

Swan Bay Environment Association Inc.



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE AGM

March 12, 2010

It has been another rewarding and challenging year for the Swan Bay Environment Association.

The SBEA continues to oppose the development of housing on the wetlands in our Borough. During 2009 the SBEA along with other local groups - Point Lonsdale Civic Ass. Point Lonsdale Coastal Spaces Group, Queenscliffe Community Ass. and the Geelong Environment Council - joined forces in writing to appropriate Government and Council departments with our concerns about the proposed Stockland Development as it is placed within a complex of wetlands of high environment significance.

We are now faced with the added knowledge that rising water due to high tide and storm surge would further impact on the quality of water entering into Swan Bay.

The SBEA has supported a call for Lakers Cutting to be included as part of the current Ramsar agreement as it is directly connected to Swan Bay. Higher water levels in Swan Bay will make interchange between the waters of Swan Bay and Lakers Cutting stronger and more frequent. Our 2008 submission to the Panel reviewing the Stockland Environmental Effects Statement expressed concerns regarding the adequacy of the protection given to Swan Bay in the proposed canal system as part of the proposed housing estate. We continue to voice our concerns about the impact of inappropriate development that will affect the life of all that depend on these important wetlands.

The SBEA was represented at the successful 'Eco Expo' held in Queenscliff and also at the Marine Discovery Centre marking 'World Wetlands Day'. In December the Bellarine Catchment Network (BCN) held an interesting and informative 'Coastal Forum' at Camp Wyuna in Queenscliff. It was open to all groups associated with the BCN.

After the devastating 2009 bushfires the Association donated money to the Jirrahlinga Koala and Wildlife Sanctuary.

Burnt Point was the focus for the SBEA 'Clean Up Australia Day'. Parks Victoria has now installed a rubbish bin and signage at the end of McDonalds Road to encourage anti-littering.

A sign too has been erected at the end of Nelson Rd and Bellarine Highway to indicate the location of the Community Plant Nursery.

Another very productive year has been undertaken by the Community Nursery. The SBEA would like to thank all the volunteers under the guidance of Jill Warneke for their outstanding success rate in the propagation of indigenous plant species. A staggering 11,500 plants have been sold or donated for revegetation. We would also like to express our appreciation to our volunteers for their planting in the Narrows and in the Indigenous Garden on the old High School site.

This year saw a major development on the Nursery site with the purchase and installation of 36 above height tables for the plants to be placed on. Also purchased were four waist high tables and a waist high wheelbarrow. The tables have made it safer for the public to walk around and to view our species and for our volunteers' BACKS. They were bought with a substantial grant from the Bellarine Catchment Network and the Council/Nursery funds which were greatly appreciated. A metal shed was also bought and erected on site for the purpose of storing the SBEA paperwork. Thank you to Jim Strickland, a Nursery volunteer, who was responsible for so much of the practical work required for the installation of both the shed and the above waist height tables. He was helped by a cohort of willing helpers in assembling the structures.

Our end of year Christmas Party was a very joyous occasion with 32 regular volunteers attending. It was a record number and with many unable to attend it shows how many marvellous hardworking gardeners

we have in our group. We cannot express our thanks enough for the work that is accomplished by our volunteers, without whom the Community Plant Nursery would not be the success it is. The Nursery again handed out plants to the community on Australia Day.

This year the Nursery working bees will be held every Wednesday	9-12
the last Friday of the month	9-12
and the 3 rd Sunday in the month.	10-12

We are always happy to see more volunteers. Please contact Jill Warneke on 5258 1716 or visit our SBEA website:
<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~sbea/>

I would like to thank those on the committee for all their invaluable work and input into matters that have arisen during the year and a special thank you to all members for your continued support. We will be losing a few committee members this year, Felicity Thyer, Beth Neyland and Jenny Darling and we thank them sincerely for their time, insight and contributions to the Association. I will also be leaving the committee. It has been very rewarding to be on a committee that is truly concerned with the environment where we live.

Jacqueline Smith
President

IMPORTANT APPEAL

*SWAN BAY ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION
PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN
PROTECTING THE VALUES OF SWAN BAY
AND ITS ENVIRONS.
IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT IT CONTINUES TO
FUNCTION BUT TO DO SO IT NEEDS A
FULL COMMITTEE TO ENSURE A QUORUM
AT EACH MEETING. WE URGE EVERY
MEMBER TO CONSIDER JOINING THE
COMMITTEE.
THE COMMITTEE MEETS ON THE THIRD
SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH, 10-11am, at the
NURSERY, 79 Nelson Rd.
If interested ring Bob Fuller (5258 1897) to
discuss the work of the committee.*

**Committee members for 2010 are Bob Fuller,
Linda Waters, Anne Barclay and Mia Cooke
– we need three more members.**

BY-THE-WIND SAILORS

By SBEA member David Rantall, St Leonards

I was walking on Edwards Point beach on the morning of 7 January, and was surprised to find many blue "By-the-wind Sailor" hydroids (*Velella velella*) on the sand on the receding tide. They consist of a royal-blue floating disc about 15mm across, with a thin clear perpendicular sail on the top. By this means they drift on the water surface, wherever taken by wind and currents. Being a relative of jellyfish they have food-capturing nematocyst threads below. Even after dying the nematocysts are still armed and active and can inflict a painful sting. They can be a nuisance to swimmers and they are close relatives of the Blue Bottle hydroid, though not as harmful. The severity of reaction to a sting varies from person to person.

They are present in very large numbers on the ocean, but they come ashore only when the wind conditions and ocean swell favour this happening. It doesn't occur every year. Usually they are on the ocean beaches, so the ones at Edwards Point inside the bay are less common - they must have come in through the heads. I wondered if there is a population in Port Phillip Bay? The answer is no. They inhabit the open oceans, drifting by the wind and currents, and are always with the plankton. Their presence at Edwards Point beach is neither common nor predictable, and was as a result of the wind and ocean currents.

Would the hydroids on the sand still be alive or would they have already perished? As long as the by the wind sailors were in the water they would be alive, but would die once they were stranded, as they don't have the ability to move or change direction but are entirely at the mercy of the wind and sea currents. I wonder if there have been any on the outer beaches.

I went back in the afternoon with my camera, but they were no longer there, which I thought was strange as the tide had been receding in the morning. I thought that they should be on the beach because once ashore, that's where they would stay unless picked up by a wave that happened to draw them back into the water. Maybe the gulls had eaten them but that's not likely, partly because there is little of food value in them, but also because their stingers are still primed and active even though were likely to have died on the sand. Because they have no hard parts like bones or cartilage, they would disintegrate quickly if the sun and wind were hot enough. Somehow they were washed back into the bay, maybe by the wake of a boat.