

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Friends of the Prom held its AGM on Sunday 28 July 2024 at the Information Centre at Tidal River.

It was well attended by 29 members, more than enough for a quorum. We expected more but some apologies came in as members were put off by the weather forecast of cold wet weather and the thought of working outdoors for our tree planting on Saturday and camping overnight at Stockyards.

Our AGM was uneventful, and who would wish otherwise? The main items of business were:

- Δ Receiving the annual committee report (attached as Appendix) and the financial report.
- Δ Reducing the annual Family membership subscription to \$20, now the same as for couples.

- Δ Changing our incorporated association's rules by adopting Consumer Affairs Victoria's new model rules.
- Δ Electing a new committee and office bearers – see more on this below.

After the meeting closed, Area Chief Ranger Brett Mitchell fielded our questions about everything going on at the Prom, and Latrobe University student Mads Dwyer gave a terrific presentation on her recently completed honours degree project. Both presentations are summarised on following pages.

We would like to thank park staff, Cassie, Gaby and Cam for preparing the room and projection facilities and for supplying a hearty barbeque lunch – it hit the spot on a cold damp day.

WE HAVE A NEW COMMITTEE

Each year all committee positions are spilled at the AGM and a new committee elected. Most of the existing committee were re-elected but there were some retirements and new faces. The committee elected at the AGM on 28 July is:

- | | |
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| Δ President:
Olga Wilkinson | Δ Ordinary committee members:
Chris Beckingsale,
Andree Fox,
Michelle Darling,
Kelsey Fraser,
Katrin MacMahon,
Peter Wilson. |
| Δ Vice-president:
Karin Ruff | |
| Δ Secretary:
Keith McDougall | |
| Δ Treasurer:
Peter McDowell | |

And we say a huge thank you to these past committee members

Peter Wilson: stepping down from his position as Treasurer

after a 3-year term – our finances have been secure in your capable hands.
Peter McDowell: for taking on the office of Treasurer.
Alex Blazejewski: stepping

down from the committee for health reasons after serving us well and enthusiastically for two years. We hope to see Alex again on the committee after a break.



At the AGM minus a few attendees



WHAT'S INSIDE

- 1 Our Annual General Committee
- 2 Thank yous and Profiles
- 3 Session with Brett Mitchell
- 4 Prom Heathlands presentation by Mads Dwyer
- 7 Tree planting on National Tree Day
- 9 Nursery news
- 10 Grazer Monitoring Project
- 11 AGM Minutes
- 13 Donation
- 14 Calendar of events 2024

**NEWSLETTER #237
AUGUST 2024**

A special thankyou to Bill

Bill Hansen has retired from the committee after 12 years including 3-year terms as secretary, president and committee member.

Bill would describe himself as “a nerdy engineer who once worked on water resource planning for Victoria”. Those of us who have worked with him over the years recognise a much broader individual than this; one who brought a fine level of considered professionalism to FOTP, who was dedicated to the role, fun to work with in the field and as Olga has remarked, an all round fine gentleman.

His earliest encounters with the bush were, he feels in hindsight, a bit brutal for the environment. As a schoolboy on hikes in the 1960’s he remembers “feeling the romance and adventure of the Snowy Mountains Hydro Scheme, the mountain cattlemen grazing their animals in the high country and logging in the mountain ash forests. It was great sport to dislodge rocks from a peak to crash down into the valley below. However this idea of the bush as a limitless resource to be exploited, gradually gave

way to being appalled not only by my earlier vandal behaviour but also at what was happening to the nation’s wilderness areas”.

His first conservation activity in Melbourne was to join the Blackburn Lake Committee of Management in the early 1980s. This consumed him for 10 years.



He fell under the Prom’s spell on a week-long hike one cold wet May in 1965 with four friends at age 16.

