

WYE RIVER SEPARATION CREEK PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER EASTER 2014

Produced & distributed by the Wye River and Separation Creek Progress Association Inc

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Wye River Separation Creek Progress Association (WRSCPA) Committee has met twice so far this year; on 8 February and 22 March.

Several issues that continue to be of concern are Paddy's Path and the River Walk. We are in continuing discussions with Gary McPike of the Otway Coast Committee (OCC) regarding the urgency of making Paddy's Path safe in the very near future. Geo tech engineers have inspected the Path and we have urged all concerned to treat this as a matter of extreme urgency.

The Wye River Walk was a WRSCPA initiative a few years ago. Approximately \$60,000 is being held, jointly by the Colac Otway Shire and OCC, for the purpose of developing the walk. There has been a dispute for some time now, between the OCC and the management of The Big 4 Caravan Park, over precisely where the boundaries of the path will be. If this is not resolved very soon, the funding could be lost. We urge both parties to resolve this as a matter of urgency so that all members of the community, holiday makers and tourists can enjoy this beautiful part of Wye River and the Otways.

The Committee has been in touch with long-standing past committee member David Henshall, regarding the maintenance and storage of Association archives. Some of the records go back 30 years and David is in the process of sorting them out. We will work with David to complete this task.

The suggested amendments to the Association Constitution made at the Annual General Meeting were most helpful and these have been and continue to be discussed by the Governance & Communications Sub Committee. As previously advised, the Committee hope to have the amended rules completed by mid- year, to enable them to be referred to members for their consideration.

The Colac Otway Shire has advised that it intends to have the Harrington Park completed by 1 July 2014. Once the project is completed, it will then appoint a new Section 86 Committee to supervise the "maintenance "of the Park. Shire CEO, Rob Small, advises that to date, \$50,000 has been spent on this project .

On 14 March, a public meeting was held at the Wye River Surf Club to discuss Bush Fire Planning. The Colac Otway Shire has prepared a Bushfire Planning Policy Project Draft Report, which is available for public inspection on their website www.colacotway.vic.gov.au. The community consultation session at the Surf Club was attended by about 40 people. During discussion, a range of concerns were expressed about future ratings and their affect on new developments and property values. Submissions closed on 17 April and the WRSCPA Committee made its submission to the Shire, expressing our concerns. (A brief summary is listed on page 2)

Finally I would like to thank the Committee for all its good work and support during my time as President. The permanent resident population is decreasing and I would encourage all members to consider nominating for the WRSCPA committee, to enable the Association to continue to grow and accurately represent the broader community.

Stephen Rae (Immediate Past-President)

CFA NEWS

Once again we are fortunate to have had a very quiet fire season so far, with no major incidents in our patch. However, we have had great representation by our members on strike teams at other fires around the State. New members, Dave Kohout (H2O Dave,) Michael Winn (H2O Michael) and Angus Hawkes, along with seasoned campaigner, Max McCaffrey, all gained valuable experience at those fires.

We have just completed a very successful burn from the Illuka Extension Road to the rear of the houses in Dunoon Road. Much planning and hard work went into making this happen. Many thanks to Andrew Hack for his planning and to our bosses at CFA District 6, for all of their assistance in the planning, gaining permission from land holders and organising resources and manpower. A big thank you to all the volunteers who participated and travelled from Colac, Barongarook, Lavers Hill, Mingay (wherever that is) and every single volly from Upper Ferntree Gully.

We are currently training up four new members and look forward to them becoming fire fighters, adding to our younger image and dispelling any mention of Dad's Army.

Also new in the brigade are our Secretaries, yes two, to take over the magnificent job which Peter Mitchell has performed over the last 12 years. We thank you very much Peter for what you have done for us in that time and there are plenty of lasting legacies of what you have achieved. To follow on the excellent work will be Jeremy and Carolyn Tatchell. Thank you very much for taking on this most sought after position.

If you haven't already done so, please download the Fire Ready app on your smart phone; you can put in a watch zone. I have a 30K radius on mine and find it very useful.

