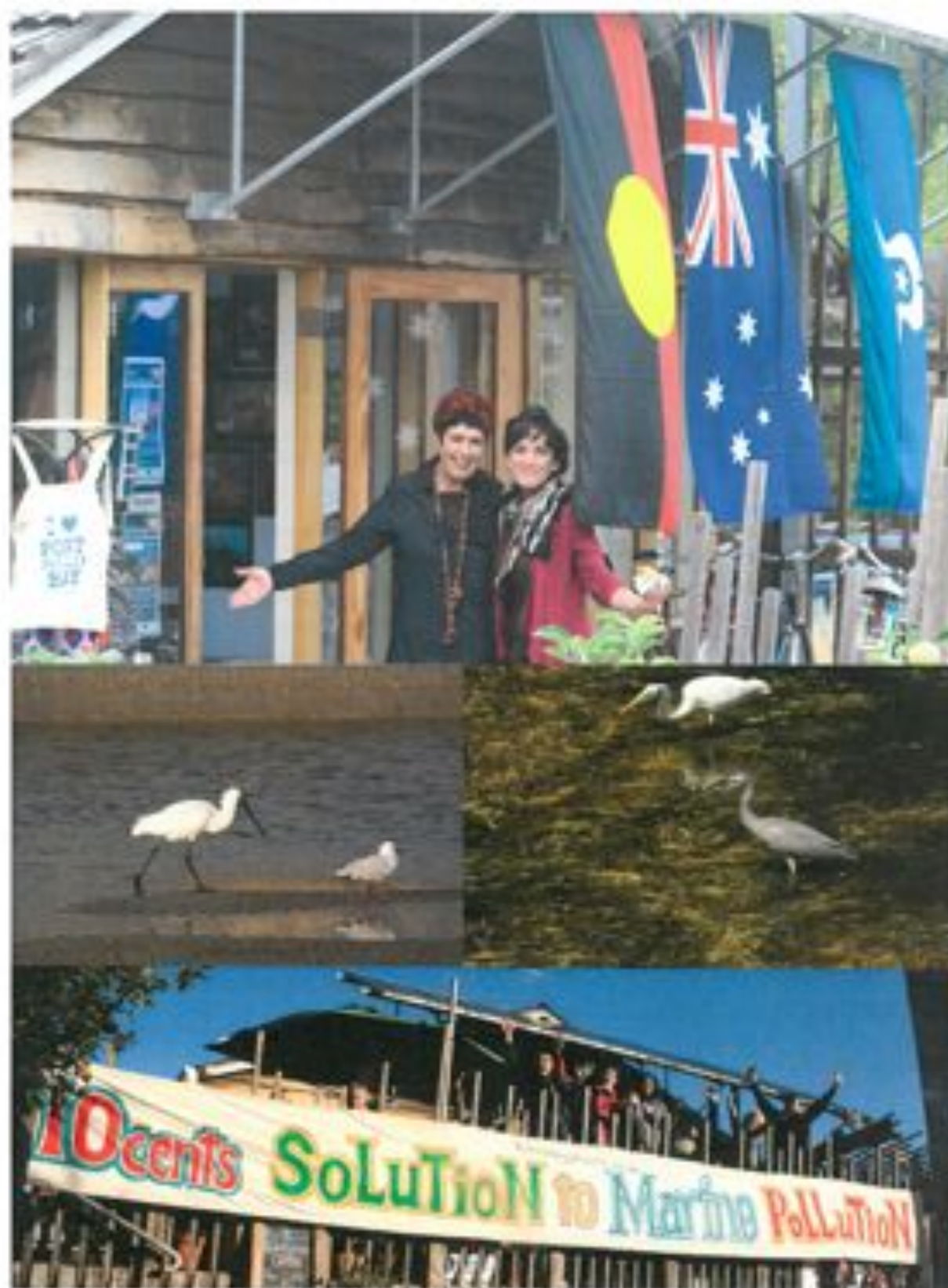




# PORT PHILLIP EcoCentre

Annual Report 2012-2013



Local ACTION global FUTURE

## Key elements of Port Phillip EcoCentre Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015

### Vision

An empowered and engaged community actively shaping a more sustainable world.

### Mission

The Port Phillip EcoCentre is a vibrant, accessible network engaging and enabling communities in long-term social and environmental wellbeing. We do this through reconnecting people to the natural world and building relationships to inspire, educate and demonstrate.