“I have vivid memories of the remote wildness of Sealers and Refuge coves, a pod of stranded whales dead on the white sand of Waterloo Bay against the blue-green sea. We bagged 3

peaks – Ramsay, Wilson and Oberon, bashed through thick scrub after losing the track from Sealers to Refuge, and waded through muddy swamps and visited the lighthouse. I was hooked. We have had several hikes and summer camping holidays at the Prom since then, but joining FOTP was inevitable after we built a house with a view towards the Prom 5 years ago.”

When asked what three things he would like to see for conservation of the Prom and if money was no objective Bill replied:

1. Eradicating weeds and feral animals, not to mention *Phytophthora Cinnamomi*;
2. Preserving the wild and remote feel of the place by preventing over-development; and
3. Giving under-privileged kids an opportunity to have a first experience of the Prom similar to the one I had.

(words from Member Profile 2016)

From the FOTP committee we say an enormous thank you to Bill and hope you enjoy many more days of leisure with Linda at the Prom.

We welcome two new committee members..

Chris Beckingsale, from Sandy Point, has joined the FOTP Committee following her life-long love of plants, birds, wildlife and wilderness. Chris enjoys Mary’s nursery group, the variety of FOTP activities and is interested in habitat restoration of grassy woodlands and heathlands and in understanding more about aboriginal heritage conservation. “I admire the invaluable contribution the FOTP has made over many decades in maintaining the Prom’s ethos of low-key camping and walking experiences and all of its efforts to preserve and revitalise the Prom’s iconic beauty,” she says.

Andrée Fox credits her love of nature, in part, to childhood holidays at the Prom with her uncle who was then a senior manager in Victoria’s national park service administration. Andrée is very proud of

her uncle, the late Trevor Arthur (1925-2009), who played a pivotal role in developing Victoria’s parks system and in the founding of the two government parks organisations that later merged to form Parks Victoria.

Andrée visits the Prom as often as possible and regards it as her spiritual home - she and her family celebrated her 60th birthday by climbing to the top of Mt Oberon.

Andrée lives on a rural property with her husband near Tarwin. Remnant areas of bush and Bridge Creek, which flows through the property, are fenced off and designated as Land for Wildlife. A Trust for Nature covenant is something she aspires to. The rest of the land is grazed by Andrée’s precious horses which share it with the local swamp wallabies, wombats and possums.

She enjoys volunteering with the

Friends of the Prom nursery and plans on joining the dungflingers in the near future.



Top: Chris Beckingsale

Below: Andree Fox



Session with Area Chief Ranger Brett Mitchell

Area Chief Ranger Brett Mitchell generously gave us some of his time to answer questions from members about current issues affecting the Prom. Here is a summary of the discussions:

Q Budget cut implications for the Prom

Parks Victoria's budget this year has been reduced. Each region must tighten its budget and typically these constraints could last for the next 3 to 5 years. Implications for the Prom are:

- ▲ Staff positions will may not be backfilled i.e. there is no education program this year.
- ▲ There will be an organisational review of structures and operational priorities/principles.
- ▲ The \$20,000 conservation program budget under Cassie has been cut.
- ▲ The pest control program will continue through tied funding and Ranger labour
- ▲ The Coastal Grassy Woodlands restoration work (on the isthmus) will continue.
- ▲ Previously committed on-ground works will continue e.g. Prom Revitalisation project (the Predator Proof Fence, Roofed Accommodations, an all ability 2km walk at the Wildlife Circuit, and the Visitor Centre upgrade); Storm Recovery project (replacement of Sealers Cove Boardwalk); Asset Regeneration (Water Tank works, Tidal River Footbridge maintenance works, etc.) Victoria's Great Outdoors (internal refurbishment of toilet amenities at Tidal River, replacement of toilet pods on the Southern Circuit, Changing Places facility at Tidal River.

Brett advised that the budget cuts are likely to have little effect on Friends of the Prom activities.

Parks Victoria is also looking into tax-deductible philanthropy options for projects like the Prom Sanctuary to increase funding for programs.

Q When can we expect on-ground works for the exclusion fence, Sealers track boardwalk and the Mt Oberon walking track to start?

