

## New AGM Venue

The AGM brings the *Friends of the Prom* community together to catch up on what has been going on in our Park and what is in store for the Prom next year. We would love to see a strong turn-out of members and friends.

This year we are continuing the tradition of inviting guest speakers with interesting stories to tell. Tara Ellard (the Prom's Nature Conservation Program Coordinator) will update us on programs and initiatives at the Prom and answer our questions while Brooke Love (Ecological Restoration Officer) will tell us all about her projects including grassland restoration.

Also, the AGM is your opportunity to

appoint the committee members and office bearers who will set the direction and guide *Friends of the Prom* through the next 12 months. If you have ever thought about immersing yourself more in the Prom, this is the opportunity to put up your hand to join the committee and be part of our active team.

This year's AGM will be on Saturday 26 July starting at 10:00am and finishing by about 2:30pm. **Please note that this year the AGM will not be at Tidal River because contractors recently moved in to upgrade the Information Centre. Instead, we will be holding it at Sandy Point Community Centre.**

## School Group Visits

Our Secretary Keith McDougall notes that *Friends of the Prom* is receiving many requests for running education sessions for groups of school students visiting the Prom. This is a consequence of the government's substantial funding cuts to Parks Victoria, leading to reduced staffing levels at the Prom and curtailment of its school education program.

*Friends of the Prom* does not have the skills or resources (or the desire) to replicate Parks Vic's education programs formerly run out of Tidal River Education Centre. However, rather than refuse all requests, the committee has agreed to develop a standard presentation for school groups and train any interested volunteers.

Our presentation covers how a volunteer organisation like *Friends of the Prom* operates and this ties in with the Year 12 curriculum's topic of 'environmental community groups'. The idea is to offer these presentations only if we have presenter volunteers available on the day.

Keith and Bill kicked off the new program on Thursday 20 March. They met a group of year 12 students from Drouin Secondary College with two teachers at the Information Centre theatre. After the presentation we walked to Norman Bay beach to explain to students firsthand our project to Restore Hooded Plover habitat.

*Keith McDougall, Secretary*

*Below: Keith discussing Sea Spurge with the Drouin students at Norman Bay (Photo:Bill Hansen)*



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**NEWSLETTER  
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JUNE 2025**

# Sea Spurge Weeding Squeaky Beach

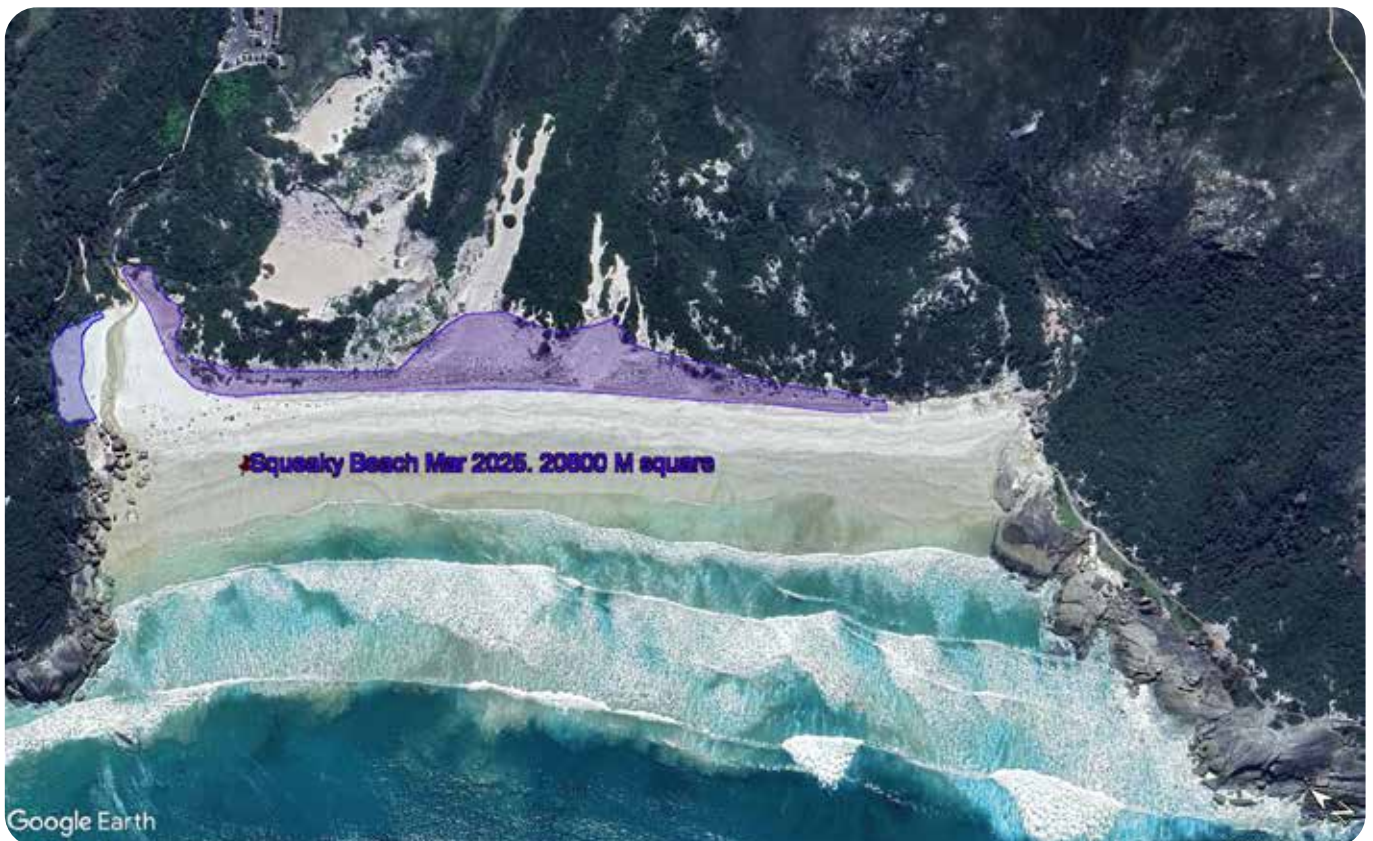
Fifteen volunteers met at the rendezvous and signed on to weed Sea Spurge on a beautiful autumn day. Peter Wilson's briefing gave us the details of the task and safety issues and advised that today we would be working at Squeaky Beach.

