



Berg
Mt Martha

Caring for the Balcombe Estuary Reserves

THE CREEK

Volume 21 No 4, August 2017

BERG MT MARTHA: THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

President Graham Hubbard reports

Over the past five years, 2013-2017, BERG Mt Martha has worked its way successfully through a formal five-year plan. Over that time we have:

- Attacked the north bank area along Maude St, with a planned burn and philanthropic funds
- Built the Liz Barraclough Bird Hide, coordinated school murals at the Rotunda, developed the Yellow Robin and Dragonfly audio trails, and published a bird brochure and our history, *Up the Creek*
- Started a Coastal Working Bee Group, re-formed the Tuesday Group and started EstuaryWatch
- Developed and started to action plans to address sedimentation of the estuary
- Achieved a dramatic increase in the number of active volunteers
- Formed a Community Awareness Group with regular quarterly events for members and the public
- Developed a Philanthropy Group and gained access to significant funds from new sources
- Developed a Trader/Business supporter program
- Developed measurement tools to assess our on-ground progress
- Regularly trained volunteers to increase our on-ground expertise.

By the end of 2017 we will have spent time on restoring virtually every area of the reserves, as well as adjoining coastal areas. We have achieved almost everything in our formal five-year plan and much more, taking advantage of other opportunities as they arose. The on-

YOU ARE INVITED TO ANOTHER BERG MT MARTHA EVENT

A Plastic Ocean

Plastics

Poisoning our oceans, our wildlife, our food.

This award-winning feature length documentary charts a 4-year global odyssey to explore the effects of plastic in our oceans on marine ecosystems and human health - and what we might do about it.

Join the wave of change.



Sunday 13 August—5.30pm

Balcombe Grammar School

389 Nepean Hwy Mt Martha

Entry by Donation

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL

Contact: info@berg.org.au

0447 160 288



ground issues we are now addressing are different from those in 2012.

2018-2022: Re-thinking our role

In January, we will develop a new strategic plan for the next five years. I would like to think we will have all the reserves under reasonable control by the end of this period, and will have the broader Mt Martha community more closely involved.

We would appreciate your input as to what we should cover in the next five-year period. We plan to survey members on this issue.

I believe we should be re-thinking our role. What should the Reserves look like in five years? What do you want done? What should we do differently that would make us more effective? How can we communicate better with the community, so we have more members, more supporters, more active volunteers? How can we ensure that Mt Martha is a truly unique place because of the quality of the Reserves?

GREAT GRANT SUCCESSSES!

We have heard recently that BERG Mt Martha has won three substantial grants:

- **Coastcare Victoria** awarded us a Community Grant of **\$7490.70** for work along the coastal strip – a great outcome for Suzanne Ryan's meticulous work in writing the application.
- **Port Phillip Bay Fund** has awarded us **\$9,960** to work on the riparian bushland surrounding around the estuary. Liz Barraclough wrote this application.
- **The Shire** has awarded us a **Community Placemaking Grant** of **\$4,400** to support Family Day 2018 – an enormous help with activities and infrastructure. Di Lewis wrote this one.



L-R: A mess of rocks, weeds & erosion on Hopetoun Creek; Melbourne Water moves in; Transformed & planted! Photos : Liz Barraclough (left & centre), Angela Kirsner (right)

FIELD NEWS

Field Officer Liz Barraclough reports Hopetoun Creek transformed

Until mid-July, Hopetoun Creek below Balcombe Preschool contained the messy remains of a rock structure that had been intended, but had failed, to control erosion. The creek banks and bed were washing away around it, with the sediment travelling downstream into Balcombe Creek, and eventually adding to the estuary's sediment load.

Melbourne Water moved in with earth-moving machinery and used the rocks to line the creek, creating a series of ponds that provide small drops in the water level. These drops will dissipate the water's energy as it flows downstream – and the ponds look wonderful!

