



**Berg**  
Mt Martha

# Annual Report 2017

ABN 50 224 628 623

No A0034645Y

## President's Report

It is a great pleasure to submit my 4th report as President of BERG Mt Martha for the 20<sup>th</sup> year of this wonderful organisation. This is the final year of implementing our current five year strategic plan. We have successfully completed all the major items in the plan during the period. The main items have been reported in *The Creek* during the year and in previous annual reports.

Our vision has remained the same throughout:

*To preserve and restore the precious ecology of the Balcombe Estuary and Reserves through best practice technical knowledge, passionate volunteerism and community involvement.*

Everything we do is dedicated to achieving this vision, with the end aim of bringing the estuary and reserves to a steady state which has only to be maintained! I believe this steady state is now within reach, in our next five years.

This year has been another year of enormous activity on many fronts with several major achievements. Liz Barraclough OAM, our indefatigable Field Officer, will report on the detail of our on-ground operations – which are the heart of what we do. I report here on the organisation as a whole. Some of the raw statistics for this year are shown in the table below:

Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2016-17 % Change
<b>No. Members</b>	470	485	503	468	-7%
<b>No. Active Volunteers</b>	70	85	109	104	-5%
<b>Volunteer Hours</b>	3,600	4,100	4,300	3,300	-24%
<b>Total Income</b>	\$67,000	\$60,000	\$104,000	\$200,000	+92%
<b>Donations</b>	\$4,500	\$7,000	\$11,000	\$83,000	+655%

Overall this year, our performance has again been outstanding. We significantly expanded total income, primarily through donations. We made significant progress on a number of major projects, we expanded on-ground activities, while we maintained school education programs and ran our usual very successful program of community awareness activities.

The highlights of our year have been:

- Receiving funding of \$30,000 from the Helen MacPherson Smith Trust, to progress the *Philanthropy Project* of restoring the north bank of the Reserves.
- Receiving over \$70,000 in on-ground donations from a wide variety of members
- Agreeing with the Shire for them to spend \$100,000 on a variety of projects related to reducing sediment coming in to the estuary
- Agreeing with the Shire an action plan for future reduction in sedimentation
- Agreeing with the Shire for them to put the Estuary and Reserves forward for an Environmental Significance Overlay, to provide further protection for the area
- The continued involvement of the Green Army in on-ground operations
- Allocation of a room in Mt Martha Community House for storage and administrative use.

However, it is disappointing to record a significant drop in our member numbers. While we believe some of this is due to being less generous in carrying non-financial members, we remain well short of our goal of involving the whole community within our membership. We believe the decline in our reported Volunteer Hours reflects a significant under-reporting this year by our group leaders and the fact that we did not have a Family Day event this year, which takes a huge amount of our volunteer time.

Nevertheless, as you will read, we undertook many activities this year as well as many others not included. I will report under the headings from our vision – best practice technical knowledge, community involvement and passionate volunteerism – as these are the ways in which we get things done.

### Operations: Best Practice Technical Knowledge

Our main activities are centred on the on-ground operations of the organisation, in which we try to apply best practice technical knowledge. As usual, we ran our Friday (weekly), Tuesday (monthly), Wednesday (monthly) and Sunday (monthly) **working bees** under Sue Betheras, Jenny Selby, Suzanne Ryan and Liz Barraclough respectively, all of whom are trained through the SPIFFA environmental management program, and more. We also trained Sue Milton, Suzanne Ryan, Peter and Deb McMahon and Cate Clarke through the SPIFFA Habitat Management course, to increase the number of our volunteers with best practice technical knowledge.

A key part of this year has again been the **Green Army program**, which MPS has involved us in. This has given us access to a great deal of effectively free labour to undertake tasks we could not or would not be able to do ourselves or get other contractors to do. In total, the Green Army have put in more hours than the total of all our Sunday working bee hours, so we have significantly increased the amount of time spent on the on-ground activities. These hours are not included in our Volunteer Hours, but from our perspective, they have the same or similar effects. The Green Army program has been discontinued by the Federal Government so we will not benefit from this in future years

**Waterwatch** and **Estuary Watch**, led by John Inchley, worked on developing assessment of our progress with water quality and estuary monitoring, in conjunction with Melbourne Water, now that we have several years of monthly measurements.

The **Sedimentation Action Group**, under my leadership, worked with the Shire to implement a series of short term agreed actions to reduce sediment inflow from the identified main drains. Carbon dating of the existing estuary sediment and clarification of the main sources of sediment entering the estuary provided a basis for the Shire agreeing with us a comprehensive action plan.

The **Philanthropy Group**, headed by Bronwyn Street, was successful in receiving \$30,000 grant from the Helen MacPherson Smith Trust to progress work started last year on restoring the northern bank of the Reserves. Together with a variety of other internal donors we raised over \$100,000 for this project, sufficient to transform this part of the Reserves, which we had previously been unable to address. I want to particularly thank all those members who made significant donations this year to enable this work to be undertaken.

The **Schools Program** under Jenny Selby ran a variety of programs for schools in the area as well as some outside our area. We believe educating students and their parents is the best way to develop people with an appreciation, knowledge and skills for what we actually do in the reserves. Jenny, John Inchley and several other volunteers also ran an **Environment Week for Schools** program at The Briars, based around our Waterwatch activity.

We reached agreement with the Shire to support our **Environmental Significance Overlay application** which our ESO group, led by Peter McMahon, prepared and which we submitted to them. An ESO aims to protect the reserves into perpetuity. This is a key end aim for our group. The Shire agreed to incorporate our application into a major internal review. While this will not begin for another year, we are confident that achieving an ESO is now feasible and realistic for us.

We have been working on developing a **BERG Mt Martha Information management system**, under the leadership of Suzanne Ryan. This aims to streamline our financial management systems, integrate our grant management processes, our membership and donation systems, our Active Volunteer database and align our forms, electronically. We also expect to align our website with these processes. This project will continue into next year, as we cautiously

approach a significant change in our processes, to make us as professional as possible in our administration and marketing.

## Community Involvement

A second way in which we try to achieve our vision is by ensuring members and the community are informed of what we do, are educated about best environmental practices and hopefully become more involved with us. This year, again under Barbara Thraves, the **Community Awareness Group (CAG)** undertook numerous activities to get us better known.