### Key values

We value integrity, inclusiveness, openness, creativity, innovation and practical action.

## Key Strategic Directions

### Engaging and empowering the community

- Build strong relationships and social connections
- Expand sphere of influence
- Take the message to the people
- Facilitate and support affiliates and community groups
- Communicate with the community

### Demonstrating best practice - facilities and resources

- Develop leading edge facilities
- Practically demonstrate sustainable living
- Attract and retain outstanding staff and volunteers
- Ensure adequate funding base

### Educating for Sustainability

- Schools
- Businesses
- Community
- Research

### Advocating and acting to protect and enhance the environment

- Provide a credible community voice
- Liaise with all levels of government

Cover photos (clockwise): Carolyn Briggs and Yas Bushby celebrate NAIDOC week. Eastern Great Egret & White-faced Heron at Westgate Park. Boomerang Alliance cash for containers campaign banner at EcoCentre. Spoonbill and friend at St Kilda West Beach.

# President's Report

It is a great privilege to be President of the vibrant effective community organisation, the Port Phillip EcoCentre. The EcoCentre is more than a retrofitted building, open 7 days a week, surrounded by gardens. It is a vibrant, accessible, community network which seeks to engage and enable people in long-term social and environmental wellbeing.

We work with individuals, organisations, and whole communities to build relationships that inspire, educate and reconnect people to the natural world, so future generations can enjoy an environmentally sustainable world. Our strong belief is that people together; working, learning, teaching, showing, doing and advocating, is the best path towards lasting, positive change.

The four key directions in our Strategic Plan are:

- Engaging and empowering the community
- Demonstrating best practice
- Education for sustainability
- Advocating and acting to protect and enhance the environment.

In the past year some key **community engagement** activities have been:

The Yarra Plume Project and Bay Care Action and Awareness Project (funded by a successful prosecution by the Environmental Protection Authority) in partnership with key groups

The Electric Vehicle Festival to expose the wider community to EV technology

Affiliates meetings: to share knowledge, plan cooperative action and be trained in best use of social media for our organisations

Regular film nights, forums and discussions featuring contemporary issues.

We have demonstrated **best practice** by:

Maintaining and extending our shared community garden and indigenous cultural garden

The 'Green Precinct' project working with the City of Port Phillip and local traders to adopt more efficient energy and waste disposal practices

Teaching young people how to construct and install nest boxes for native animals

Further developing governance, management and operational policies and procedures, including our human resource policies and practices.



Pam O'Neill, President

Our education program and research activities have expanded and diversified including:

More programs for schools and teachers linked to the Australian and Victorian school curriculum

Convening an environmental network for teachers

The Annual Sustainable Schools Festival where students share their sustainability achievements

The Pest Seastar Control in Local Habitats Project to develop guidelines for removal of pest seastars

Research reporting on litter collection and audits

With the Boon wurrung Foundation, research and development of an Aboriginal cultural walk including the production of educational resources.

We have **advocated and acted** to protect the environment including through:

Collaboration with Ricketts Point Marine Care to produce a DVD on marine plastics in Port Phillip Bay

Managing the penguin protection component of the St Kilda breakwater extension to ensure penguins were not harmed during works

Providing strategic advice and participating in many events and activities of our affiliates.

We are a small not-for-profit group with a big reputation for achievement thanks to our fantastic staff, our members and affiliates who work with and motivate us, our volunteers who selflessly make things happen and our competent Committee of Management.

Thank you also to our funders, especially our major sponsor the City of Port Phillip. Together this past year we have achieved much to protect the environment and to make our world a more sustainable place. We can all be very proud.

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT  
TO THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT OF PORT PHILLIP ECOCENTRE INC**

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc (the association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2013, statement of profit or loss and comprehensive income for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the statement by members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

**Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report**

The committee of Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report, and has determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic) and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The committee's responsibility also includes such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

**Auditor's Responsibility**

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the association's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report, in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