There was inevitably a bit of creek-side trampling from the machinery, so Balcombe Grammar, in the first of its 2017 sessions with BERG MM, planted masses of grasses on the site. [Editor's comment: Before this, within hours, it seemed, of the rock work, Liz had already 'whacked in' dozens of Melaleucas and other plants!] In no time it will be dense indigenous habitat.

Working bees on Hopetoun Creek

There has been lots of working bee activity close to this area. Along Hopetoun's west bank, the Friday Group removed Deadly Nightshade and grassy weeds round existing plants, they pruned seeding Pittosporum for Naturelinks to mulch, and Naturelinks sprayed. Then the June Sunday working-bee (plus Scouts – see next page) moved in to plant 525 grasses, shrubs and trees. This mass planting will help control erosion as well as enhancing habitat.

This year's Green Army crew also did three days here, planting over 1000 grasses and shrubs upstream of the pedestrian bridge above Uralla Rd, and weeding below Balcombe Preschool.

Working bees near Uralla Bridge

The July Sunday working bee

worked on the north bank of Balcombe Creek near Uralla Bridge. With a great turn-out, we planted and guarded 212 grasses plus some shrubs and trees, and removed much of the remaining Tradescantia and Winter Cherry on the creek margins.

The Friday group also did some weeding around Uralla Bridge and paths, and further upstream they removed more Winter Cherry plus Tobacco Plant westwards from the Geoff Kaye Bridge.

...and on Maude Street

Work continues on the large Maude St site. For three days in June, the Green Army crew worked there with Naturelinks, weeding and dragging out the chain-sawed material to the chipper. And the Friday Group removed lots of woody weed seedlings after the massive woody weeding that has already happened



July Sunday working bee, beside Uralla Bridge: Left, Bendigo Bank Director Colin Forsyth planting. Right, Debbie McMabon, Graham Hubbard & Peter McMabon admiring a small part of the morning's substantial planting. Photos Angela Kirsner

here. We are about to erect a sign to explain to passers-by our restoration aims and work on this site.

Thanks to Scouts & Bank Directors

We were delighted to have the help, at the June Sunday working bee, of twelve local Scouts plus three of their leaders – they did a marvellous job planting. And at the July Sunday working bee, we were joined by four Bendigo Bank directors (two of them members of BERG MM), there to get a taste of our work.

Thanks to our morning tea providers

As always, a big thank you! We are chronically well fed at working bees, by the wonderful roster of baking BERGers organised by Trish Reilly.

Coastal Group

In June, with seven BERGers plus Tamara (Naturelinks) and the Green Army crew, more than 190 plants went in over the morning. Then three keen BERGers planted another 40 in the afternoon and the next day.

These plants are enhancing the track to the beach in front of the shops, the roadside edge, and open areas behind beach boxes. The Green Army also worked on after lunch to put guards around plants above the north beach car park.

The July Coast Group day was cold and damp, and saw a grand turn-out of just two people! After a little weeding around the Lifesaving Club, coffee and warmth were in order.

Tuesday Bunyip Group

In June the group removed weed grasses in the indigenous garden beside Mt Martha Preschool, with Naturelinks spraying nearby. July's working bee was cancelled, as most of the group were away.

Green Army

We had seven hard-working days in June from this year's Green Army crew, working, as described in other parts of this report: on the Maude St site, along Hopetoun Creek, and with the Coastal Group.

Peninsula Conservation & Habitat Management Course

BERG MM is currently supporting three BERGers to do this excellent course and add to our on-ground expertise: Suzanne Ryan, Cate Clarke and Debbie McMahon.

New playground equipment

The Shire has asked for our input on new play equipment in the Old Campground, as they tell us the existing equipment needs too much maintenance. They also plan to replace some of the old picnic furniture next year, and we have asked that they consider replacements made from recycled sustainable materials.

CAN YOU HELP?
BALCOMBE GRAMMAR
COMMUNITY SERVICES
PROGRAM

BERG Mt Martha is again working with Balcombe Grammar Year 6s in on-ground projects, including planting, and a rubbish audit round the estuary shore.

