

VH Coastcare – Chairman’s Report for year ending 31 March 2020

We have once again had a very busy year, but this time it has ended with very trying situations – firstly the tragic bush fires in many parts of the country and now the COVID-19 pandemic which is causing us to go into hibernation for an unknown period of time.

However the good news is that at 4.30 pm today we were advised that we have obtained a \$500 grant from the RAA Community Sponsorship Program for buying some more tools and equipment. This will be paid when we are active again.

20 year anniversary

This year was the conclusion of our 20-year anniversary year. We were recognised by the NRM ‘for 20 years of dedication to coastal ecosystem conservation in the City of Victor Harbor’. Andrew and Anita Leak went to the NRM Environmental Volunteer Award Day where they were presented with a framed Certificate and a magnificent book *Wildlife of Greater Adelaide*.

Work Area Activities

We have worked in a number of different areas:

The Bluff

Work Area 1 The presence of five feral goats on the Bluff and eating the vegetation has been eliminated. However there is now evidence that a fox (or more than one) is catching and eating terns by the boat ramp. Council staff have the matter in hand.

Work Area 1G We had a full sweep through the area immediately behind Whalers Inn mainly dealing with coastal tea trees, olives and acacia cyclops. We also dealt with gazanias and polygala at the end of the Whalers Inn car park.

At the bottom of both sides of the footpath from Jetty Road up to the first car park, we dealt with boxthorns, olives and other weeds and the Council collected the prunings. Work also continued further south along the slope into Work Area 1C.

Work Area 1H On the west side of Bluff Road we dealt with suckering sheoaks (*casuarina glauca*), acacia cyclops and a large pine tree near the cove. Several piles of prunings were collected by the Council. Council staff flagged which sheoaks should not be poisoned and the effectiveness of our work has been commended by council staff.

Work Area 1C We have just started eradication of suckering sheoaks, olives and African daisies in the area just past the first car park.

Kent Reserve and River Inman

Work Area 8 We had one working bee in the dunes that are between the boat ramp and Harbor View Terrace. The Council collected the prunings.

Our late member Roy Jones continued to work on erasing the fennel along the riverbank upstream from the Rotary Bridge.

The Esplanade

Work Area 11 We have continued with the tamarisk control at the western end of the car park by the causeway. It is painstaking work and has involved a number of repeat applications to kill these shrubs which constantly show new growth even after earlier treatment.

The Causeway

Work Area 12 It has been very concerning to see the amount of erosion immediately to the east of the start of the causeway which has exposed the block wall and caused the loss of much of the revegetation along its top.

Bridge Terrace

Work Area 13. We planted about 50 more Council-provided dune plants in the dunes near the beach volleyball courts. We have done that for the previous two years but subsequently lost many plants during the summer thereby necessitating replanting. This year we had a watering bee rostered once a fortnight during the summer and have had a much better survival rate. The success of the new plants has been sufficient for us to start removing some of the euphorbias there. Many thanks to all members who were on the watering roster and to the Council staff for bringing the 800 litre water cart down for each of these occasions. There was evidence that a front-end loader was driving over this area and our plants so as to clear the adjacent storm drain. The matter was drawn to the attention of the Council staff and hopefully will not be repeated.

We were amongst many local residents expressing concern to the Council about the Encounter Bikeway plan to build a shared cycle/footpath through the middle of Bridge Terrace Reserve. The Council have now drafted an alternative route, but it is not yet confirmed. The matter is still in hand.

Bridge Point Garden

Work Area 16. Here we have done some severe pruning so as to control many of the shrubs which were becoming overgrown and straggly. The Council collected the prunings. We also planted a number of ground covers and have ensured their survival by having a regular watering roster during the warmer month. Many thanks to Richard Edwards and Derek Conroy for doing this work.

Lagoon Embankment

Work Area 20 We did work both sides of the railway line east along from Bus Stop 3, controlling African daisy, polygala and olives.

