



NEWSLETTER

Issue 1

10/12/2019



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Greetings for the holiday season and welcome to the first edition of the Healesville to Phillip Island Nature Link (HPNL Inc) Newsletter. Lots has been happening since our first AGM on 19 November.

Many thanks to Cr Amanda Stapledon for Chairing our historic, inaugural meeting.

My interim President's Report has been included in this newsletter, it tells the story of how this organisation has come into being



Image: Marlene Hargreaves

Cr Amanda Stapledon, Mayor of Casey, who attended our meeting with interest in her capacity as a Director of the Casey Cardinia Tourism Board.

Friday Dec 7th, our new HPNL Inc committee met with Rob Jones, Natural Resource Planner for Cardinia Shire. Cardinia Shire Mayor Graeme Moore and Councillors Brett Owen and Ray Brown, along with Rob, have been supporters of the HPNL concept from the outset and it is exciting to see that Nature Link overlays are to be included as part of Cardinia Shire's new Biodiversity Strategy.

Rob discussed the need for scientific rigor in selecting the routes that the Nature Links should take, the need to protect biodiversity hot spots and to identify gaps in connectivity and how best to address them.



Image: Marlene Hargreaves

We all agreed there needs to be cooperation between citizen advocacy groups like our own and all levels of government for this ambitious project to succeed.

If you haven't yet seen it, our strategic plan for the Casey-Cardinia Section of the Nature Link can be found on our website at <http://www.hpnl.org.au/> .

The vision is that the C-C section will link with plans that have been or are in the process of being prepared for Yarra Ranges Shire and Bass Coast to provide nature connectivity from the Yarra River to Western Port and Phillip Island. People linking with nature, as well as healthy, diverse, interconnected natural habits are seen as important in ensuring that our unique flora and fauna survive into the future.



Sub committees have been formed to progress further plans, seek funding, do community engagement and initiate on-grounds works for the Upper and Lower Cardinia Creek, Toomuc Creek and Upper Bunyip River and Lower Bunyip River, including Yallock Creek.

In addition there are also sub-committees for research, finance and communication. We are keen to support or work with community groups right along the proposed routes of the Nature Link, we'll have more to say about this in the New Year.

Many thanks to everyone who has helped progress the project to this stage, looking forward to continuing to work with you in 2019 and the years to come as we bring the vision to fruition.

Wishing you peace and joy for the holiday season,

Kindest regards,

Pat

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Image: Brian Hughes

Discussing forming new 'cells' to progress the Nature Link



Image: Brian Hughes

Recently elected member for Bass, Jordan Crugnale with Pat Macwhirter at the launch of the Strategic Plan at Harewood in October



Image: Sue Davies



**HEALESVILLE TO PHILLIP ISLAND NATURE LINK (HPNL INC)
INTERIM PRESIDENT'S REPORT – FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
PAT MACWHIRTER**

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

This first Annual General Meeting of the Healesville to Phillip Island Nature Link (HPNL Inc) is a major milestone for this project which was conceived around a kitchen table in Upper Pakenham in 2017.

Included in that first small group were myself, Elizabeth Fraser, Alex Smart, Doug Evans, Jeff Yugovic, Cathy Dowling, MaryAnne Sawyer and Ian Chisholm



Image: Marlene Hargreaves

We were dismayed that poorly planned urban expansion, including a proposed new airport, was continuing to fragment native habitats leading to unnecessary loss of threatened and iconic native birds, animals and vegetation.

We felt what was needed was a well thought out, landscape-wide approach that protected the unique biodiversity of our region and ensured nature connectivity while at the same time allowing controlled development and encouraging a deeper community understanding of the relationship people have had with our local indigenous wildlife for over 30,000 years.

Following on from this, in September 2017 a community meeting was called at Harewood, Koo Wee Rup, including local councillors Graeme Moore and Ray Brown and MHR Brian Paynter from which a Healesville to Phillip Island Nature Link Steering Committee (consisting of Elizabeth Fraser, Andrew Titterington, David Young, Glenn Brooks-McMillan, Mary Cole and myself) was formed.

With advice and funding from the Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority the HPNL steering committee set about researching possibilities and developing a draft Strategic Plan for the central Casey-Cardinia Section of the proposed Nature Link. Meetings with Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, DELWP, politicians, land holders and community groups followed.