Wye River Fire Brigade lost a very valued member late last year in Allan Howie. This is the first fire season in 25 years without Al and he was and is greatly missed. A story and a laugh always came back from Al's adventures with my favourite being the one when we were on a strike team at King Lake. Al had a few beers and after his shift, he went back to the dormitory, quite late. Al thought he was getting into his bed, but in fact was the Incident Controllers! The holler let out woke everyone and after a bit of a giggle, Al was first asleep.

Roy Moriarty, Captain, Wye River CFA Brigade

BUSHFIRE PLANNING POLICY PROJECT

The Colac Otway Shire (COS) has prepared a Bushfire Planning Policy Project Draft Report, which is available for public inspection on their website www.colacotway.vic.gov.au

The State Government has adopted legislation requiring Councils to apply a Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) to their planning schemes, in areas of high bushfire risk, to ensure a precautionary approach to development is taken with the overarching tenet, being the value of protecting human lives.

The Draft Report addresses the Bushfire Attack Levels (BAL) that are a means of measuring a building's potential exposure to ember attack, radiant heat and direct flame contact. BAL ratings are used as the basis for establishing the requirements for construction when applying for either a planning or building permit. The higher the BAL rating the higher the standard of construction required.

The Draft Report reveals that almost the entire townships of Wye River, Separation Creek and Kennett River are to be rated at the highest level BAL-FZ (Flame Zone) i.e. having direct exposure to flames, radiant heat and embers from the fire front.

The Project does not intend to extend the settlement boundaries for these townships and identifies a tension between the existing planning scheme controls and requirements of the BMO to maintain adequate defendable space around buildings. The Draft Report recommends that revegetation requirements that are currently in place to manage neighbourhood character be reduced, to enable the maintenance of defendable space.

On Friday 14 March 2014 the COS conducted a community consultation session at the Wye River Surf Club, outlining the project, that was attended by about 40 persons. During discussion, a range of concerns were expressed, including the validity of the BAL ratings for these settlements and their affect on new developments and property values.

The COS has accepted submissions on the Draft Report until 17 April 2014. The Report is available for viewing at the COS offices in Colac and Apollo Bay. Further information is available from the COS Strategic Planning Unit on 5232 9400.

CFA AUXILIARY REPORT

I would like to sincerely thank all the members of our community who give their time to help make our two fetes so very successful financially, but also as terrific community events. Not only thanks to the hard workers, but also to those who donate all our merchandise AND those who BUY AND EAT on the day! Without you all, nothing would happen.

At the Summer Fete we made \$14,546.00 – an amazing amount for such a small community and in two hours, except for the raffle ticket selling the night before. It just blows my mind how many transactions happen, seeing that we only sold about 10 items for \$50, the rest just 50c, \$1, \$2 and \$5!

I would also like to acknowledge the staff at the Wye Store, who need a special thank you, as they donate all their tips to our Brigade. The Big4 Holiday Park also needs special thanks, as they donate a percentage of a particular weekend's takings to our brigade! Thank you.

A group of dedicated Auxiliary members held a book stall two weeks after the fete. They were inundated and sold many of our left over books. So watch out for any 'Bookstall' notices in the future!

As we have successfully repaid our entire loan to build the extension to the Fire Station, we are in the process of saving the money needed to upgrade our brigade owned "Vehicle of first response" – the 4 wheel drive.

So please, if you were not able to make the Summer Fete, don't worry and feel guilty, as there is the **Easter Fete on Saturday 19th April ... Easter Saturday**. All donations of new, pre-loved goods and cakes will be very gratefully received.

Carolyn Tatchell, President

ESTUARY WATCH

In the eighteen months since the establishment of our local EstuaryWatch group, we have gathered our data on the first and third Sunday of each month. We are somewhat apprehensive should we ever have to use the berm measuring pole if the outward flow is blocked by sand, but thankfully, our river consistently manages to maintain its unhindered flow out to the waiting sea - although sometimes only just.

The collection and recording of such data means that Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) has a growing database specific to our river and does not have to rely on extrapolation of data collected from other rivers in our region.

Last year, our group had an efficiency boost when we welcomed our new member, Gail Chittleborough, after completing her training with our co-ordinator, Rose Herben. It is good to have a mix of resident and non-resident members to ensure there are always at least two people to do the monitoring and everyone can have a turn at uploading the data on to the CCMA database.

Being involved with Estuary Watch has made us look at our river with greater interest as it follows its meandering course over the sand at the whim of winds and tides. It has also given Estuary Watchers opportunities to attend workshops and seminars organized by CCMA, such as the recent *Estuaries Unmasked* seminar at Ocean Grove, which included an informative talk about bird species found in and along wetlands and estuarine waterways surrounding Geelong, given by well-known bird enthusiast, John Newman.

If you are interested in joining our group, please contact me and I will put you in touch with Rose.

Yvonne Sheppard : Phone: 5289 0068

WYE RIVER SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

In 2013, the Life Saving Club turned 55 years of age, a milestone which we have largely let slip by in the business of the everyday life of the club. However, reflecting on the changes in the club since 1958, it has been quite a journey. Starting in a small shed, graduating to a larger one and now in our current iconic building, the club is a reflection of the growth and increasing popularity of the town. Many more people visit, pass through, or live in the town these

days, with a consequent increased use of the beach and lifesaving facilities, a demand which we strive to stay abreast of. Refurbishments planned this year will also enable us to preserve and maintain the building for future generations.

Thankfully, this season has been one of our quieter ones for the last few years, which has meant more time to skill up and train all our patrol members and focus on renewing outdated equipment and upgrading infrastructure. The increasingly changeable nature of the beach and conditions, with more extreme tides and subsequent dune damage, is also uppermost in our minds. Rips and tides are never the same at Wye River and as one of the more dangerous beaches in Victoria, we are ever mindful of the need for vigilance.

Wye River has always had a capricious sea. However, climate change has also brought greater and more frequent changes to the beach, currents and dunes. The Club constantly monitors conditions and modifies practices to suit these, for example, the ramp access has been less secure this year. As part of a larger state-based and national organisation, Wye River SLSC also benefits from support and information regarding up to date emergency management and communications technology.

This year has also seen more members and nippers than ever (432) and it is terrific to note that we have nearly as many women as men. It is only 25 years or so since women have been allowed to be active members in surf life-saving. This year's patrol season finishes on Easter Monday and re-commences at the end of November.

I would also like to thank the many other donors and supporters of the club. The generosity of the Wye River and Separation Creek community (both residents and part timers) never ceases to humble me, remind me of the trust given to the club and the importance of preserving this trust in a small community.

As most are well aware, we are a voluntary club relying mainly on donations, sponsorship and membership fees to function. Thank you Wye River and Separation Creek for contributing to our doorknock appeal on 1st January. We raised over \$2500, which is a fantastic effort.

I am also very excited to announce a new major sponsor for next year. Matt and Leanne Travers from the Big 4 Caravan Park have committed funding to the Nippers program for the next 3 years. This is a terrific contribution and one which will be well invested in the children and juniors of the club – the next generation of life savers. We would like extend a heartfelt thanks to them and express our appreciation for such a level of support and confidence from one of our local businesses.

Finally I would like to invite you all to attend our Annual Wing Ding held on Easter Sunday (20th April) from 12.00. There are great prizes to be won, lots of fun; meals and drinks are included and with all happening in a fabulous venue. If you can't make it but would have items to donate for raffles or auctions, please drop them into the club house, identifying yourself. See you there!

Debra Hocking- President

SPECIAL COMMUNITY NOTICE

A DEFIBRILLATOR FOR THE WYE SEP COMMUNITY

The BIG4 Wye River has worked closely with Susie Cartledge and has recently been granted funding from the Lorne Op shop for the purchase of a Defibrillator machine. A huge thankyou to the Lorne Op Shop for their very generous support and to Susie Cartledge for making it all happen. A key criteria for the funding was that the machine is to be available for access by ALL of our community at all times. It is located on the outside wall of the BIG4 Wye River reception.

What a great asset for our town.

OTWAY COAST TOURISM - We have local tourism members from Wye River to Wongarra.

On 10 April, several of our members met in a positive meeting with our local federal MP, Sarah Henderson, at Wye River. We reminded Sarah that the Separation Creek footbridge is a high priority locally and tourists will benefit if the road vistas are opened up along the Great Ocean Road (GOR,) after years of neglected vegetation growth. We raised the condition of Paddy's Path and the need for good walking tracks in the area. We also supported the Kennett River Association's plan for upgrading the toilets and parking in Kennett, as well as the need for passive Koala interpretation for visitors.

We continue to monitor mobile coverage and in March, escalated recent problems with the new antenna to Telstra regional management. Telstra are now confident the mobile system will perform much better than in previous years.

We met with the new organisers of the GOR Marathon and supported ways to reopen the road earlier on the day the marathon passes through our towns.

We are working with the Shire and the Department of Environment & Primary Industry (DEPI) to keep Otway parks and waterfalls (eg Hopetoun and Beauchamp,) open, after a history of closures in recent years.

The new regional tourism board, Great Ocean Road Tourism (GORT,) extending from Torquay to Port Fairy and beyond, is now in place. The new board should be less Geelong -centric and more supportive of local tourism. Some of our group met the new GORT members in March, in Apollo Bay, in a joint function with the Victoria Tourism Board.

Any owners who rent their houses are welcome to attend our meetings; contact me.

Rex Brown, Chair, Otway Coast Tourism 0408 006 992

OTWAY COAST COMMITTEE (OCC)

Wye River Foreshore Camping Ground – Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) & New Amenities Block

The new STP was completed and made operational in October 2013, in time for the camping grounds opening on Melbourne Cup weekend. The STP functioned well over the summer period with minor teething problems.

The new amenities block modules did however present some challenges, as the manufacturer was unable to meet the original supply deadline, with only one module installed the week before the opening. To compensate, the OCC organized portable toilets and showers, to ensure adequate facilities were available to all campers. OCC outdoor staff from Apollo Bay then worked substantial overtime to ensure the final modules were operational prior to Christmas. More work remains at the camping ground and is programmed to begin after the closure at the end of April 2014. Works include replacement of the reticulated potable water system throughout the park, installation of fire hose reels and re-sealing the road in the camp ground.

Wye River Beach Retaining Wall:

In November 2013, I reported that *"the OCC has successfully applied for funding from the State Governments 'Coastal Risk Mitigation Program' for funds to address the state of the retaining wall adjacent the mouth of the river. The OCC initially applied for funding for the replacement of the wall, however Department of Environment & Primary Industries (DEPI) officers advised that because of the highly competitive nature of the program it would be preferable to undertake a coastal hazards vulnerability assessment and options report of the project by suitably qualified and experienced coastal engineers, to ensure sound planning and engineering informed any replacement wall, thereby improving the chances of a successful funding application."* The report has been completed and a further application for the wall replacement project will be submitted for the next round of the program in May 2014.

Wye River – River Walk:

The Colac Otway Shire have recently confirmed that the funding required to construct an aggregate path through the Wye River Big 4 Caravan Park Crown land leasehold, as originally planned, has been received and is available.

Negotiations are continuing with the tenants at the Wye River Big 4 to formalise the river walk which is a condition of their Crown land Lease. Currently the Lease requires that "access to the general public for the purpose of passive non-vehicular recreation is to be freely permitted. A slashed grassy walking track of at least 2.4 metres width which generally follows the southern river bank "is to be provided "and maintained by the tenant."