CAG arranged a visit to Tony O'Connor's environmental house and wetlands on Century Drive, presentation of the film, *A Plastic Ocean*, designed to highlight the problem of plastic in the oceans and a presentation by P T Hirshfield on protecting the wonderful marine life in Pt Philip Bay. We also sponsored a screening of *A Plastic Ocean* to all Year 7 students at Balcombe Grammar, which was very successful with reports that students had begun to modify their behaviour as a result, eschewing plastic straws, single use lunch bags and bottled drinks – a very pleasing result.

In addition, Angela Kirsner continued to produce informative editions of *The Creek*, Di Lewis maintained our impressive information board in the campground, Richard Kirsner maintained the website, we held the annual Weed-busters education morning in the village and we again contributed to Clean Up Australia Day.

This year Barry Morris achieved great success for us in publicising our work through local newspapers through a series of articles. Tamara Keyte also ran our Facebook page tirelessly, as we attempt to make ourselves more attractive to younger residents.

Our **Business Sponsors program** continued under John Stirling, but the number of sponsors declined, possibly due to John's extended absence for the year. While we started this as a fundraising activity, we see it as equally or more important to engage our businesses in the work we do. We see our relationship with our sponsors as a partnership. That means we expect our members to support our sponsors as they are supporting us. So, if you have a chance, please support our sponsors whenever you can and thank them for sponsoring us. They are:

**Major sponsors:** Mount Martha Community Bank, Bonaccorde Property Services, Bunnings Mornington

**Supporters:** IGA Supermarket, Mt Martha Post Office, Mt Martha Medical Centre, Terry Bateman Pharmacy, Higher Ground Coffee, Bells Meats, Mt Martha Veterinary Clinic, Warlimont & Nutt, Farrell's Bookshop, Peninsula Travel, Mount Martha Gardening and Mt Martha Newsagency.

As part of us involving the local community, we moved our banking exclusively to the Mount Martha Community Bank, which has been a key financial supporter for us in recent years. Several bank directors also attended a working bee during the year to show their support for us.

Bunnings Mornington also provided us with a fundraising slot on their sausage sizzle calendar and John Trevillian organised another successful fundraiser for us with them.

## Passionate Volunteerism

The third element of how we do our work is through getting our members to be Active Volunteers, passionate about what we do, in any of the many different areas of our activities. Although our member numbers dropped, we virtually maintained our number of Active Volunteers, representing over 20% of all members. Through our Active Volunteers program and database, maintained by Bev Fryer, we actively sourced many members who have key skills which we need to operate professionally. This database is invaluable for us when we need to source expertise for new projects.

Importantly for our culture, Trish Reilly again undertook the role of **catering coordinator**, organising morning teas for working bees and other functions during the year. Trish's organisation has again been outstanding in terms of ensuring our on-ground workers have wonderful morning teas!

## Thanks to All

This is a wonderful organisation to be involved in! The amount of effort involved is demonstrated in the physical changes we see in the estuary and reserves and in the volunteer hours we record to measure our contributions.

Thanks to the Committee – perhaps our most passionate Active Volunteers – for the work they put in to make the organisation work so well, particularly Liz Barraclough OAM, our wonderful Field Officer and Di Lewis, our incredibly competent Secretary, part-time grant sourcer, grant writer and also informal communications manager.

I want to pay particular tribute to previous President, John Inchley, who has decided to step down from the Committee. John is a stalwart of BERG MM. John has run Waterwatch and more recently Estuary Watch as well, been a major contributor to the Schools Program, Environment Week and the SAG group, as well as being President for several years and a consistent working bee attendee for many years. In fact John has been a volunteer for many of our activities whenever and wherever there has been a need.

Thanks also to the many leaders of the many activities we run during the year. Most of their names are mentioned in the report. Thanks to all the Active Volunteers who contribute their time and skills in the many ways in which we need help. Thanks to those who have donated financially to us, as your contributions enable us to do things we would simply not be able to undertake without money.

Thanks to the members for supporting us financially and in spirit, particularly those more experienced members who used to be the physically active leaders of this organisation but who can no longer contribute in this way.

There is much still to do, but we are making great strides towards achieving our vision. I look forward to your continued support.

Graham Hubbard

President

October 2017



L-R Graham Hubbard, Cr Rosie Clark, Liz Barraclough, Cr Sam Hearn

## Field Officer's Report

Again, BERG Mt Martha has had a great year of activities, events, achievements, most of which are outlined in Graham's report. This report just gives more detail on the on-ground projects, programs and related activities. Each year, although it may appear as if there is just more of the same eg weeding, planting, schools' programs etc, it is an on-going process of building on, increasing, advancing, adding to previous years' work and projects to restore the ecological integrity of the Balcombe Estuary Reserves and the related environs. The education and the raising and encouragement of community awareness and appreciation of our precious and unique local natural environment are major contributors to this process.

### On-ground activities

#### Working-bees

We have one weekly and **three** regular monthly working-bees held throughout the year, to maintain and monitor the Balcombe Estuary Reserves and related areas ie the foreshore and the lower reaches of Hopetoun Creek. Weed control will always be the primary, on-going and probably the most important on-ground activity. However, enhancement planting of indigenous species to improve diversity is still of vital importance and necessary. Monitoring and follow up are increasingly essential, as we extend our works throughout the reserves.

#### Tuesday Group

Jenny Selby's regular and enthusiastic group of helpers who mostly concentrate on the Bunyip and closely adjoining areas has reduced in numbers, due to ill health, holidays and other unforeseen commitments. As we have just received a large grant (BOA17 - \$45,000) in this area, she would be thrilled to have some more support and volunteers to contribute to this grant, as well as to the regular maintenance of the adjoining areas.



Thanks to **Pia Spreen** from Naturelinks, funded by the Shire, who gives invaluable guidance, assistance and support at all working-bees.

#### Friday Morning Group

Under Sue Betheras's coordination and management, this group has continued its valuable weekly work in targeted and sensitive areas.