Dates: Friday Aug 4, 18, Sept 1.
 Help would be much appreciated at any of these sessions.

Contact Jenny Selby 0432 719 288

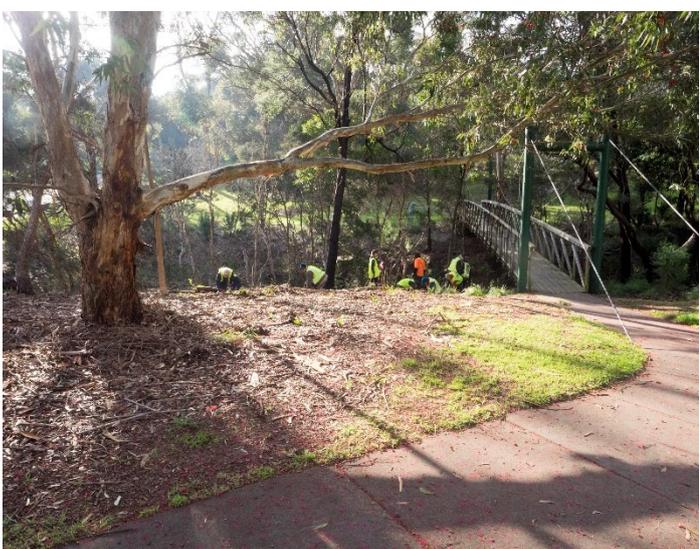
WEEDBUSTER STALL

BERG MM is again setting up a 'Weedbuster' information stall outside the IGA, together with Sunshine Reserve Conservation & Fireguard Group.

Date: Sat 2nd September, morning.
 If you know your weeds and are able to help, call Liz Barraclough on 0408 388 430 .



*In flower in the reserves: Nodding Greenhood Orchids.
 Photo Angela Kirsner*



A gorgeous winter's day for the June working bee on Hopetoun Creek, with lots of Scouts and their leaders helping the BERGers. But the highlight was definitely morning tea! Photos Angela Kirsner

INJURED WILDLIFE

With Spring close by, what do you do if you find baby wildlife injured or abandoned?

Eve Kelly, of the Australian Wildlife Protection Council, provides some tips.

Baby birds

Not all baby birds found on the ground need to be rescued. If you're unsure, seek wildlife advice before you interfere.

Feathered chicks that have left the nest may end up on the ground. Here they are normally protected and fed by the parents, who may leave them for a short time to look for food. If you see a baby bird that can't fly but is *uninjured* and *feathered*, wait an hour or so to see if its parents are about. To keep it safe, you could make a 'nest' from a small basket or ice-cream container (with holes in the bottom) and a tea towel, put the baby in it and put it in a nearby tree for the parents to find. A hungry baby will call for its parents.

If you're sure the baby is injured or abandoned, put it in a ventilated box, keep it quiet and warm, do not try to feed it or give it water, but contact a local wildlife rescue service. Unfeathered birds may have just fallen out of the nest; if you can find the nest, try placing the baby in it. But if unsure, ask for help.

Baby possums

Baby possums on the ground or awake during the day are in need of help. Many have injuries after being attacked, or have dropped from mum's pouch. They need warmth immediately, and appropriate food formula. Wrap the baby (eg in a tea-towel or t-shirt), and put it in a small box. Warm it *slowly*; put a water bottle filled with hot water *from the tap* (not boiling) beside it in the box. Don't try to give it food or water; contact a wildlife rescue or a vet.

Who to call for help

There are a number of volunteer organisations you could contact:

- **Wildlife Victoria, 1300 094 535**, will put the call out to available rescuers and/or wildlife carers Victoria-wide. Not available 24 hours, can get very busy, but their website is good for advice – <https://www.wildlifelifevictoria.org.au/>.

