

Max Parnell — a fond farewell

The *Friends of the Prom* volunteers are mourning the loss of Max Parnell, who passed away on Tuesday 8th February 2022, aged 87. Max had been made a life member of *Friends of the Prom* because of his valued contribution to our group over nearly 30 years.

Max was one of the original nursery volunteers and he continued attending

the nursery right up to near the end. He was one of that dedicated crew who work at the nursery every second Thursday, year-in and year-out. We will always fondly remember Max as a steadying presence – friendly, reliable, practical and funny. We were so privileged to work alongside Max for so long.

Our thoughts are with his family, close friends and

his partner Millie.

Max didn't want a funeral. Instead his family arranged a series of functions in the district to celebrate his active community involvement including sharing pre-dinner drinks at the Stockyards campsite with *Friends of the Prom* volunteers after their beach clean activity on Saturday 26th February.



FRIENDS
— OF THE —
PROM



Above and right: Max at work in the nursery (Kelsey Fraser)

Max's son Mark (far right) chatting to ranger Jim Whelan at Stockyards 26/02/2022 (Bill Hansen)



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From your committee

The future is looking bright for the FOTP. With the coming of the Prom Sanctuary project, there will be many exciting volunteer opportunities ahead. As a group we already have many wonderful projects which are making a difference. In order to keep the momentum going strong we need your help. Now is a great time to

think about the positive difference which you can make by becoming involved in shaping the direction of *Friends of the Prom*.

Soon the July AGM will be upon us and we will need to elect a new committee. Our current president, Bill Hansen, is coming to the end of his time in the job and so we will have positions to fill. We are

always looking for people to take on key roles in the FOTP as a great group needs great people to move it forward. So please take the time to consider the contribution which you can make by putting your name forward for the committee come this July.

Vice President Deb Henry

Beach cleanup

Forty seven volunteers turned out on Saturday 26th February for our first activity of 2022.

Thirty seven of these formed into six groups to clean up Prom beaches – Norman Bay, Squeaky/Picnic/Whisky, Darby, Cotters, Shallow Inlet off Hourigans Lane and Five-Mile. Each group returned to base laden with bags bulging with rubbish and with their own stories to relate. After it was sorted, counted, weighed and recorded for the Tangaroa Blue Foundation, the rubbish tally for the day was 120 kg.

Possibly because of the persistent easterlies this summer, Five Mile Beach had the most rubbish with 66 kg collected, while western beaches such as Cotters had much less than usual. As in other years, the types of rubbish found ranged from tiny scraps of plastic to large immovable items.

The other 10 volunteers remained behind to build tree-guards.

We would like to thank rangers Cassie and Tom for their hard work in helping to make the day so enjoyable for everyone.

Beach	Amount of rubbish collected (kg)
Norman	2.0
Squeaky, Picnic & Whisky	21.5
Darby	11.7
Cotters	4.5
Hourigans (Shallow Inlet)	14.5
Five Mile	66.2
Total	120.4



Above: Helen's group sorting the rubbish from Cotters beach (Bill Hansen)

Beach cleanup continued

Gerry and Valerie de Lang reported that their group of 9 plus the two rangers, Cassie and Max, headed out to Five Mile Beach in 4-wheel drives. This beach stands alone as an open beach in the north east corner of the Prom. Given its remoteness, a 13k walk for most people, we were in for a surprise with the amount of rubbish collected. We split into two teams, one heading north and the other south. The beach is obviously visited by boaties as there were a number of glass bottles and other rubbish in back of the dunes. Bags soon filled with the usual suspects. One item that did not fit into a bag was a large wheel plus tyre that was rolled all the way back along the beach by Lisel. A mysterious yellow cylinder (containing some electrics) could not be budged from its place. One plus was sighting hooded plovers, at least 2 and maybe 4 or 6. Thanks to Bob and James for driving and rangers Cassie and Max for accompanying the group.

