

## **PRESIDENTS'S REPORT**

The main issue that we have dealt with over the last 12 months has been the proposal for a walking trail in the Yallock Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park (formerly Bass Coast Marine and Coastal Park).

We reported to members on developments in this area in February and again in early May. The May report is attached here for members' information. Since that time there has been one further formal engagement with Parks Victoria (PV) and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). A public on-line community consultation was held on 20 May. The slides from the consultation are also attached.

Parks Victoria was represented by Caz Treby and Nick Loschiavo and DELWP by Cass Phillippou. HHRRG was represented by executive members Amaryll Perlesz, Rosemary Paterson, Luisa Macmillan and Ros Eason.

The key developments reported at the presentation were:

- The legislative steps to establish the new Coastal Park are not expected to be completed until late 2020. There is a Covid 19 -related backlog of parliamentary business.
- The design contract has been awarded to Hassell Studio.
- A desktop site appraisal of the coastal area between San Remo and Inverloch was to be undertaken over May and June.

The greater part of the meeting was taken up with questions from those attending. The overarching concern was the one already identified by our group and by the Coastal Alliance of which we are members ie how to reconcile stated the aim of "open access" to the park and multiple uses of it (walkers, bike riders, horse riders? hang gliders?) with the need to protect existing environmental values and landscape character.

Specific questions focussed on track width and surface, the likely scope of vegetation clearance, the actual track location and the possibility of a new camping site. On all these questions DELWP and Parks gave no firm answers or assurances but they are clearly aware of the potentially contradictory nature of the government's aims. DELWP suggested, for instance, that not *all* parts of the track would be suitable for shared use and Parks said that the final alignment of the track should be one that mitigates the impact on the local environment by e.g. creating no-go zones and utilising existing footprints.

But the devil is in the detail. A second round of public consultations is scheduled for September – October but it is to be hoped that members of the Coastal Alliance and other community activists will have an opportunity for further input before then. HHRRG will continue to explore these possibilities.

**ATTACHMENT 1.** Slides

**ATTACHMENT 2.** Executive report, May newsletter.

## **Yallock Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park (formerly Bass Coast Marine and Coastal Park): walking trail update: May 2002**

In February we reported to members on the government's plans to create a walking trail extending from San Remo to Inverloch through the new Marine and Coastal Park. Since then there have been no new formal announcements from government about the progress of this project and we understand that the design services contract has not yet been awarded.

Obviously though some work is continuing as we understand that consideration is being given to how stakeholder consultations can be held in the Covid 19 environment. It appears likely that these will now take place on-line only.

The Yallock-Bulluk Coastal Alliance, of which we are members, was however able to have one face-to-face meeting met with Parks Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to voice our concerns about the proposal and to explore what avenues are open to us to have input into it.

### **Meeting with Parks Victoria and DELWP**

The Yallock Bulluk Coastal Alliance met with representatives of DELWP and Parks on 27<sup>th</sup> February at Harmers Haven. DELWP was represented by Cass Philippou, Project Officer, and Rinske Poulier, Project Manager . Parks was represented by Brian Martin. Ros Eason and Amaryll Perlesz attended on behalf of the HHRR Association and the Friends Group respectively.

The discussion was largely of a preliminary character, at least as far as DELWP and Parks were concerned, as the tender for design services had only closed on 11 February. However we did get some general indications about both DELWP's and Parks' thinking in some areas of concern to us.

- **Consultations.** DELWP apologised for not having been in touch with relevant local groups at an earlier point of time but undertook to do so regularly in future. Cass Philippou indicated, however, that it would be unlikely that the Coastal Alliance would be given a position on the Project Working Group (PWG) as we had proposed.

There was also little appetite for the creation of a lower-order Stakeholder Reference Group. It seemed that the preferred model was for one-on-one consultations with specific stakeholders (e.g. mountain bike riders, walkers, cyclists, environmentalists etc), supplemented by the kind of public open-day where members of the community can make comments on issues and/or proposals but without the structure of a formal meeting. These consultations were being scheduled to begin at Easter.

Events have since overtaken these plans. Public meetings of any kind, including stakeholder round tables, are off the agenda for the time being. Consultations are

likely to be on-line only but no timetable has been flagged and a proposed project website has yet to materialise.

- **Camping ground.** Members will recall that one of the key concerns of the Coastal Alliance was the apparent encouragement in the design brief for new camping grounds in the Park.

It became clear during discussions that there was little appetite, especially within Parks Victoria, for the creation of such new camp sites, and although the issue would still be part of the design brief, DEWLP indicated that it was “a site” rather than multiple sites that would be considered. Discussion in fact focussed on how existing sites might be upgraded, if required, rather than new ones developed.

- **Dual access.** As explained in our last newsletter, it is not clear from the design brief to what extent the government intends, or hopes, that the new trail provides multiple access ie not only walking, but cycling, horse riding, car access etc. We outlined our concerns on this question, in particular about the environmental impacts of multiple access requirements (widening of existing paths, creation of new surfaces etc).

After the formal meeting, the members of the Coastal Alliance took the DELWP and Parks representatives on a brief walk around a section of the heathland and the beach. HHRR Association and Friends Group were particularly keen to impress two things on them:

- the damage that would be done to native vegetation by any widening of the narrow path that leads from the end of Viminaria Road onto the heathland
- the fact that a continuous walk along the beach was not possible at certain tides.

They seemed to take the point on both counts. But we will see.