

Best Wishes for the Summer Festive Season

This is the last newsletter for 2021. Covid restrictions messed up the smooth scheduling of our activities this year but the wheels kept turning thanks to the wonderful support from our regional volunteers.

We want to thank all our volunteers

for supporting us during the year, and pass on our best wishes for the summer festive season. We have planned a full program of activities for 2022, and hope to see as many of you as possible down at the Prom when we hit the ground again in February.

By the way, we have a new logo

How long does it take a Committee to come up with a new logo? Several of our Committee members began looking to replace the existing *Friends of the Prom* logo in 2017. Since then it has been simmering away, with Committee members coming up with new ideas every now and then. Although these logo designs were attractive and very clever, they lacked the simple striking symbolism which is the hallmark of a successful logo.

A few months ago, the Committee decided to break this endless cycle by

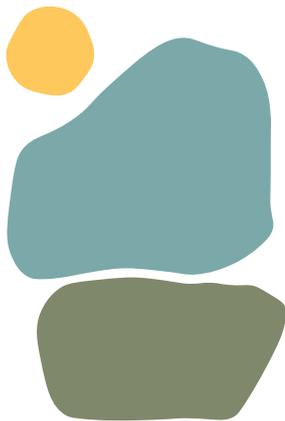
engaging a graphic artist to help us find the logo we were looking for. A sub-committee of Kelsey Fraser and Lynne Muir (newsletter editor) did the ground work – they prepared a design brief and approached several local graphic artists which then led them to engage *Empire Collective*, based in Foster North. *Empire Collective's* Emma Barrett produced a series of proposals for the Committee to consider. All were emblematic of the Prom, but one stood out above the rest.

We explored a few colour changes to this

one, but none improved on the original. There was a surprising level of agreement between those attending at our recent Committee meeting, so that's the one we unanimously agreed to adopt.

It is a simple almost abstract design inspired by Whale Rock, and is the perfect emblem for people to associate with *Friends of the Prom*. We hope you like it too!

Note: The colour variation in the side panel will be used whenever the logo is reversed out of a darker background.



FRIENDS
— OF THE —
PROM

Δ Empire Collective is a full service design, photography and marketing agency in Foster North run by Designer Emma Barrett & Photographer Jarl Line. Empire has been servicing businesses throughout Australia, the UK and Scandinavia for over 2 decades. Emma & Jarl have over 60 years of industry experience between them and offer a full design and production service from concept to fruition, from micro jobs to major campaigns. Find out more at www.empirecollective.com.au



FRIENDS
— OF THE —
PROM

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 1 New logo
- 2 Remembering Rose
- 3 Sea Spurge hit
- 4 Grazer Monitoring Project
- 5 All things koala!
- 6 Nursery and FOTP News
- 7 At Land's End & Snippets
- 8 Calendar and Contacts