Over the past 5 years, the approvals/permits required to comply with Legislative requirements in the areas of biodiversity and threatened species has increased enormously. This means many more comprehensive surveys and considerably longer approval processes :

- ▲ The Sealers boardwalk plans are expected to be completed this year and construction to begin in 2025.
- ▲ Parks Victoria is still finalising designs for the fence, particularly in the trickier locations such as the entry gate and where the fence passes through wet areas.
- ▲ Planning is still in progress for the Mt Oberon walking track with the main issue being the design of an alignment which avoids fauna species coming under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act.

An added complication is that post Covid, construction costs are up by about 40%.

Q When is the first draft of the Landscape Management Plan for the Prom due?

A preliminary draft plan has been prepared for internal use, but it needs more traditional owner input before it is ready for public consultation. A draft suitable for public consultation is perhaps 6 to 12 months away.

Factors which are drawing out the process include:

- ▲ Updating the Prom's Conservation Action Plan which is a necessary link between the Landscape Plan and other plans and projects.
- ▲ Loss of staff recently and unable to backfill positions due to budget cuts
- ▲ The Landscape Plan is grappling with very difficult issues like park capacity and sea level rise.

Q Are the Stockyards toilets to be replaced?

There are funds for a new toilet, but the future of this area is still to be determined in collaboration with traditional owners especially in relation to the Big Drift.

Q Is Parks Victoria looking at assisting with deer culling in a buffer strip on private land abutting the park, as is occurring for other parks in the region?

This is not an issue for the Prom because of the planned exclusion fence which will solve the problem.

Q What opportunities are there for Friends of the Prom to work on new projects in the park?

Brett is happy with the work that Friends of the Prom have been doing in the park over the past few years and is happy for that to continue. Park managers are happy to discuss new opportunities if FOTP members are looking for a change. He agreed with a suggestion from the floor that reviewing camera data is a possibility.

Q When will the rusting polyhouse in the nursery be replaced/repaired?

Brett thought this was in hand and will talk to his staff to get an update.

Presentation from Mads Dwyer on Prom Heathlands

Mads (who uses they/them pronouns) is studying botany and plant ecology at La Trobe University and recently submitted their final thesis for an honours degree at La Trobe University with their research project based on fieldwork at the Prom. Their thesis is entitled – *Key factors affecting Coast Tea Tree (**Gaudium laevigatum**) invasion into Sand Heathlands at Wilsons Promontory National Park?*

Friends of the Prom awarded Mads a research study

grant last year to help with the cost of their fieldwork. Mads has attended our AGM to present to members an excellent overview of their research and its findings.

This is a summary of the presentation:

Heathlands at the Prom exist on infertile soils and are dominated by low hardy shrubs such as Heathy Tea-tree (*Gaudium myrsinoides*) and Dwarf She-oak (*Allocasuarina pusilla*).



Photos clockwise from top left: Dwarf She-oak, typical heathland plants, Heathy Tea-tree, Pink Heath, Orchids



Prom Heathlands cont...

It is known that heathlands are adapted to fire and that the fire regime needs to be consistent. Under a regime of frequent fires, heathland plants resprout and reseed to recover post-fire.

The low-nutrient soils and frequent fire of heathland communities means that invasion by exotic plants is rare, however invasion by native plants can occur.

Threats to heathlands are:

- Δ Grazing pressure – from native and introduced animals.
- Δ Pathogens – grass tree dieback for example.
- Δ Inappropriate fire regimes.
- Δ Shrub invasion – Coast Tea-tree and White Kunzea.

Compare the two photos below from Norman Bay Lookout – in 1960 (low heathland) and 2023 (encroaching trees and Tea-tree).

Mads project addressed three questions about Coast Tea-tree's ability to invade a heathland community:

1. What role does fire regime play?
2. What role does distance from a seed source play?
3. What role does soil depth play?