The WRSCPA initiated the proposal to formalise the path, with a formed aggregate path, to improve the access and remove any uncertainty of path users and campers alike to the provision of the public access, by successfully applying to the Colac Otway Shire (COS) for funding under its Small Town Infrastructure Fund. The OCC supported the WRSCPA in the funding application to COS and subsequently the OCC supported COS in a further application to the State Government for the remainder of the funding required. The OCC has agreed to contribute the cost of construction with the funding expected to cover the cost of materials. There is no cost involved for the tenant with the construction of the path. **Negotiations are continuing with the tenant, to ensure the path alignment is as described in the lease and not on the sections of the river bank/bed that are subject to flooding when the river mouth is closed.**

Paddy's Path Update:

Last year the OCC engaged a Civil Engineer with erosion/land slip expertise, to inspect the slip on Paddy's Path and then write a project scoping report. The report identified the need for further investigation and that the 'slip bowl' (the likely area of movement) is larger than the area managed by the OCC and that other stakeholders are likely to be impacted should any significant movement occur. The OCC forwarded the report to Vicroads, DEPI, and COS for their consideration. However in early December there was a major slope failure, making the path unsafe.

The OCC discussed the issue and the need for input with other stakeholders, COS & VicRoads, at the January forum and met with the VicRoads senior regional managers in February to discuss repair options. VicRoads, to their credit, have independently inspected the site and we expect that their geo tech expert and ours will meet onsite shortly to look at possible repair options. In the meantime the OCC are investigating options to provide temporary safe alternatives around the most recent slip.

Gary McPike: Executive Officer: Otway Coast Committee.

70 Great Ocean Rd Apollo Bay 3233 (Apollo Bay Recreation Reserve)

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LOCAL GOSSIP – MARCH 2014

Sadly I must inform you that in November Nell Lewis passed away. After years of permanently residing in Wye, Nell and Eric had to move last October to the Apollo Bay Nursing home. Nell was very happy there but unfortunately she passed away all too quickly to get the full benefit. Eric has now moved to an Aged Care Facility close to his children. Our thoughts are with Eric and their family.

In December, Al Howie lost his battle with cancer. His passing is a devastating loss to our community, as well as to Dympna and their families. He was such a charismatic person, an integral part of the character of the town. He was a real identity, honest, loyal and participated in most local happenings. He was loved and respected by all. He enjoyed life to the full. He loved the whole area but mainly the surf... at his Sep Beach....now colloquially named 'Howies Beach'. Dympna was such a wonderful positive support and nurse for Al and with Wellsy, it meant Al was able to be at his beloved home in Sep as much as possible.

The one big exciting event that happened to Al was that in December he got his wish and he and Dympna married.

Following his funeral in Lorne there was a wonderful celebration of his life, held as he wished at pub, store and Howies' beach. Dympna, your family and Wellsy; we can never forget him. Our thoughts, strength and love to you all.

A few of our community are having trouble with their health; Marilyn while recuperating from a hip replacement has had to go back to hospital and have another more serious op!

David Henshall has fought back from his malady.

Juliet had a battle with her wheelie bin and ended up second best with broken wrist!!

Our Cazthere is no stopping her.. golf, work, golf, Elvis, golf, running, golf and Wellsy. Caz even gave a speech to hundreds of people for 'Strive to Thrive' – a post - cancer gym scheme to help people get back to their normal lives. She is an inspiration to us all. No wonder Wellsy bought that new toy...he had to find something to fill up his time!

I know there are others fighting ill health and operations; believe me, we are thinking of you.

Dot Hutchinson – Nana Dot- has now moved into the Lorne Nursing home. She is much closer to Wye and happier. She will now be able to accept the loving care given there and will be keeping the nursing staff on their toes!

Audrey Kerville has also moved into an aged care facility in Melbourne. She and her family have had a holiday home down here forever. Luckily she has passed on her love of the area, not only to her son and daughter in law, but also her grandchildren.

All that said our little communities are still growing,

Tom and Harsha have had a beautiful little baby boy, Hugo, and are all living here in Wye. About a week later Tom's sister Skye had a little girl, Abigail, in Perth! Talk about being torn grandparents; where should they be... poor Sue and Peter!

The Russel clan is growing with Evan and Sarah having a lovely baby daughter.

No more babies BUT Lesley and Tony Maly moved permanently into Wye. They have 'got right into the swing of things' by joining the CFA and WRSCPA, for starters and finding work. Same with Mary Eckhardt and Dennis Staight. They have had their house down here for 10 years, but have seen the light and moved down here 24/7.