Peter Wilson reports that he and two other leaders had five scouts from 8th Knox group under their charge for the weekend. They walked out to the southern end of Norman Bay along Biddy's Track before turning back north along the beach collecting litter and marine rubbish all the way to Tidal River. Surprisingly, the beach was fairly clean and only half a sack was filled. Their most substantial find was a plastic tub containing children's gloves, apparently mistakenly left behind after a school group activity. The scouts sorted, counted, weighed and recorded their rubbish which took some time as the data sheet is quite detailed. The Scouts



Top: Pat and Bob and the mysterious yellow cylinder at Five Mile beach (Gerry de Lang)

Bottom: The scouts at Tongue Point (Peter Wilson)

...and more Beach cleanup!

made the most of their rest of their weekend camp –finishing off Saturday with a swim on Norman beach and on Sunday a walk from Darby to Tongue Point with a side visit to Fairy Cove. Peter made special mention of the enthusiastic presence of Ann Stacpoole (a FOTP volunteer) who teamed up with them for both days.

Olga reported that her group of eight volunteers went to Shallow Inlet via Hourigans Lane. They split into two groups, one going left along the foreshore as far as the ocean entrance, the other right. There was a lot of rubbish amongst the dunes and grass and many pieces of rope. Their rubbish weighed in at 14.5 kg. (See top right)

Helen reported that her group of five went to Cotters Beach where they found a surprisingly small amount of rubbish, collecting 4.5 kg. This beach normally attracts a lot of ocean borne rubbish although they returned with nearly 1,100 small pieces of plastic. They saw no Hooded Plovers.

Basia reported that her group of six collected rubbish at Darby Beach, some heading north, the others south. There was a moderate amount of rubbish collected including the usual polystyrene foam, bits and pieces of plastic of all sizes, and the ubiquitous bits of rope. They were unable to retrieve a large length of plastic cable buried deeply in the sand.

James and his group collected rubbish from Whisky, Picnic and Squeaky beaches. These three beaches are popular with visitors and the group returned with the second largest haul for the day of 21.5 kg. (See bottom right)

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome
to new member
Patrick O'Halloran



Top: Eddy, Robert, Mary, Matt, Kelsey, Michelina and Deb with their rubbish haul at Shallow Inlet (Olga Wilkinson)

Bottom: Liam, Jalen and Zahli with their rubbish on Whisky beach (James Wilkins)

Restoring Hooded Plover Habitat — aka Sea Spurge Purge

We are looking forward to a good post-COVID turnout for our Sea Spurge weeding activity to be held over three days — Friday 25th, Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th March. Refer to Park Connect for details and registration.

However, we had a preliminary warm up on Tuesday 22nd February

when Karin and Bill joined eight visiting Wesley College students and their two teachers at Picnic Bay to weed Sea Spurge. Rangers Cassie, Maggie and Harley were there to do a safety briefing and answer questions about conservation and indigenous issues at the Prom, but also to help out with the weeding.

Even a half day's weeding = a lot less Sea Spurge.

Below: Wesley College Y12 students, teachers, rangers Maggie and Harley and Karin after a morning of weeding Sea Spurge 22/02/2022 (Bill Hansen)



COVID VACCINATIONS

Parks Victoria has not mandated double vaccinations for volunteers working in their national parks, but with a large percentage 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.

Koala Habitat Restoration Project

We are progressing well with Stage 3 of this project to encourage the return of koalas which will see 200 more trees planted out at the former airfield on the Yanakie Isthmus.

For starters, there is a forest of Manna Gum and Swamp Gum seedlings in our Tidal River nursery, ready for planting out when the weather is cooler and there is more moisture in the soil.

Meanwhile, we are on the home stretch with building the 200 steel tree-guards for the seedlings — 134 guards are now completed with 66 to go.

On 30th December last year, two

of our long-time tree guard builders, John Storti and Dale Richardson, were visiting friends camping down this way and offered to spend part of their day building tree-guards. They were joined in this impromptu activity by Gary Williams (a last minute ring-in) and Bill Hansen. Despite being a short working day in the heat, the tally was a creditable 30 completed guards.