- i) Uralla Bridge area and Quarry - the on-going weeding and enhancement planting is paying dividends with an increased diversity of vegetation and fauna, especially small birds.
- ii) Hyacinth Orchid Patch – is being monitored and maintained. Naturelinks has gradually been removing the fallen Teatree to encourage the regeneration of the understorey, including the important and vulnerable, Hyacinth Orchids
- iii) Maude St burn site – seasonal monitoring and surveying of this site is on-going.
- iv) The Jaw - follow up weeding, planting and monitoring.
- v) Hopetoun Creek grant sites – occasional follow up eg weeding and planting when necessary, to supple-

ment Sunday working-bee works.

- vi) Old Campground, bird hide - only require relatively quick maintenance work and monitoring.

### Sunday working-bee

These working-bees mainly concentrate on work required in the grant sites and are vital as part of our in-kind contribution - mainly weeding, mulching and planting in the riparian and woodland areas of Balcombe Creek and its tributary Hopetoun Creek and the foreshore. Thanks to **Tess Graham** and **Richie Ball**, as supervisors funded by the Shire, for their good-natured help and support at these working-bees.

### Coastal Group

Suzanne Ryan is doing a great job coordinating and running this relatively new group that meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month and whose primary interest is to protect and restore the narrow, vulnerable and exposed area of the Mt Martha foreshore. This enthusiastic group (3 – 12 participants depending on seasonal 'leave' etc), has been weeding, planting, nurturing earlier plantings, fencing etc. Suzanne has also been applying for grants - successfully, drawing up works plans, monitoring and reporting.

The group has also occasionally been joined by outside groups eg. Green Army, 5 from ADP (an Australian & New Zealand company). This has also involved extra planning and coordination.

Thanks to **Tamara Keyte**, Naturelinks, who, as the working-bee supervisor funded by the Shire, has supported, worked and shared her expert knowledge and experience with Suzanne and the group.

### Weed Control

Weed control is an on-going process, but absolutely essential if we are to retain, maintain and improve the native local vegetation that supports the remaining and most resilient of our native animals and birds.

We use a number of methods to selectively and specifically target different weed species and we are constantly learning and trialing the most effective, but least harmful to all, but the weeds. We rely heavily on the knowledge and skills of our bushland contractors and the advice and guidance of the Shire's conservation officers. Grants are our main source of funding for this activity, enabling us to employ contractors. Without them, we would have to rely on donations, our own relatively limited labour and more support from the Shire, who already contribute a major amount per year (this financial year - \$53,620) under their Bushland Management Program.

### Planting

Again this year, most of our plants went into the sites along Hopetoun Creek ie in the area below the kindergarten and upstream in the areas threatening erosion from greater storm water run-off and from the exposed reconstruction site ie where Melbourne Water replaced the fallen rock structure. The emphasis has also been on habitat restoration of this, once heavily weed infested and degraded area.

A 5 session school program with Balcombe Grammar Year 5 students, a number of Sunday working-bees and Green Army sessions contributed greatly to the restoration of this area. The increase of water flows into the creek from storm water outlets and surface overflows from roads and adjoining areas, has increased the undermining and erosion of the banks, which in turn is contributing to the increased sediment entering the creek system. This has necessitated, not only dense planting of the banks and the riparian areas of both Hopetoun and Balcombe Creeks, but consideration of other necessary control methods and infrastructure works to manage this problem. This will be an on-going project and BERG Mt Martha is working closely with the Shire to address the problem.



Enhancement or diversity improvement planting has continued in other grant sites and throughout the reserves where considered necessary.

### **Mature Tree loss**

Again this year there has been a concerted effort to continue the reestablishment of big trees/'large' habitat throughout the Reserves ie particularly Manna Gums, Sheoaks, Banksias and Blackwoods, as they are threatened, not only in the bushland areas of the Reserves, but also in adjoining sites and even along the roadsides, private gardens etc. We plant large numbers of tree every year and in this planting season have planted well over 200. This is an investment in the future ie the re-establishment of the ecological integrity of the indigenous bushland. Habitat hollows can take up to 100 years to develop It will take a number of years for us to see a notable change in the landscape. But already, particularly along the foreshore, Coast Banksias are beginning to rise above the middle storey.

### **Free Indigenous Plant Offer**

We continue to encourage residents to restore the habitat in their gardens and on their nature strips through our offer of indigenous tube stock, available from the Shire nursery at The Briars. Kate, Tara, Tanzin and Tracy are always happy to advise and help select the appropriate plants and add them to a BERG MM account.

Unfortunately, the adjoining and surrounding nature strips are a constant seed source causing the on-going reinfestation of weeds into the reserves. It would be great, if we could get residents to replace these weeds with similar indigenous vegetation to still preserve the casual, bushy, semi-rural character of Mt Martha.

## **Grants**

Grants (and their funding) are not always reliable. Providers come and go, depending probably on political priorities etc. However, Melbourne Water's grants have been a constant over a number of years. They allow us to plan and provide project continuity. However, recently, we have been tapping more into the philanthropic 'market/pool' so we can extend our reach to cover areas in the reserves, not previously or possibly funded from available grant sources.

Limited grant funding for community awareness activities is available, but we have to increasingly rely on the generous donations from members for this important aspect of our work.

**Grant Applications & Site assessments** – BERG MM's On-site Assessment Team (Sue Betheras, Sue Milton, Liz Barraclough, Jenny Selby and Suzanne Ryan – depending on sites) work together with Matt Stahmer and Hannah Brown (MPS Natural Systems Team) and Naturelinks (contractor) on project determination, grant assessment and reporting. For each project/grant, a detailed project works plan, map and costing, is undertaken and approved by BERG MM, the contractor and the Shire.

### **MOU MPS 17 (Feb 2017 – June 2017)**

We tend to use this money to 'fill in the gaps' ie for small projects and miscellaneous works. Eg i) Orchid area – woody weed removal (chainsaw and remove fallen Teatree). ii) Below Ferrero Ovals – Forget-me-nots; iii) Rabbit Paddock - ground flora weed and woody weeding ie drill & fill small and medium Mahogany Gums. iv) Kotor Hill & below Hilton Crt– spray Rock Rose seedlings.