Starting at the north end, the Sea Spurge regrowth was widespread but manageable and the group moved steadily

south as far as the first dune blowout where we paused for lunch. A few volunteers left us after lunch and the rest of us made good progress. But clambering up and down dunes in the hot sun proved to be exhausting for some of us and we all finished up for the day about 2:30pm having weeded about 75% of the length of the beach.

*Report by Bill Hansen*

*Below: Volunteers weeding in the dunes; Google Earth location of weeding areas (Photos: Sigrid Meir, Peter Wilson)*



# Sea Spurge Weeding Picnic Bay

Twenty seven volunteers arrived at Picnic Bay on the Saturday morning. A small group went to Squeaky, not wanting to walk the steep path down to Picnic and back up again. With a strong group, we worked our way down along the dunes, weeding as we went, despite the regrowth at one per 10cm in places. By midday we were already a third of the way along the beach to where it widens out, deepening

inland. After taking a well-earned lunch, work progressed both inland and further down the dunes. The team covered 2/3 of the dunes infested by Sea Spurge. It was good to see new volunteers this weekend and enjoy their knowledge of Country and Western music on Saturday evening.

*Report by Peter Wilson*

*Below: Volunteers weeding in the dunes at Picnic Bay; Google Earth location of weeding areas (Photos: Peter Wilson)*



# Tree Guard Removal

May 3 was election day so it was only fitting we started at Yanakie, to vote, before joining the team at the Prom wildlife walk parking area for the tree guard removal day. The polling booth opened at 8 am, and smiling brightly outside was *Friends of the Prom* Vice President Karin handing out how to vote cards to early voters.

They included FOTP member and long-time Ranger in charge, Jim Whelan, who was also voting early to head off for the day removing over 100 tree guards. Karin's partner Thomas led one of the working group teams before heading back to relieve Karin of her democratic responsibilities. Some of the team of 12 volunteers had taken the chance to vote early to sidestep a Yanakie trip. Bill led the day with Peter Wilson dividing the group into four teams to work through the sometimes tough task. The tree guards were removed from trees big enough to survive an onslaught from hungry animals. With Jim, nursery coordinator Mary and President Olga all present, there were plenty of wise heads to advise on which trees to liberate. The guards were collected by the

Park Rangers ready for use in the Koala habitat tree planting on May 17.

The biggest challenge was to remove the guards which were left too long and needed pruning of the invasive wattle to free the guards from the well-established gum trees.

Jim perfected the art of simply lifting the guards off the trees, which was easy if the trees were not too bushy. Then it was a matter of cutting and untangling the guards. All day there were plenty of curious onlookers including some friendly wombats, emus and wallabies to make sure the FOTP workforce were not destroying the koalas' meal tickets. The aim was to collect 140 guards, including 20 freed from an earlier excursion. By day's end the team, exhausted, beat the challenge of collecting 150 reusable guards, including 20 from past efforts.

The good news is there are plenty more guards left to remove on the next excursion.

*Report by John Durie*

*Below: Tree guard removal team (Photos: Karli Duckett)*



## Tree Planting

Several weeks out from May 17, tree planting activity was in some doubt. Unusually dry conditions had settled on all Victorian areas south of the ranges, which wasn't good for the trees planted last year. Almost two-thirds failed. But after discussion with nursery staff and rangers, plus hope from above, we committed to proceed as planned on May 17.

Arriving at Stockyards on Friday, a few volunteers were already present, either from working at the nursery the day before or looking out for the Saturday's activity. For once, the rain on the roof was a welcome sound, thinking of how dry the area had been. On Saturday morning the trailer was loaded and it was time to go to work.

Meeting at the wildlife car park, ranger Brooke did the intro, and we rolled out onto the target areas. With over 200 plants to go out, I had hoped to get most of them planted. With a team of 28 we dispersed into several groups: access track, South runway area, Wildlife track loop. Regrouping at lunch, and the focus changed to completing each target area, then finishing off along the access track.

Happily, we ran out of seedlings so no more work could be carried out. Nursery boss Mary was happy with 200 seedlings in the ground, and with the steel guards in place we achieved more than we had hoped for.

With rain it's hoped for a better success rate than last year. In the previous five years, we have enjoyed a 90% success rate, and seeing a two-thirds fail rate from 2024 was a bit of a shock. Much of the access track planting was replacing failed trees from last year.

FOTP member and retiring Prom ranger Jim Whelan told us Parks have been encouraging natural vegetation to reclaim the area before settlement for twenty years or more. Helped by volunteer groups like *Friends of the Prom*, 600 trees have been planted that are now mature enough to survive and provide a habitat, and hopefully a return of the koalas that were once common in the area.

*Report by Peter Wilson*

*Below: the tree planting crew in the field and on lunch break (Photos: Peter Wilson)*



# Nursery News

## Coastcare Grant Application Success

**G**ood news! *Friends of the Prom's* application for a 2025 Coastcare grant to replace the hardening-off shed at the Tidal River nursery was successful.

The existing shed was rusting badly and the only thing preventing it from collapsing was the wire netting covering. We propose to build a new timber rectangular portal-framed shed which will cover the same footprint as the old one.

The grant will pay for all structural materials required to erect the shed and *Friends of the Prom* will pay for the finishing-off materials like watering system and shade cloth.

Park managers have agreed to build the shed using their qualified staff based at Tidal River.

On Thursday 15 May, nursery volunteers made a start on the project by temporarily relocating the tables and plants in the old hardening-off shed – a job made easier when Cam brought in his secret weapon, the *JCB Telehandler*. Cam has since removed all the wire netting and rusted metal frame of the old shed.

Our order for timber, hardware and wire netting all needed to build the structure arrived at the nursery on Monday 2 June. Building can start as soon as Shaun is free – expected in early June.

*Report by Bill Hansen*

*Below left to right: the hardening-off shed emptied of its contents; the plants in their temporary home; Cam makes moving the tables look easy (Photos: Bill Hansen)*



## Nursery News cont...

### Visit from Royal Botanic Gardens staff

Our normal nursery routines were upended on Thursday 3 April when we hosted 4 staff (Marie, Allie, Emily and Matt) from the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne.

They came to the nursery to meet and greet the nursery crew and to discuss a collaboration between our respective groups. They are designing a new Gippsland themed habitat area to sit alongside their existing 'living collections of plants' at Cranbourne; such as the Ironbark Garden, the Box Garden and the Stringybark Garden.

These display collections representing different localities around Victoria, with the Gippsland Garden to include three groups of plant collections representing East, Central and South Gippsland regions.

The South Gippsland collection will focus on plants found

at the Prom because of the park's iconic status in the region. They will carefully select plants which are evocative of the Prom and if possible, include those that are rare and not found in many other places – such as *Banksia Saxicola*, found only in the Grampians in western Victoria (at high altitudes) and at the Prom.

The Cranbourne gardeners went away to plan the details of their South Gippsland Garden and will reach out to us when they need our help to bring their plans to fruition. They also offered to help us out if we are having difficulty propagating particular plants. If we provide the seeds or cuttings, they will propagate the plants at their Cranbourne nursery and in return they could keep some of the plants for their own use.

