



PORT PHILLIP CONSERVATION COUNCIL INC.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE 2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Welcome to our 2015 AGM

As foreshadowed in my report to our April meeting; following the purging of the one term Baillieu-Napthine Coalition Government last November, the new ALP Government and its reliance on the increased number of Greens elected, gave hopeful signs of a more thoughtful approach to environmental issues. And so far the Government does appear to be more considerate on some coastal issues.

Shamefully, almost on the eve of the November election, the former Coalition Government entered into contracts committing to massive payouts to developers if projects did not proceed. One such contract was at Point Nepean National Park, whereby the Point Leisure Group company was given the go ahead for a \$100 million development including hotels, function centre, thermal pools and spas, restaurants etc. etc.

PPCC Inc, along with VNPA and no doubt many others, wrote to the new Government requesting that it reject the PLG proposal, and it appears that they have listened. However, they have had to pay approx. \$1 million compensation to PLG. It seems likely that the Park's management will revert to the former Parks Vic Master plan, which had been developed over a number of years and with significant community input.

So, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water Lisa Neville deserves our congratulations for that outcome. The list of new initiatives and conservation actions that have been committed to is impressive, in stark contrast to the policies of the former feudalistic Liberal-National Coalition Government.

The reintroduction of Climate Change and Water as significant issues, removing cattle from the Alps, removal of large scale development in National Parks, relooking at the Native Vegetation controls and a review of the Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act, are all welcome. There is also a review and renewal of the previous Biodiversity White paper, to provide a sound basis for future actions; development of a new Marine and Coastal Act; and a strategy to repair riparian land and rivers.

Other issues of note:

Brighton Lifesaving Club: Yet another proposal by a Council to replace a small life saving clubhouse with a multimillion dollar development, restaurant, function room etc. Bayside City Council is calling on State and Federal governments to help fund the proposal, supplemented by Bayside City Council building and selling more bathing boxes on Brighton Beach.

Frankston Yacht Club: Frankston City Council is also continuing its onslaught of coastal developments. With the Council-backed massive 8-9 storey SouthEast Water building on the banks of Kananook Creek now dominating the coastal scenery, Council has commenced a massive 3-storey fine dining restaurant, café, and function centre redevelopment of the former, small Yacht Club. Member Organization FBA Inc. has dedicated countless hours rehabilitating and beautifying Frankston foreshore. Frankston City Council continues to pave it over.

Mornington Yacht Club: MPSC has just granted a 21-year lease to the Club, which was opposed by Member Organization MEA Inc. Its President, Jan Oliver, was quoted in local media saying the

lease is too cheap at \$51,500 for the most valuable property in Mornington. Considering that the State Government has just spent \$18 million rebuilding the pier with modifications to benefit the Yacht Club, I agree.

Geelong Environment Council: Member Organization GEC Inc. has pursued the issue of the [Cheetham Salt fields](#) at Moolap, outlining a proposal to State Government for an internationally significant [birdlife and recreation park](#) on the site. GEC Inc. has produced a colourful brochure setting out the many benefits and calling on us to pressure government to support the proposal – instead of the proposed housing estate put forward last year by developers.

GEC Inc. is also concerned about the State Government's so-called "controlled burning" of the Otways National Park. Over 10,000 hectares has been burned so far this year at a cost of \$11 million. Added to this broad-scale area are the thousands of old growth trees around the perimeter of the burns that are bulldozed, judged "killer trees". In the Otway National Park and Forest Park areas the plan is to burn a further large number of hectares in the coming 2015-16 spring and summer.

PPCC Inc. submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the proposed sale of the Port of Melbourne: In September 2015, PPCC Inc. was invited to make a [written and oral submission](#) to the 8-member Committee, made up of Liberal, Labor, Nationals, Greens and Independent MPs.

Our Secretary produced a comprehensive submission and on 8 September 2015 at Parliament House, Walter Grahame, Jenny Warfe and I were cross-examined by the Committee. PPCC Inc's most recent [Policy Statement No. 17 'Limitations of Port development in Port Phillip and Westernport'](#) was also put to the test by the Committee. It stood us in good stead. So, I would like to thank Walter and Jenny for the work they did earlier this year in the development of Policy No. 17. It was very timely.

Alarming, what we also heard from the shipping industry during the Inquiry was that they expect within 5 years they may want to have the Great Ship Channel through the Heads deepened and widened again. Treasurer Tim Pallas and Ports Minister Luke Donellan have not ruled this out.

Rosebud Foreshore: Is again under attack from the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council. Having successfully beaten back the \$40 million pool proposal on the foreshore, our [Member Organizations](#) FoRB&F Inc. and MHCG Inc. now have the [Jetty Road Precinct Master Plan](#) to contend with. Included in this plan is a large children's playground, a boardwalk on top of the sandbag retaining wall, a viewing deck on top of a large drain extending into the Bay, a BMX track, Sprint track, event-servicing stations, retaining walls, several large shade sails (but no trees!) The road section between Point Nepean Road and the pier will be turned into a paved "mall", with parking retained as well.

You are also welcome to inspect our correspondence file [on these](#) and [other issues](#) that the Committee has dealt with in the last 12 months.

The Committee continues to meet on a monthly basis, alternating between Mary Rimington's home in Mordialloc and Eva Welch's in Frankston. I thank Eva and Mary for their hospitality and also thank other Committee members.

And of course you - our wider membership - for your continued interest and support.

Len Warfe
President, Port Phillip Conservation Council Inc.