NEWS#226
DEC 2021

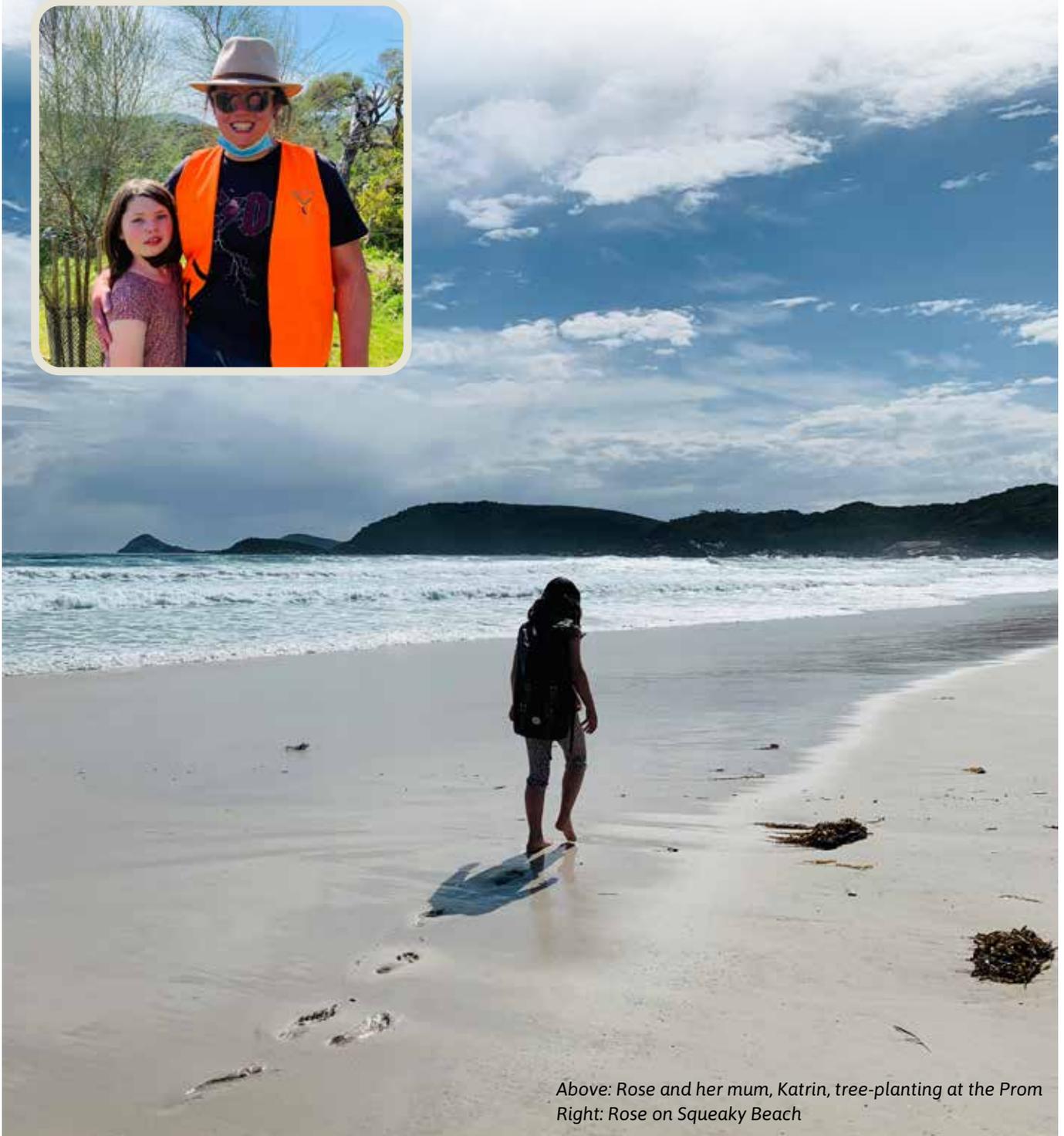
Remembering Rose

We were all shocked to hear in the media of the tragic death of a young girl, killed in a road accident at Tidal River on Sunday 10 October. What we didn't realise until recently, is that seven year old Rose McMahon had been supporting her mum with the tree planting with *Friends of the Prom* on the previous day. Rose was a bright and active

Grade-2 student at St Ita's primary school in Drouin and much loved by all who knew her. The family had experienced many great holidays at the Prom and would like to honour Rose's memory by giving back to "the incredible volunteers and *Parks Victoria* staff that were there to support us". They have set up an on-line memorial fund, and

well-wishers can make a donation to the GoFundMe account — <https://www.gofundme.com/f/v63q9v-rose-mcmahons-legacy-of-love>.

The money raised will be used by the family to support their local community, but also projects at the Prom, and initiatives including tree planting days.



Above: Rose and her mum, Katrin, tree-planting at the Prom
Right: Rose on Squeaky Beach

Sea Spurge Hit

We returned from post-Covid lockdown with a bang — three consecutive days of hand weeding at Picnic Bay from Friday 5 to Sunday 7 November.

Apart from a damp start for Friday morning's briefing, the weather was kind to us for the whole three days.

We had a great turnout of volunteers – 20 on Friday, 27 on Saturday and 20 on Sunday. These included a large contingent escaping Melbourne after the lifting of Covid travel restrictions and some enthusiastic new volunteers. Some volunteers came for one day, most

for two days and five even stuck it out for the whole three days.

Thank you to all our volunteers – your contribution has made a big difference to Picnic Beach – we have now cleared about 50%, which will encourage Hooded Plovers to return there to nest.

The recent heavy rain and warm weather provided perfect germination conditions for Sea Spurge. Tiny seedlings were sprouting in many places, even in areas which had been re-sprayed in early September and hand-weeded last March. We may have to organise another follow up spray early in

2022 to control these new seedlings.

On the Saturday, a small contingent of volunteers visited Squeaky Beach to control re-emerging Sea Spurge. The weed is fairly sparse but requires persistent visits to keep it under control.

We want to thank the Committee's Peter Wilson for coming up with the idea of specialised Sea Spurge weeding forks in distinctive "honey-bee" striped handles (harder to lose). He modified 14 off-the-shelf gardening forks and they were a great success.