PORT PHILLIP ECOCENTRE INC.  
ABN 66 852 809 680

DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2013

	2013 \$	2012 \$
<b>INCOME</b>		
Administer Projects	18,636	37,395
Aust. Sustainable Schools Init	3,750	25,825
City of Port Phillip Administration Grant	134,530	189,188
City of Port Phillip other grants	161,126	32,884
Commercial Sponsors	5,227	14,600
Commonwealth Grants (GVEHO)	-	3,600
Court Order Grants	124,203	-
Consulting	55,906	61,616
Donations	2,058	13,950
Government Grants (DEECD)	9,590	-
Interest	9,713	7,553
Membership	3,232	2,659
Other grants	34,692	23,870
Product Sales	21,438	27,044
Sundry Income	16,993	12,483
	<u>601,094</u>	<u>452,245</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Audit Fees	2,530	2,500
Auspicng	25,848	19,843
Bank Charges	656	641
Cleaning	6,037	3,024
Computer expenses	2,804	2,303
Consumables	18,554	20,061
Depreciation	12,163	-
Electricity	1,637	1,346
Equipment Replacements	17,917	1,085
Insurance	4,480	4,486
Equipment and materials	8,376	2,044
Office Supplies	2,803	1,435
Other Operating expenses	12,452	-
Printing, postage and stationary	7,486	4,466
Professional Services	20,002	9,388
Repairs and Maintenance	597	3,863
Seminars and Training	3,902	1,519
Storage	1,249	1,410
Sundry Expenses	4,766	5,933
Subscriptions	795	1,274
Superannuation	29,638	21,302
Telephone	3,988	8,142
Wages and Salaries	365,634	240,608
Workcover	2,666	3,973
	<u>557,900</u>	<u>380,742</u>
Net Profit / (Loss)	<u>43,194</u>	<u>91,503</u>

This statement should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

PORT PHILLIP ECOCENTRE INC.  
ABN 66 862 809 680

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
AS AT 30 JUNE 2013

	Note	2013 \$	2012 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	2	343,328	236,729
Accounts receivable and other debtors		55,270	34,315
Prepayments		401	2,163
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>398,999</u>	<u>273,207</u>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Plant and equipment	3	16,948	22,598
Eco House Building	3	254,006	260,519
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>270,954</u>	<u>283,117</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<u>669,953</u>	<u>556,324</u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Accounts payable and other payables	4	38,726	29,485
Employee provisions		21,227	13,780
Grants received in advance		112,400	58,653
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<u>172,353</u>	<u>101,918</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<u>172,353</u>	<u>101,918</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u>497,600</u>	<u>454,406</u>
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>			
Retained surplus		497,600	454,406
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>		<u>497,600</u>	<u>454,406</u>

	Note	2013 \$	2012 \$
<b>Cash flow from operating activities</b>			
Receipts from grants and customers		624,175	440,353
Payments to suppliers and employees		(527,289)	(346,990)
Interest received		9,713	7,553
<b>Net cash provided / (used) by operating activities</b>	5	<u>106,599</u>	<u>100,916</u>
<b>Net increase / (decrease) in cash for the year</b>		106,599	100,916
Cash at the beginning of the year		236,729	135,813
<b>Cash at the end of the year</b>	2	<u>343,328</u>	<u>236,729</u>

# Independent Auditor's Report continued

PORT PHILLIP ECOCENTRE INC.  
ABN 66 852 809 680

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2013

### NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial statements are special purpose financial statements prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic). The committee of management ("committee") has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historic costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where stated specifically, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise, have been adopted in the preparation of these financial statements.

**a. Income Tax**

Pursuant to the provisions of the Income Tax Assessment Act, the Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc. is exempt from income tax.

**b. Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)**

Property, plant and equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all property, plant and equipment is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

**c. Impairment of Assets**

At the end of each reporting period, the committee reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, an impairment test is carried out on the asset by comparing the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, to the asset's carrying amount. Any excess of the asset's carrying amount over its recoverable amount is recognised in the income and expenditure statement.

**d. Employee Provisions**

Provision is made for the association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee provisions have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

**e. Provisions**

Provisions are recognised when the association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

**f. Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

# Independent Auditor's Report continued

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2013

### NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES CONTINUED

**g. Accounts Receivable and Other Debtors**

Accounts receivable and other debtors include amounts due from members as well as amounts receivable from donors. Receivables expected to be collected within 12 months of the end of the reporting period are classified as current assets. All other receivables are classified as non-current assets.

**h. Revenue and Other Income**

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable after taking into account any trade discounts and volume rebates allowed. For this purpose, deferred consideration is not discounted to present values when recognising revenue.

