

Environment Bulletin

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MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

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PORT PHILLIP CONSERVATION COUNCIL INC.

PROTECTION OF TOOTGAROOK SWAMP, Mornington Peninsula

The Shire of Mornington Peninsula impressed and surprised a conservation group recently when it took decisive action to protect a 320 hectare wetlands area in the southern Mornington Peninsula known as the "[Tootgarook Swamp](#)". The wetlands, fronting Browns and Truemans Roads, Boneo, just south of Tootgarook, had been in the one private ownership for many decades, but in early 2001 it was put up for auction. Many local conservationists and residents in the southern Mornington Peninsula feared that the bird life and natural character of the large site would be threatened.

The wetlands area is a major water source for Chinaman's Creek, which enters Port Phillip at Rosebud West. The area is also habitat for migratory wading birds, such as Latham's Snipe, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and Greenshanks, which the Commonwealth of Australia has a duty to protect under international treaties it is a party to. There is also a large population of Swamp Skinks in the swamp, which are a threatened species in Victoria.

Port Phillip Conservation Council Inc., a federation of 15 conservation organizations around Port Phillip Bay, has as one of its key policies (www.ppcc.org.au/policy12.pdf) the need for the remaining very few large parcels of undeveloped land around Port Phillip, such as the former Ansett land at Mt Eliza, and Spray Farm at Portarlington, to be protected from more intensive development. The [Tootgarook Swamp](#) is one of those significant land parcels singled out by PPCC Inc.

To the surprise, and definite approval, of [Port Phillip Conservation Council Inc](#), a large part of the wetlands were bought at the auction by the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, in order to protect them. Another part of the land was bought by a tour operator, who is expected to be no threat to the natural values of the land, and the remaining portion was not sold. PPCC Inc. congratulated the councillors on this excellent example of timely conservation action by local government.

Geoffrey Goode
President,
Port Phillip Conservation Council Inc.