- **Animalia Wildlife Shelter 0435 822 699** – 24 hours, based in Frankston, attends the Peninsula up to about Brighton. Rescues and cares for all wildlife. Website provides great wildlife advice: <http://www.animaliawildlife.org.au>
- **AWARE Wildlife Rescue 0412 433 727** – 24 hours, based in Frankston, attends the Peninsula and surrounding suburbs. Website: <http://www.awarewildlife.org.au/>
- **WHOMP 0417 380 687**, based on the Peninsula. Rescues and cares for all wildlife including sea birds.
- **Crystal Ocean Wildlife Shelter 0407 787 770**. Based in Rye, attends surrounding suburbs. Possums, bats, birds, reptiles.
- **Snake Catcher Victoria, 0408 806 7062 or 5975 0481** – 24 hours. Based on the Peninsula but services all Victoria, for injured reptiles, snake relocation. Website: <http://snakecatchervictoria.com.au/>

BEACH LITTER AUDIT

Peter Dedrick reports

South Beach, Mt Martha, is one of nine Port Phillip Bay sites to be surveyed monthly for 12 months in the Baykeeper Beach Litter Audit.

The audit will document the small litter (plastic nurdles, cigarette butts etc) often missed in beach clean-ups, to provide a picture of where the rubbish entering the Bay ends up. Most plastics float in the upper water column and their destination depends on the winds and tides.

BERGers Peter and Fran Dedrick met with Baykeeper Neil Blake at



Baykeeper Neil Blake (centre) teaching the audit methodology
Photo Fran Dedrick

Rye to learn how to do the audit. We document what we find in three 'quadrats' (1m squares) along each of three 'transects' (straight lines from the top of the beach to high tide mark). While collecting rubbish is not the aim, we pick up any we find along the way. It takes about an hour, but we need to add more time to explain to inquisitive passers-by what we are doing and why.

If you would like to know more, or join us, contact Peter or Fran at fdedrick@bigpond.net.au

About the Baykeeper

Neil Blake OAM, founding director of the Port Phillip EcoCentre, has worked for over 30 years to protect the Bay. His Baykeeper program is affiliated with Waterkeeper Alliance, a global network of non-government advocates for an identified river, lake, bay, or sound.

Waterkeepers are recognised as the voice for their particular body of water, listening to and identifying problems and helping to find solutions. As Port Phillip Baykeeper, Neil works with government, schools, researchers, business and community to protect the bay. See <https://www.bay-keeper.com/>.

FOSSIL BEACH

A NEW LOOK AT AN ANCIENT SITE

Fossil Beach is one of Mt Martha's quiet treasures. Located almost opposite the Dava Hotel, it has had many visitors over some 150 years – but how many are aware of its historical and scientific significance?

In 2011 the Shire, which manages the site, commissioned the *Fossil Beach Cement Works Heritage Study* (available on line). It's a fascinating report that traces the site's history in some detail and makes a number of recommendations to conserve and manage it.

White history is evident in the stone ruins of the Patent Septaria Cement

Company works, set up in 1861 to make cement from the limestone septaria nodules found at the cove. It seems, however, that the company failed to do its homework and it closed after only three years. The ruins are the only surviving evidence of attempts to manufacture cement in 19th century Victoria – indeed, the next oldest such remains are from the mid 20th century.

The cove's ancient cliffs show geology from the Tertiary Age, while the blue clay at sea level, known as 'Balcombian clay', is teeming with marine fossils from the Miocene period – about 15 million years old. More than 1000 different fossil species have been found here.

On the headlands are Aboriginal shell middens. More recently, the site has been used for scout and guide camps, natural heritage education, and simply picnics.

Making it happen

The report recommends a staged approach to conserve and manage Fossil Beach, and local resident Ian Stevenson has worked with the Shire to make this happen. So far, the old toilet block has been removed, and planning is underway for signage, vegetation management, surfacing and better access.

Ian, who has considerable experience in both local government and non-government environmental programs, is setting up a **Fossil Beach Interest Group** to support the work and gain community input. It is open to anyone with an interest in Fossil Beach.

To join or find out more, email Sue Milton susanmilton@bigpond.com or Ian Stevenson stevensonian2014@gmail.com.