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method, which for floating rate financial assets is the rate inherent in the instrument. Dividend revenue is recognised when the right to receive a dividend has been established.

Grant and donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds, which is generally at the time of receipt.

If conditions are attached to the grant that must be satisfied before the association is eligible to receive the contribution, recognition of the grant as revenue will be deferred until those conditions are satisfied.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax.

**i. Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the assets and liabilities statement.

**j. Accounts Payable and Other Payables**

Accounts payable and other payables represent the liability outstanding at the end of the reporting period for goods and services received by the association during the reporting period that remain unpaid. The balance is recognised as a current liability with the amounts normally paid within 30 days of recognition of the liability.

**k. Critical Accounting Estimates and Judgements**

The committee evaluates estimates and judgements incorporated into the financial statements based on historical knowledge and best available current information. Estimates assume a reasonable expectation of future events and are based on current trends and economic data, obtained both externally and within the entity.

**Key Estimates**

Included in the records of the Entity are buildings and plant and equipment amounting to \$283,117 cost and \$12,163 accumulated depreciation at balance date. The fixed asset register and accounting records for these assets have not been found. Management has determined and is of the opinion that these assets exist and estimate that the carrying value in the books approximates their value in use.



# Independent Auditor's Report continued

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2013

### NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES CONTINUED

#### k. Critical Accounting Estimates and Judgements continued

##### Key judgements

There are no critical judgements that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amount of the assets and liabilities.

	2013	2012
	\$	\$

### NOTE 2: CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

Cash on hand	204	494
Cash at bank – restricted	16,642	27,594
Cash at bank – unrestricted	<u>326,482</u>	<u>208,641</u>
	<u>343,328</u>	<u>236,729</u>

### NOTE 3: PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Plant and equipment	22,598	22,598
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>(5,650)</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>16,948</u>	<u>22,598</u>
Eco House	260,519	260,519
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>(6,513)</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>254,006</u>	<u>260,519</u>

### NOTE 4: ACCOUNTS PAYABLES AND OTHER PAYABLES

Trade Creditors and accruals	38,726	13,258
Creditors – Yarra Plume Bay Care Project	<u>-</u>	<u>16,227</u>
	<u>38,726</u>	<u>29,485</u>

# Independent Auditor's Report continued

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2013

	2013 \$	2012 \$
<b>NOTE 5: CASH FLOW INFORMATION</b>		
Reconciliation of cash flows from operations with net current year surplus		
Net current year surplus	43,194	91,503
Non-cash flows in profit:		
- depreciation	12,163	-
Changes in assets and liabilities		
- (increase)/decrease in accounts receivable and other debtors	(20,955)	(6,402)
- (increase)/decrease in prepayments	1,762	743
- (decrease)/increase in accounts payable and other payables	9,241	13,666
- (decrease)/increase in income in advance	53,747	2,390
- (decrease)/increase in employee provisions	7,447	(964)
Cash flows (used in)/provided by operating activities	<u>106,599</u>	<u>100,916</u>

### STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the committee the financial report as set out on pages 1 to 7:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the financial position of Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc as at 30 June 2013 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic).
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the committee and is signed for and on behalf of the committee by:



Pam O'Neil (President)

  
Keith Badger (Treasurer)

Melbourne:

Date: 4th September 2013

## Working together

One the great things about being part of the EcoCentre is meeting and collaborate with so many wonderful, talented and passionate people. Here is a photo gallery of some special people, from various backgrounds and cultures across the world who have shared our journey in the 2012-13 year. They all display an extraordinary generosity and desire to work together for a healthy



Film-maker Michael Lutman (above) from the US is working with Venezuelans Patricia Acuna and Mani Mejia (below) to produce a documentary on plastics in Port Phillip Bay.



Silke Stuckenbroek (2 Hands campaigner of German descent) and Tim Silverwood (Take 3) were interviewed and filmed for the doco collecting plastic trash at Point Ormond.



Angolan food scientist Vissolela Nidenzako and Rob Youl of Australian Landcare International co-presented at an EcoCentre food forum in May. Funds raised support Landcare initiatives in Tanzania.



Captain Charles Moore (US discoverer of the North Pacific Garbage patch) searches for nurdles at St Kilda south beach while Rob Taylor (Veg Out President) and Paul Sharp (2 Hands founder) discuss plastic pollution.



