

Walking track plan for the Prom

Our April newsletter included a summary of the Committee's discussion with park managers about developing a new walking track strategy for the Prom. The managers wanted to know the Committee's reactions to a broad range of possible ideas for upgrading the network of tracks.

We have since received feedback from some members who were disappointed we didn't push back harder against those ideas that would introduce a much higher degree of commercialisation to the Prom.

The park managers explained to us before the meeting that they had pulled these ideas

from existing walking experiences adopted elsewhere in Australia and overseas, and that they had no preference for any one of the ideas raised, except those already flagged under the \$23million Prom Revitalisation Project (which are not controversial).

We gave the Committee's position on each of the ideas raised, and followed up a few days later in writing.

We have included a copy of our written follow up in this newsletter for your information. See pages 10–13.

We would love to hear from you if you have any feedback on the Committee's position.

Friends of the Prom

NEWS#223

June 2021

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*Left: Track to Fairy Cove
(Photo: Lynne Muir)*

Annual General Meeting

The AGM brings us together to review what happened at the Prom last year and to see what is in store for next year. We would love to see a strong turn-out of members and friends.

This year we are continuing the tradition (briefly interrupted in 2020 by Covid19) of inviting guest speakers with interesting stories to tell. Ranger Jim Whelan will give us a quick overview of the current research projects at the Prom that are restoring Coastal Grassy Woodland on the Yanakie Isthmus. He will be joined by the recipient of our 2020 research study grant, Cassandra Kalafatakis, who will present the findings of her research project on factors affecting the natural regeneration of Coast Banksia on the Isthmus.

The AGM is also your opportunity to appoint committee members and office bearers to set the direction and guide *Friends of the Prom* through the next 12 months. If you have harboured an ambition to be more involved with *Friends of the Prom*, or have ideas about the direction it should take, we would welcome your nomination for a Committee position.

The AGM will be held in the Tidal River Information Centre's Theatrette on Sunday 4th July 2021 starting at 10:00am and finishing by about 1:00pm. Parks Vic will put on lunch.

Please register on ParkConnect for catering and Covid19 purposes, or contact the Secretary on info@friendsoftheprom.org.au .

Below: Cassie working on her research project in 2020 (Photo: C. Kalafatakis)



AGM – SAVE THE DATE

Date: Sunday 4 July 2021

Time: 10:00am to about 1:00pm

Meet: Tidal River Information Centre, Theatrette

Lunch: Provided by Parks Victoria

RSVP: Please register on ParkConnect or contact the Secretary on info@friendsoftheprom.org.au

Tree planting on the isthmus 22 May

On Saturday 22 May, 42 volunteers met at the former airstrip on the Yanakie Isthmus to help restore a Swamp Gum woodland.

About 120 years ago, this area supported healthy woodland where koalas were plentiful. The land was leased to settlers who were required to clear the trees under the terms of their lease and develop grazing land. By 1913, only the white skeletons of ringbarked trees remained and the koala inhabitants just a distant memory.

Friends of the Prom is now helping *Parks Victoria* restore this degraded area by planting Swamp Gums. Since May 2018, we have planted 480 trees. This number may not seem all that impressive in the scheme of things, but it represents a huge effort when you realise that each young seedling must be protected by a large and expensive steel tree-guard if it is to survive. The tree

guards have to be strong enough to withstand attention from the abundant grazing animals in that area — kangaroos, deer, wallabies, wombats and rabbits.

The weather gods smiled upon us on the Saturday and conditions were just superb. Peter Wilson took a large team to plant 104 trees and install guards over part of the former airstrip; Bill Hansen took a second smaller team to check previous plantings. They replaced about 40 trees that had not survived, as well as doing some rescue weeding; Charlie Ablitt took a third team to clear scrub that had encroached on our previous plantings.

This work completes everything we had to do under our 2019 Landcare grant. But we are not finished with the koalas just yet. We recently applied for a third grant, this time through the Victorian Government's Biodiversity On-ground Action program. The outcome will be known in June — keep your fingers crossed!

Below: Frosty morning at the former airstrip – note the evidence of abundant wildlife. (Photo: James Wilkins)







This and previous page: Photos of the tree planting on 22nd May by Mark Cant, James Wilkins, Sigrid Meier and Rosemary Stayner



Events coming up

THE WEEKEND OF 3RD AND 4TH JULY is an important weekend for us — a tree planting activity on Saturday and our Annual General Meeting on Sunday. *Parks Victoria* has asked volunteers coming down for the weekend to camp at Tidal River (free of charge) which is very convenient for both activities.

