



## Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula Inc

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### ANNUAL REPORT 2017

*We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of these lands and waters, their spirits and ancestors.*

#### Management Committee 2016-2017

President: Mae Adams

Vice-President: vacant

Secretary: Janet Carey

Treasurer: Lorraine Norden

Committee members: Heather Shimmen, Marion Kavanagh, Will Norden, Debbie Birkett, Sue Flere, Kylie Laing, Linda Braddock, Sally Moseby (resigned August 2017).



Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula inc gratefully acknowledge the support of our project partners:



**Coastcare**  
Victoria



  
Australian Government

  
South Gippsland  
SHIRE COUNCIL

  
SOUTH GIPPSLAND  
LANDSCAPE NETWORK

  
birdlife  
AUSTRALIA

## President's Foreword

2017 has seen transitions motivated by structural changes to several of the organisations we traditionally work with. Parks Victoria, the South Gippsland Landcare Network and South Gippsland Shire Council have all experienced a reduction in funding for on ground conservation work and changes to how they interact with community volunteers. With an emphasis on working with online technologies, these changes have required our volunteers to attend training sessions, initiate our own volunteer training, as well as maintaining the strong advocacy required to improve natural landscapes in the coastal environment.

It is a credit to the commitment and expertise of the Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula that several major achievements have been realised this year. The Save our Reserves campaign, the re-vegetation of Anderson Inlet foreshore, and the continuation of the Community Fox Control Program are legacy to the long-term commitment and resilience of the group. Seal the Loop, Mange Management and Wildlife Care and Rescue are significant additions to the group's efforts to protect and care for our precious wildlife. As always, the friendship, commitment and passion of the volunteers and our ability to work together to make positive change have been key contributing factors for these achievements.

Continuing with the theme of transitions, this year I will be stepping aside from the role of President and would like to express my heartfelt thanks for the support and good will that has been extended to me over my years in this role. It has been a privilege and pleasure to work with you all and I look forward to keeping in touch and participating at working bees and other events as time allows.

Mae Adams  
President  
AGM 1 October 2017

## Projects and Activities 2016-2017

The Committee and membership have been very active this year delivering many ongoing projects and other activities that foster our objective of protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of the Venus Bay peninsula. The success of our projects is due to the huge volunteer effort of our members and the support of our project partners. Thank you to all.

### Projects

Co-operative Fox Control Program  
Venus Bay Indigenous Gardens, Sites A & B  
Beach 1 Car Park revegetation  
Bridal Creeper Control Program  
Seal the Loop  
FVBP website and Facebook  
Plant of the month  
Saltmarsh revegetation site, the bird hide Anderson Inlet  
Save our Reserves: Community land stewardship at Venus Bay  
Wombat Mange Management

### Activities

FVBP Planning session facilitated by Debbie Birkett, 13 November 2016  
Combined Christmas break-up and BBQ with Tarwin Landcare Group and Silver Banksia Plant Group, long table Tarwin Lower 4 December 2016  
Clean Up Australia Day working bee 5 March 2017  
Working bee Beach 1 carpark revegetation site 26 March 2017  
Combined FVBP, VBCC and Native Plant Group Koala Tree Project stall at Tour de Tarwin, Easter Saturday 15 April 2017  
Planting at Saltmarsh revegetation site, the bird hide Anderson Inlet 7 May 2017  
Orchid walk led by Lorraine Norden, Tarwin Lower Flora and Fauna Reserve 2 July 2017  
Working bee Saltmarsh revegetation site 16 July 2017  
Koala Talk by Colleen Wood, Manager of Southern Ash Wildlife Shelter 6 August 2017  
Hooded Plover monitoring – Biennial Hooded Plover count November 2016  
Wildlife Care and Rescue support

Koala talk presented by Colleen Wood August 2017





## **Co-operative Fox Control Program 2016–17**

The Venus Bay Co-operative Fox Control Program was initiated in 2007 by Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula with the support of private landholders, public land managers, South Gippsland Landcare Network and the community. Its purpose is to reduce the devastating impact of fox predation on native wildlife.