Nikki Kowalczyk (marine scientist of Polish background) trading places with English excavator operator Mick Surrey during the St Kilda breakwater extension works.

## Youth Wildlife Ambassador - Gio's Nest-box Forum

Gio's Nest-box Forum is funded through the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority to be delivered until November 2013. The project's key objectives are to increase breeding habitat for local native species which has been lost due to clearing of old (hollow-bearing) trees; and to increase community education about this issue.



Gio with some of his nest-box designs

Through designing, building, installing and monitoring appropriate nest-boxes, local species are able to use these boxes as a replacement to hollows. The project came about because of Youth Wildlife Ambassador Gio Fitzpatrick's passion for and interest in local wildlife. It is through Gio's nest-box designs and knowledge that the project has been able to attract much attention and community support.

To monitor the project, a small study area was established around Elwood canal or 'Elster Creek'.

Key program outcomes include:

Build, install and monitor twenty nest-boxes in Elster Creek study area. Nest-box types are relevant to the type of species we are trying to attract - 'target species'

Produce and distribute Gio's Nest-box Forum booklet and Gio's Wildlife Discovery DVD, as a resource for primary, secondary schools and the wider public

Establish, market and maintain an on-line nest-box forum, open to schools across Victoria and conduct six online forums with schools

Undertake spatial data reporting of the nest-box locations within the study area

Gio's Nest-box Forum is in progress until the end of November. Twelve of the twenty nest-boxes destined for the Elster Creek Study area have been installed. Regular monitoring is being undertaken by Gio and Friends of Elster Creek. These monitoring sessions double as community education sessions. 'Gio's Wildlife Walks' and 'Native Bird Surveys' have proved to be very popular as well as collecting invaluable data.

Three successful workshops have been undertaken, one with Jewish Ecological Coalition facilitated by Gio and the EcoCentre and two within local schools, facilitated by the EcoCentre Schools' Education team.

Over the course of the program, nest-box designs have been refined and a skilled volunteer has been trained and appointed to the role of building nest-box kits ready for use in schools.

Another skilled volunteer has been recruited to map the locations of nest-boxes, which will prove to be an invaluable resource regarding future monitoring and the growth of the program.



Gould's Wattled bats snuggled in one of Gio's 'bat tubes' in St Kilda Botanical Gardens

As much as possible schools receive instructions and support in their process of installation and monitoring.

As part of the program, schools can fundraise and purchase kits (able to be built with basic hand tools), have an incursion run by one of the Education team and gain access to Gio's online forum using Victorian Education Board endorsed Blackboard Collaborate. Gio has been trained to use this on-line communication tool.

## Breakwater construction project: penguin protection

Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron commissioned Port Phillip EcoCentre (in consultation with Earthcare St Kilda and Fitzgerald Constructions) to manage little penguins on St Kilda breakwater during construction works which would impact on around 5% of the total breakwater.

A key objective was to complete the construction before onset of the 2013-14 penguin breeding season. The 2013 St Kilda breakwater construction Penguin Management Methodology was devised to expedite the works and minimise the direct impacts of construction activities on penguins.

Potential direct impacts included nest site removal, nest site displacement, penguin interaction with machinery and the associated risks to penguins.



Principal Penguin Monitor - Nikki Kowalczyk meets the media

The Penguin Management Methodology commenced on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2013 and continued for the duration of the breakwater development until the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 2013. A Principal Penguin Monitor (or Deputy) supervised a team of trained volunteers to conduct the morning searches each day prior to construction works commencing. Searches included checking for penguins under or around construction equipment and stockpiled rock and in the works area designated for that day.

The penguin monitor team checked breakwater construction zones on a total of 118 days. All penguins found were recorded and those that were able to be captured were relocated in accordance with the Penguin Management Action Plan (Actions 1-8 depending on the life-stage of penguins) and relevant provisions of the Department of Environment and Primary Industries research permit # 10006681.

In accordance with Action 1 of the Action Plan, monitors relocated penguins from construction designated zones on 286 accounts and placed these birds in the water.



What all the fuss is about.

In accordance with Action 2, two moulting penguins were relocated to an appropriate position along the breakwater. In accordance with Action 3, the nest contents (1 adult and 2 eggs) of a single nest were relocated during construction works. Actions 4 – 7 were not put into effect as there were no instances of chicks within construction zones. In accordance with Action 8, one abandoned egg was removed from the northern construction zone.