TREE PLANTING

On Saturday 3rd July we get to move some of our plant stock out of the Tidal River nursery and into the ground around the Tidal River campsite. Details will be emailed out to you separately.

The nursery

The group continues to meet at Tidal River every second Thursday rain, hail or shine. This is a quiet time of year at the nursery but there is always an undercurrent of activity. They have been:

- ✦ Removing tree-guards, weeding and replacing dead seedlings for previous plantings in the camp ground;
- ✦ Propagating new batches of Swamp Gums and Manna Gums for the next stage of our project to restore koala habitat on the Yanakie Isthmus;
- ✦ Collecting *Correa* and *Pomaderris* cuttings and propagating seedlings for Tidal River;

- ✦ Maintaining nursery tools and equipment;
- ✦ Maintaining the display garden outside the Tidal River café; and
- ✦ Removing moss from the older tube stock.

The group is looking forward to some visits by school children to the nursery in the coming months. This is part of the education program run by *Parks Vic* at Tidal River.

Below: Swamp Gum seedlings in the nursery



MEMBERSHIP FEE RENEWAL

Memberships expire on 30 June each year, so please consider renewing your membership for 2020/21. Your membership fees keep us going – without them we cease to exist. They cover our basic running costs and most importantly our public liability insurance.

To renew your membership, please contact our Acting Treasurer Bert Fabel at membership@friendsoftheprom.org.au

You can pay via Direct Deposit to our Westpac account:

Account Name: Friends of the Prom Inc.

BSB: 033 152

Account Number: 188795

Single: \$15, Couple: \$20, Family: \$25

Important: Please provide your full name so we can identify you from the bank statement.

EVENTS FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2021

Weekend activities continue for the rest of 2021, and don't forget to pre-register online in *ParkConnect* for any activity you want to take part in.

SATURDAY 3 JULY

Tree planting at Tidal River

SUNDAY 4 JULY

AGM at Tidal River

SUNDAY 1 AUGUST

National tree planting day at Tidal River - public event.

SATURDAY 25 SEPTEMBER

Tree planting and maintaining plantings at Tidal River and Stockyard Cemetery

FRIDAY 5 TO SUNDAY 7 NOVEMBER

3-day sea spurge removal at Picnic Bay

We will send out details of these activities before the above dates.

You will need to register with *ParkConnect*. See next column. ➔

WEEKDAY ACTIVITIES CONTINUE IN 2021

♻️ Tidal River nursery – every second Thursday (Register on *ParkConnect* or contact Mary Walker).

♻️ Grazer monitoring project
Our June 1 was postponed due to the Covid19 lockdown

- next visit to be advised -
Register on *ParkConnect* or contact Bill Hansen.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

We urge all our volunteers to get themselves a Working With Children Check as soon as you can. Parks Victoria requires all volunteers working in its parks to have one from 1st July 2021. **The application process is straight-forward if you follow Parks Victoria's instructions – see on following pages 8-9.**

The time has not yet come when you will be turned away without one, but please get one anyway. We need you to keep volunteering with us!

CONTACTS

Media Enquiries

Bill Hansen (President)
0417 341 504
president@friendsoftheprom.org.au

Membership & General Enquiries

Karin Ruff (Secretary)
info@friendsoftheprom.org.au

Nursery Enquiries

Mary Walker
0408 530 638

Acting Treasurer

Bert Fabel
membership@friendsoftheprom.org.au

How to apply for a Volunteer Working with Children Check

workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au

For volunteers

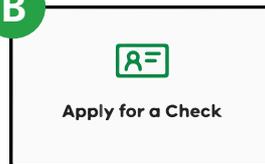
1 Apply online to get your free Working with Children Check

A



Visit the Working with Children website:
workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au

B



Click 'Apply for a Check'

C



Select 'Apply from Victoria'

D

Fill in the online application form:

1. Verify your identity

You will need to prove your identity as the first step in your WWCC application. You can save time by doing this online, or take your proof of identity documents to the Post Office for verification in person.

2. Application type

Have you applied for a Victorian Working with Children Check before?

Yes No

What kind of check do you need?

