

Victorian Coastal Awards for Excellence 2015

Winners



Victorian Coastal Council



Victorian Coastal Awards for Excellence 2015

Natural Environment Award

Awarded for outstanding contribution to the enhancement, conservation and protection of coastal and marine environments, ecosystems and species.

JOINT WINNER

Jan Juc Coast Action Group

21 Years of Jan Juc Coast Action

Jan Juc Coast Action Group was formed under the newly established Coastcare program in 1994, to provide support to volunteers wanting to be involved in coastal management and conservation. The group owes its long-term success to the network of friends and neighbours who have contributed to the work.

Jan Juc Coast Action Group's original aim was to restore the Bells Beach Coastal Reserve to a pristine coastal heathland. Over time their actions have reversed degradation and fragmentation of habitat and restored fragile coastal heaths. To date the group has rehabilitated four kilometres of coastal foreshore and continues to improve this area through monthly working bees – all with a membership of just 50.

The group has worked cooperatively with partners that include different levels of government, the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee and the local surf industry to coordinate a regular program of works. Activities include the removal of pest species, fencing and revegetation, and education and interpretation.

In recent years, the group's focus has shifted from revegetation and access control to targeting key rare and threatened species, engaging with the community and sharing knowledge, attracting younger members and collaborating with businesses through offering opportunities for corporate volunteering.





Natural Environment Award Continued

JOINT WINNER

Sea Search Program – Parks Victoria

Ten Years of Corner Inlet Community Seagrass Monitoring

Concern about the health of Broad-leaf seagrass in Corner Inlet led to the establishment of the Corner Inlet Community Seagrass Monitoring Project, part of Parks Victoria's Sea Search program.

A significant milestone was recently reached with the 10th anniversary of the Corner Inlet Community Seagrass Monitoring Project. This project has been heavily dependent on the commitment and enthusiasm of Marine Park Ranger Jonathon Stevenson and a group of up to 80 dedicated divers and snorkelers, some of whom have been involved with the program for the full ten years.

As the longest running study under the Sea Search banner, it is one of only a few long term studies collecting data on seagrass health in Victoria, and the first of its kind in Corner Inlet. This partnership between Parks Victoria and volunteer citizen scientists has collected vital long term data on the health of Broad-leaf seagrass around the Inlet.

Now, for the first time, managers have information on seasonal growth trends, changes in seagrass density, reproduction, epiphyte growth patterns and faunal groups associated with the seagrass.

The project has also engaged the local and broader community, raising awareness and generating support for this lesser known but important marine habitat.



FINALIST:

- Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority – *Ramsar Protection Program*

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Education Award

Awarded for the development or delivery of an education program/initiative that raises awareness and improves understanding of Victorian coastal and marine environments.

WINNER

BirdLife Australia

Bringing the Coast to the Classroom

BirdLife Australia's 'Bringing the Coast to the Classroom' program focuses its messaging on coasts as habitats, using beach-nesting birds as flagships.

BirdLife staff deliver free excursions, giving students an interactive presentation about coastally-dependent birds and the threats facing them, followed by curriculum-based activities. These activities foster coastal appreciation and understanding, and establish a direct connection between students, their actions and the coastal environment. Every student receives an activity booklet, teachers receive a Beach-nesting Birds Education Kit, and BirdLife regularly run professional development days for educators to ensure a place for coastal birds in the classroom.

Beyond the classroom, students can participate in activities that educate their community or have a direct on-ground application. This includes creating signage and posters for display at beaches or in the windows of coastal businesses, to spread awareness throughout the broader community. Students also build wooden shelters for BirdLife Australia's Hooded Plover volunteers to place on beaches for the chicks to use as refuges from disturbance. BirdLife Australia empowers students to acknowledge the difference they can make through their individual actions.





Education Award Continued

SPECIAL COMMENDATION:

Point Ritchie Moyjil Project Committee *Sharing Stories of Place – Point Ritchie Moyjil*

Sharing Stories of Place: Point Ritchie Moyjil is a 30 minute documentary (and associated interactive website) that takes viewers on a virtual journey through the history of the rocky headland situated at the mouth of the Hopkins River in Warrnambool, Victoria.

Specifically, the documentary allows the Traditional Owners to share stories and explain what the site means to them. This resource rich area has sustained indigenous Australians with its abundance of marine life, plant and animal food among the dunes and coastal vegetation.



FINALISTS:

- Barwon Heads Primary School – *Let our Sea Be Plastic Bag Free*
- Making A Difference (MAD) for the Merri & Friends of Merri Marine Sanctuary – *Education, engagement and action – combatting downstream water quality impacts and invasive marine pests*

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Planning and Management Award

Awarded for an outstanding planning document that implements clear direction for the protection, improvement and sustainable use/development of Victoria's coastal and marine environments,

Or

Outstanding management activities that deliver enhanced protection, improvement and sustainable use of Victoria's coastal and marine environments.

WINNER

Environment Protection Authority Victoria *The Victorian Marine Operational Model*

The Environment Protection Authority Victoria has led the development and successful introduction of a state-of-the-art system (VIC-MOM) for predicting the dispersal of marine pollution and ship ballast discharges. This has improved the management of contamination and biosecurity threats to and from marine conservation assets, aquaculture and fisheries, shipping and ports, oil and gas facilities, and coastal discharges (such as sewage treatment plants).

