

# Swan Bay Environment Association Inc.



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## NEWSLETTER NO. 64 – September 2013

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### 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Swan Bay Environment Association

*(Jill Warneke)*

It is with amazement and pride that we realise that the Swan Bay Environment Association was established 25 years ago and has been working consistently since then for the protection and enhancement of the natural values of wonderful Swan Bay and its environs. The following is a summary of some of the Association's achievements over those years.

#### ***Formation***

In 1988 a group of people, including scientists from Deakin University formed the Swan Bay Research Group and notified the Government (Joan Kirner was the relevant Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands) of their intentions. They held the Inaugural Public Meeting of the Swan Bay Protection Association at the Uniting Church Hall in Queenscliff on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1988.

Amongst that first group some of the names would still be familiar to many members: Henry Hudson (Queenscliffe's Citizen of the Year 2009 and an OAM), John Birrell (Victoria's Police Surgeon for many years and a local doctor), Margaret Cameron (Deakin University Librarian and a prominent bird expert) and Dick Cotton (a biochemist with an interest in Swan Bay).

A statement of purposes was written up and the SBEA was incorporated on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 1988. The Annual Subscription was \$10 and it still is! And we have a Concession for \$5! The "Statement of Purposes" was very detailed but was summarised as "to ensure that Swan Bay and its environs are not damaged by inappropriate and insensitive developments". The same purpose applies today.

#### ***Newsletters***

The first Newsletter of the Association was issued in June 1989 and the most recent which you are receiving is No. 64. Members have been kept up to date with the Association's activities via these Newsletters.

#### ***Educational Activities***

The educational aims of SBEA have been extremely important. The following are just a few examples:

- we have run courses e.g. an environmental course at the Neighbourhood House;
- we have written articles for local newspapers e.g. on the importance of planting local plants, on walks around Swan Bay, on identifying local bush foods;
- we have planned excursions and visits to important environmental sites and indigenous gardens e.g. a "Waterwise" tour of local

- houses which use water saving techniques;
- we have conducted workshops e.g. on seed collection and growing local plants;
  - we have built a boardwalk through the Saltmarsh on Murray Road so visitors can safely observe the ecology and;
  - we have arranged many other interesting activities – too many to mention!

### ***Submissions and Lobbying***

Over the years there have been various threats to the health of Swan Bay, and the Association has been active in writing letters and submissions and lobbying where appropriate for its protection. Some examples - pressure has been applied to the Stockland development to avoid potential damaging run-off into Swan Bay and also to ensure appropriate vegetation is planted; Swan Bay is a Ramsar site for the protection of international birds and SBEA has been keen to see this maintained and extended, and SBEA has lobbied for an increase in the recognition given to local groups in the EES (Environmental Effects Statement) process. Many other issues appear in the SBEA files.

### ***AGMs***

Many fascinating and expert talks have been given at the Association's AGMs, such as Harry Thorman on the sea life in Swan Bay, Beth Ross on the importance of indigenous vegetation, Dr Alastair Hirst (DPI scientist) on seagrass, Peter Menkhorst on the birds of Mud Island and Megan Underwood on the Storm-faced Petrel.

### ***Website***

The SBEA's website was launched in 2006. It presents lots of information about Swan Bay and the Association. <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~sbea/>

### ***Nursery***

One of our most successful activities has been the Queenscliffe Community Indigenous Plant Nursery. When the SBEA began revegetating around the shores of Swan Bay we realised there was not enough of the indigenous flora available to plant so we decided to grow our own. We set up a small area at the old Council depot in the Narrows. When the MAFRI laboratory was built there in 2002, the Nursery moved to its present site at 79 Nelson Rd and since then tens of thousands of plants have been grown for revegetation sites as well as private gardens.

### ***Thanks***

A big thank you to all members, workers and supporters who have helped to make SBEA such a successful and vibrant Association. We hope everyone (and their families) will join us for a celebratory lunch we are planning for December. Invitations will be sent out for this event nearer to the date.

### **Bellarine Rail Trail Revegetation**

*(Press Release by Matt Crawley)*

“In late August, the Swan Bay Environment Association and Bellarine Landcare Group revegetated another section of the Bellarine Rail Trail. Species indigenous to the area, including many grassy ground cover species and Saltmarsh species, were used in the activity. This is an ongoing project that is in its fourth year. Again community support was great with 40 community representatives, and students and staff

from Queenscliffe Primary School attending. Jill Warneke from Queenscliffe Community Indigenous Nursery said that over 400 plants were grown at the nursery for this site and the same volunteers who grew them, planted them out. This provides a full circle for the community members and provides a great connection to the site.

Matt Crawley, Program Manager stated that support from Victrack, Landcare Australia Limited and G J Gardner Homes enabled projects like this to happen and assists community groups to undertake weed control and habitat restoration projects along the Bellarine Rail Trail. This support provides resources and funding to enable our projects to go further and achieve more.”

#### **Thank you, Alan**

The committee would like to thank Alan Jenkins for his work at the Nursery and on the SBEA Committee. Alan started work at the Nursery in January this year on Newstart. Alan was also asked to join the Committee as part of this commitment. He had done a year of Horticulture at the Gordon and so mainly spent time on seed collection and propagation. Alan has now returned to his property, near Ballarat, and since it is a long way to travel down to the Nursery each week, he has resigned from the Committee and unfortunately won't be a regular at Working Bees. He is currently working at “The Smart Living Centre” in Ballarat. Alan was also our speaker at the last AGM when he gave a talk on Biodiversity and its origins at the Earth Summit in 1992. We thank Alan for his contributions and wish him well in the future.

#### **Landcare Awards**

The Swan Bay Environment Association, Borough of Queenscliffe and BCN were shortlisted for the State Landcare Awards – Coastcare Category presented at Government House in late August. Unfortunately, we did not win the award. However, the Friends of the Bluff did win the award, so for Rhonda Coffey, Alex Sedger and others that accepted the award, this was a great result. Our congratulations to them.

#### **Save the Birds** (*Felicity Thyer*)

SBEA committee has approved the donation of \$100 to the Crisis Appeal of BirdLife Australia for beach-nesting birds. Since our beaches are usually home to some hooded plovers, the Save the Hoodie appeal has particular meaning and relevance to us. If you would like to read more, see <http://www.savethebirds.org.au/save-the-hoodie/>

#### **Nursery Report** (*Jill Warneke*)

At least 15 volunteers work each Wednesday morning at the Nursery (and a good number on the 3rd Sunday each month) and the plants are responding well to the attention. During the recent planting season some thousands of the indigenous plants grown have been used in local re-vegetation projects and planted in school grounds, Council land, large properties and domestic gardens. Now we have started growing for next year and soon the seed collection season will start. Thanks to all the volunteers who help with this important activity of the Association.