Employee Volunteer

3. Your details

4. Contact details

5. Organisation details

! It is extremely important to use the address and phone number below for organisation details:

Parks Victoria

Level 10, 535 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Phone: 13 1963

Occupational fields = 44, 46, 48, 50, 52

Occupational type = Volunteer

6. Review

7. Consent and declaration

2 Get your email verification and barcode



Check your email for verification of your application and a barcode from Working with Children Victoria.

Print out your barcode or save a digital copy onto your phone.

3

Go to an Australia Post branch

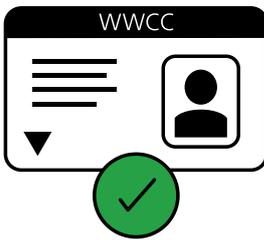


Visit an Australia Post branch with your identification and the email barcode. The barcode is your confirmation of the WWCC application.

You do not have to pay for a Volunteer Working with Children Check — they are free. You will also be asked to take a photo at the Post Office, which is also free. It will form part of your WWCC card.

4

Your application outcome



You and Parks Victoria should receive notification about your WWCC within 3-12 weeks of your application. If your application is successful, you will receive a WWCC card sent to your home address. Please keep it in a safe place.

If you receive a notification that your application has not been successful, or you are not sure what the response means, please get in touch with your Parks Victoria contact or the Statewide Volunteer Team at volunteer@parks.vic.gov.au

5

Upload your WWCC details onto ParkConnect



After receiving your WWCC card in the mail, you will need to upload the details and a photo of the card onto ParkConnect. It is important that the Parks Victoria Volunteer team have a record of your WWCC information. Volunteers who have not uploaded their WWCC by 31 December 2020 will no longer be able to participate in volunteer activities with Parks Victoria.

1. Visit parkconnect.vic.gov.au/volunteer
2. Register or sign in to your existing volunteer account
3. Navigate to the 'Accreditation skills' tab in your volunteer profile
4. Select 'Add'
5. Enter your WWCC details
6. Select 'Browse' to upload an image of your WWCC card
7. Click 'Submit' to confirm your details

Parks Victoria will only collect personal information that is necessary for it to perform its functions and activities.

The primary purpose of collecting personal information is to enable Parks Victoria to carry out its functions and activities. Personal information will be used for that purpose, and in other cases where consent has been given.

For more information on our privacy policy, please visit parks.vic.gov.au/privacy

Thank you for helping us to ensure child safety
at Parks Victoria.

Walking track plan for the Prom FOTP Committee comments

Our Committee met via Zoom of Monday 12 April to consider the points raised in the discussion between Parks Vic senior managers and five Friends of the Prom members. This document sets out the Committee's position on the matters raised at the meeting.

1 General comments

1.1 Maintain the low-impact nature of activities at the Prom.

Overnight hiking at the Prom should remain an adventure experience for walkers – where the visitor is rewarded for self-reliance and physical effort rather than how much they can afford to pay.

Creating a two-tier class of visitors at remote outstations is to be avoided – those who reach a destination using physical effort and their own resourcefulness should not have their experience diminished by the presence of luxury tour facilities with their paying guests. Maintaining a low impact regime of experiences at the Prom does go against the trend for other places and States e.g. Bay of Fires walk in Tasmania, where walking “experiences” run by commercial outfits are fully-catered with wilderness lodge accommodation. There is no reason why these practices need be imported to the Prom. In fact the Prom could have its own very attractive and marketable point of difference by remaining a low-impact destination.

The Prom is a training ground for over-night walkers – the reward-for-effort for Prom hikers in terms of scenery is huge, the distances are modest and it is hard to get lost because of the Prom's confined nature. An overnight hike at the Prom teaches young people to be resourceful and resilient and leaves an indelible impression on their young minds. We are aware of instances where secondary educational programs established to help difficult students include overnight hikes at the Prom. These are credited with turning kids' lives around.

Most of our members get involved in Friends of the Prom later in life because of their early positive experiences of being let loose at the Prom as youngsters. They place a high value on that low-impact characteristic of the Prom.

1.2 Update the Prom Management Plan

The current Prom management plan is nearly 20 years old and must form the basis for developing any new walking track plan.

The current management plan is in urgent need of updating to take into account the Prom Sanctuary concept given the proposal to build a fence across the Isthmus at the Park boundary as part of the Prom Revitalisation Plan.

It is undesirable to be developing a long-term walking track plan in advance of updating the management plan.

