

Cape Conversations

Cape Paterson Residents and Ratepayers Association Newsletter – December 2025



Message from our President – Rohan Brown

Finally, our Protected Settlement Boundary has been formally established at Seaward Drive. October 14 was an auspicious day as the Bass Coast Statement of Planning Policy was gazetted by the State Government, the final step in a protracted process. This was the culmination of a long campaign by CPRRA members and others in our community. CPRRA members should feel justly proud to have played such a significant role in achieving this outcome, preserving our unique beachside village for the enjoyment of future generations.

Our Committee held five meetings this year, two of which were attended by local councillors, Meg Edwards in February and Mat Moran in June. We continued to run the popular monthly Parents' Group at the Community Hall (thanks to our enthusiastic volunteers who facilitate this) and our wonderful working bee volunteers have made a significant impact on that pesky boneseed as well as completing extensive planting and vegetation clearance, contributing to our continuing commitment to our environment. We have also continued our advocacy for enhancing our unique location through liaison with relevant stakeholders as well as grant applications.

We have also embarked on a project to upgrade our IT systems and processes which will continue into 2026.

Hopefully summer will eventually arrive, and we can all enjoy our wonderful coast and the delights on offer. Stay safe and I hope to see as many members and friends as possible at our AGM. Thank you to our members for your contribution to making Cape Paterson the special place that it is.

Beat the AGM Rush!

Why not pay your membership prior to the AGM on 17 January? Skip the queue and help to streamline our volunteer's workload!

Membership is \$15 per adult (and optional for those over 70). For over 70s still wishing to contribute you can make a donation which is GST free!

Direct transfer is to our Bendigo bank account: BSB 633000 Account 130956113. Please add your last name and street number e.g. "Happyface 143".

Any questions? Email us at membership@capepaterson.asn.au

Diary Dates

End of Year Dance

18 December (see p. 5)

Annual General Meeting

January 17, 2026 (see page 2)

Cape Acquathon

18 January 2026

Working Bee

14 February 2026

Clean up Australia Day

1 March 2026

(more info in the February newsletter)

V/Line coach services

V/Line ran a consultation process from May to June this year.

For those interested in the Yarram, Leongatha, Koo Wee Rup to Melbourne routes information on potential increased services is available on the Engage Victoria website:

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/Yarram-Melbourne-VLine>



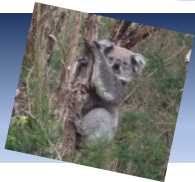
CPRRA's Annual General Meeting and Celebration

Our AGM will be held on **Saturday 17 January at 11am at Cape Paterson Community Hall.**

We will be seeking nominations for all places on the committee. After several years of serving some current members are not renominating so there is room for "new blood" as the CPRRA commences a new chapter in its 62-year history. No previous experience is necessary - just enthusiasm and commitment to contribute to Cape Paterson's environment, planning and wellbeing. Contact us on secretary@capepaterson.asn.au -or anyone else on the committee and we'll be able to fill you in without any need to commit.

The meeting will be followed by a 20-minute presentation on the Bay Beach Master Plan by Zaki Harba from the Community Safety Building Authority. Those with long memories may recall the first presentation of the initial plan at the 2014 AGM - so it is long overdue for an update. We will wrap up with food and (non-alcoholic) beverages to celebrate our successful campaign to return the settlement boundary to Seaward Drive and forestall plans for massive greenfield development.

Everyone welcome (members only to vote) but we would appreciate RSVP's to arrange catering secretary@capepaterson.asn.au). An official AGM notice will go out later in December.



Biodiversity

— protecting and conserving our environment

Working Bees Moving Forward

Thanks to our wonderful environmental volunteers for their contributions during the past year. Together we are making Cape Paterson a place where the natural wonders of our coastal area are maintained to the benefit of residents and our endangered critters (e.g. hooded plovers and short tailed shearwaters), and our not so endangered critters such as koalas, wombats, frogs, lizards (and yes, even snakes).

In the coming year we will continue with our weed removal and plantings but we're also hoping to embark on a couple of new projects. Teaming up with our near neighbours the Pommytown residents (residents on the east side of the Cape-Wonthaggi Road as you're leaving Wonthaggi). They're interested in establishing/enhancing koala bio links between Cape Paterson and naturally occurring bush in their neck of the woods. One possibility is to connect Boundary Road/Fultons Road with the new Inverloch-Wonthaggi bike path. To that end, if you can let me know of any koala sightings at the east end of Cape then I'll try to collect scat samples for analysis for use in grant applications (secretary@capepaterson.asn.au)

Now the northern development is not an overdevelopment threat, we plan to apply for grants to carry out weed removal and establish fire resistant plantings on the north verge of Seaward Drive. This will help protect the entire Cape Paterson township from fire as well as provide a protective corridor for birdlife and our precious fauna.

Birdwatching at Sea – Anne Looney and Geoff Glare

From your vantage points at the top of First or Second Surf when scanning for whales or as you stride along the wet sand at Undertow Bay on a wild and windy day, you might observe over the roiling ocean the white flash of a magnificent soaring albatross.