### **Melbourne Water Grants**

Melbourne Water grants extend over an 18 month period which means projects can overlap. However, for our accounting and practical convenience, we try to finalise all major works and spending in the financial year and use the final six months to complete the necessary assessments and reports.

**2016 Melbourne Water grants – (\$37,820)**

(Feb 2016 – May 2017)

- i) *Swamp Scrub/Grassy Woodland Ecotone Improvement, Balcombe Creek, Stage 9 (\$16,422)* – for woody and scrambling weed control on the north bank below Maude St Burn site to Victoria Cres; plants and revegetation materials.
- ii) *Riparian Biolink Restoration Project, Mt Martha (Hopetoun Creek), Stage 3 (\$20,848)* – Site 1 (below the Balcombe kindergarten) - follow up grassy, woody and scrambling weed control; Site 2 (upstream of Ferrero Recreation Reserve, parallel and below residences in Balcombe Cres) – follow-up woody weed control between mulched access path and the creek; plants and revegetation materials.
- iii) *Support Grant (\$550)* – for insurance and workshop and materials.

**2017 Melbourne Water grants – (\$37,705.55)**

(Feb 2016 – May 2017)

- i) *Swamp Scrub/Grassy Woodland Ecotone Improvement, Balcombe Creek, Stage 10 (\$18,367.55)* – for woody and scrambling weed control in the riparian zone on northern side of creek from below the eastern end of the Burn site to the end of Alice St/Newton St; plants and revegetation materials.
- ii) *Riparian Biolink Restoration Project, Mt Martha (Hopetoun Creek), Stage 3 (\$18,238)* – Site 1 (below the Balcombe kindergarten to Hopetoun Rd) - follow up grassy, woody and scrambling weed control; Site 2 (upstream of Ferrero Recreation Reserve, parallel and below residences in Balcombe Cres) – follow-up woody weed control between mulched access path and the creek; plants and revegetation materials.
- iii) *Support Grant (\$1,100)* – for insurance and training- Peninsula Habitat Conservation Management Course.

**Coastcare Victoria Community Grant – (\$6,313)**

(July 2016- Dec 2017)

*Mt Martha Foreshore Restoration Follow-up 2016.* Weed control along the foreshore between Coolangatta Rd and South Beach Carpark; plants, revegetation materials, administration and community awareness activities eg newsletter, signage, publicity etc.

**Port Phillip Westernport Catchment Authority Community Grant – (\$14,987.50)**

(Dec 2015 – Oct 2016)

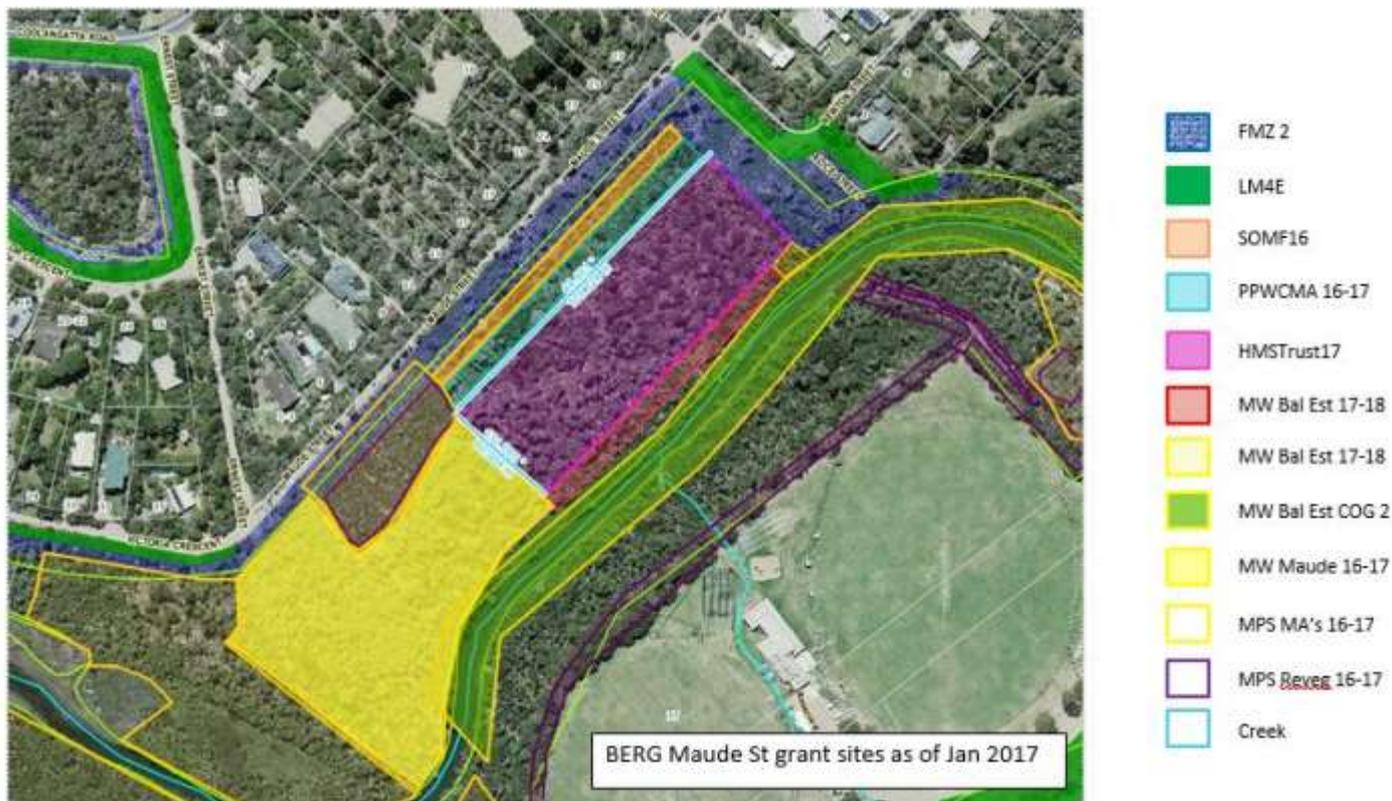
This was the first time this grant had been offered. It was for *Grassy Woodland Habitat Restoration* in the area above and adjoining the riparian section of Swamp Scrub on the lower reaches of Hopetoun Ck ie the upper/southern section of Rabbit Paddock, end of Village Close. It adjoined and complemented the Melb Water grants in this area. Initial and follow up woody and scrambler weed control and enhancement planting was undertaken. Funds also covered reveg materials eg stakes & guards, weed disposal, project coordination, 2 editions of the newsletter and for one person to undertake the Peninsula Conservation Habitat management course(deferred to 2017).