1.3 Spread of Phytophthora Cinnamomi

This plant disease is common in the Park with devastating consequences to the affected vegetation. We are concerned that new walking tracks into unaffected areas of the Prom will spread the disease further. We would like to see a walker disinfection regime introduced as part of any walking track plan at the Prom.

1.4 Increased resourcing

We note that Parks staff are already under-resourced with the current level of visitor numbers. Increased numbers of walkers would require additional Parks Vic resources to service campsites, enforce regulations etc. Therefore adequate recurrent resourcing needs to be recognised in a new walking track plan.

A number of existing tracks are badly eroded and not well maintained. We support the increased use of boardwalks where tracks traverse swampy and sandy terrain, and improved, regular track maintenance.

2 Specific concepts proposed by Parks Vic

2.1 Upgrading and connecting existing walking trails

- The northern circuit walk - making it easier to follow with better signage and upgrading some sections
- all-ability access tracks, short & medium walks - 2 flat tracks that could be upgraded to all-ability tracks are on the Yanakie Isthmus: the Cotters Beach track and the Wildlife Viewing track. The latter could include loops of varying lengths and could connect to the Vereker Fire Trail.
- The northern Prom is to remain a wilderness area for more adventurous walking, with perhaps some added signage and track maintenance. We noted that the northern Prom is an area for those with competent navigational skills and people without should be strongly deterred from attempting the walk

We support the above proposals in principle.

Some of us opposed the re-routing of the end of the Sealers Cove track to avoid the creek/water crossing as they considered it part of the challenge of this walk – adding an unpredictable element of adventure. Others were happy to do without this challenge and would support the re-routing.

We support the replacing and adding of new interpretive signs. We would welcome a greater acknowledgement of indigenous cultural history.

From a European historical perspective, there are early walking routes on the Prom which could be developed as part of a walking track plan e.g. the Victorian Naturalists 1913 provide an account of a day walk from Corner Inlet (Millers landing?) to the Darby River chalet (11km) and return. There are others.

2.2 Upgrading existing campsites & expanding the capacity of some:

- Enlarging campsites.
- Adding tent platforms or pods to protect both the environment and campers at, e.g. Little Waterloo Bay;
- 3-sided communal shelters for cooking and shelter.

We support the above proposals in principle.

We are concerned about the provision of water supply and adequate toilets at large popular campsites. Up-to-date water supply information is needed before hikers set off.

2.3 New Walks

(Some are in the current and previous management plans but have not been implemented).

Those funded in the Prom Revitalisation package are:

- Walking trail from Tidal River to Telegraph Saddle car park, which should help to alleviate parking pressure there.
- Walking trail between Whisky and Darby beaches

We support these proposals in principle.

We also support in principle the previously planned “Great Prom Walk” (predates the 2002 Management Plan) from the park entrance and via Cotters and Darby beaches and on to Tidal River, with a possible link to 5 Mile Rd to the east.

Further possible tracks being explored are:

- a side-track up Mt Wilson from the Sealers Cove Track and
- a track over Mt Norgate between Oberon Bay and South Point.

We support the above proposals in principle.

We note that a new track between Sealers Cove and 5-Mile Beach is not permitted under the current management plan. We would not support a new track proposal for this area in the absence of an updated management plan for the Prom, which takes the wider conservation implications for the Prom into account.

2.4 Accommodation

We support in principle the refurbishment of two Light Station cottages. We acknowledge the inconsistency between our support for this proposal and our earlier remarks about the

undesirability of having two tier facilities at the Prom. We are happy to make an exception for the lighthouse complex given:

- its long-standing historical importance,
- it requires a significant effort to walk in
- there are no side by side camping facilities there.

We are opposed to making the lighthouse more accessible to visitors – e.g by helicopter.

2.5 Other ideas floated by Peter Beaumont

We are ambivalent about increased use of water transport for hikers to get to start or finish of walks, e.g. from Tidal River or Port Welshpool to Waterloo Bay and Refuge Cove e.g. using tour companies such as Pennicotts. Our primary concern is diminishing the wilderness adventure experience for hikers as a result of overcrowded campsites and walking tracks.

We are opposed to provision of helicopter access for tourists/hikers, e.g. to Light Station due to both noise and diminishing the wilderness adventure experience for hikers.

We are opposed to providing mountain bike trails on designated tracks because the activities of mountain bikers are very difficult to control and provide a conflict with walkers and their safety.