The world's seabirds are considered to be the most threatened group of birds. Threats include ingested marine debris, including hard and soft plastic, longline fishing where birds are caught on hooks then drown, loss of breeding habitat, predation of chicks and eggs at the breeding grounds and shortage of food due to global warming. Years ago, we came across the carcass of an albatross on the beach at Second Surf, its huge wingspan evident despite its battered form.

In the past, seabirds were rarely observed from close range. Most observations were made from land-based vantage points, cruise ships or fishing boats. Over the past forty years, Australian seabird watching trips, 'pelagic trips', have become popular as boats chartered by enthusiastic birdwatchers and photographers venture out to the continental shelf where seabirds feed in waters enriched by the upwelling of currents.

Calm sunny weather is good for photography but not necessarily good for viewing a diversity of seabird species. Weather conditions usually involve swell and wind chop. Windier weather is better for seabirds but it can make photography a little tricky. An added bonus when seabird watching is the opportunity to see marine mammals.

We have photographed humpbacks, sperm whales, orcas, blue whales and sei whales, and several dolphin species. Presently, the only regular pelagic trips along the Victorian coastline are from Lakes Entrance and Portland. Locally, if you are lucky, you might observe albatrosses, shearwaters or petrels when taking a seal or whale watching cruise around Phillip Island or Wilsons Promontory.



Shy Albatross Port Fairy May 2018



Shy Albatross Port Fairy October

Birdwatching at Sea – continued

Albatrosses, petrels, shearwaters and storm-petrels are tube-nosed seabirds (Order Procellariiformes). The two raised tube-shaped nostrils close to the base of the upper bill assist with the dumping of excess salt from the blood. Tube-nosed birds are almost exclusively pelagic (feeding on the open ocean).

Albatrosses (family Diomedidae) are large to very large seabirds with narrow wings. The wing shape enables the albatross to soar without the need for active beating of the wings. This type of flight, dynamic soaring, is enabled by the ocean environment and relies on the presence of persistent winds.

Three of the world's four genera of albatrosses occur in Australian waters on a regular basis: Wandering Albatross types and two species of Royal Albatross. These are the albatross with the largest wingspans typically up to a maximum of 3.5 metres, measured from wingtip to wingtip. Mollymawks, with white bodies and dark backs, are smaller with wingspans of 2 to 2.5 metres. The two species of Sooty Albatross, both with grey to sooty-brown plumage, are slightly smaller again.

The Shy Albatross is the albatross most likely to be seen off the coast of Victoria. It is an endemic breeder in Australian waters with breeding sites on Albatross Island in Bass Strait and on two islands south-west of Tasmania. It readily follows boats and ships and attends fishing vessels. Look out for its effortless gliding flight as it wheels over the waves, the tips of a wing slicing the surface of the water. Use your binoculars to see its distinctive white cap, grey cheeks, yellow-tipped bill and thin black eyebrow.

We encourage you to take a moment to observe and appreciate the pelagic seabirds, those often distant but spectacular soaring visitors to our Cape Paterson coastline.



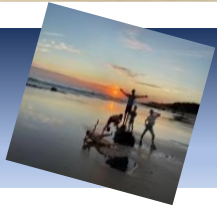
*Tuber Nose Northern Giant Petrel
Port Fairy*



*Giant Albatross Wildlife Coast Boat Cruise,
South of The Nobbies Phillip Island June 2012*

References:

Birds of New Zealand A Photographic Guide, Scofield, P., Stephenson, B., Auckland University Press, 2013
The Australian Bird Guide, Menkhorst, P., Rogers, D., Clarke, R., et al, CSIRO Publishing, 2017



Wellness

— enriching our community

CPRRA Parents Group

We had a very lively morning in December with our biggest Parents Group to date - 16 parents and 18 children enjoyed the company, social contact and unstructured playtime on offer. And this time, a special treat - a home-made mini-Christmas cake for each family.

In 2025, 37 local families participated in our Parents Group sessions (involving 134 parent and 179 child attendances across the 11 sessions). While most of our families come from Cape Paterson and Wonthaggi, others also come from Inverloch, Dalyston and Harmers Haven. We were all delighted to welcome four new babies this year, with our youngest attendee being only two weeks old! The Cape Paterson Community Hall is a bright spacious venue where our friendly volunteers have thoroughly enjoyed hosting the sessions, and engaging with local mothers, fathers and kids.

In 2026, Parents Group will restart on Friday 6 February. All local parents with pre-school children are welcome to join. Sessions are from 9:15 to 11:00am on the first Friday of the month, and refreshments for parents are offered. It's free to attend, being sponsored by the CPRRA as a community activity.



Volunteers, Leone and Helen, setting up for December Parents Group

End of Year Dance with 'People who want to Dance'

Cha cha, Rumba, Jive, Waltz, Gypsy, Cajun, Samba & Salsa

Thursday 18 December 2025 Cape Paterson Community Hall with live music by BCAL Ensemble and Canti Popolari



5:30 - 7:30pm (Hall accessible from 5:00 - 8:00pm) BYO drinks and snacks

This is a self-funded (gold coin) community event to encourage participation in music, dance and enjoyment of community facilities