A workshop was held at Dr Mary Cole's place in Garfield, facilitated by Stuart Cowell who had earlier facilitated Conservation Action Planning for Western Port.



At the same time Andrew Titterington was instrumental in developing a website for the project which was launched earlier this year at www.HPNL.org.au .

Brian Hughes of Vantage Multimedia visited many locations along the proposed HPNL route gathering footage for a promotional video which has been widely praised and can now be seen on the website.

Several options for governance were explored with the steering committee ultimately deciding that a stand-alone incorporated organisation with the capacity to partner with other organisations would best serve the needs of the project.

With particular help from Andrew Titterington, Model Rules were adopted and HPNL became incorporated with the original steering committee (less Elizabeth Fraser who retired but with Marlene Hargreaves and Brian Hughes added) becoming the interim office bearers for HPNL Inc.

The Strategic Plan, Healesville to Phillip Island Nature Link: Cardinia Waterways Section was officially launched at Harewood on 14 October 2018 and can now be found on the website .



Image: Brian Hughes

Newly formed HPNL Committee: Top left; Brian Hughes, Dr Mary Cole, Andrew Titterington, David Young, Glenn Brooks-McMillan, Marlene Hargreaves, Dr Pat Macwhirter, Joy Carbery



Harewood, Western Port, Image Sue Davies



The past year has been a huge learning curve with many meetings and much groundwork laid. There is a clear role for citizens' advocacy groups with local knowledge to work alongside government and private agencies, land holders and land managers to ensure the success of the Healesville to Phillip Island Nature Link.

As new, elected, office bearers for HPNL Inc take the reins of the organisation, we hand over the vision outlined in the strategic plan and a preliminary draft of an Implementation Plan for the Lower Cardinia Creek section of the Nature Link.

We have been in consultation with Melbourne Water and have identified key parcels of land suitable for initiating on ground work as lobbying, planning and community engagement continues for the overall project.



Images: Marlene Hargreaves



**MEETING 14TH NOV 2018 TO SET UP:
EASTERN ARM STAKEHOLDER GROUP [E.A.S.G.] OF THE
HEALESVILLE PHILLIP ISLAND NATURE LINK [HPNL]**

General Structure

Andrew Troedel was appointed convener and minute taker.

EASG will meet on a needs basis but otherwise possibly quarterly.

EASG will promote the concepts as promulgated by HPNL of;

- Providing corridors for indigenous fauna.
- Increasing awareness of the role and plight of native fauna in the environment.
- Acting as a conduit for information, ideas, proposals etc., to and from HPNL.
- Operating within the district east of Nar Nar Goon to Labertouche, north and south of the Princes Freeway and encompass into the Koo Wee Rup swampland.
- Supporting the involvement of likeminded individuals and organisations in the concepts and projects of HPNL, and promote the membership of HPNL.

Likeminded organisations might include: Landcare Groups, Friends Of ... Groups, etc.

It is not the role of EASG to direct or instruct organisations in what to do or how.

Specific Actions Required

Circulate information to groups and encourage their acceptance of the concepts and membership of HPNL.

Evaluate specific areas where planting has been effective in both the swampland and undulating areas.

Determine where infill planting would be useful in undulating areas to complete corridors especially along watercourses.

Determine a plan of action for the swampland, including:

- Evaluating suitable river and drain banks, road easements and reserves suitable for planting.
- Choosing suitable plants [especially those with fibrous root structure, ti-tree, and small shrubs]. Refer Melb Water plant list.



Image: Sue Davies



Specific Actions Required

- Encourage farmers to appreciate the commercial benefits of plantations
- Determine a program for the informing of the general population in regard to the challenges.
- Determine a means of getting support of the Corporates.
- Evaluate and develop access to various mapping systems which will be useful.



Upcoming meeting (all invited):

Date:

Monday 14 January 2019

Time:

10 am

Venue:

Harewood, 3300 South Gippsland Highway, Koo Wee Rup (Next to Tooradin Airport)

Purpose:

Dr Mary Cole will give a short talk on 'Soil Health in relation to the Nature Link'

We will be discussing;

(1) goals, opportunities and constraints for a Council-led project to identify priority Biolinks on varying scales across Cardinia;

(2) approaching Federal politicians before the Federal election

(3) any other matters members would like to raise.