*Report by Bill Hansen*

*Below clockwise from top left: Tour of nursery and plantings at Tidal River for Cranbourne Gardens staff (Photos: Marie, Olga and Bill)*



## Nursery News cont...

Mary, Olga and Chris assisted Cam with a much-appreciated Junior Rangers team during school holidays on April 17. Seven enthusiastic children – Evelyn, Charles, Harrison (call me “H”), Amelia and Brielle – were kitted out in volunteer vests, gloves and protective glasses. Cam demonstrated how to use the tree hole digger – yes, much like a pogo stick – and the young team learned how to plant out and protect from hungry wildlife a number of *poa* and *correa alba* at Tidal River campground. They did a great job, watched on by their parents who were equally enthusiastic about the program’s educational benefits.

Back at the nursery, the rest of the nursery team were busy pricking out 250 *lomandra* for ranger Riley to plant

at the Bear Gully Campground. At lunch we celebrated our President Olga’s birthday in nursery style with cake and a sparkling beverage.

On May 1, the nursery team weeded and tidied up Display Garden at Tidal River and planted out *correa alba* at campsites nearby. Wombat lover, Michelle, made a stone driveway for “Rocky” the wombat who lives under the Display garden’s rocky outcrop. Bert got into the “Rocky” spirit and built Rocky his own letter box. It’s installation will have to wait until the new building is finished because the Display Garden is now behind the construction site fencing.

*Report by Chris Beckingsale*



Top left: Celebrating Olga’s birthday; right: Cam demonstrated how to use the tree hole digger much like a pogo stick; below: Junior Rangers learning to plant out new bushes. (Photos: Chris Beckingsale)



## Prom Projects Begin

The \$23 million Wilsons Prom Revitalisation projects are now underway, offering expanded facilities and better amenities for Park users. The Visitors Centre has moved temporarily 100 metres to the west while construction is underway on the new centre. The building works include new toilet, shower and changing areas including full disability facilities. The project includes replacing the toilet blocks at Sealers Cove, Refuge Cove and Little Waterloo Bay.

Work is also being done on the Tidal footbridge which was closed last year on engineers' advice. As a reminder, visitors can access the Three Bays Walk via the Squeaky Beach and Lilly Pilly Gully car parks. The Sealers Cove track rehabilitation is now also on track to start by year's end.

**From the official newsletter:**

Sealers Cove is a major and complex project, replacing two kilometres of boardwalk in remote and sensitive terrain.

Specialists have assessed the arboriculture, ecology, cultural heritage, and hydrology along the walking track. This will protect the cultural and natural values during construction.

In 2021, successive storms and floods caused widespread damage across the Prom – including to the Sealers Cove Boardwalk, which connects the cove to the Tidal River visitor precinct across an otherwise impassable swamp. Parks noted its remote location and deep swamp landscape have created complex environmental and engineering challenges. The extensive planning undertaken will support the long-term sustainability of the track and help visitors enjoy this special place for many years to come.

Finally this winter the Light Station accommodation will be available to large groups wanting to book Cottage five (up to eight people) and Cottage two (up to 12 people.)

**Bookings must be made on the Park Website.**

*Report by John Durie*

*Below: Work has begun on the Information Centre upgrade. (Photo: Bill Hansen)*



## Grassland Restoration (aka Dungflingers) activity report next newsletter...

### NEW MEMBERS

We extend a very warm welcome to the following new members:

Delu Pok and family

Dan Misson and family

Jane Spence

Rhys Freeman

Adriana and Peter Christianson

Quentin Matiske and Judith Kirkwood

## DONATIONS

*Friends of the Prom* has benefited from generous donations by well-wishers over the past few years. We have been using these donations to encourage scientific research at the Prom through our program of an annual grant to a tertiary student 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.



## MEMBERSHIP FEES

You don't have to be a financial member to participate in our activities. But if you have been to some activities and want to continue volunteering with us, we urge you to become a financial member.

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.

## 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***

# EVENTS CALENDAR

## JUNE 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
Saturday 14 June	A cultural heritage workshop
Saturday 26 July	AGM at the Sandy Point Community Centre
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/ Grassland Restoration on the Isthmus	Friday 13 June, then 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* Kelsey Fraser at [kelseyv.fraser@gmail.com](mailto:kelseyv.fraser@gmail.com)

***Please note this is a new contact number.***

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