VIC-MOM was developed throughout 2013–14 and is now fully operational, finding regular use in investigating and responding to unapproved spills and discharges. The system is capable of providing information in near-real-time and in a recent simulated oil spill exercise supported delivery of a 'Net Environmental Benefit Analysis' in under 20-minutes, compared to 3-hours for the previous system.

While the initial purpose of the system is to provide core capability to the EPA, free online access and ease of operation will underpin a broad range of benefits to Victorian coastal and marine environments, government and industry sectors, and marine research and education.

The online user interface (Connie2) can be accessed at:
<http://www.csiro.au/connie2/?loc=VIC>



FINALISTS:

- Corinella Coastal Reserve Committee of Management Inc – *Corinella Coastal Reserve Management Plan 2015*
- East Gippsland Water – *Importance of Covering your ASS (Acid Sulfate Soils)*
- Seaspray Reserves Committee of Management – *Relocation of Seaspray Caravan Park*



Community Engagement Award

Awarded in recognition of outstanding contribution to improving understanding and connection with coastal and marine environments through engagement with the wider community.

WINNER

Friends of Beware Reef

Community Engagement & Marine Species Monitoring

For over 13 years the Friends of Beware Reef have conducted countless underwater marine surveys, and collected photography and videography of many spectacular sites. The group has concentrated in particular on the Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary.

The data collected has been generously shared with land managers, tertiary institutions and the general public.

The group has been involved in a variety of initiatives, including:

- Continually monitoring the species inhabiting our Victorian coast in partnership with Parks Victoria & the University of Tasmania.
- Publicising observations of marine pests located in East Gippsland waters.
- Pioneering an urchin removal program with Parks Victoria at Beware Reef.
- Over 200 presentations to schools and other interest groups.
- Participating in the advisory committee for setting up the marine parks for East Gippsland.



FINALISTS:

- Beach Patrol Australia Inc – *Beach Litter Cleaning*
- BirdLife Australia – *A Marathon Effort: BirdLife Australia's Hooded Plover Biennial Count*

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Design and Building Award

Awarded for outstanding coastal design, building or infrastructure that respects and compliments the Victorian coastal landscape and incorporates ecological sustainable design and construction principles.

WINNER

Frankston City Council **McCulloch Avenue Boardwalk**

With increasing medium density housing development along the Nepean highway frontage and coastal strip, there is a corresponding increase in pressure on facilities and access to the Frankston and Seaford foreshore.

The McCulloch Avenue beach entry services a large local community due to a pedestrian crossing on Nepean Highway, and a bridge across Kananook Creek linking to the wider Seaford / Kananook area.

The boardwalk will provide a safe and accessible path to the beach. It has been designed to allow people access to the beach without damaging the dune environment, while also acknowledging the beautiful experience of walking through this fragile landscape.

The boardwalk has been designed to minimise impact on the sensitive dune system and not interfere with ongoing environmental processes.





Postgraduate Marine Research Award

This award from the Victorian Marine Science Consortium is given to an outstanding postgraduate research student.

Marlenne Rodriguez-Malagon

Marlenne is completing her PhD at Deakin University, under the supervision of Associate Professor John Arnould and Associate Researcher Alastair Baylis.

Marlenne is studying the Individual Foraging Specialisation in Australasian Gannets (*Morus serrator*) and its Reproductive Consequences.



Victorian Coastal Awards for Excellence 2015

Outstanding Individual Achievement Award

Awarded to an individual in recognition of their significant and long-term contribution to the protection and improvement of Victoria's coastal and marine environments.

WINNER

Bob Semmens

Bob Semmens is a Mallacoota coastal legend. Since retiring to Mallacoota some 25 years ago Bob has been a pivotal member of Friends of Mallacoota and Mallacoota Coast Care.

'Bushy Bob', as he is affectionately known, is highly respected by community members and visitors for his broad knowledge of the natural world, gained through his work as a Parks Ranger and a life-long interest in natural history. This together with his infectious enthusiasm and passion for the environment, his commitment to its care, and his readiness to encourage others' involvement, continues to make him an inspiring and influential person.

Most notable of his achievements is his dedicated service to all aspects of bird conservation; from his careful observations, monitoring, surveys and meticulous records, to public education at various levels, and the hands-on work of constructing fences for the protection of breeding shorebirds.

Also impressive is his determination to control Sea Spurge and other coastal weeds on our beaches. For 16 years he has been heavily involved in combating Sea Spurge on Mallacoota beaches and nearby Croajingolong National Park – approximately 50 km coastline with some very remote beaches. As well as physically removing Spurge, both in working bees and as an individual, he has written articles on it to inform others. Thanks to Bob, Sea Spurge is now well under control on Mallacoota beaches and in nearby parts of Croajingolong.





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Victorian Coastal Council would like to thank the nominators for their time and effort in submitting award nominations.

Thanks also to all the nominees for their inspiring stories and ongoing contribution to improving coastal and marine environments in Victoria.

The Council acknowledges the contribution of the Technical Assessment Panel members for their support and significant contributions of time and effort in evaluating all the entries.

Visit the Victorian Coastal Council website soon
for highlights from the 2015 Awards Ceremony
vcc.vic.gov.au



Victorian Coastal Council



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