DIARY DATE

NOTICE OF MEETING AND CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

**2017 BERG MT MARTHA
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY 28TH OCTOBER
Mt Martha House (Mtg Rm 5)
Registration 9.15am, meeting 9.30 sharp**

**Our Scintillating Speaker is
Dr Teresa Lebel**



Senior Mycologist,
National Herbarium of
Victoria
**What are fungi? Where do they fit in our ecosystems?
How do they interact with other organisms?
Come and learn about these weird and wonderful organisms, how we can encourage their growth,**

and the good things they do for their ecological community.

Meeting Agenda

- Welcome and apologies
- Minutes of 2016 AGM
- Committee reports:
President, Graham Hubbard
Treasurer, Julie Zammit
Field Officer, Liz



- Election:
President, Vice-President,
Treasurer, Secretary, & up to 10 ordinary committee members.
- Appointment of Auditor

Nominations for office bearers & committee
For nomination forms call 0447 160 208 or go to www.berg.org.au, under 'Resources'. Nominations in writing, signed by two BERG Mt Martha members & accompanied by the candidate's written consent, must be with the Secretary by Friday 20th October.

PENGUIN AHOY!

Marg Mackie reports

Just after 7am on Wednesday June 21st, and it was still fairly dark at Mornington's 'Fishies' Beach.

At the water's edge, a length of sturdy rope caught my eye. I pulled on it. Entangled in it was a black 'blob' which let out a shrill cry.

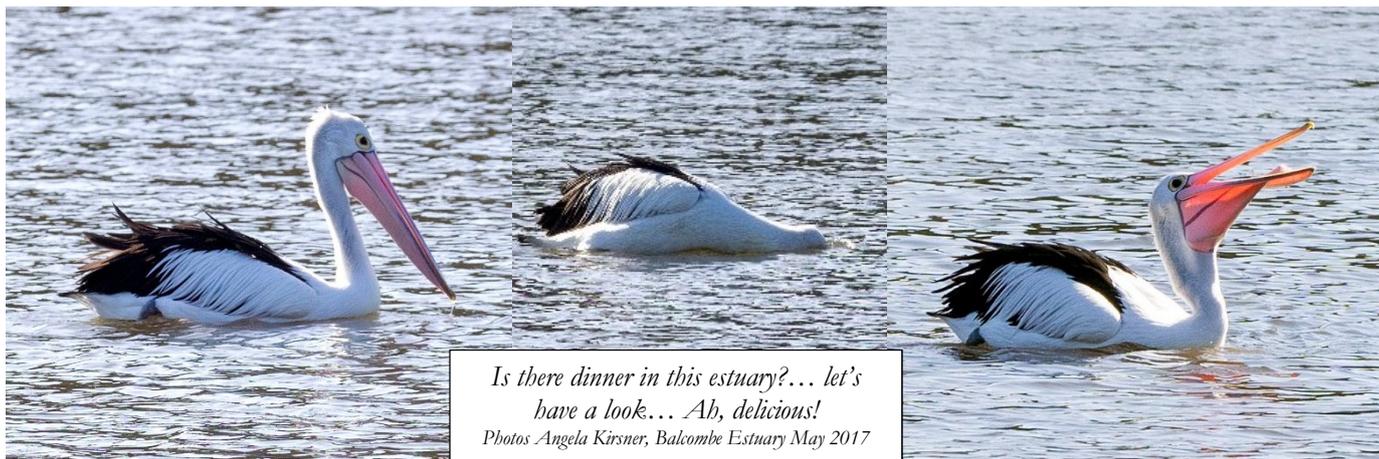
It turned out to be a very angry and vocal penguin.

I gathered up the rope and a mass of tangled mesh which bound the penguin, wrapped him firmly in my coat, and made my way up the beach.

Fellow beach walkers Sally and Mariese approached, and together we took the penguin to Mariese's house. There, we carefully cut the mesh, rope and seaweed from the bird's body and legs. The little fellow seemed in good condition, fat and well fed, so back we went to the beach to release him. But no, he wasn't going anywhere, certainly not back to that water!