*Left: Sea Spurge is still thriving on Picnic Bay beach; Inset: Ayden finds a Sea Spurge amongst the native vegetation (BillH)
Right: Damp start to Friday morning briefing (BillH); volunteers take a break for lunch at Picnic Bay with one of Peter Wilson's unmistakable Sea Spurge weeding forks in the foreground; Peter, Olga and Michelina taking a break (BillH);*



Grazer Monitoring project

Our small dedicated band of dungflingers completed their final count for the year on Tuesday 9 November. Fourteen volunteers worked with Jim Whelan and Brooke, Jim's newly appointed ecologist understudy. It was a

beautiful spring day amongst the now thriving native grasses and wildflowers. Most of the group was made up of our dependable regional regulars that supported the project through lockdown, but 5 were eager Melbournites excited to be out of

the city, including 4 new faces. As we head into summer, the dungflingers go into recess to let the native dung beetles get on with their job undisturbed. We will let you know in March/April 2022 when the next visit will be.



Above: First timers Max and Lydia counting at one of the 140 sites; Middle: wallaby scats; Far right: First timers Gayle and Jeffrey counting (LynneM); Right: Wild flowers at one of the restored grassland areas (LynneM)

Photo below: l to r, back row – Gayle, Jeffrey, Lorraine, Max, Will, Yianni, Lynne, Karin, Keith and Jim; front row – Bill, Anda, Antoinette and Lydia.(Brooke)



Koala Habitat Restoration Project Stage 3

We struck the first blow for Stage 3 with our first tree-guard building activity on Thursday 2 December. The materials, steel mesh and wire netting for 200 super-strength tree guards, were waiting at Yanakie for volunteers to get started on production.

Six volunteers came along to help out. The day was a bit too warm for comfort, although the official

temperature was only 26°C, it felt a lot hotter due to the high humidity. During the day we chased the shade around the large Coast Banksia in the centre of our work area in an effort to conserve energy. We completed 40 tree-guards which was more than expected, but we were lucky to have a good crew on the job. We knocked off at 1:30 pm because of the heat.

Our next tree-guard building activity will be in February 2022 and we urge a few more volunteers to give it a go. The work requires no special skills or unusual physical strength. Our volunteers soon find a task on the production line that they are comfortable with, and quickly develop their skills.



Photos: Peter W, Peter McD, Harry and Rob on the production line (Eddie Pang); Bill and Rob building a mesh cage (EddieP); Peter McDowell, Robert Marioli, Harry Snowden, Peter Wilson and Eddie Pang with the 40 completed tree-guards (BillH)

Strzelecki Koalas ... biodiversity heroes!

Did you know that South Gippsland is the last stronghold of the original Victorian koala population?

Koalas on mainland Victoria and South Australia were almost extinct by the 1920s. The last bastion was South Gippsland and the Strzelecki Ranges.

In the late nineteenth century, however, a handful of koalas had been translocated to French and Phillip Islands, where they bred rapidly. These genetically compromised island animals were reintroduced back to Victoria and South Australia. They have continued to breed rapidly and have caused overbrowsing problems where they have been introduced. Their lack of genetic variation has also led to congenital health problems.

Amazingly, the more genetically robust Strzelecki/South Gippsland koalas managed to survive and slowly increase their population size, but at nowhere near the rapid rate of the translocated koalas. Because of their unique genetics, the Strzelecki/South Gippsland koalas constitute one of the most important koala populations remaining in the world.

Koalas throughout Australia are

being impacted by the changes in the weather patterns of our country. Increasingly frequent, fierce bushfires and catastrophic storms have reduced the habitat of key koala populations in Victoria over a 10 year period by about 25%. Other threats include land clearing, logging, car strikes and dog attacks.

Strzelecki/South Gippsland koalas occur from the Strzelecki Ranges down to the coast, from Wonthaggi to Yarram – they are the local koala for Wilson's Prom! Their genetic diversity means that they are more resilient and better able to adapt to a changing environment than their translocated cousins. If we protect these koalas, we could safeguard a future for koalas in Victoria.

How can we help?

There is an active campaign to have the Strzelecki/South Gippsland koala EPBC listed, so that it and its habitat would be Federally protected. To support the EPBC submission, the Strzelecki Koala Action Team (yes, their acronym is SKAT!) is working on a Strzelecki Koala Map. They are calling for citizen scientists to report any sightings of Strzelecki koalas or their scats to anthony.amis@foe.org.au



Any questions, please speak with Anda 0409 180 346.

