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DOLPHIN
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE



Newsletter

Term Two 2026



City of
Casey

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SINCE 1991



CATCHMENT WORKSHOP

We had a fantastic Catchment Workshop at the Clyde North Wetlands. We began with a presentation from Sustainability Project Officer Jen and her fabulous team from the City of Casey. The team discussed litter lifecycles and the consequences of littering, the types of gross pollutant traps, how litter flows from streets into stormwater drains, the importance of wetlands in trapping pollutants from flowing into the waterways, and the huge costs of monitoring and removing litter. The council also demonstrated how they vacuum up litter from the GPT, and Ambassadors gained a greater appreciation for our Councillors and the enormous work they undertake to help minimise litter from entering our waterways!

We followed up with a fantastic ponding session to find macroinvertebrates and identify their pollution tolerance. We were very happy to find various pollution sensitive animals, which is a great sign of a relatively healthy waterway! With the winds picking up and storm clouds on the horizon we had an early finish for the day, with planned activities to be conducted during our next workshop. Thank you SO much to Casey Council for making this day so special, and to the ISIC teachers, parents, and carers for transporting Ambassadors and supporting them throughout the year!



RESEARCH NEWS

Victoria's Humpback migration season is well and truly here as these magnificent creatures travel from the cold waters of Antarctica to the tropics of Queensland to mate and give birth.

The DRI Research Team recently published their Two Bays Whale Project Report from the 2025 season. The Two Bays Whale Project is a citizen science initiative to record and report sightings of whales along Victoria's coast. Humpback whales were the most frequently observed species recorded with 339 validated sightings, involving an estimated 699 individual animals! The majority of the sightings were recorded in the Two Bays region from Barwon Heads to Inverloch.

Want to help out? PodWatch is an easy way to report sightings of dolphins and whales and contribute to creating positive impacts for cetaceans during this time of rapid environmental change. Scan the QR code, or visit the DRI website to learn about these amazing animals and the many ways you can help!

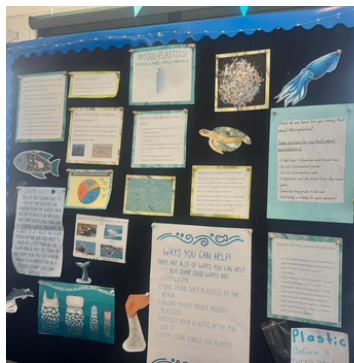
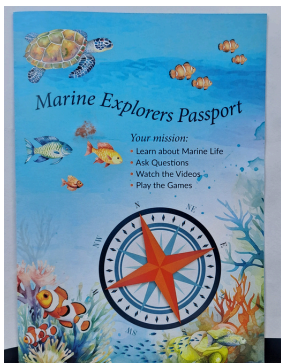


AMBASSADOR HIGHLIGHTS

MOOROODUC PRIMARY ADOPTS A DOLPHIN

Our fabulous Ambassadors Peyton, Zevah, Zac and Archer ran a guess the number of lollies in the jar competition to raise funds to adopt the dolphin Violet. Violet (pictured) was first seen in Port Phillip in 2015 and has been seen most years since. In 2020, she became a first-time mum and spent the next 18 months raising her young calf in the protected waters of the Bay!

Adoption Supporters are the true heroes behind all our work to protect some of Victoria's most loved creatures and their environment. We thank our wonderful ISIC Coordinator Renee, and her fabulous Ambassadors for their amazing effort to spread awareness and for adopting the beautiful Violet!

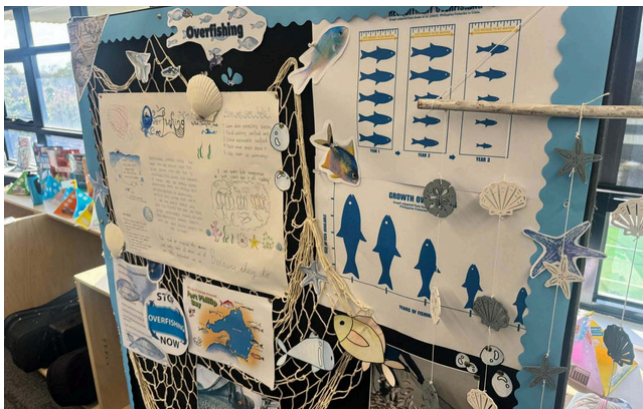


ST LEONARDS COLLEGE OCEAN EXPO

Our awesome Ambassadors from St Leonards College ran their own ocean Expo. The Project Expo allows students to share their research on how human activities impact marine habitats in Port Phillip Bay.

