



Greg Parry, SBEA President, welcomes guest speaker, Danny Rogers (left).

Another successful AGM

A well-attended Annual General Meeting was held on 1 April. Our guest speaker was Dr Danny Rogers, who spoke about 'Shorebirds of Swan Bay'. Danny is one of Australia's best known shorebird ecologists with an unsurpassed knowledge of birds of Swan Bay and a co-author of the recently published 'Australian Bird Guide'.

Members at the AGM voted unanimously for updating our Rules of Incorporation, which now include a new statement of purpose: 'To conserve the ecology of Swan Bay and its environs and to mitigate the impacts of climate change, catchment development, weeds, loss of vegetation and litter, assisted by an active and engaged community.'

The AGM also elected the following Committee members: Greg Parry, Eva Mutton, Neil Mathieson, Sue Wasterval and Chris Smyth. At the subsequent Committee meeting the following office bearers were appointed: Greg Parry (President), Chris Smyth (Vice-President), Eva Mutton (Secretary) and Neil Mathieson (Treasurer). A sincere Thank you to Pauline Nunan and Roel Wasterval, who have both stepped down from the Committee this year. Pauline has made a wonderful contribution over the last three years in many areas but particularly as our media person. Roel has had many roles in the Committee over many years, most recently as President for 8 years. He has overseen a range of issues that have threatened Swan Bay during that time and has made a significant contribution. We are pleased to welcome Lisa Barker, who has very recently joined the Committee.

Roel and Sue Wasterval were both honoured with Life Membership at the AGM for their many years of tireless efforts and dedication to SBEA. They were presented with a beautiful glass platter made by Wathaurong Glass at a Morning Tea held at the Nursery.



Left: From left, Pauline Nunan, Eva Mutton, Greg Parry, Roel Wasterval and Sue Wasterval at the presentation of Roel and Sue's Life Membership. Right: James Tippett, one of our long-term volunteers acknowledged at the AGM and presented with a plant from our indigenous nursery.

The efforts of our long-term volunteers were also acknowledged at the AGM, many of whom have volunteered regularly at the Nursery for ten years and some even longer. They were each presented with a plant from our nursery and later the new Swan Bay Environment Association badge. We would like to acknowledge Rosemary Brown, Crenagh Kelly, Patricia Brideson, Jim Caldwell, Marg and Phil Barlow, Pam and David Thomas, Heather McFarlane, Denise Moore, John Woods, Kathy Lang, Gail Stocker, Sue Longmore, Ian Alexander, James Tippett, Mary-Ann and George Joynson, Barb and John Cormack. The success of our Nursery depends entirely on our wonderful volunteers.

Welcome to new members

We extend a warm welcome to:

- Delia Naumann, who began as a Nursery Volunteer in January
- Sandra and Martin Kent. Sandra is also a Nursery volunteer
- Maureen and Glenn Monckton, new residents in Queenscliff. Maureen is a Nursery volunteer
- Jim Vaux, who has been supporting the Borough Coastcarers monthly weeding sessions at both The Narrows and The Rip this year
- Lou Read, a new resident of Point Lonsdale who is keen to volunteer at the Nursery.
- Jess Pearson.

We are pleased to have you all on board and greatly appreciate your support of SBEA.

Membership fees now due

With the AGM behind us, membership fees are now due.

Thank you to all those members who have promptly paid membership for 2022. For those members still to pay, annual fees are \$20 for an individual, \$10 for an individual concession, and \$30 for a family.

Please pay directly into SBEA account Bendigo Bank – BSB 633-000 Account No- 136 521 358 *Use your **'name mship'** as reference so we can acknowledge your payment.

Cheques can be posted to SBEA, PO Box 143, Queenscliff 3225.

Please contact the Secretary Eva Mutton evamutton@bigpond.com if you have any membership queries.

Nursery News

We are now deep into the planting season and the nursery plants are selling quickly. The majority of the non-sales section in the nursery is filled with an unprecedented number of pre-orders for local revegetation projects. The first of these orders are just starting to be collected and planted and include orders for Bonnyvale Wetlands, Barwon Coast and



soon the Queenscliff Boat Ramp. Other revegetation orders to be collected and planted this year are for locations that include the Point Lonsdale Cemetery, the Rail Trail, Point Development, Swan Island Golf Club, The Queenscliff Cruising Yacht Club and Barwon Coast for National Tree Planting Day.

Our new volunteers are settling into our Thursday and Sunday working Bees. This Thursday, 2 June, we are having the second of our funded excursions for volunteers. The first excursion was to the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens in May 2021 (the day before a strict lockdown was called). The second excursion will be to the Melton Botanic Gardens, which is a volunteer-run garden that focusses on dryland plants. The nursery manager, Anne Langmaid, will be providing us with tours of the nursery, the Eucalyptus arboretum and several of the SA and WA gardens. It should be a great trip!