Mads selected 43 survey sites in three heathland communities – an area in the north of the Prom in proximity to the 5-Mile Road, an area inland of Squeaky and Whisky beaches and an area behind Waterloo Bay.

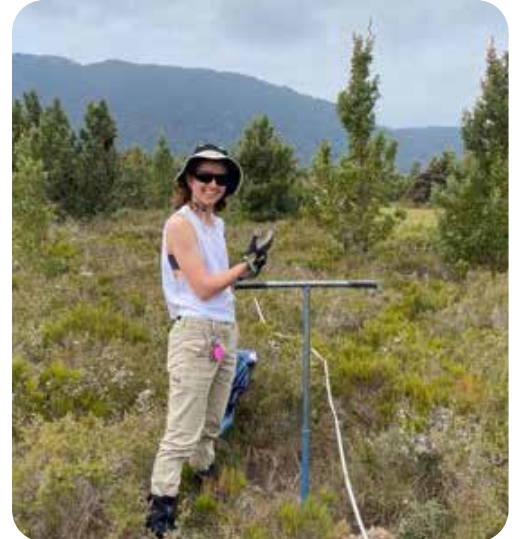
The sites were divided into sand sheet or sand dunes, communities last burnt in 2005 or 2008 or 2009, and number of fires since 1950. They set up transects at these sites and, with the help of family and friends, measured:

- Δ Fire history – total number of fires, duration between fires, season of most recent fire.
- Δ Distance from seed source – coast, mature stands, invasion edge.
- Δ Sand depth to 2 metres.
- Δ Percentage of transect with Coast Tea-tree.

Below right: Mads in the field measuring sand depth and at the presentation at the AGM



Above: Norman Bay Lookout 1960
Below: Norman Bay Lookout 2023



Prom Heathlands cont...

After completing a statistical analysis of data collected from these sites, Mads concluded that understanding Coast Tea-tree invasion is a complex problem and came up with some interesting findings:

Fire regime – Mads tested the hypotheses that frequent fire and long fire intervals would lead to greater invasion cover. Overall, this was verified by the analyses, but it was found that these aspects of fire regime did not explain all the variation seen in Coast Tea Tree cover. They found that the timing of frequent fires was an important variable – sites with late season fires showed much higher cover of Coast Tea-tree. A difference of several months in the timing makes a big difference. Analysis of these aspects of fire regime implied that multiple variables are at play in invasion.

Proximity to seed source – Mads' findings supported the hypothesis that the density of invasion cover reduces with increasing distance from mature stands of Coast Tea-tree.

Sand depth – Mads' hypothesis that invasion cover increase with the depth of sand was not supported by

the data as there was no discernible relationship.

Landform type – Mads' hypothesis that dunes (with their deeper sands) would show a higher invasion cover than sand sheets was not supported by the data.

Mads' project produced useful information for park managers for conservation and restoration of the Prom's sand heathlands:

- ▲ All sand heathlands, regardless of whether they are found on shallow or deep sands, are vulnerable to invasions.
- ▲ The risk of invasion is increased by proximity to seed source, long intervals between burns and late season burns.
- ▲ Avoiding further invasion is critical.
- ▲ Regular assessment of risk.

And finally, Mads has been inspired by their work at the Prom to continue on to a master's degree which will address some unanswered questions on the invasion of the Prom's valuable heathlands.

Left: Typical heathland transect, middle: sand heathland, right: transect through thick Tea-Tree



Tree Planting on National Tree Day

Our second tree planting activity for 2024 was held on Saturday 27 July, the day before the AGM. It was also the day before National Tree Day and our contribution to that nation-wide event.

Twenty three volunteers defied a dreadful weather forecast to plant seedlings on the dunes either side of 34th Avenue in Tidal River campground. We worked in an area which had been planted out

about a year ago so the group divided their time rescuing previous plantings now overrun with weeds and planting new seedlings. Parks Victoria's Cam Downing supervised our work and explained that not all that long ago, this area had a dense canopy of Tea-tree and She-oak until it was devastated by extreme winds. He demonstrated the value of our work by pointing out the healthy young She-oaks growing nearby that Friends of the Prom volunteers had

planted 5 or 6 years ago and were now 3+ metres tall.