Earthcare volunteers contributed more than 420 hours to the morning searches and recorded a total of 898 encounters with penguins within construction zones over the course of the breakwater development.

An unexpected drama unfolded during July as penguins began to show signs of breeding activity and the need to complete the construction became all the more urgent. A young sub-Antarctic fur seal decided to holiday in St Kilda and took up residence in the construction zone. Following consultation with wildlife authorities, staff from Melbourne Zoo were called in to safely relocate the seal, enabling the construction to be completed soon after.



Melbourne Zoo wildlife experts move to relocate the visiting sub-Antarctic fur seal

## Education for Sustainability: Schools' Program



In 2012 -13, the EcoCentre schools team worked with over 30 schools on a regular basis.

15 schools in Port Phillip, Bayside, Glen Eira and Kingston through a consortium with Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies (CERES) on ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic

16 schools participated in Tomorrow's Leaders for Sustainability in Port Phillip and Bayside council areas

4 Bayside and 3 Port Phillip schools on ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic framework including 3 schools submitting for Sustainability Star certification

5 Bayside schools participated in biodiversity activities in Bayside locations

6 schools attended the My School - Audit and Action training for secondary students

*More than 700 students from various schools visited the EcoCentre on excursions.*

Our School's Team partnership with the Boon Wurrung Foundation has grown in 2013 with more bookings of Aboriginal educators conducting sessions that have complimented in-school programs and excursions.



Elwood PS environment leaders in a possum skin cloak at Westgate Park

Professional learning for teachers in Aboriginal History and Culture is scheduled for October this year. This will be a new development for our programs as we aim to give teachers curriculum support and confidence to teach about the First People of our local area.



April, student volunteer Jess and Boon Wurrung Elder Carolyn Briggs co-facilitated a standing-room-only workshop at the Greening Australia Toolbox Conference



Elwood PS celebrate their first ResourceSmart star!

## Schools' Program continued

*"I learned that one person can make a big difference!" – Year 5, St Columba's PS*

Our programs have continued to expand into the Bayside Council area. We have delivered Tomorrow's Leaders for Sustainability, Bayside Biodiversity Activities and the Teachers' Environment Network in 2012/13. Bayside City Council has once again supported the Sustainable Schools Festival with funding for the event.



Sam of Montague Continuing Education Centre planting at Perc White Reserve

The Schools team now includes three part-time staff, including our new team member Bronnie Walsh. This is equivalent to 1.4 EFT. We have employed sessional staff as required and currently have two excellent sessional staff members working with us. Our future goals:

- Expand our work with schools in surrounding municipal areas, in particular Glen Eira, Bayside and Stonnington through excursions

- ResourceSmart AuSSI Vic facilitation, Tomorrow's Leaders for Sustainability, and local practical action activities

- Work with the Boon Wurrung Foundation to develop teaching resources for schools that increase knowledge and appreciation of the First People of the local area

- Continue to streamline management systems and diversify funding so that engagement can be consistent throughout the year.

*"We took the group down to the Perc White Reserve today to check on the plants we planted a few weeks back. They're growing well and the kids were really proud to see them flourishing."*

Teacher, Montague Continuing Education Centre



Sandringham Secondary College exploring Ricketts Point

*"The students were able to view the park in a way they hadn't before: exploring the gardens and noticing things that they had walked past hundreds of times and opening their eyes to indigenous culture in our local area." – Year 1 Teacher, Elwood PS*

*"I loved everything! How it was interactive, and the guest speaker who was an expert in this field."*

Secondary student participant in Environment Resource Management Green My School



MacRobertson Girls' High students learn how to conduct an Energy Audit at Green My School

## Yarra Birrarung Plume project



Crew from Earthcare, EcoCentre, City of Port Phillip, 3206 and 3207 Beach Patrol at Middle Park Bay Care day

In 2012 the Victorian Environment Protection Authority invited EcoCentre and Marine Care Ricketts Point to submit project proposals which might be funded through a Magistrate's Court order. The groups decided on a joint proposal to deliver a series of community "Bay Care events" and produce publications to promote participation in the ongoing activities of key local groups.

The groups are Port Phillip EcoCentre, Earthcare St Kilda, Ricketts Point Marine Care, Jawbone Marine Sanctuary Care Group and Boon wurrung Foundation.