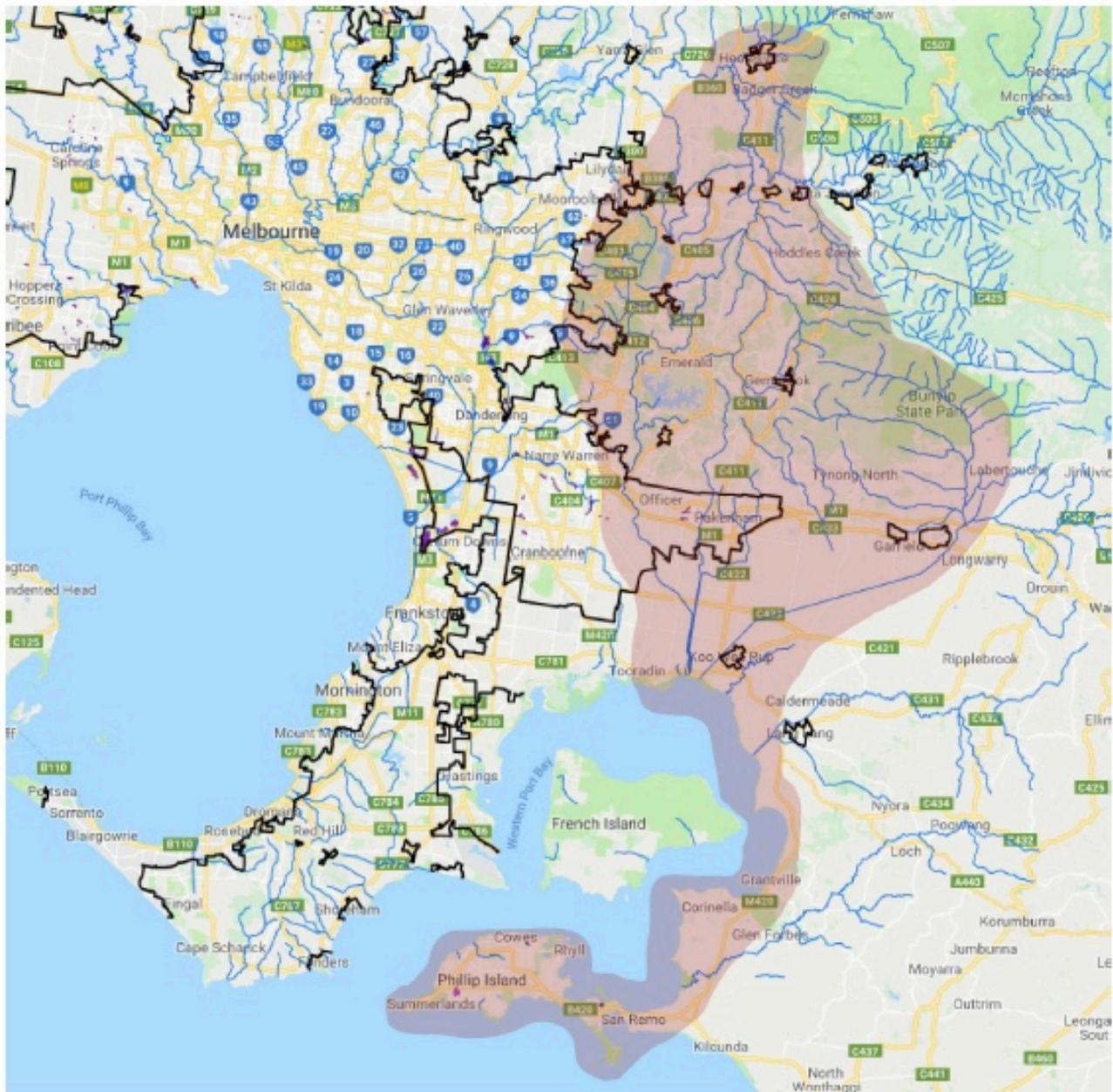


Image: Andrew Titterington



Map 1 – Healesville to Phillip Island Corridor

Shows the subject area for the Healesville to Phillip Island Nature Link. Connections to French Island, the rest of Western Port and to Port Phillip via the Yarra River and Dandenong Creek Catchment would be encouraged.