Weeding at The Narrows and the Rip View car park



SBEA Members are regularly participating in monthly weeding activities of the Bellarine Catchment Network and Borough Coastcarers weeding group. There are two sessions, both from 10.00am–12noon:

The first Tuesday of the month: along Lover's Walk at The Narrows. Meet at the Dog Beach car park.

The second Tuesday of the month: in Moonah woodland adjacent to the Rip View car park in Point Lonsdale.

The next weeding at The Narrows is on Tuesday 7 June at 10.00am, while the next Rip View weeding is on Tuesday 14 June at 10.00am. If you are planning to attend for the first time, please email Lachlan Forbes (lachlan@bcn.org.au). Volunteers are guided by conservation field staff. BYO gloves and glasses. All activities are subject to weather warnings and considerations.

Work at The Narrows site adjacent to Lovers Walk has now been continuing for the past 18 months. After pulling up a huge amount of Polygala (Bellarine Pea), weeders were thrilled to see the regeneration of many new seedlings of local plants such as Small-leaved Clematis and Coast Pomaderris. However, other invasive weeds have also now become visible, particularly Aloe and Italian Buckthorn. Aloe is a garden escapee which has unfortunately taken a stronghold in several areas. Thankfully it can be easily grubbed out with a small trowel. Italian Buckthorn is much more difficult to remove. Seeds are easily dispersed by birds from the many garden specimens of this shrub in the Borough. Very small seedlings can be easily pulled by hand, however larger plants must be cut and painted to ensure they do not grow back. You can help by removing Italian Buckthorn *Rhamnus alaternus* from your garden so that our weeding efforts are not in vain. Removing plants before their red/black berries develop again from October will help to break this cycle of weed infestation. The Grow Me Instead website suggests suitable replacement species [Italian buckthorn](#) | [Grow Me Instead](#)



Cats in the Borough

The issue of cats roaming onto neighbouring properties and the dissatisfaction with Council's response to this problem is again being taken up with the Borough Mayor and CEO by SBEA. Though there are a relatively small number of cats registered in the Borough, constant sightings of cats in the dunes, in saltmarsh and woodland along Swan Bay, as well as in neighbouring gardens have prompted this action.

The current situation in the Borough of Queenscliff - *All cats must be confined from sunset to sunrise to protect native wildlife and minimize public nuisance. As a cat owner, we encourage you to place bells on your animals' collars to deter them from hunting native wildlife. If you have a cat wandering on your premises, you can hire a cat trap from Council. A security deposit fee of \$50 applies, which is refunded when the trap is returned.*

[Domestic animals | Borough of Queenscliffe](#)

This very basic information, and the onus of dealing with a wandering cat being put on others, shows the Borough to be very much out of step with many other LGA's in Victoria. Thirty-nine out of 79 LGA's in Victoria support the RSPCA/Zoos Victoria Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife Initiative, many councils provide a wealth of helpful information to cat owners, and more councils are introducing a 24/7 Cat Curfew.

We were pleased that the Council made a commitment last year to develop an education program and to promote responsible cat ownership. We would like to assist them in this undertaking by suggesting they:

- Become a supporter of the Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife initiative and circulate that program's extensive educational material through the Council website, social media and new pet registration packs.
- As a partner in the Gardens for Wildlife program, they take a greater responsibility in publicising the damage that cats can do to native birds, reptiles, frogs and insects. Cats do not only kill wildlife at night – and even well-fed cats will hunt. The G4W program encourages residents to plant local indigenous plants to attract wildlife so we should be ensuring these gardens are not visited by unwelcome cats.
- Have information readily available to help cat owners provide an outdoor enclosure for their cat. Collaborate with community organisations to provide support and increase options of cat enclosures available locally. Publish articles where owners and their cats are happy with this lifestyle. Cats are safer if confined, they tend to be healthier, live longer and incur fewer vet bills. (Australian Veterinary Association).
- Provide a less confrontational way of dealing with roaming cats. Trapping is cruel and should only be used for feral cats, not where the cat's owner can be identified. Some councils have a form where residents can report nuisance cats if the problem persists and when it has not been resolved by a neighbourly conversation. Help pet owners understand that they have an obligation to the community.
- Provide an incentive e.g. reduced registration fees for cats which are confined 24/7.
- Work towards implementing a 24/7 Cat curfew with a plan that begins with a minimum 12-month education campaign to explain what cat confinement is and the benefits of it for cats and for wildlife. Facilitate a phased implementation and provide support for owners to make necessary adjustments.