To the vet, little penguin, and from there to a wildlife shelter. We learnt that he had been released the next day. A wonderful experience for us, perhaps not for him.

BERG Mt Martha welcomes back some old members returning after a long absence:
Sharon Rogers & family;
Diana Johns & Craig Lee



Is there dinner in this estuary?... let's have a look... Ab, delicious!
Photos Angela Kirner, Balcombe Estuary May 2017

THREATS FROM PLANNING CHANGES

Dianne Lewis reports

Several BERGers attended a packed meeting at Hastings Community Hub on 22nd June to hear Professor Michael Buxton, planning and environment specialist.

Prof Buxton outlined the threats to the amenity, landscape and neighbourhood character, heritage and green wedge of the Mornington Peninsula from recently gazetted Victorian State Government VC110 and VicSmart planning changes.

The new legislation significantly reduces protection on the Peninsula from excessive development in our

coastal towns and the 'green wedge' by allowing 'as of right' 3-storey, multi-unit buildings, 10-day turn-around planning permits (approved by the Shire) with no community notice or right of appeal, and removing the limit on the number of dwellings on a lot.

The meeting was hosted by Peninsula Speaks Inc and Cr David Gill. A plan of action will be developed with the support of Mornington Peninsula Shire Council.

Watch the local press for information about what you can do about to help. BERG MM will forward relevant information to members.

BERG MM Working Bees	Other BERG MM Activities	Other Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sunday working bee: monthly, 2nd Sunday, between 9am & 12noon. Details emailed a few days ahead, or call Liz Barraclough 0408 388 430. ❖ Tuesday working bee: monthly, 2nd Tuesday between 9am & 12 noon, meet at end of Latrobe Dve. Call Jenny Selby 0432 719 288. ❖ Coast Group: monthly, 3rd Wednesday, between 9am & 12 noon, meet in car park by the Yacht Club. Call Suzanne Ryan 0418 387 604, or, for August, Barb Thraves 0417 446 025. ❖ Friday working bee: weekly between 9.30am & 12 noon. Call Sue Betheras 0408 808 201. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Waterwatch testing: monthly, 4th Sunday 9.15am, starting at Augusta St Bridge. Call John Inchley 5974 1095. ❖ BERG Mt Martha Committee meets monthly at Mt Martha House, 9.00am, usually the 2nd Saturday. Next meetings 12th August & 9th September. All members welcome. ❖ BERG Mt Martha AGM Saturday 28th October 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ BirdLife Mornington Peninsula bird-watching 2nd Wednesday and 3rd Sunday. Enquiries to Max Burrows 9789 0224, mornington@birdlife.org.au or www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlife-mornington-peninsula. ❖ SPIFFA 1st Monday, 7.30 pm, at Parks Vic, Hinton St, Rosebud. Enquiries 5988 6529, or www.spiffa.org. ❖ Sunshine Reserve working bee 9.30am, last Thursday of month. Call Pia Spreen, 5974 1096
BERG MT MARTHA COMMITTEE PRESIDENT GRAHAM HUBBARD • VICE PRESIDENT PETER MCMAHON • SECRETARY DIANNE LEWIS • TREASURER JULIE ZAMMIT • FIELD OFFICER LIZ BARRACLOUGH • NEWSLETTER ANGELA KIRSNER • COMMUNITY AWARENESS BARBARA THRIVES • PHILANTHROPY BRONWYN STREET • WATERWATCH JOHN INCHLEY • FORESHORE GROUP SUZANNE RYAN • ASSISTANT TREASURER SUE MILTON		
Balcombe Estuary Reserves Group Mt Martha Inc. No. A0034645Y ABN 50 224 628 623 Mail: PO Box 433 Mt Martha 3934 Email: info@berg.org.au Mob: 0447 160 288 Web: www.berg.org.au		

THE CREEK

Print Post Approved pp100003761

If undelivered, please return to:

BERG Mt Martha, PO Box 433

Mount Martha 3934

SURFACE
MAIL

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA