

Calling all volunteers

We all love the Prom and enjoy giving our time to make it an even more amazing place. However, your committee is asking you to consider giving just a little more, if you can.

The way volunteering at the Prom works is that the *Friends of the Prom* committee comes up with ideas for volunteer activities, presents them to our liaison ranger from Parks Victoria (Cassie) and, if PV is happy with what we propose, we invite you to come along. Currently there are only a handful of people (most of whom are on the committee) who organise activities for over 100 volunteers. If one of the handful is unable to attend, we run the risk of having to cancel activities.

With new projects such as the Prom Sanctuary about to happen, *Friends of the Prom* is going to be in high demand. Unless we can build our capacity, I doubt we will meet that demand. The committee has no more capacity and so we are calling on our broader cherished group of friends and members to learn the ropes and help out when you can.

We invite you to enrol in our apprenticeship scheme. If you are coming to an activity, why not help the organiser and learn how to run the activity? The more people who know how to do that, the less likely we are to cancel activities.

Any volunteers for the upcoming ***sea spurge***

activity? Peter Wilson can take you through the planning, running the activity (e.g. bringing the trailer, safety briefing etc) and reporting. It's not really hard.

Please email me if you are interested in being an apprentice for this or future activities (info@friendsoftheprom.org.au); the next activity after ***sea spurge being tree guard removal and tree planting*** in May. It will be a huge contribution to our group.

Please also consider being on the committee. I could tell you how exciting it is to be Secretary and how much fun we have in committee meetings but my nose is already long enough. However, someone has to do it for the show to go on. Positions run for a maximum of 3 years but you are welcome to try it out for one year.

The AGM will be on Saturday 26 July (followed by National Tree Day plantings on Sunday 27 July).

I will remind you closer to the dates. Hopefully not everyone will be looking uncomfortable and trying not to sneeze when nominations are called.

Let me know too if you have ideas for volunteer activities that we are not currently offering. We are always looking to add diversity to Prom activities.

Keith McDougall, Secretary

Below: our next generation of volunteers! Alex, Rosie, Mabel and Amos hauling away a found wet blanket at Squeaky Beach on our Cleanup day (Karli Duckett)



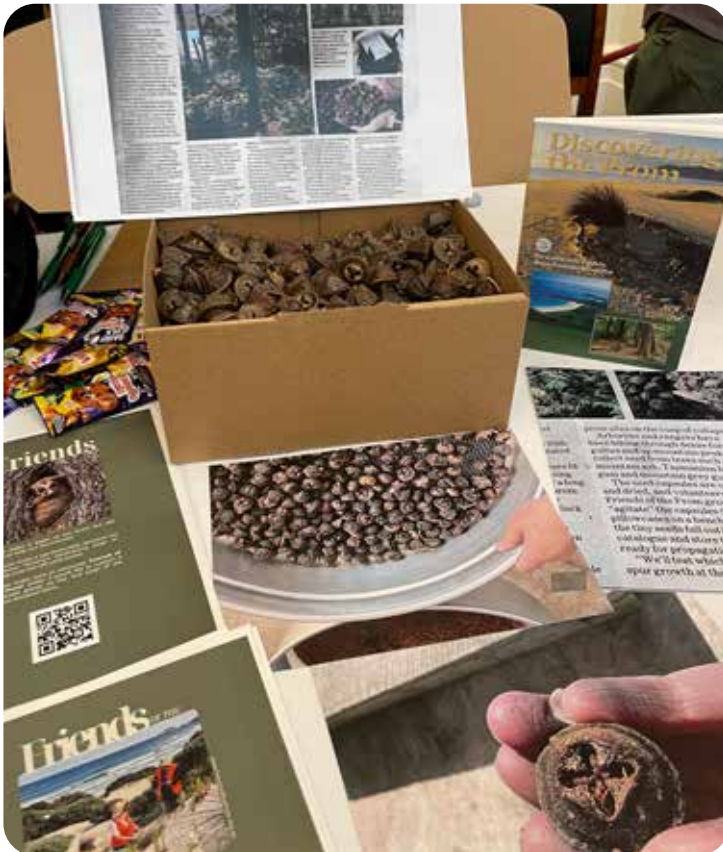
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**NEWSLETTER #239
MARCH 2025**

FOTP goes to Parliament House

Friends of the Prom members Kelsey Fraser and Michelle Darling had the opportunity to attend a special meeting of volunteers from various environmental groups and were introduced to some Landcare members and parliamentary members on Landcare Day.



Money raised for the Prom Sanctuary

The People and Parks Foundation has recently raised over \$800,000 for the Prom Sanctuary through donations from the public, which were matched dollar-for-dollar by the Victorian Government up to \$395,000. The generous amount donated by the public exceeded the Government's contribution and surpassed expectations.

People and Parks Foundation is an Australian environment and health charity which works in partnership with organisations like Parks Victoria to develop and resource transformative projects that benefit the health of people, places and the planet. It acknowledges the reality that projects like the Prom Sanctuary vision cannot be realised by government alone.

The money will go towards restoration works in the Grasslands, Heathlands and Offshore Islands. These works will build on existing work and planning undertaken in the Coastal Grassy Woodlands and Heathland Restoration Plans and the Conservation Action Plan. It will have a positive impact on the restoration of these habitats and control of weeds in the offshore islands.



Above: Eastern Bristlebirds have been introduced to the Prom in response to the bushfire threat to their East Gippsland habitat (DEECA)

No news yet on Dungflingers future

The last time volunteers visited Varney's Grasslands to collect data for the Grazer Monitoring Project was 1 October 2024. At that time Parks Vic's analysis of our data suggested that grazing animal populations were finally in balance and maintaining a healthy ecosystem in the restored grasslands. This meant that our work in this area was done, and without a new site to work on, the Dungflingers' future was uncertain. We understand that Parks Victoria is currently reviewing the data that volunteers collected between 2017 and 2024 and establishing new enclosures elsewhere.

At their next quarterly planning meeting later this month, Park managers and *Friends of the Prom* reps will be discussing future restoration work and the prospects for volunteer involvement.

Stay tuned for updates.

Bioblitz cancelled

The mini bioblitz around the Stockyards that was scheduled for the morning of Sunday 23 February was cancelled because of the likelihood of thunderstorms and the lack of anything to photograph following our hot, dry summer. Nonetheless, two intrepid volunteers did upload some observations on iNaturalist during the beach clean. Toby and Lilly Beasley blitzed the field, photographing and uploading some interesting marine and littoral (shoreline) creatures. The experts agreed on the identification of an Eastern Fiddler Ray – see photo. While the species is common in Australian waters, that is only the second record at the Prom, highlighting the value of these casual observations. Toby's record is already on the Atlas of Living Australia.

Next year, thunderstorms



permitting, we may move from the land to the seashore and document life there. If it is as hot as it was this year, no-one will mind getting wet in the shallows or amongst the rock pools. The Blitz is likely to return in spring but perhaps in a more targeted way as we look for species to propagate for our burgeoning partnership with the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens.

Above: Eastern Fiddler Ray found on the beach (Toby Beasley)

Beach clean Saturday 22 February 2025

Despite the heat, our 2025 effort was a very successful beach clean, with 45 keen volunteers divided into 6 groups to clean Norman, Squeaky, Picnic, Whisky, Darby and Cotters Beaches and the eastern Shallow Inlet shoreline from Hourigans Camp Lane. It was a beautiful morning, but it gradually got hotter until we were all very keen to return to the shade of Stockyard. Here Mary and Jane greeted us with tarps and scales all ready to pitch in to help with the sorting.

The big job of weighing, sorting, counting and recording of all the rubbish is always quite interesting and we were encouraged to see very few plastic straws or party balloons – a very positive change from a few years ago. A few large items had to be left or dragged up out of the reach of high tide and their position has been reported to Cassie as well. Many thanks to our liaison ranger Cassie Nolan for collating our data and uploading it on the Tangaroa Blue Foundation’s marine database.

Beach	Weight of rubbish sorted (kg)			
	2025	2024	2023	2022
Norman Beach	4.5	NR	5 (estimated)	2
Squeaky Beach	4.5	NR	0.5	21.5 (incl. Picnic and Squeaky)
Picnic & Whisky	1.7	NR	NR	12
Darby	6.3	14.0	7.7	12
Cotters	39.2	18.5	11	4.5
Hourigans (Shallow Inlet)	19	4.0	30.8	14.5
5-Mile	Not visited	10.5	9.5	66.2

NR = nil report

Right and below: most of the beach cleaning group at Stockyards (Karli Duckett)



Squeaky Beach Group with Karin

As we were 8 volunteers and it was early in the day, we were able to spread out along the width of the beach and make our way to the rocks and start of the track to Tidal River, but still found more rubbish on the way back. Most of the rubbish we found had been swept up to lodge amongst the rocks and bushes at both ends of the beach, with the largest item a few metres of black electrical cable. We were glad to have a break in the shade of the large boulders at the northern end, but the beach had become very busy and we found cars parked on both sides of the access road out. Yeshani and Anastasia were returning to Melbourne in the afternoon as Yeshani had volunteered with another beach clean in Melbourne the next day – a truly dedicated volunteer!



Beach clean Saturday 22 February 2025 cont...

Whisky Bay and Picnic Bay with Chris

Ours was a youthful and enthusiastic crew with Rose, 9, and Mabel, 6, with their father Daniel (new FotP members who wanted to 'give back' after a fabulous summer camping trip to the Prom); Shelley was with her son Amos, 5; Ash has just finished school and is about to embark on a degree in environmental science. Also on board were Alex and Dave who landed our

largest items, a huge blanket which needed a team effort to wash off the sand in the shallows, and a broken cricket bat.

On the path to Whisky Bay we spotted two Weasel Skinks and an eel in the creek before landing four dirty nappies (ughh!), plastic bottles, cans, soft and hard plastic food wraps and an assortment of hard plastic bits and pieces. On the climb over to Picnic Bay we saw a snake disappear into the

bush, a Glossy Grass Skink and three sweet Scrub Wrens darting about for insects over the creek. Picnic Bay was much cleaner – apart from the blanket and cricket bat. Before making our way back up to the carpark and Stockyards to weigh and sort our haul of rubbish, we enjoyed having lunch in the cool shade of the rocks, watching the waves rolling onto the shore.

Clockwise from left: Alex with Rosie, Mabel and Amos with the wet blanket; Dave with broken cricket bat; Daniel carrying wet blanket, such hard work– carting rubbish up the hill to the cars; enjoying lunch in the shade at Picnic Bay;



Beach clean Saturday 22 February 2025 cont...

Hourigans Camp (Corner Inlet) with Kelsey

The 'Hourigan's Hooligans' set out on the track to the inlet, only to come across a tiger snake about 100 metres from the carpark. Once we reached the beach we split into two groups and set off in opposite directions. It was lovely in the morning with some cloud cover but by 11:30 the sun had some bite.

What felt like a relatively clean beach turned up roughly 19kg of rubbish. Amongst all the driftwood there was a substantial amount of

entangled rope for our collection, along with an assortment of clothing and even a frisbee.

Cotters Beach with Sigrid and Charlie

The team left Stockyard for Cotters beach and after our walk to the beach we broke into two groups: six people did a forced march of 4 km straight north. We were lucky to see two groups of hooded plovers, one of four and the other of seven birds at the shoreline, which compensated us

for the hard walk. On our way back we collected all the rubbish we could find.

Meanwhile, the other three group members cleaned the south side of the beach and then walked towards the other group. It was great that we were able to cover about five km of this long beach, collecting 35 kg of all sorts of rubbish and leaving a heavy rope, a huge buoy, a gas cylinder and two containers with unidentified liquid at the beach for the Rangers to pick up. We were a great team of people working together in the best way!

Some interesting finds at the remote Cotters Beach (Sigrid and Charlie Ablitt)



Beach clean Saturday 22 February 2025 cont...

Norman Beach with Keith

Sandy, Olivia and Keith braved Norman Beach amidst the masses of bronzed beachgoers and an organised running event, returning with 4.5 kg of rubbish and huge thirsts. Upon reports that the rangers regularly cleaned that beach, we thought we might have to buy coffee at the shop and 'accidentally' drop the cups as we searched for debris; and on our first traverse where we only picked up a pair of socks and lots of tiny pieces of blue plastic it seemed like the only way we were going to have anything to show.

But then one beach goer gave us a plastic wrapper he had found and we were on our way. Most of our weight was rope but we could have had more to show had we lugged back a large sign advising against naked flames. The most disturbing find was a headless, undecorated doll — amazing what people take to the beach!

Darby Beach with Andre

In what is probably a first for our newsletter, Andre's report on her team's exploits on Darby Beach is in the form of a half-sonnet ... or whatever ...

*"It was a fabulous crew of eight,
Off to Darby Beach and its
rubbishy fate,
6.3kg of assorted rubbish was found,
Lots of micro plastics, boating, party,
kiddy bottles, cans
and takeaway crap...
Random tubing, chunks of foam,
plastic and a party hat.
Despite the heat,
the rewards were great —
camaraderie and
leaving the beach in
a far better state!"*

Thanks to all the crew for your efforts.

Clockwise from top left: Norman Beach sign – "Every piece of rubbish tells a story..." (Keith McDougall); Keith and others amongst the final round of rubbish; the Darby crew (Andre Fox)



Nursery News

Last working day for 2024

Our final get together on 28 November gave us the opportunity to celebrate Jan's birthday. But it wasn't long before Jan was back at her post in front of the sink, washing and sterilizing the endless tube stock pots, trays etc for future seed and plant propagation. It's an invaluable contribution.

Other activities included weeding the display garden, collecting seed and walking on Link Track with Mary to assess which plants had seeds ready for collecting.

Bill, together with ParksVic staff members Cam and Sean, has been busy designing a new hardening-off shed and applying for a grant before the existing shed deteriorates further.

Christmas party

On December 12, the nursery group had its annual Christmas lunch at Stockyards and the spread was amazing with absolutely every Christmas specialty down to pavlova, pudding and brandy custard. It was a lovely gathering with a good turnout of around 22 people. We missed Jim Whelan who was in hospital with pneumonia, but his wife Heather joined us and we are pleased to know that Jim has recovered well.

Elizabeth, who moved to Tasmania earlier in the year, sent a gift to Mary: A framed FotP t-shirt with the original design from some 40 years ago. It was a great hit and it has been decided to re-use the design and arrange for a new

round of FotP t-shirts to be made up. Elizabeth, of course, is one of the FotP's stalwarts who gave decades of hard work and great humour to the group.

Kris Kringle gifts were exchanged followed by speeches from Mary, who expressed special thanks to the Nursery's Parks Victoria liaison officer, Cam. Cam has been supporting the Nursery in its quest to propagate the plants required for the Prom's needs for 12 years and, as Mary said, we couldn't do it without him. Cam, in turn, had nothing but praise for Mary and the team and gave Mary and the group loads more chocolates to put in the fridge!!!

Photos clockwise from top left: Rust damage to the frame of the nursery's hardening-off shed; Cam, Michelle (standing), Barb and Leah; Jan at work; the nursery crew; Christine, Jan and Viv (in Olga's loveseat) and Katrin



Nursery News cont.



Mother and daughter day

A few of us decided to go to the Nursery on Friday 27 December (Thursday was Boxing Day and problematic) and it turned out to be just Michelle with daughter Ella and Chris with daughter Tiger. Boxing Day had been hot and we expected to have to water the seedlings but Cam, who had been on fire alert on Boxing Day came in and checked the sprinklers. The plants were all well-watered and lush, so we set about removing some that had not taken and did some weeding. The four of us had a lovely time together and our two conservation-minded daughters had lots to talk about.

*Top: Back to propagating at the nursery on our first Thursday for 2025
Middle: Ella, Michelle, Chris and Tiger
Bottom: Working amongst the lush plants*



Nursery News cont.

Visit to Narkabundah Wildflower Nursery

There was a great turnout for our visit to Rob O'Sullivan's Narkabundah Wildflower Nursery at Sandy Point on Thursday 23 January. Rob and Jess showed us around the nursery and gave us some extremely valuable tips to get the highest success rates when propagating indigenous plants from seed and cuttings. One important takeaway was to water the plants deeply — long enough to soak the full depth of the pots — first thing in the morning and then let them dry out and oxygenate over the remainder of the day, and not water again in the evening. However, as Rob was quick

to point out there is no substitute for the human eye to gauge watering needs in changeable weather. Here Narkabundah has a distinct advantage over us with their ability for on-site daily inspections while we visit only every second Thursday. Rob and Jess also generously shared their knowledge about soil structure and fertiliser.

Many thanks to Rob and Jess for all their informative and useful guidance which will hopefully help lift the FotP Nursery's propagation success rates.

Our rewarding time at Narkabundah was followed by lunch and cake at Henri and Simon's beautiful house in Sandy Point which was enjoyed by all, including two new

members Dave and Lyndon Green.

Over February the nursery has been growing plants for Park Ranger, Riley, for the Bear Gully Campground near Cape Liptrap Lighthouse. Two trays of Kangaroo Apple (*Solanum aviculare*) seeds sown on February 6 produced 100 ready for pricking out into tubes on March 6, with many more to come in coming weeks. Mary has been pleased to be able to tick off her list a number of tasks, including de-mossing 120 scrub she-oaks (*Allocasuarina paludosa*) and 50 of the purple-flowered Callistemon pallidus, potting up some Boobiolla (*Myoporum insulare*).



Clockwise from Left:
Volunteers meet Rob and Jess at
Narkabundah Wildflower Nursery

Rob explaining how they use polystyrene
plug trays for propagation

Lunch at Henri and Simon's house



Nursery News cont.

Two unexpected visitors to the nursery

First, Jan had an unexpected shock when she went to fill the outside sink at the nursery on Thursday 20 February. A female Pygmy Possum and her two even tinier babies had lodged themselves in the plug hole. We supposed they had entered the sink for some reason and were unable to scale the steep sides to escape. Happily,

they were still moving, and Cam was able to very gently remove them and return them to a folded-up tent on the top shelf inside the nursery shed. Cam had noticed them running around a few days earlier and they had taken up temporary residence there. Very soon after their rescue, they were spotted moving around their nest.

Our second unexpected visitor was Samuel McLennan. He is the amazing

Tasmanian who decided to make a statement about the amount of rubbish littering our oceans and washing up on our beaches. He built a raft from rubbish he found on Tasmania's beaches and then sailed it across Bass Strait, arriving at the Prom in mid-February. He joined us on March 6 at the nursery and did an excellent job weeding out the polyhouses.



Left: Pygmy Possum mother and babies "hiding" in the plughole; Pygmy Possums at their temporary nest in the nursery shed (Cam Downing)

Below: Samuel weeding under the tables in Rose's Flowerpot hothouse, and his raft



DONATIONS

Friends of the Prom has benefited from generous donations by well-wishers over the past few years. We use these donations to encourage scientific research at the Prom through our program of grants to tertiary students to help with expenses. We have now made the process of donating easier by registering our organisation with Landcare Victoria's Deductible Gift Recipient Fund.

You can make a tax-deductible donation via Landcare Victoria's fundraising page <https://landcarevictoria.org.au/donate>; alternatively, scan the QR-code below using your smartphone. **Please make sure you nominate 'Friends of the Prom' under 'I would like to support a particular group' on the first page of the online donation form.** This will ensure that Landcare passes on your donation to us.



FEEDBACK FROM YOU

If you have any thoughts on what we do, our activities, or matters raised in this newsletter, we would love to hear from you – put your comments in an email to the Secretary:

info@friendsoftheprom.org.au

MEMBERSHIP FEES

You don't have to be a financial member to participate in our activities. But we urge those of you who have attended more than one or two activities to become financial.

Your membership fees keep us afloat, as without them we cease to exist. The fees we levy are set as low as we can make them, and they only just cover our basic running costs, such as public liability insurance and unavoidable IT expenses.

To renew your membership, please contact our Treasurer, Peter McDowell at membership@friendsoftheprom.org.au

You can pay via Direct Deposit to our Westpac account:

Account Name:
Friends of the Prom Inc.
BSB: 033 152
Account Number: 188795

Single: \$15,
Couples and families : \$20,

Please remember to provide your full name as a reference so we can identify you on the bank statement.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a very warm welcome to the following new members:
Lucy Nuttall, David McMahon and family;
Simon Ellis, Stephanie Clarke and family;
Evie Bath; R and B Cian;
Yvonne du Plessis.

EVENTS CALENDAR FOR MARCH TO JULY 2025

Except for the nursery, a reminder with more detail about these weekend and weekday activities will be emailed to members closer to the date.

WEEKEND ACTIVITIES

DATE	ACTIVITY
Friday 28 March Saturday 29 March	Sea Spurge weeding at Squeaky and Picnic Beaches
Saturday 3 May	Tree guard removal at the former airbase
Saturday 17 May	Planting trees at airbase using the recycled tree guards
Saturday 15 June	An activity to be confirmed (either a cultural heritage workshop or tree planting at Tidal River)
Saturday 26 July	AGM at Tidal River
Sunday 27 July	National Tree Day planting

WEEKDAY ACTIVITIES

Tidal River nursery	Every second Thursday, rain, hail or shine – meet 9:30 am at the nursery compound in Tidal River – check website for dates
Grazer monitoring project	To be advised

REGISTERING WITH PARKCONNECT

Please remember to register for all activities on *ParkConnect* and make sure you have a **Working with Children Check** loaded on to *ParkConnect*. WWCCs are now compulsory (unless you are volunteering with us for the first time). If you need assistance with navigating your way through *ParkConnect* or the WWCC process, you can contact *Friends of the Prom's* Peter McDowell by email: pdmcdowell101@gmail.com.

CONTACTS

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