**Maude St ‘Philanthropic’ site**

This refers to the area running parallel to Maude St between the Burn site and Alice St/Newton St. and is covered by a number of grants and programs. See map for details.

1. Fuel Management zone 1
2. SMOF16 grant (Sally Oatley Memorial Grant) - approx. 10 – 15m wide X 170m – (\$15,000). Completed, except for future follow up (from ‘matched’ Philanthropic funds).
3. PPWCMA16/17 grant (Port Phillip Water Catchment Management Authority) – (\$16,208) - approx 10 –

- 15m X 170m. Completed, except for future follow up (from 'matched' Philanthropic funds).
4. HMST17 grant (Helen MacPherson Smith Trust) – (\$30,000). Extends south from PPWCMA16/17 site to MW17B grant ie approx. 15m from creek.
  5. MW17B (Melb Water Community Grant) – (\$18,367.55). Immediate riparian zone ie to approx. 15m above creek.



*It will be interesting and an on-going learning process to compare the regeneration of these two adjacent sites ie Burn Site and the Philanthropic Site. Two different bushland restoration methods have been used ie 1) control burn (in April 2013) and 2) weed removal and control - manual and selective chemical, with some enhancement habitat planting.*

**Sally Oatley Memorial Grant (\$15,000)**

(July 2016 – Dec 2017)

For restoration ie weed control, of the section of Grassy Woodland area in Maude St, adjacent to the Burn Site and above the PPWCMA16/17 grant site.

**Port Phillip Westernport Catchment Authority Community Grant (\$16,208)**

(Feb 2017 – Nov 2017)

For the *Balcombe Creek North Bank Extension Project*. To protect and restore indigenous flora and fauna in a sensitive area of Damp Sands Herb-rich and Grassy Woodland, northern side of the Balcombe Estuary Reserves, extending from the 2013 control burn site on Maude St to Alice St for a width of 10-15m by 170m length. Weed control works, project coordination, plants, revegetation materials, and community awareness – one edition of the newsletter and interpretive signage (*Frogs of the Lower Balcombe Creek*)

**Helen MacPherson Smith Trust (\$30,000)**

(Jan 2017 – Dec 2017)

For 'Restoring the Northern Bank of Balcombe Creek', predominantly for weed control (\$28,000) in the Maude St Philanthropic area, between the PPWCMA17 grant and the MW17B, and interpretive signage (\$2,000) for community awareness ie 1 on-site sign to highlight the 'before' works and 2 multi-functional signs ie to be fixed on a wall

in the Old Campground, but also produced in laminated poster form be used for display purposes eg events. These are to depict the 'Riches of the Reserves' and the threats to the Reserves and the restoration works of BERG Mt Martha.

### **Green Army**

We had several groups in August and September 2016 to augment and contribute to BERG MM and Naturelinks' works in the reserves. They did supplementary planting along the banks of Hopetoun Creek, cut & painted Winter Cherry along the north bank of Balcombe Creek, Uralla Bridge to the Jaw, and woody weeding SOMF site in Maude St with NL.

On the foreshore, they worked with BERG MM Coastal Group members and Tamara, NL, on coastal woody weeding ie Polygala seedlings etc south from Coolangatta Rd track. Then restored and repaired protective fencing of dunes and access tracks and weeded, digging out Bridal Creeper, scramblers and Madeira Vine.

Thanks very much to the BERG MM members who helped supervise over these weeks, especially Ian Croker and Eric Smalley who directed and organized the fencing.

## **Other Activities/Tasks**

All our on-ground works aim to directly improve the health of the waterway, while our community awareness activities contribute indirectly through education, encouraging involvement and raising the profile of BERG MM and the local environment and its precious ecology.



### **'Explore Bush Magic with Gidja'**

BERG Mt Martha organised a guided eco walk with Gidja Walker, our local ecologist and 'dream weaver', for children and their parents and grandparents, to discover the ecological wonders of the Balcombe Estuary bushland. Armed with large magnifying glasses, all were enthralled, as they discovered and examined even the tiniest wonders on the ground, on the leaves and in the bark of the surrounding trees and listened to the inter-relationships of the organisms to their environment.

Of course, we finished with a sausage sizzle!

### **Bird Surveys**

These are still carried out by Mornington Peninsula Birdlife a number of times a year. Pam Hearn, our own bird expert, plays an important role in all the bird watching activities, surveys and education workshops offered to members and local residents. On-going monitoring and recording is important to help determine the success of our work in improving and restoring local habitat.

### **Nesting Boxes**

The on-going mapping, monitoring and maintenance is included in the Shire's Bushland Management Program and is undertaken by Naturelinks. These boxes compensate for habitat loss and also provide a ready visual educational tool for schools and other interested groups.

### **Weedbuster (Sept 2016)**

It seemed to go well, with a fair bit of early interest. Thanks to Jenny Selby, Sue Betheras, Flo Gason and David Street who helped spread the 'weedy' word. Unfortunately, Sunshine Reserve Conservation Fireguard Group was unable to attend. The weed information was appreciated by a number of local residents.

## Clean Up Australia Day

It was BERG Mt Martha's turn to coordinate the event this year. The number of participants increased to 40 - not perhaps overwhelming, when you consider the population of Mt Martha, but still these dedicated and diligent few made a huge difference and collected an amazing amount of rubbish ie 44 bags, a dumped couch, cabinet, double mattress, roll of black rubber sheeting and bean bag.

Again, the **Birdrock Ave Group** (35 in all!) did a wonderful job, scouring and cleaning the northern areas along the beach and roadsides.

Thanks to **Mt Martha Yacht and Rotary Clubs** for their input and participation. Rob Debenham, YC Commodore, helped man the registration desk and YC members helped clean up the beach.