As so often occurs with our activities at the Prom, the dreadful weather did not materialise although the day was cold and grey – good weather for planting seedlings and providing an excuse to buy hot chips from the General Store to go with the sandwiches at lunch. Thankfully, the serious rain held off until we were packing up for the day at about 2:30pm.



*Left top: Trevor and Bill at work,
Left below: Harry and Michelina at work,
Below: Amos and Shelley removing tree-guards*



Tree Planting on National Tree Day cont...

Cam estimated that we planted about 200 seedlings and rescued nearly as many previous plantings. This is not a huge number of seedlings to plant in the scheme of things. It doesn't take long to plant a seedling in the ground, but the time-consuming part is installing a sturdy tree guard that will protect the seedling from browsing animals. There was plenty of evidence of She-oaks that had outgrown their undersized tree-guard only to be pruned back by a deer or wallaby. We replaced quite a few short tree guards on She-oaks with taller ones.

We thank Cam for organising the plants, tools and materials, and rangers Cassie and Gaby who joined us working for several hours.



Volunteers being briefed by Cam and gathering for information and respite inside and out (Photos Trevor Skinner)



Nursery news

The nursery volunteers are currently working hard to propagate plants destined for revegetation projects at Tidal River scheduled over the next few years such as the accommodation units, the Open Space project and Visitor Centre upgrade.

The volunteers also find time to revisit areas planted out during previous FOTP activities at Tidal River campground and carry out maintenance work. The tree-guards we install around each plant do a great job protecting the seedlings from grazing animals, but unfortunately, they also protect vigorous weeds which soon crowd-out our precious seedlings unless we intervene until the seedlings are big enough to look after themselves. Quite often the challenge is to find the seedling in a forest of weeds inside the tree guard.

Top l – r, Henri, Chris, Katrin, Mary and Michelle propagating from cuttings at the nursery 05/2024

Far right: Antoinette maintaining the display garden outside the General Store

Right: Henri, Katrin and Mary with some of our newly propagated seedlings



Tearful farewell for Elizabeth Moerkerk

After 40 years of volunteering at the nursery, Elizabeth said her farewells to the FOTP at the recent AGM. She is making plans to return to Tasmania where she grew up and will live in Launceston nearby her daughter.

Elizabeth is going to be greatly missed. She and her late husband Marc joined as volunteers with Friends of the Prom in 1984 around the same time as Mary Walker, later joining the original group of nursery volunteers in 1994. *“It was always Elizabeth, Millie, Jan and me – the early, early stalwarts at the old nursery,”* says Mary.

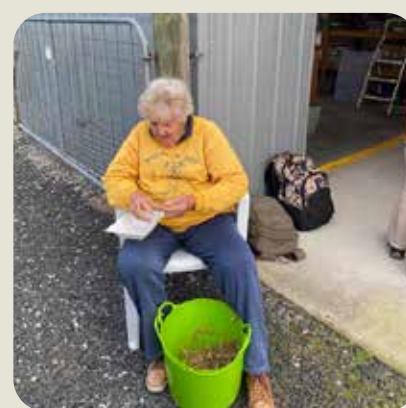
When asked what she’ll miss most about Elizabeth, Mary is close to tears *“just her presence – it’s the break-up of the older gang.”*

“The first time I ran into her, she and husband Marc, had this half-trailer, the nose-cone of a plane, at Stockyards – very different!” says Mary. Mary remembers the delicious roast dinners Elizabeth, Marc, Millie and partner Max and Jan cooked up at Stockyards and the good times they all had over decades.

“Elizabeth has always been up for anything, ask her and she’d do it,” Mary says. *“She knew the plants, did*

the cuttings, and wrote the labels; she has always been so reliable and she has a good sense of humour.”