Area through which the proposed Healesville to Phillip Island Nature Link would pass

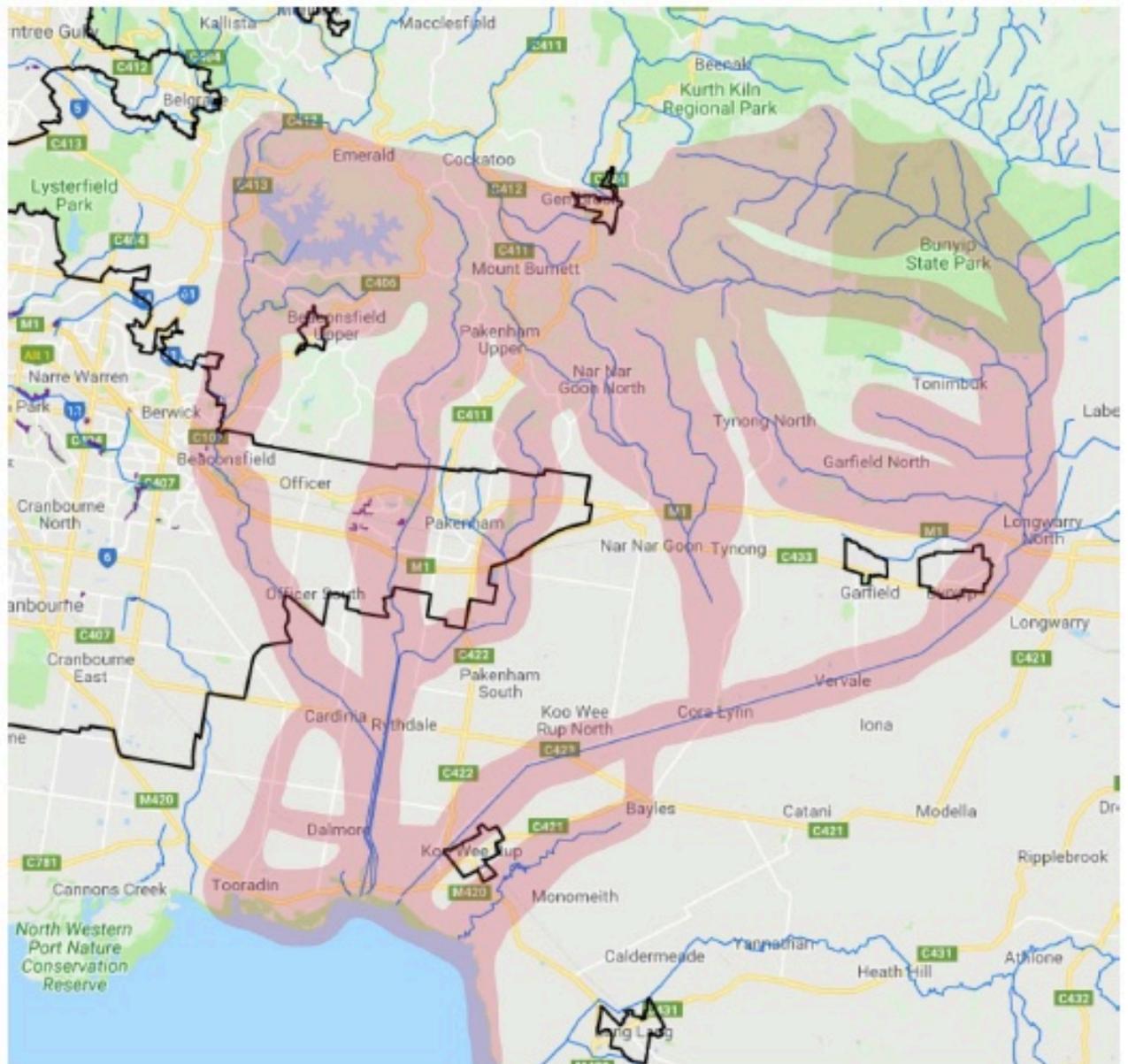


Urban Growth Boundary



Map 2 - Healesville to Phillip Island Nature Link - Indicative Proposed Nature Links within the Cardinia Waterways Catchments (CWCs) Section

CWCs is a loose term used in this Plan to describe waterways leading into northern Western Port, their environs and potential links between them. To the north they link with the Yarra River catchment and to the northwest with the Dandenong Creek catchment. See Appendix 2



Areas through which the proposed Cardinia Waterways section of the HPNL would pass

Urban Growth Boundary