The **Rotary** group did a fantastic job, collecting 12+ bags of rubbish (and the large roll of rubber) from just the 50 meters along the edge of the estuary from the Esplanade Bridge to the Henley Ave storm water outlet drain. (Most of this rubbish comes in from the Bay on high tides when the mouth is open.)

**Sea Shepherd** again did a meticulous clean-up of the South Beach area ie collecting even the smallest particles of rubbish including plastic micro beads etc. This is the really dangerous material, broken down from the larger rubbish the rest of us collected, which is ingested by, and is poisoning, marine life.



## Kinders, Schools & Tertiary Institutions

**Mt Martha Preschool Indigenous Carpark Garden** – Naomi Grant, a preschool teacher and parent, applied for a MPS Placemaking Grant to construct a pleasant 'waiting and meeting place' beside the kindergarten in the Balcombe Estuary Reserves, just above the Bunyip. Berg Mt Martha was one of the groups who helped, through collaboration and donations, to create this community space for everyone to enjoy.



**Balcombe Grammar** – 50+ Grade 6 students, over 4 sessions for their MAD (Making a Difference) Community Service Program, mulched and planted over 600 grasses, sedges and shrubs above the banks of Hopetoun Creek and the last group removed (6 bags) the flower heads of Oxalis (Soursob) at the Bay Rd end of the Hopetoun Creek and from the easement on the way up to the school. Many thanks too, to the BERG Mt Martha volunteers who helped Jenny Selby and me ie Lorraine Lamb, Flo Gasson, David Glaspole, Annette Klein, Verity Mapp, Suzanne Ryan, Ian Gould, Jenny Wood, Debbie McMahan and of course, John Inchley who also took 2 sessions of Waterwatch which the students always love.

**St Mary's College, Seymour** – The principal had asked if BERG MM might be able to organize an environmental activity for their 80 students who were on camp at Dromana. He was keen that they appreciate and contribute in some way to the natural environments through which they had been hiking and enjoying over their time on the Peninsula. We organized a walk from the Briars to the Estuary and

then a 'Sea Shepherd' rubbish clean-up (ie picking up every bit of rubbish, no matter how tiny, sorting and measuring/counting it) at sites along the southern edge of the estuary.

Their visit on Friday 14 Oct appeared to be successful and was enjoyed by all ie school and BERG MM helpers (thanks very much to John Inchley, Barb Thraves, Lyn Dell, David Street and Debbie McMahan).

**Chisholm TAFE Cert 4 Conservation & Land Management students** – Jeff Linnell sent thanks to BERG MM ie Jenny Selby and Di Lewis for meeting the students and discussing BERG MM's role in the management of the reserves, estuary, our interpretation signs, audio trails etc.

**Deakin University's School of Environment and Life Sciences'** undergraduate students (approx. 40) visited us in Aug 2015 and April 2016 as part of their round-the-bay excursion to examine catchment management, programs and processes, coastal systems and developments. This involved a guided walk and talk to present an overview of the Balcombe Estuary, relevant local issues and BERG MM's role in the reserve and the catchment as a whole. This annual visit has been included in their Environmental Management and Sustainability unit for a number of years. Many thanks to Sue Betheras who helped take this April session.

**Old Campground Toilet Site Restoration** – the dilapidated and vandalized old campground toilet block at the end of Henley St was removed by the Shire (including asbestos!) and the open space was mulched and revegetated by BERG Mt Martha at a Sunday working-bee.

### Training, Workshops, Forums

**Marine & Coastal Act Consultation** – forum at Mornington Yacht Club on 15<sup>th</sup> Sept. Attended by 4 BERG Mt Martha members.

Peninsula Habitat Management course – is only run every second year and 2016 was the 'off' year. It is not cheap ie \$700 for non-commercial applicants and, we just discovered, \$500/program for Seniors and guess what age group a good number of us fall in! So, our funds will go much further and for the 2017 course, under way at present, we have 3 members participating for the price of 2! However, we would be thrilled if we could enlist some younger members in future programs.

**Friends Network Day** run by the Shire – 6 BERG MM volunteers attended the all-day presentations from members of the Bunurong Land Council. Sessions included:

- i) the land and sea resources of Bunurong country.
- ii) middens, the threats to their future existence, both natural eg coastal erosion at Williams Beach, Mt Eliza, and man-made eg ever-increasing development. Also, demonstration of protection processes instigated and undertaken by the Mt Eliza Group with the help of the local scouts.
- iii) Bunurong history and mythology.
- iv) demonstration of basket making, weaving, shelling etc. (The two sisters who ran this session are direct descendants of the one of the 6 Bunurong women who were kidnapped from near Pt Nepean in 1830, sold to sealers and ended up on some of the southern coastal islands.)
- v) Bunurong stone and wood culture ie spears, tools etc.



### Biodiversity Planning and Monitoring Forum

Attended by 2 BERG Mt Martha volunteers at the Arthur Rylah Institute. The aim was to engage relevant industry members and allied groups eg Friends groups, Landcare etc and determine the direction of the new body - Victorian Biodiversity Managers' Network and to introduce monitoring methods eg Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation, data gathering techniques, and any relevant software. There were a series of presentations, followed by a workshop and discussion panel in the afternoon.

The forum was organized because of a perceived need for consistency and standardization of bushland management methods and monitoring in the expanding industry.

## Community Links

**Mornington Peninsula Shire Nursery team** – the nursery staff, Kate, Tracy, Tara and Tanzin are always cheerful, efficient and most obliging. They propagate and supply us with all our indigenous tubestock and recently, trays of cells that are cheaper, quicker and easier to plant. Their stock is always of a high quality and whenever possible they prepare and fill our orders on time.

**The Briars' ranger team** – We share a common and precious bio-link with our close neighbours across the highway and we benefit from our shared interests and their expert knowledge and experience. We enjoy a cooperative and easy relationship with all members of the team (Jonathon, Sharon, Sue and Tristan, and now headed by a new manager, Rebecca Levy. BERG MM looks forward to an on-going and increased involvement in the future.

**Mt Martha Yacht Club and Mt Martha Lifesaving Club** have a good relationship with BERG MM and we contribute to each other's activities whenever possible. We have a common interest in the preservation and improvement of the foreshore and its environment. Again, this year both clubs shared the task of the coordination and registration of Clean Up Australia Day, fulfilling BERG MM's aim of spreading the load and encouraging and enlisting more involvement by the Mt Martha community.

The **Balcombe Moorooduc Landcare Group and Mt Martha Foreshore Advisory Group** have BERG MM members on their committees, as we share a common catchment and a common interest in its environmental health and management.

**Local Schools** – their involvement is mutually beneficial, with BERG MM contributing to their environmental and sustainability programs and the schools helping us with our on-ground projects.

Jenny Selby has done a marvelous job in extending the schools program, but thanks are also due to other BERG MM volunteers for the extra hours they have put in above and beyond the call of duty ie the normal working bees.

## Issues

**Sedimentation of the estuary** – The Sedimentation Group (SAG) has been especially proactive in tackling the sedimentation that threatens the ecological integrity of the estuary. It has been a long-time concern of BERG Mt Martha's and now, over the last 12- 18months, the collaboration and cooperation with the Shire are resulting in a number of on-ground works that hopefully, will contribute to addressing the problem.

**Dogs off-lead** – This on-going problem is yet to be satisfactorily resolved.

## Thanks

**Mornington Peninsula Shire's Natural Systems Team** is always supportive, not just financially, but through their ready guidance, advice and unreserved assistance with all our projects. **Simon Thorning**, as head of the team, always responds to our cries for help and gets results, even when it is way out of his area; **Matt Stahmer** and his 'support crew', **Hannah Brown and Gerard Cook** manage us with great humour and tolerance. We appreciate their advice, guidance and the effort and time they give to BERG MM. Their grant assistance, on-site assessment, monitoring and reporting, guidance, supply of working-bee supervisors and their Bushland Management Program, their contribution is very much appreciated and recognised by BERG MM.

**Naturelinks** as our contractor, plays a valuable role in the management of the Reserves. Not only their on-ground service, but also their input in determining priorities, management strategies and grant applications, is a great help to us. We also appreciate and have enjoyed the input, assistance and expertise in their supervisory capacity at

2016/17 working-bees - **Sally Mcleod** as Team Leader, **Vyv Styrdler** as leader of on-ground works, **Danielle Suffern**, Friends Group coordinator and **Pia Spreen, Tamara Keyte, Tess Graham and Richie Ball**, as working-bee supervisors. They are always most helpful and cooperative with all our activities and have an in-depth knowledge of the Reserves.

**Broad Spectrum** is contracted by the Mornington Peninsula Shire to carry out fire control works in and around the Reserve. As well as weed control, they provide a mulching and weed removal service. **Dan Idczak** and his team have also been most obliging with supplying us with mulch for our revegetation works.

**Progress Signs** have always supported and advised us, and creatively and clearly designed and printed our interpretive signs. **Hayley Robinson** is our main contact and happily and skillfully helps and produces any signage we require.

**Paul Hodgson** is Melbourne Water's grant contact and assessor for BERG MM. He is approachable and always happy to help or give advice, taking on a greater share of the management and coordination of Melb Water involvement/matters in the creek, has made life easier for all involved. Melb Water has become an indispensable partner in the rehabilitation of the Balcombe Creek and its environs. It contributes mainly through grants, but provides support for some extra contractor works.

**Phillip Wierzbowski** is the Coastcare coordinator for our region. We have been lucky to receive grants relatively regularly for the restoration of our narrow and vulnerable strip of foreshore and he has been always ready and willing to help us where and whenever he can.

#### **Sunshine Reserve Conservation & Fireguard Group**

We enjoy a close and cooperative relationship with this hard working and dedicated group of Mt Martha volunteers. Although their reserve offers a different local environment and ecology, we share a common interest in a very vulnerable coastline, as well as a number of other shared local environmental concerns. We jointly run the annual Weedbuster activity outside the local IGA.

**Bev Colomb**, as our long-standing local councilor and now as mayor, has always been supportive, prepared to listen, and offer willing assistance wherever possible. We welcome Sam Hearn and Rosie Clark, as relatively new ward councilors, to the ward. Graham and I enjoyed introducing them, through a guided walk, to the Balcombe Estuary Reserves and to BERG Mt Martha, in the early days of their appointment. We appreciate their interest in BERG Mt Martha and consider ourselves lucky to have involved and considerate local members.

**David Morris**, the State Member for Mornington, is always interested in our activities and issues, and if able, is happy to help and support us. He takes a keen interest in BERG MM and very kindly contributes to the printing of our information material etc.

Of course, special thanks to all the **BERG MM members and supporters**. We couldn't do a quarter of what we do without their support, diverse expertise and enthusiastic involvement.

And many thanks to Trish Reilly and the Catering Team. The delicious and bountiful morning-teas are the highlight of our Sunday working-bees and other designated events.

Liz Barraclough OAM

**Balcombe Estuary Reserves Group Mt Martha Inc**  
ABN 50 224 628 623

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

**for**

**Year Ended 30 June 2017**

**Balcombe Estuary Reserves Group Mt Martha Inc.**  
 ABN:50 224 628 623  
**STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS**  
 for the period to 1st July 2016 to 30th June 2017

	2017	2016
<b>Cash at bank &amp; on hand at start of year</b>	96,645.02	63,745.46
<b>Plus receipts for year</b>		
Bank Interest	1036.42	902.12
Donations	9,033.75	8,994.50
Trader donations	1,400	1,700.00
Fundraising	-	1,044.16
Memberships	4,715.00	3,970.00
Project Income - On Ground Donations	72,650.00	-
Project Income - Grants	111,064.25	84,385.15
BERG History sales	100	2,520.00
<b>Total Receipts for the year</b>	<u>199,999.42</u>	<u>103,515.93</u>
	296,644.44	167,261.39
<b>Less payments for year</b>		
Donation expenditure	6,215.67	11,173.80
Bank Fees & Charges	66.82	1.46
Project expenditure	66,098.10	58,866.11
BERG history expenses	-	575.00
<b>Total payments for the year</b>	<u>72,380.59</u>	<u>70,616.37</u>
<b>Cash at bank &amp; on hand at end of year</b>	<u>224,263.85</u>	<u>96,645.02</u>

<b>BERG Treasurer's Report - as at 30 June 2017</b>				
<b>GRANTS &amp; On Ground Projects BALANCE</b>				
<b>Title [Report by date]</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Grant / On Ground Project (\$) - PTD</b>		<b>Remaining (\$)</b>
1. Philanthropy Project - MATCHING DONOR & OTHER ON GROUND		\$72,650.00	-\$293.50	<b>\$72,356.50</b>
2. Helen Macpherson Smith Trust (Wpac Acc) [ 1 Jan 2017 to 31 Dec 2017]	HMST	\$30,000.00	\$0.00	<b>\$30,000.00</b>
3. Melbourne Water Grant 2017 (MW17S) SUPPORT [Feb 2017 to 30 May 2018]	MW17S	\$1,100.00	-\$729.50	<b>\$370.50</b>
4. Melbourne Water Grant 2017 (MW17H) HOPETOUN CREEK [Feb 2017 to 30 May 2018]	MW17H	\$18,238.00	-\$395.85	<b>\$17,842.15</b>
5. Melbourne Water Grant 2017 (MW17B) BALCOMBE CREEK [Feb 2017 to 30 May 2018]	MW17B	\$18,367.55	\$0.00	<b>\$18,367.55</b>
6. MOU / MPS - to June 2017	weeding	\$3,300.00	-\$2,044.90	<b>\$1,255.10</b>
7. PPWCMA16/17 [1 Feb 2017 to Nov 2017]	PPWCMA17	\$16,208.00	-\$2,030.60	<b>\$14,177.40</b>
8a. Coastcare Victoria Community Grant [July 2016 to 31 Dec 2017] <i>*adjusted funding allocation June 17</i>	CVCG16	\$6,313.00	-\$4,778.75	<b>\$1,534.25</b>
8b. Coastcare Victoria Community Grant [July 2017 to 31 Dec 2018]	CVCG17	\$7,490.70	\$0.00	<b>\$7,490.70</b>
9. Port Phillip Bay Fund (PPBF 2017) Grant [Aug 17 to June 2018]	PPBF	\$9,960.00	\$0.00	<b>\$9,960.00</b>
10. Family Day 2018 (MPSC EnvDay Grant 2015 - ED15 and MPS Grant 2017)	FD18	\$5,610.00	-\$107.44	<b>\$5,502.56</b>
<b>PPWCMA15 (Port Phillip Water Catchment Mgt Auth)</b> <b>[15 Dec 2015 to 30 Oct 2016]</b>	Pen Cons'n Habitat Manage Course	<b>\$14,988.20</b>	<b>-\$14,988.20</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Sally Gately Memorial Fund Grant</b> <b>[July 2016 - 31 Dec 2017]</b>	<b>SOMF16</b>	<b>\$15,000.00</b>	<b>-\$15,001.15</b>	<b>-\$1.15</b>
<b>Melbourne Water Grant 2016</b> <b>[Feb 2016 to 30 May 2017]</b>	<b>MW16</b>	<b>\$37,819.65</b>	<b>-\$37,817.15</b>	<b>\$2.50</b>
<b>Balance unspent from On Ground Projects &amp; Grants</b>		<b>\$257,045.10</b>	<b>-\$78,187.04</b>	<b>\$178,858.06</b>
Accumulated Funds from Membership Fees & Other Income (since inception)				\$45,405.79
				<b>\$ 224,263.85</b>

**Balcombe Estuary Reserves Group Mt Martha Inc.**  
 ABN:50 224 628 623  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
 for the period to 1st July 2016 to 30th June 2017

	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Closing cash on hand	224,263.85	96,645.02
<b>Total</b>	224,263.85	96,645.02
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Less</b>		
Project Grants and On Ground Donations Unspent	178,858.06	63,208.69
	178,858.06	63,208.69
Net Assets	45,405.79	33,436.33
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>		
	45,405.79	33,436.33
Represented by		
Bendigo - FTD	0.00	32,085.42
Westpac Operating Account	4865.47	50,841.43
Bendigo Holding Account	100,541.31	0.00
Bendigo Donations Account	97,429.78	13,668.17
Bendigo Operating Account	21,377.29	0.00
Cash	50.00	50.00
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>224,263.85</b>	<b>966,645.02</b>
Less liabilities - income received in advance for project grants unspent	-178,858.06	-63,208.69
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>45,405.79</b>	<b>33,436.33</b>

**BALCOMBE ESTUARY RESERVES GROUP MT MARTHA INC.**

**Independent examiners report to the members.**

This report on the financial report for the year ended 30 June 2017

**Respective responsibilities of the members and the examiner**

The Members are responsible for the preparation of the financial report. It is my responsibility to issue this report on the financial report in accordance with the terms of my appointment as an independent examiner.

**Basis of this report**

My examination includes a review of the accounting records that are kept, and a comparison of those records with the financial report. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial report and seeking explanations from the members concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a statutory audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion, or a review opinion, on the financial report.

**Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention

- 1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
  - to keep proper accounting records; and
  - to prepare a financial report, which accords with the accounting records of Balcombe Estuary Reserves Group Mt Martha Inc.. has not been complied with; or
- 2) To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial report to be reached.

(Signed)



Geoffrey Kidd - CPA  
P R Jennings & Co  
230 Main Street, Mornington  
(03) 5975 5183

**BALCOMBE ESTUARY RESERVES GROUP MT MARTHA  
INC.**

ABN 50 224 628 623

**STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

**Schedule 1, Regulation 15, Form 1**

*Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*

Sections 94 (2)(b), 97 (2)(b) and 100 (2)(b)

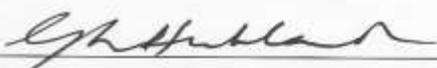
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**The 2016/17 Annual statements give a true and fair view of financial performance  
and position of the BERG Mt Martha incorporated association**

We the President and Treasurer, being members of the **BERG Mt Martha  
incorporated** committee, certify that –

“The statements attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the financial  
performance and position of the above named association during and at the end of  
the financial year of the association ending 30 June 2017”

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the committee  
and is signed for and on behalf of the committee by:

President:  Graham Hubbard

Date: 14/10/17

Treasurer:  Julie Zammit

Date: 14/10/17