On Saturday 26th February, ten volunteers resisted the urge to join the beach cleaners and stayed behind to build tree-guards. The team set two records for this project – it was the biggest number of volunteers we have had building

tree-guards in one session and they managed the highest number of tree-guards built. We have also exploded the myth that women don't volunteer to build tree-guards. This amazing team finished with a record daily tally of 64 guards completed.

On Friday 24th February, ranger Brooke Love took some of the nursery volunteers on a tour of inspection of active Parks Victoria projects on the Yanakie Isthmus, including our koala trees at the airfield. They found that most of the trees we planted and guarded over the past few years are thriving, although a few need replacing.



Left: The team showing off a sea of completed tree-guards 26/01/2022 (Bill Hansen)

Above: Antoinette, Brooke and Mary inspecting a healthy looking Swamp Gum at the airfield that we planted several years ago (Olga Wilkinson)

Right: John, Gary and Dale working on tree guards while following the shade (Bill Hansen)



Exciting times ahead for the Nursery

There are exciting times ahead for our Tidal River nursery.

The McMahon family has very generously offered to purchase an atmosphere controlled seed-raising house for the nursery. It would provide the missing piece for our nursery and provide a lasting memorial to seven year-old Rose McMahon, who died in a tragic accident at Tidal River the day after her family had been tree planting with us on 9 October 2021. The seed-raising house is an enduring investment in the Prom as it will keep on giving for many years to come as the seedlings germinated would be used on restoration projects throughout the Park. It is one of the projects the family will fund from Rose's on-line memorial fund (Go-fund-me — *Rose's Legacy of Love*) the family established to contribute to community initiatives around the Shire of Baw Baw and the Prom.

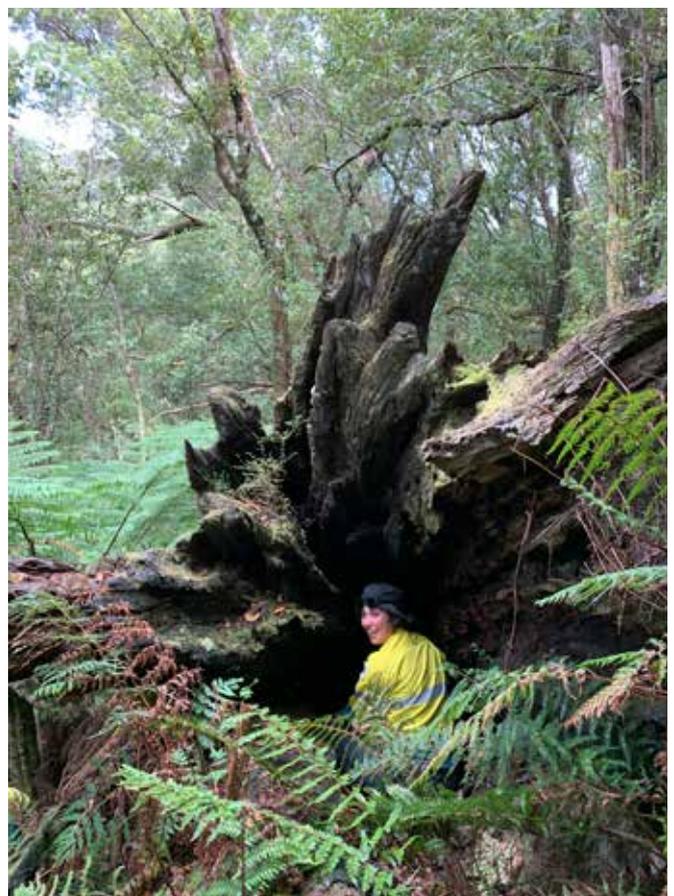
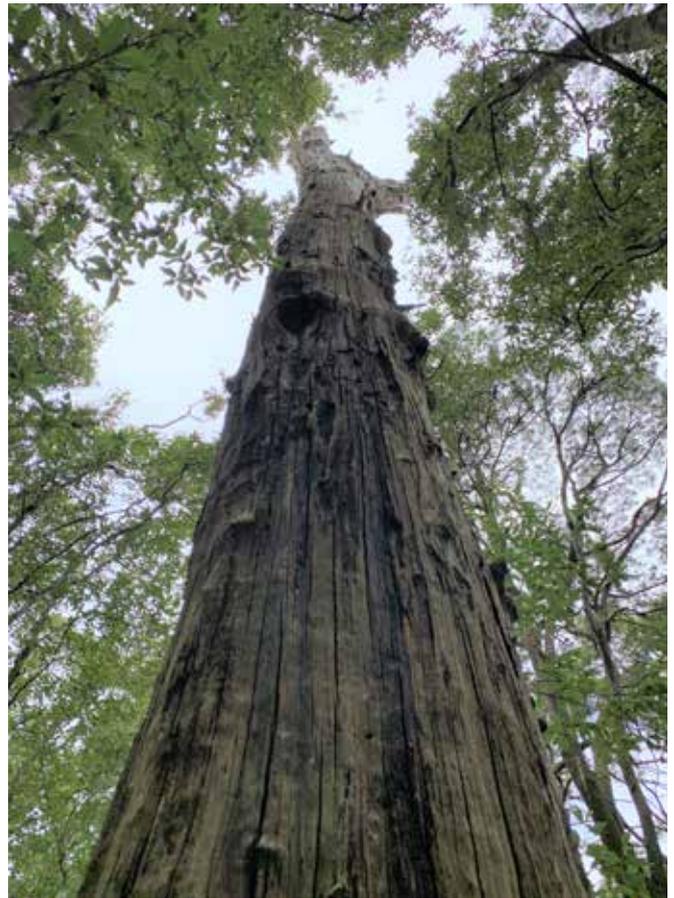
We currently use the polyhouse (which has a spray watering system), for seed germination and find that seed trays are often too wet or too dry, so there is often low, and sometimes zero, seed germination rates. A controlled atmosphere seed germination house would be a valuable addition to our nursery improving the success rate of seed germination and extending the range of plants we are able to grow.