The fox control program has continued this year with two trapping pulses conducted at Venus Bay in November and June in co-operation with private landowners and Parks Victoria. In the November pulse 4 foxes were caught and in June 8 foxes.

Since the program began, a total of 398 foxes have been humanely removed from the Venus Bay peninsula.

Ongoing control has been effective in disrupting the fox breeding cycle and keeping the population on the peninsula at a low level. This has reduced the risk of predation on threatened Hooded Plover nests and small native mammals such as possum, rodent and antechinus species.

Community reporting of fox sightings or signs via our FoxWatch program has helped to target remaining animals and new ones that move in to claim territory after each pulse.

We gratefully acknowledge funding for this year's program from South Gippsland Shire Council.

## **Venus Bay Indigenous Gardens, Site A, Venus Bay Community Centre**

This site has been handed back to the Venus Bay Community Centre and is no longer maintained by FVBP.

## **Venus Bay Indigenous Gardens, Site B Coast Banksia Woodland**

This site is maturing each year, with a number of indigenous species, including orchids reappearing.

## **Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula website and Facebook**

<http://www.facebook.com.friendsofvenusbaypeninsula/>

<http://www.friendsofvenusbaypeninsula.org.au/>

Our new WordPress website is now in the design stage, with some liaison work still to be done to bring it to completion. Thanks to everyone who assisted and we hope it will be ready to go live soon. The new site will be mobile and tablet friendly with Google Analytics tracking so that website performance can be seen over time. This will provide essential information about what content to keep and what to edit in future, and allow us to more effectively manage our online presence. The website will link to the Friends Facebook page and include a blog and bush detective features. Funding has been generously provided by Coastcare Victoria for volunteer training so our committee can update the WordPress site as required.

The Friends Facebook page has grown in online presence and is now a key tool for promoting our events and achievements.

## Beach 1 Car Park revegetation

Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula have been working on this site since 2009 and the plantings are now well established. The car park garden has made excellent progress from a bare patch to a thriving indigenous garden. In March 2017 a working bee was held to remove weeds from the plantings. Parks Victoria (PV) were unable to provide support for this event but two days later, without notification, a PV crew removed the protective fencing from the gardens, damaged the area and left an unsightly mess of crumpled vegetation. FVBP protested to PV and some remedial work was done but it is very disheartening when our efforts are not valued.



Beach 1 Car Park 2009 (left)



The same site March 2017

The same site one day later



## Weed Control - Bridal Creeper *Asparagus asparagoides*

Heavy rains in January gave established Bridal Creeper plants a head start in the growing season, and it has been more important than ever to keep monitoring this Weed of National Significance to stay ahead of its adaptability to climate events. Fortunately, after 12+ years of control work, the amount of Bridal Creeper in the landscape is now much reduced, and the plants have not been able to re-establish strongly in the control areas. The rust fungus continues to work for us to prevent seeding and reduce plant biomass. Once established in the landscape it will never be completely free of Bridal Creeper, however it is now so well controlled that any harm to the natural environment has been minimised. Thanks to the volunteers who continue to manage Bridal Creeper on private and public lands at Venus Bay.

## Seal the Loop

The last clearance of all “Seal the Loop” boxes, Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>. September 2017 was as follows;

No 1. Beach	very small amount of line,
Bird Hide Jetty	empty,
Rock wall shelter	partial bird nest
Tarwin Boat ramp	nesting material
Tarwin Lower platform	plastic bottle, food container, T shirt, cigarette packet.

Lack of line in boxes may be due to the recent weather.

Usually there is line in Bird Hide, Rock wall and Tarwin Lower River boxes.

The Tarwin Lower River box usually has other rubbish pushed in the box. Perhaps a rubbish bin in the area may help, who knows?

As there is no safe way for disposal of fishing line, it is being stored until further notice.