Back in the early days, Elizabeth and Marc lived in Cheltenham and would stay at Mary’s place in Dandenong to get a head start getting off to the Prom on Thursdays. Then for many years Elizabeth and Marc lived in Waratah Bay and Mary would stay with them. Elizabeth and Marc later moved to Foster, and more recently since Marc passed, Elizabeth and Milly, whose partner Max has also passed, live at the same retirement village in Foster.



Left: Elizabeth and Viv de-mossing seedlings Dec 2019, celebrating Elizabeth’s birthday at the nursery Feb 2020

Grazer Monitoring Project

The mid-week crew have made two visits to the restored grasslands since our last newsletter.

The first was on 28 May, when 12 volunteers made the first count of the season after all plots has been cleared six weeks earlier on 16 April. It was a joy to be out in the grasslands in fine sunny weather. The count of native grazing animal pellets (kangaroo, wallaby and wombat) was similar compared with the previous count in December 2023, but the number of rabbit pellets had increased, possibly due to a build up in the breeding cycle. The good news was that no deer pellets were found.

Our vice-President, Karin Ruff reports on the next visit on 9 July – “Almost constant light rain kept some regulars indoors on this cold winter’s day, but a great group of new volunteers meant the job was completed in the usual time frame. Even the two rangers, Ineke and Gaby, were new to

the job (Brooke was ill), so Jim instructed these six while the five of us experienced dung flingers started monitoring. This was a day to test those precious waterproof data sheets and maps. They worked pretty well and were restored when dried in the vehicle. I learned another use for my felt hat – regular tipping my head forward drained the water off before it dripped over the brim!”

The new volunteers said they really enjoyed the day, despite the weather, and we were rewarded with unprecedented numbers of wallaby and wombat dung to fling at the rain. Only a couple of the dreaded rabbit scats, which can number in hundreds. Lunch was a short sit on wet ground in drizzle, but with interesting chat as usual. Overall, a satisfying and successful day, so thank you to the 11 hardy volunteers and the 2 rangers.”

Left to right: New recruit Jack filling out the tally inside a dry car, a wombat burrow very much in use according to the vast dung pile outside, rangers Gaby and Ineke new to the game as well, three new happy recruits, Mike, Jack and Bailey,



Below: What a difference a day makes. Sun for the dungflingers in May—Keith, Bill, Lynne, Brooke, Geof, Olivia, Thomas, Anda, Andrew and Yianni, (Heather and Karin not in photo) ; rain in June for the hardy group sheltering before heading out on site—??Bailey, Keith, Karin, Jack, Jim (Lynne and Mike not in photo)



Friends of the Prom is now a charity

Recent changes to the Australian Tax Office (ATO) rules require all Not-for-Profit organisations with an active ABN, to submit an annual tax return. Friends of the Prom falls into this category.

Landcare recognised that this would affect many 'Friends' groups and ran a webinar to assist groups such as ours to register as a charity. We learnt that being registered as a charity exempts us from the onerous task of preparing an annual income tax return and reporting annually to the ATO.

The Australian Charity and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) has an online portal through which the application to become a charity can be submitted. We had all the right documents and

committee structure, so our application was successful. We were notified on the 17/07/2024 that we are now registered as a charity and it was backdated to the beginning of last financial year 30/06/2023.

We do have to report to the ACNC annually to prove that we are still doing charitable work but they will liaise with the ATO.

The benefits of being registered as a charity are:

- ▲ No more annual reporting to Consumer Affairs Victoria (after this year) with possible savings on annual reporting fees.
- ▲ No annual tax return to the ATO.
- ▲ We can apply for a discount on

things such as computer software subscriptions.

These benefits are mainly administrative and won't directly affect our members. For example, donations to FOTP will still be made using the Landcare DGR (Deductible Gift Recipient) facility via the Friends of the Prom webpage. It is a separate process to apply for DGR status. Not all charities are eligible for DGR and a special account needs to be set up so we thought it would be simpler just to continue using the Landcare facility.