Activities conducted by the groups included:

- Volunteer recruitment and training
- Litter clean-ups and audits
- Shoreline seashell surveys
- Pest seastar control and monitoring
- Penguin colony monitoring
- Rakali monitoring
- Oil spill response training
- coastal and waterways revegetation
- Port Jackson Shark monitoring
- Underwater habitat mapping
- Marine Ed Centre school excursions
- Snorkeling & inter tidal reef surveys
- Fish counts
- Indigenous cultural heritage talks and tours
- Beach walk & talks
- Seagrass mapping
- Water quality monitoring; and
- Preparation of educational publications

'Bay Care' events were held at Ricketts Point, Williamstown, St Kilda, and Middle Park to disseminate a range of publications and information relating to local aquatic habitats, water quality issues.

The events also promoted opportunities for the public to get involved with local groups. One of the exciting outcomes unearthed by the project was the realisation that the world's one and only litter fairy lives in Elwood. Her magic spells (especially effective on children of all ages) are cast by singing, playing ukulele, and twirling a hula hoop at the same time!



Lauren the Litter Fairy

The project also funded the Gould League to deliver curriculum-based schools activities at Ricketts Point Marine Education Centre, supported local volunteer training, and enabled important networking between the participating groups. Overall, the project has proven to be very effective use of the funds with all participating groups noting a significant increase in public profile.

Another successful court prosecution by the EPA resulted in further funding for the Bay Care Action and Awareness project which will conclude in June 2014. Stay tuned for similar positive outcomes!



Baykeeper, Neil Blake takes good advice from the younger generation on the state of the beach



## Pest seastar research

Completed in June 2013, the Pest Seastar Control in Local Habitats project produced three major outcomes:

- A scientific report comparing seasonal populations of Northern Pacific Seastars in Mornington and St Kilda harbours;
- A report comparing the mollusc populations in Mornington and St Kilda harbours; and
- Preparation and publication of **Best Practice Guide for removal of Northern Pacific Seastars**.



Introduced pest species Northern Pacific Seastar (left) & native Granular Seastar

The project was funded by the Federal Government 'Caring for Country' program and drew on the ongoing efforts of Earthcare St Kilda to remove North Pacific Seastars from St Kilda Harbour since 2004. It involved liaison and collaboration with numerous stakeholders including Earthcare St Kilda, Parks Victoria, Victorian Department of Environment & Primary Industries, Deakin University, Reef Watch and Polperro Dolphin Swims.

The Best Practice Guidelines for Removal of Northern Pacific Seastars were based on research of relevant literature, land manager policies and practices, and dive industry standards. Content was also gathered through liaison with Earthcare seastar collection activity organisers and practical involvement in collections.



Natives: Eight-armed Seastars & Biscuit Seastars

The **Best Practice Guide** was written to enable local communities to take action to protect local habitats of native species where infestation has already occurred. The principles and practical steps in the guide may be adopted and applied in a community or industry setting.

During the period from July 2012 to June 2013 community removals of pest seastars were conducted at St Kilda harbour on 10 occasions. Community collections were conducted at Mornington Harbour and Point Cook Marine Sanctuary on one occasion. Data on Northern Pacific Seastars removed was gathered on each occasion.

Monitoring of populations of selected native seastars was conducted on 4 occasions at St Kilda and on 4 occasions at Mornington. Data gathered during this monitoring was comprehensively written up in a research paper by Jason Strugarek and Jeremy Willcox. Soft sediment populations of native molluscs (potential prey of Northern Pacific Seastars) were surveyed in St Kilda and Mornington and the results of this research written up by Neil Blake.



Earthcare citizen scientist measuring the catch

The methodology for the native seastar survey and the native mollusc survey are both designed to be easily replicable by schools and members of the community as a citizen science initiative.

**Best Practice Guide for removal of Northern Pacific Seastars** was compiled by: Dean Bird and Neil Blake with thanks to Julianne Stuart, Wendy Albury, Judy Muir, Jason Strugarek, Jeremy Willcox, and Jill Robinson. Sincere thanks go to John Tornatore and Emily Verey of Parks Victoria.