The Nursery

The Friends of the Prom nursery at Tidal River is back to business as usual with the return of its commander-in-chief, Mary Walker, after a three month long absence due to Covid lockdown.

Throughout the lockdown, the

regional nursery volunteers have kept it running – collecting seeds and cuttings, weeding and planting, including tending the display garden outside the café.

In early November, some of the nursery crew visited the Shipwreck

cottages at Tidal River, the site of a major tree-planting activity back in July 2019. It is always heartening to see that our labours of 2 years ago on bare ground have transformed the area.



Above: Mary happy to be back camping at the Prom after lockdown (Olga Wilkinson); Before – planting day at the Shipwreck cottages 28 July 2019; After – plantings at the Shipwreck Cottages November 2021

New trailer for Friends of the Prom

For the past few years we have been fortunate to have the use of a trailer generously loaned to us by Coastcare. We use it to transport materials and tools for our various activities.

It can be hooked up to one of our volunteers' private vehicles, which means we can be independent of Parks Victoria staff.

We recently took delivery of a brand new purpose-built Coastcare trailer – this one has a galvanised steel body so it will better withstand the Prom's marine environment, and big bonus - it is designed with a longer draw bar so it is easier to reverse.

Coastcare has asked us to keep the new trailer out of the weather, so it will have to be garaged at Yanakie in our shed unless the park managers can come up with a more convenient option at Tidal River.



At Land's End: The Wilson's Promontory National Park

Committee member Charlie Ablitt came across a link to archival footage from the 1960s with the above title. We thought it might be of interest to Prom lovers – nostalgia for our older members, moments of comedy/disbelief for our younger members.

To watch this on YouTube, copy this link to your browser.
<https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/News-Opinions/Latest-News/Step-back-in-time-with-ACMIs-archives>
We yearn for the days when Prom rangers wore jodhpurs to work!

COVID VACCINATIONS

Parks Victoria has not yet mandated double vaccinations for volunteers working in their national parks, but with about 90% of Victorians over 12 years of age now fully vaccinated, we can safely expect that most of our volunteers will have been double vaccinated by now.

On the off-chance you haven't got around to being vaccinated (unless you have a valid medical exemption), we prefer you do not attend our activities – in the interests of the safety of our other volunteers.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to recent new members –

Jessica Somerville,
Katherine Walker and the
Bertelle family – Lorenzo,
Cetina, Oscar and Lea.



Warmest Christmas greetings from all your Committee members; artwork: Lynne Muir

EVENTS CALENDAR FOR 2022

SATURDAY 26 FEBRUARY

Beach rubbish clean-up and tree-guard building

SATURDAY 21 MAY

Tree planting at Tidal River

SATURDAY 16 JULY

Plant trees at airfield for Koala Habitat Restoration Project

SUNDAY 17 JULY

AGM

SUNDAY 31 JULY

National tree planting day – a public event.
(Schools Tree Day Friday 29 July and National Tree Day Sunday 31st July.)

SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

Tidal River tree planting and clean-up of plantings amongst the camp sites.

FRIDAY 4, SATURDAY 5 AND SUNDAY 6 NOVEMBER

3-day sea spurge removal – various locations

We will send out details of these activities before the above dates. You will need to register for these activities with ParkConnect.

WEEKDAY ACTIVITIES

- Δ Tidal River nursery – every second Thursday (Register on *ParkConnect* or contact Mary Walker).
- Δ Grazer monitoring project
The dungflingers are in recess over summer and will return in March or April. Register on *ParkConnect* or contact Bill Hansen (see Contacts below).

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

All volunteers registered on *Park Connect* received a message from *Parks Victoria* CEO on 20th July, re-stating its policy requiring all volunteers to have a current **Working with Children Check**. The checks become mandatory for volunteers after 31st December 2021.

We urge all our volunteers to apply for a **Working with Children Check** as soon as you can. The application process is straight-forward if you follow *Parks Victoria's* instructions in its email message. Don't disqualify yourself from volunteering with us for want of a **Working with Children Check** – we need you!

MEMBERSHIP FEE RENEWAL

You don't have to be a financial member to participate in our activities. But we urge those of you who have attended more than one or two activities to become financial.

Your membership fees keep us afloat – without them we cease to exist. The fees we receive are low and only just cover our basic running costs, most importantly our public liability insurance.

Currently our financial members include 37 singles, 17 couples, 14 families and 7 life members.

To renew your membership, please contact our Treasurer Peter Wilson 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.

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

Treasurer

Peter Wilson
membership@friendsoftheprom.org.au