Thank you to Peter McDowell for persevering to get this through.

Friends of the Prom Committee Report for the period 1/07/2023 to 30/06/2024 Annual General Meeting 28 July 2024

1. Overview

There were some new and interesting highlights this past year to mention, in addition to our ongoing projects and regular activities:

- ▲ We welcome our new liaison ranger Gaby Mitchell to our AGM and thank her for her enthusiastic support
- ▲ Three new activities were introduced by the committee and were very successful and well received by our volunteers:
 - ▲ In July 2023 our first Cultural Heritage Workshop with Ranger Clinton Morton was a wonderful day for 25 volunteers, despite bad weather.
 - ▲ In October 2023 the planned Hooded Plover workshop was cancelled, but a 2-day Koala Survey was run as part of a state-wide survey by Federation Uni, with 20 volunteers attending the koala scat count.
 - ▲ 22 volunteers attended the first and very successful FOTP iNaturalist Bioblitz at Varneys Grasslands, led by Restoration Ecologist Ranger Brooke Love
 - ▲ in November 2023 the committee found a day, Friday 24th, when everyone could meet in person at Tidal River to plan and discuss Friends of the Prom issues. This was a very productive and enjoyable day and allowed new and ongoing committee members to get to know each other better.
- ▲ The committee's quarterly meetings with Gaby and Cassie, and often with Cam as well, have been very helpful and enjoyable.
- ▲ This year keeping up with corporate governance changes and rules needed more time, such as tax changes for not for profit associations entailing registering FOTP as a charity. In order to comply with *New Incorporated Association Rules* we also had to work out the pros and cons of making adjustments to our 2015 rules or adopting the new Consumer Affairs Victoria model rules.
- ▲ We registered on Landcare Victoria's Deductible Gift Recipient Fund, making donating easier
- ▲ FOTP submissions to issues affecting the Prom and the implications of these issues for the Prom, such as the proposed *Prom Landscape Plan*.
- ▲ FOTP supported our 4th scientific research student with a \$1,000 grant to help with travel and living expenses, which was funded by the generous donations received over the past few years.
- ▲ FOTP also now have a more visible presence in the Tidal River Visitor Information Centre, with a large sign on display.
- ▲ Total volunteer hours for people that attended FOTP activities comes to around 3300 hours over the last year. This does not include the hours committee members contribute besides attending an activity.

2. Our regular activities, as reported in more detail in our Newsletters, were:

- Δ July 2023 – tree planting at Tidal River for National Tree Planting Day with 48 volunteers
- Δ October 2023 – the 3-day weeding Sea Spurge activity at Picnic and Squeaky Beaches was successful, with 45 volunteers attending altogether.
- Δ February 2024 – 27 volunteers attended Beach clean, plus 6 did tree guard building
- Δ March 2024 – Sea Spurge weeding at Picnic Bay – 27 individuals volunteers attended over 3 days.
- Δ April 2024 – 22 volunteers attended the Airbase tree guard recycling, with guards being removed from suitable trees and stockpiled for reuse. On the 10th of May, 3 volunteers returned to the airbase to prepare the tree guards for reuse at the tree planting on later that month.
- Δ May 2024 – 19 volunteers planted 165 trees around the airbase for the Koala Habitat Restoration project.

In addition, our weekday volunteers have been helping at the nursery (see next section) and the Grazer Monitoring Project also known as “dungflingers” has been operating during the cooler months; the dungflingers have met 6 times over the past 12 months for a total of 60 volunteer days.