Port Phillip Bay Ramsar site boundary review

The Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site has six distinct wetland areas. The boundary for this Ramsar site was defined when it was listed in 1982. Since then, there have been some changes in land status and an increased understanding of wetland systems in the region and their values.

Before and during the renewal of the site’s management plan in 2017, community members and stakeholders identified several wetland areas outside the Ramsar site as worthy considerations for addition to the site. An action was subsequently included in the management plan to undertake a boundary review.

DELWP is now progressing this review and would like to consult with the public on eleven wetland areas that have been proposed for addition to the Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site by stakeholders. **Closes 10th June.** <https://engage.vic.gov.au/port-philip-bay-and-bellarine-peninsula-ramsar-site-boundary-review>



The map shows the location of the 11 wetland areas proposed for inclusion in the Ramsar site. Each has significant values worthy of Ramsar recognition and include the Lonsdale Lakes, Lakers Cutting, the entrance to Swan Bay (Sand and Swan islands), Edwards Point at the northern end of the bay, Salt Lagoon at St Leonards, Moolap at Point Henry, Lake Connewarre, Breamlea Karaaf, Avalon, Point Wilson, Point Cook and Altona. Members are encouraged to send a letter in support of the mapped areas being included in an extended boundary of the Ramsar site.

Swan Bay Wetland Restoration Citizen Science Day



Citizen scientists, including our members Jane Abbott and Francis Grundy (see photo far right) enjoyed a day sampling and measuring saltmarsh at Swan Bay in late March. In the process they learned about the importance of blue carbon in mitigating climate change and the potential co-benefits for landholders, the community and the environment.

The Swan Bay saltmarsh restoration project is a collaboration between Deakin University’s Blue Carbon Lab, Bellarine Catchment Network and the Bellarine Landcare Group. The Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation supports the project and conducted a Welcome to Country ceremony and gave cultural significance talks. Project staff are working with private landholders to install low-cost fencing to restore coastal wetlands, and to better understand the accumulation and storage of Blue Carbon beneath saltmarsh ecosystems.

Pocket Park Project

There are 10 Pocket Parks scattered around the Borough of Queenscliffe and, as a result of general attrition and the storms over the summer, some of them are looking very depleted and miserable. A plan needs to be developed to undertake a replanting program, and the Swan Bay Environment Association is spearheading this in collaboration with the Borough of Queenscliffe. The project is in its early stages, and we will be encouraging local community members to be involved in both the project's planning and subsequent planting activities. The Swan Bay Environment Association's indigenous nursery will be providing the trees and shrubs to be planted and we are looking to extend the idea of our Gardens for Wildlife program into the Pocket Parks while maintaining their attraction as public parks and open space. Pocket parks at Douglas Court and Jennifer Crescent have been chosen as the first for restoration.

OBPs arrive on the Bellarine

Craig Morley from Geelong Field Naturalists reports that three Orange-bellied Parrots have now been sighted and identified on the Bellarine Peninsula. The first, a wild-bred adult female, was seen on 8 April and is the first OBP recorded on the mainland for 2022. She was last seen at Melaleuca in south-west Tasmania on 24 March. Since then, a wild-bred adult male (14 April, last seen Melaleuca 21 March) and a juvenile female from the February 2022 Melaleuca release (22 April) have been sighted. After an excursion on 21 and 22 May, the five migrant Orange-bellied Parrots, a mixture of wild-bred adult and juveniles and captive-bred juveniles (released at Melaleuca Feb 2022) seen at Lake Connewarre, were clearly a huge thrill.

Below are extracts from the OBP Mainland Release Trial Program 2022 Two Week Update 26 May 2022, which discusses two OBP releases:

12 birds were released on May 9th. These birds were sourced from NRE [Department of Natural Resources and Environment] Tasmania and Adelaide Zoo and spent seven days in on-site aviaries before release. Most of the first group of birds have remained in the area (11/12 detected in the area two weeks post release) and most have been observed regularly near the aviaries. They are making use of a nearby shelterbelt of Melaleuca and have been observed foraging on Austral Seablite and Sea Barley Grass in the adjacent saltmarsh. The second release group comprised of 8 birds from NRE Tasmania. These birds were released on May 23rd, after spending 6 days in the on-site aviaries.

Blue E Blue, an adult male from the group released at Lake Connewarre in 2021 was first seen this year on April 14 with wild adult male Silver Green E. This is the first time he had been seen since late July 2021. We hope that birds from the second release group join birds from the previous release and the natural migrants to create a large flock. It is over 20 years since a flock of 15 or more OBPs have been recorded in their non-breeding range.



Birds exiting the Lake Connewarre release aviary. Image Sarah Agterhuis