Sue Flere

## Plant of the month

Since November 2013 Lorraine has been writing a ‘Plant of the Month’ segment on behalf of FVBP about one of the indigenous plants of Venus Bay, for inclusion in *Matter of Fact*, the monthly community newsletter. A description of the species, its uses in the landscape, habitat value, requirements and propagation method is included, along with Aboriginal uses if relevant and other details on how the species was named. The article is then placed on the FVBP Facebook page.

## Membership Report

Membership for 2017 stands at 62, including 42 Household memberships with at least 2 members, so that member numbers are at least 104. Membership fees are expected to remain stable at the coming AGM:- \$20 for family, \$10 per individual and \$5 concession. Fees are then due and all payments will be receipted in paper form, for entering onto the database.

Please note our constitution requires that member details are available for perusal if required, by any member of FVBP.



## Saltmarsh Revegetation of bird hide and jetty area, Anderson Inlet

### Bird Hide/Saltmarsh 2017

Coast Care provided the funding for this project five years ago and the revegetation of this site has continued this year with the help of all the hard-working volunteers. Some of these were familiar faces as well as several new folks. There has been two community planting days thus far with a noticeable improvement with the recently added plants combining with established areas of vegetation. We have planted at least five to six hundred plants in 2017!



The site has been a problematic place to revegetate due to compaction by vehicles when it was a car park. Added to this the salt marsh underneath has been destroyed by gravel, cement and all manner of detritus dumped on top and during high tides the area is often inundated (not all plants enjoy the salty water) and it is a very exposed area. There is human traffic through the planting area and kangaroos nibble the new plants as well.

Despite all this, over the five years of planting by the many people who have contributed, there has seen a tremendous change to this beautiful area on the Tarwin river with the revegetation now beginning to blend into the surrounding salt marsh. The site continues to be

maintained for weed control and damage done due to a number of factors. The plantings are expanding into some underdeveloped areas and hopefully will be enhanced with natural revegetation. This is intended to happen gradually into the future.

There is no better affirmation than to see all the little birds; Flame Robins, Yellow-rumped Thornbills, White-fronted Chats, Willie Wagtails to name but a few, hopping happily about in and out of the protective vegetation.

Heather Shimmen



Jetty area showing  
saltmarsh revegetation  
despite the odds

## Save Our Reserves - Community Land Stewardship in Venus Bay

At last we have some good news regarding our long campaign to protect public open space in Venus Bay!

Following SGSC elections of a new Council in October 2016, including our own Venus Bay Councillor and VBCC Manager Alyson Skinner, FVBP again took up the challenge to Save Our Reserves. The previous council had voted to sell 4 Venus Bay reserves including 30A Inlet View Road (also known as 1A Canterbury Road) and 3-5 Marine Parade as part of its Strategic Review of Land Holdings. As a stage in the process towards sale, in November 2016 Council posted signs on both blocks advertising its planning application for a permit to remove the reserve status of the land.

Despite the short time frame, objections for both reserves were sent on behalf of Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula, Venus Bay Community Centre and by many individuals. Due to the number of objections, the matter was put to a Council meeting. FVBP and VBCC requested that their submission be heard.

To let the community know what was happening FVBP contacted Colin Suggett who had previously designed a Save our Reserves sign, last used in 2008. He kindly offered to order a reprint so that once again we could put signs on all our reserves and public sites. Venus Bay Community Centre shared half the cost of the signs and stakes with FVBP. Many FVBP members and others also purchased signs for their private properties. A joint FVBP/VBCC working bee was held to install the signs so that just before the Christmas influx of visitors Venus Bay was festooned with SOR signs publicising our message. A huge thank you to Colin who designed the signs, ensured they arrived in extra quick time and worked out an ingenious method to install them. The local community newsletter Matter of Fact was a great resource with plenty of information and the local Press also ran supportive articles on our campaign.

In February 2017 - Debbie Kraushofer (VBCC) and Lorraine Norden (FVBP) delivered a Power Point Presentation to the new Council - concerns for land sales in Venus Bay, to inform the new Councillors of our long-standing concerns.