Dare we say Dave H2O and Mel and their two beautiful daughters have moved to Wye from Kennett – unfortunately only while their home is being altered!

Florence has joined the big kids on the school bus this year; what are Matt and Leanne going to do with only one child at home? Go Florence! By the way, the school bus driver says it's a very pleasant drive, as one of his passengers made a general statement to all in the bus that 'there were to be no toilet jokes on the bus'! Not quite as memorable though as one child (no longer here) a few years ago, after a trip to Melbourne, seeing those billboards on the highway just before West Gate Bridge, asked Roy 'why do you want longer sex?'

It is always exciting when permanent renters purchase their own homes in the area. Carolyn (still dogless) is now the very proud owner of her own home in Wye. Luke, Marcella, Junior and 'Cholita' have also bought their own pad in Wye. We wish them every happiness and lots of laughs in their homes. It's a great place to live, I can tell you.

There are changes at The General Store too...Bryan Alley has moved down here to be the store's new chef, as Jimmy and Kate have left to keep working with Dave and Richie in their new project in the city. But Mike has joined the team as another staff member. Good luck to them all.

We have also had a number of new holiday homeowners move in to our beautiful region. Please every-one of you know that you are all invited to every event/happening/group in our area. Just keep an eye out on the notice boards by the store and in the pub for dates of events. WELCOME!

Guess what? We will all see more of Yenda again. He has seen the light and retired from the big smoke, again, and will be here not only on weekends but all week.

Even though Slugger has sold we are not losing him completely ... I gather he will become a 'seasonal resident/worker'. Good luck.

We have a few crazy runners representing us in this year's marathon and half marathon. Good luck Roy and Elliot for the big one! And for the half; Max, Luke and....who could it be ...but ...our curly top Caz! Pip has now joined the bike craze as has Toby, Wellsy and Roy.

Laura is working her butt off at the pub, busy saving money for her huge overseas adventure in America and Europe. Have fun and enjoy. What about our Tess, surveying the seas and turtles in the Seychelles & Borneo and now as well as surveying, she is helping rebuilding the reef in the Maldives and taking tourists scuba diving there! Where will she be next! It's fantastic!

I've only heard of one BIG birthday and I think Prousy turning half a century qualifies for a big kiss!

To any person I have missed, my apologies; I can only report on what I hear and even though I have huge ears I do miss many things!

The Busy Body

The family of the late Allan Howie would like to thank this wonderful community for your support and understanding during Al's illness and after his death. To his friends, who made his birthday so special with a now lasting memorial to him; the tradies who gave up their own time to help complete his deck and other unfinished work projects; Peter Latham for his beautiful poem; Megan our resident nurse at Sep; Luke, Caroline and staff, for catering so well to the crowds that descended on them for his wake; Ritchie and Dave for their contribution and of course Wellsy, our rock.

Thank you all so very, very much - **Dympna and family**.

The Progress Association prints material from contributors, uncut. The views expressed are theirs and may (rarely) not coincide with those of the Association.

PROGRESS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP FORM (FOR NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS)

To ensure continuation of the work of the Progress Association, and of this Newsletter, PLEASE (RE) SUBSCRIBE.

Annual membership is \$10 per person or \$15 per family.

Please complete this form and send it with your subscription to: **The Treasurer, WRSCPA, C/- Post Office, Wye River Vic 3221.**

You can also pay by direct transfer to our bank account: WESTPAC, Colac branch: BSB 033-637, Account Number 99-0081, Account Name: WRSCPA.

Following lodgement please e-mail wye.seppa@gmail.com advising who you have paid for, the amount paid, and giving the information requested below. This is important because we must, by law, keep a record of current members. Receipts will be issued on request.

Please indicate whether **Individual** or **Family** membership; **renewing?** (tick)

Name/s: (Please print)

Addresses: (Wye/Sep & other if applicable)

Phone No: (Wye/Sep & other if applicable)

Email: Receipts issued on request.