3. The Nursery

- Δ It has been a good year for the nursery and also a busy one. We completed spending our \$2,000 grant from the Parks Victoria Volunteer Growth Fund – the overall benefit of this grant was to inject more interest in the nursery and help to upgrade our facilities. The nursery’s volunteer profile is rapidly changing with newer volunteers more likely to attend intermittently as they find time in their busy lives. There are enough new volunteers to get through the work, but there is more pressure on the experienced volunteers like Mary to teach their precious skills.
- Δ Recently the nursery volunteers have been working hard to expand their stock of seedlings to meet large orders for seedlings for revegetation and landscaping associated with Prom projects such as the Visitor Precinct, new accommodation units and the Open Space project at Tidal River as well as the Wildlife Circuit. Some projects could be scheduled as early as Sept/Oct 2024.
- Δ In between this activity, volunteers have been maintaining the display garden outside the general store and weeding and planting around Tidal River camp ground as well as assisting Park staff with their Junior Ranger program during school holidays.

4. Progress on major projects

Restoring Hooded Plover Habitat by removal of Sea Spurge

Our Coastcare grant for more Sea Spurge spraying at Picnic Beach was completed successfully with our contractor spraying weedicide across infested areas in September with a follow up spray in April. Picnic Beach now requires a concerted effort of hand-weeding, as does Squeaky Beach, if we are going to control re-emerging Sea Spurge.

Koala Habitat restoration on the Yanakie Isthmus

Our Landcare grant application to clear more areas of Coast Wattle and Teatree was unsuccessful but this didn’t stop progress on this project. The eucalypts we have been planting on the isthmus since 2018 experienced excellent growing conditions through spring and summer, to the point where trees were mature enough to allow us to remove 137 of our steel-mesh tree guards. As the guards are designed to be sprung apart, we used these guards and rounded up some more, allowing us to plant 165 more trees in the air-base area. As more of our trees mature, we will continue to re-cycle tree guards and plant more trees for koalas.

5. Our challenges for the coming year

- Δ For the nursery to meet the demand for plants generated by new projects at the Prom.
- Δ The committee in collaboration with PV needs to continue coming up with an interesting and useful program of activities to attract volunteers and contribute to the conservation of the Prom.
- Δ Review our schedule of activities for the *Restoration of Hooded Plover Habitat on Prom Beaches* project to make sure that we can keep on top of Sea Spurge control on both Squeaky and Picnic beaches.
- Δ Develop ideas for at least one project well in advance of grant opportunities being advertised.

6. Thank you

Finally, the Committee would like to thank everyone who contributed to Friends of the Prom over the past 12 months, including:

- Δ Our financial members, who keep us afloat.
- Δ The volunteers who keep turning up to our activities.
- Δ Mary Walker for her leadership of the Nursery.
- Δ Lynne Muir for her ‘silk-purse’ treatment of our newsletter.
- Δ Parks Victoria staff, who are always there to respond to our needs and keep us working safely. A special mention to our liaison rangers Gaby Mitchell and Cassie Nolan, nursery liaison staffer Cam Downing, and restoration ecologist Brooke Love.

Below: Keith and Olga at the AGM (Photo Trevor Skinner)



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 any reports 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 (just) – without them we cease to exist. The fees we receive are low and only just cover our basic running costs, most importantly our public liability insurance.

To renew your membership, please contact our Treasurer Peter McDowell at pdmcdowell101@gmail.com

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

Meg Platte and Mal Boyd, Trevor Skinner, Paul O'Sullivan, Genine and Jack Hook, Anne Algar, Ben Cooksley, Catherine Shugg, Elisabeth Benn, Genine Hook and family, Natalie Coman and Richard Perry.

EVENTS CALENDAR FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2024

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 24 August	Cultural heritage workshop
Saturday 12 October	iNaturalist Bioblitz (location tbd – possibly Vereker Fire Trail, Five Mile Rd)
Sunday 13 October	Hooded Plover workshop with Bird-Life Australia
Friday 15, Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 Nov	3-day sea spurge removal

WEEKDAY ACTIVITIES

Tidal River nursery	Every second Thursday – meet 9:30 am at the nursery compound in Tidal River – see contact below
Grazer monitoring project	Every 6 weeks. Next count is scheduled for Tuesday 20 August – the activity notice email has the details

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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Treasurer

Peter McDowell
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