Tom Stephens Reserve

Work Area 39 Upstream from the River Hindmarsh bridge we dealt with hakea drupacea, olives and gazanias. This is a new area where we have never worked before.

Hayborough bank

Work Area 39 We did work on the bank by the Hayward Street steps and in the areas both sides at the bottom. Mainly boxthorns, buckthorns and olives were controlled.

Hayborough East dunes

Work Area 40 We planted about 150 plants in the dunes at the end of the Investigator car park. Plants were provided by the NRM (Corey Jackson).

Other matters

First Aid Kit

We made a significant upgrade to our medical First Aid kit which is now in a well-designed bag that opens to display the contents. Thanks to Anita Leak for facilitating this.

Education

Richard House gave his talk *Your Dunes My Dunes* to the Native Plants Society and also to Encounter Bay Rotary. The former was also well attended by several members of Victor Harbor Coastcare.

Richard House, Nigel Ibbotson and Derek Sim attended a Chemical Handling workshop.

Barb Francis gave us an excellent demonstration and training on how to bandage a limb after snake bite.

Andrew Leak attended the 2019 SA Coastal Conference.

Council Liaison

Many thanks to Nick Hayles for being our Councilor's Representative and contributing to several of our meetings. Thanks also to Brian Doman, Andrew Comas and Lee Jeffery, all of whom have helped us with our work. Meetings have been held with Council staff to review projects and identify new projects. Council have also been very co-operative in removal piles of prunings and providing weed killing poisons.

We gave feedback on the Draft Environmental Management Plan and the Encounter Bikeway proposal along Bridge Terrace.

Web site

A web site has been established in conjunction with UniSA student, Chelsea Colbert for whom it was part of her training. Many thanks to her for getting it all going and then to Andrew Leak who has put in so many further hours work learning how to do maintenance. The site can now be seen on www.vhcoastcare.org.au.

Publicity

Julie Graham resigned from her role as Publicity Office because she now has a job with the Alexandrina Council and is finding it more difficult to also perform this role. Anita Leak very kindly took on the role instead. Thank you, Julie, for what you have done to date. Thank you Anita for the displays of posters around town and getting some articles published in The Times.

Andrew Leak has been adept at maintaining the web site and Facebook pages. Many thanks.

Equipment

Bunnings very kindly sponsored us by donating a reciprocating saw. However it has not turned out to be as effective as we had hoped for the sort of work that we do.

We have applied for a grant from the RAA Community Sponsorships Program for 5 sets of tool belts and tools.

Membership

We welcome several new members this year, Anne Berresheim, Sam Blight, Barb Francis, Kevin Howard, Oscar Lane (junior), and Rebekah Vassos. Sadly, long standing members Bill Harvey-Crowson and Roy Jones have passed away. Our headcount is now 45 members.

Beach Pole Monitoring

Thanks to Andrew Leak for doing the monthly beach pole readings and sending the figures to the *Coast and Marine Branch of the Department for Environment and Heritage* for use by the *Coast Protection Board*. We have done this job, which started as a weekly reading, since inception in 2002.

Hooded Plovers

Richard Edwards, and David and Sue Thorn must again be commended for their ongoing commitment to the preservation of the hooded plovers and the work they do with fencing, signage and recording when there are eggs in the dunes.

Project Monitoring

Time Sheets for the year show

	This year 2019/20	Last year 2018/19	% change
Off-site activities	453 hours	342 hours	+ 32%
On-site activities	546.5 hours	407 hours	+ 34%
Totaling	999.5 hours	749 hours	+ 33%
Hourly rate		@\$42.25	
Value	\$42,229	\$31,687	+ 33%

All hours and their value to the community have increased significantly since last year, probably because of the membership increase. Well done everyone! (Full details at end)

Clean up Australia Day

We participated in this activity again and worked through the same stretch as last year between the River Hindmarsh and the River Inman. Twenty people participated. Seven bags of rubbish were collected plus three bags of recyclables worth \$9.20. Thanks to Derek Conroy for taking it all away.