In March SGSC released the draft Council Plan 2017-21. Tucked away on page 15 under Object 3: "Improve South Gippsland's Built Assets and Value our Natural Environment", was a very important item:

### *3.7 Review the Land Realisation Project in regard to public open spaces in Venus Bay*

A group submission from Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula was sent as a PowerPoint presentation. Prepared by Lorraine Norden, it argued the case that Venus Bay should be excluded from the Land Realisation Project due to our unique and precious environment. On May 17 Lorraine delivered her presentation to Council.

The previous week Councillor Alyson Skinner presented a petition initiated by the former Tarwin Lower Venus Bay association and signed by almost 1000 people, asking Council not to sell existing open space and Council owned land in Venus Bay.

Following this, a decision was made by Council at a Special Meeting held on Wednesday 24 May 2017. Success!

Motion passed at the Council meeting 24 May

MOVED: Cr Skinner SECONDED: Cr Edwards

THAT COUNCIL:

1. WITHDRAW THE PLANNING PERMIT APPLICATIONS FOR, AND REVOKE THE DECISION TO SELL THE FOLLOWING PROPERTIES:

i. 3 MARINE PARADE, VENUS BAY (PREVIOUSLY REFERRED TO AS 3-5 MARINE PARADE, VENUS BAY); AND

ii. 30A CANTERBURY ROAD, VENUS BAY (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS 1A CANTERBURY ROAD, VENUS BAY and 30A INLET VIEW ROAD VENUS BAY).



2. CONSIDER A FURTHER REPORT AT THE NEXT APPROPRIATE COUNCIL MEETING DETAILING THE OUTCOME OF THE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE STRATEGY FOR VENUS BAY TO DETERMINE COUNCIL'S LAND HOLDING REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC OPEN SPACE WITHIN VENUS BAY TOWNSHIP ZONE.

CARRIED

For: Councillors Brunt, Edwards, Skinner, Brown, Rich, Hill and McEwen.  
Against: Councillors Argento and Kiel.

Land sales in Venus Bay have been put on hold while a new open space strategy is prepared by Council over the next two years. The war is not over but a serious battle has been won! Many thanks to everyone involved over many, many frustrating years to finally achieve success.

### **Tour de Tarwin stall. Koala Tree Project**

For the fourth year VBCC and FVBP held a joint stall at the Tour de Tarwin on Easter Saturday to promote the Koala Tree Project and distribute Gippsland Manna Gums and local indigenous plants to local residents for a gold coin donation. This year we were joined by the Native Plant Group at VBCC and they provided the plants. It was once again very well received. A map was provided so that residents could mark where the trees were to be planted. The project is planned to be ongoing. Future aim is to create corridors and include public land. Reports were received of the excellent growth of trees from previous Easter stalls.

### **Wombat Mange Management**

First, great news regarding our application for Bald Hills Wind Farm Grant of \$2000, which was granted, enabling purchasing of Cydectin to dose our mange infected wombats.

There have been sightings of Mange infected wombats by local residents, which is very heartening as people become aware of this hideous disease resulting in painful death. Residents have expressed interest in treating these animals, which is greatly appreciated.

One of the difficulties I have encountered, is identifying the animals being treated. It is my intention of spraying a small patch of cow tail paint colour on animals being treated! Shall keep you posted on this plan.

Treatment can be a tricky process, with two systems currently used.

Firstly, when the animal is badly infected, they are out during the daylight hours feeding. They need to eat constantly as they lose condition, and to avoid encounters with healthy wombats.

The pole and scoop method by applying 10 mls of Cydectin along the spine of the animal once weekly. This treatment needs to continue for at least 6-8 weeks so the mange cycle is stopped.

Once the wombat is not approachable a burrow flap may be set up on a burrow or well-worn track.

Wombats are currently being treated in Venus Bay, Paris Court, Atherton Drive, Pandora Drive.

Mange infected wombats have been reported at Anita Crescent, Inlet View and no.4 Beach, yet to be accessed.

Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula and Wombat Mange Management welcome reports of wombats needing treatment.

Wombat Mange Management	0431 600 125
Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula	0415 197 313
Sue Flere	