More money coming in for conservation projects at the Prom should lead to some more interesting and varied work for the nursery. One possibility discussed for the nursery is to process a large quantity of eucalyptus tree seed for the proposed Prom Landscape Trap Restoration Project.

A landscape trap is effectively a 'hole' in the tree canopy and there is evidence these areas once supported damp old-growth forest. But after several fires in succession (possibly the 1950s), the natural re-growth of canopy trees was suppressed, allowing dense scrub to take over, creating areas that are dry and fire-prone. This ambitious project, which is awaiting final confirmation from DELWP, aims to restore old-growth forest at two trial sites at the southern end of the Prom (not far from Roaring Meg campsite) each with an area of 16 ha.

The project would employ arborists to collect the fruit (seed pods) from suitable eucalypts in the locality to be passed on to the nursery for processing – enough seed for aerial seeding, 16 kg, is the target.

*Right: the stump of a former forest giant (possibly Southern Blue Gum or Mountain Ash) at the project site.
Below: Ruby at Sealers Track.*



EVENTS CALENDAR FOR 2022

FRIDAY 25, SATURDAY 26 & SUNDAY 27 MARCH

3-day sea spurge removal – various locations
Tree-guard building

SATURDAY 21 MAY

Tree planting – sites to be confirmed

SATURDAY 16 JULY

Tree planting – sites to be confirmed

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 & 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

Parks Victoria now requires all volunteers attending our activities to have a current **Working with Children Check**. Please don't disqualify yourself from volunteering with us for want of a **Working with Children Check** — we need you! The application process is straight-forward and free if you follow Parks Victoria's instructions. Note that your WWCC must be registered for volunteering with Parks Victoria using their Melbourne address. Because of some initial confusion, some of you may have nominated *Friends of the Prom* on your application or used Parks Victoria's Tidal River address. If so, you should transfer your WWCC to Parks Victoria, this can be done online.

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

Please remember to provide your full name as a reference so we can identify you on 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