Community Involvement

We manned the sausage sizzle at Bunnings in February, raising money for the South Coast Environment Centre.

Social

The Council very kindly awarded us with a \$100 grant to hold a *Volunteer Week* event that would thank volunteers for their contribution to the community. We had a Happy Hour at the Leaks' house.

We also had an end of year BBQ at my own house.

Thanks

So many of our group require thanks!

- Andrew Leak for doing the minutes and accounts, and for handling general secretarial work. Also especially for work in establishing the newly created web site. Also for reading the beach poles monthly and keeping an eye on erosion situations.
- Anita Leak for publicity following Julie Graham's resignation. Also for handling First Aid requirements and providing morning tea for the Wednesday bees.
- Trevor for still being *Mr Trevorkill!*
- Richard Edwards for looking after the tools and bringing them to the working bees. Also for plant watering at Bridge Point and working on hooded plover protection.
- Eric Everitt for keeping our tools sharp.
- Nigel Ibbotson for his work with his chain saw.
- Derek Conroy for watering at Bridge Point. Also for the use of his trailer to remove rubbish after the Clean Up Australia Day working bee.
- (The late) Roy Jones for working on fennel control along the River Inman.
- New member Barb Francis for her snake bite bandaging demo and for coming to so many working bees.
- New member Kevin Howard for coming to so many working bees.
- New member Sam Blight, a professional environmentalist, for her helpful information and advice.
- All members who came to working bees and who volunteered to be on the watering roster.
- David and Sue Thorn for their work on the hooded plover protection.
- Nick Hayles for being our Council liaison representative.
- We now have a total of 45 members. Thanks also to members who don't come to any meetings but just support us by paying a sub.

And outside the group we have to thank

- Brian Doman who is our liaison in the Council staff and is acknowledged as a great supporter.
- Andrew Comas from the Council for dealing with matters relating to our on-ground activities, such as advice and guidance. Also for providing plants and weed killer.
- Lee Jeffery who works for the Council but who also made the excellent weed map that we use on The Bluff.
- Corey Jackson our NRM Coast, Estuarine and Marine Officer for the Fleurieu Peninsula.
- The RAA for selling copies of the Entertainment book.

Conclusion

Once again I thank all members of the group for their support and involvement. All our work is based on the team working together and I am grateful to everyone for their participation. I hope this coronavirus pandemic does not keep us inactive for too long and look forward to meeting you all again in a happier future.

And remember '*If you don't start somewhere you will never get anywhere*'

Richard House, OAM
31st March 2020

Summary of hours worked for the year

	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Off site and admin				
Preparing for meetings. Work re agendas and minutes	72	64	49	71
Attending Victor Harbor Coastcare meetings	196	160	164	193
Attending workshops, studies, courses, presentations etc	60	90	53	33
Schools liaison	14	4	0	0
Admin, Letters, emails, reporting etc. Grant applications and follow up	44	48	51	69
Lobbying	0	0	0	0
Publicity.	17	17	26	87
Total hours	402	383	343	453
Total value	\$18,113	\$17,235	\$14,470	\$19,139
On site				
Preparing for working bees. Collecting and returning equipment, plants etc.	27	26	19	43
Weeding, pruning, bonfires etc	221	252	288	351.5
Planting	42	44	43	34
Watering	2	13	14	71.5
Planning, construction or maintenance of infrastructure	0	5	2	0
Monitoring sites and follow up work	13	18	22	28
Beach poles	37	46	20	18.5
Total hours	342	404	408	546.5
Total value	\$15,390	\$17,235	\$17,217	\$23,090
Year total hours	744	787	750	999.5
Hourly rate	\$45	\$45	\$42.25	\$42.25
Year total value	\$33,503	\$35,415	\$31,688	\$49,229
No of members	39	40	41	45
Av hours per member	19.07	19.6	18.29	21.7
Av hours per month	62.00	65.58	62.5	83.3