## Friends of Westgate Park

The Friends of Westgate Park have completed another successful year enhancing biodiversity at Westgate Park. Almost every day in the year saw some activity in the park: planting, mulching, weeding, seedling propagation, guided walks, fungi mapping, bird surveys, checking water quality, educating school children on biodiversity or the back-breaking task of repairing roads and tracks. In addition to this very important on-ground work, the



Stinkhorn or red starfish fungus

group has been developing plans for Westgate Park's future. Urban open space is under threat and Westgate Park requires careful management with the Urban Renewal Project in Fisherman's Bend and the expansion of Webb Dock within its precinct.

The Fisherman's Bend Urban Renewal project will place even more demand on quality open space in the area and we believe that Westgate Park, with our vision, will be an asset treasured by the community in the years to come. We have been working closely with the team responsible for the Webb Dock expansion and have plans to develop wetlands along the park's southern boundary as a buffer to the port expansion.



Black-winged stilt



Fan-tailed cuckoo

The Friends have successfully lobbied the Minister for the Environment to incorporate this area into the park and to transform this area into wetlands and provide for walkers and cyclists by linking existing path networks and offering a more logical, direct route to the River and the punt to Williamstown and to the Bay.

We have also successfully negotiated with the Port of Melbourne Corporation to include additional land along the Yarra River in Westgate Park (downstream of the existing park boundary). Our group can hardly wait to get our hands dirty in revegetating these new areas.

Open space in our region provides a mix of opportunities to study plants from around the world, to play sport, ride a bike or swim, all contributing to community health and well-being. But Westgate Park is a unique opportunity to showcase the indigenous plants of the area. Our vision is of a beautiful, bushland park that sustains native fauna that is an attractive destination for people to safely enjoy interesting walks, vistas, resting places, picnics and barbecues. Friends of Westgate Park has the vision, drive, expertise and resources to do that.

***If you want to help:  
please contact Tony on 0400 770 254.***



Friends at work!

## EcoCentre people

### Management Committee

Pam O'Neil	President
Lis Ferwick	Vice-President
Tony Flude	Secretary
Keith Badger	Treasurer
Steve Pennells	
Mark Karki	
Ann Callaghan	
Nicky Petch-Baker	(retired)

### EcoCentre Public Fund Managers

John Gilchrist	(retired)
Kay McKenzie	
Louise Kyle	
Michele Hodles	

### Staff

Adam Casley (Waste Audit Coordinator)
Andrea Eales (Schools' Educator)
Annett Finger (Deputy Penguin Monitor)
April Seymore (Schools' Educator)
Bede Doherty (General Manager)
David Giles (IT Communications)
Dean Bird (Seastar Research)

### Staff (cont.)

Debra Sleigh (Accounts)
Fam Charko (Volunteer Coordinator)
Gio Fitzpatrick (Youth Wildlife Ambassador)
Jagoda Kurek (Accounts, 2012-13)
Jason Strugarek (Seastar Research)
Jeremy Willcox (Seastar Research)
Jill Robinson (Environmental Projects)
Justin Stapleton (Seastar Research)
Lisa Scilliano (Revegetation Officer)
Neil Blake (Director)
Nikki Kowalczyk (Penguin Monitor)
Paula Havelberg (Visitor Engagement)
Sandy Morrison (PPUFFN Project)
Steve Hanna (Human Bobcat)
Will Pullin (Garden Coordinator)
Yasmin Bushby (Visitor Engagement)

### Key volunteers

Steve Hanna (Human Bobcat)
Tashi Taskovics (Film Nights Coordinator)
Katherine Evans (Film Nights Coordinator)

### Student placement

Amanda Grzegorzczyn
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## Affiliate Groups 2012 - 2013

Animal Liberation Victoria	Oases Community Learning
Australian Landcare International	Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation
Australian Youth Climate Coalition	Port Phillip Community Group
Earthcare St Kilda Inc	South Port Uniting Care
Earthsong	St Kilda Community Gardens Club
Elwood Flood Action Group	St Kilda Indigenous Nursery Cooperative
Friends of St Kilda Botanical Gardens	St Kilda Youth Services
Friends of Westgate Park	Transition Port Phillip
Jewish Ecological Coalition Inc.	Veg Out Community Gardens Inc.
Locals into Victoria's Environment (LIVE)	Very Edible Gardens Inc.
Marine Care Ricketts Point	Victorian Landcare Council
Mary & Basil Community Garden	



## Port Phillip EcoCentre Inc.

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