Through a poster, game, video and questions, students successfully communicated scientific ideas to their younger audiences. The goal was for students to explain how environmental changes affect living things and suggest ways people can help protect marine ecosystems.

What a fun way to spread the environmental message to the entire school! Thank you so much to ISIC Coordinator Emma and her team at St Leonards for their passion and enthusiasm, and to the Ambassadors for their amazing efforts!



COMING UP: PHILLIP ISLAND WHALE FESTIVAL

What a treat you have in store for the first weekend on the school holidays from the 3-5 July! Phillip Island will transform into a breathtaking coastal stage as humpback and southern right whales visit the surrounding coastal waters. The Island Whale Festival is a celebration of these gentle giants and the wonder of nature!

Come and visit our DRI stall and chat to the DRI Education and Research Teams about all things whales and dolphins. Learn how to be a whale researcher and help our gentle giants thrive into the future. There are also many other organisations presenting, plus many family-friendly events, marine education sessions, whale spotting opportunities, and much more. We can't wait to see you there!!





“A bottlecaps journey” poem

To understand how humans and the Bay’s health connect,
We need to step back and look at the catchment.
Because the health of Port Phillip doesn’t begin in the water,
our drains and rivers are a pollutant transporter.

Every year an army of plastics spills into the Bay.
So many pieces, actually millions a day.
Each piece has a unique journey from where it came from,
but we can’t follow them all, so we’ll focus on one.

On a sweltering day in an ordinary Melbourne street,
you gulp down a bottle of lemonade to beat the heat.
After a half-hearted effort there’s no bin to be found,
so both bottle and lid end up dropped on the ground.

The bottlecap, an eyesore, sits in the gutter for days,
not budging an inch until it finally rains.
The rain slithers down the gutter like a watery snake,
Taking every plastic skerrick in its wake.

The bottlecap drifts along on the river of rain,
Slipping down the mouth of a stormwater drain.
From there, it travels through underground tunnels
which collect and direct dirty water like funnels.

Straight into the creek, the street-water is spilled
churning and winding its way downhill.
The bottlecap floats down the creek like a fish,
where it’s joined by a variety of other rubbish:

There are multicoloured pieces of red, green, and purple,
which are tiny beads of pre-melted plastic called nurdles.
There are mountains of cigarette butts that weren’t properly binned
and oodles of polystyrene crumbs which blew over on the wind.

All the many creeks and the rubbish they contain
Empty out into the main river, again and again.
The bottlecap’s part of a huge army of litter
That’s always growing, getting bigger and bigger...

Finally the river ends, and flows into our Bay,
and so does the plastic collected on the way.
The bottlecap is moved along by the waves,
until it comes to rest on the sand one day.

The harsh sun shines down on the bottle lid,
breaking it up into tiny microplastics.
Microplastics are far too small to pick up,
and we can’t control where they end up.

These tiny pieces may be ingested by filter feeding clams,
which are a tasty snack for crabs digging in the sand,
a seabird then gobbles as many crabs as she can fit,
and now her belly is full of microplastic bits!

Bioaccumulation, that is the name
Where toxicity multiplies as it goes up the chain.
With predators and prey and a food web so diverse,
As we go up the trophic level it keeps getting worse.

How do we stop this? Is there a way?
How do we protect the health of our Bay?
Let’s go back in time, to that hot sunny day,
back to that empty bottle of lemonade...

This time you open your bag and pop it in,
take it home to your collection, and trade it in.
Once recycled, the bottlecap can live again,
and 10¢ per piece adds up, so it’s a win-win!

Even better is trying to reduce when you shop,
And finding ways to reuse what you’ve already got!
So less is being bought and entering into the cycle,
Imagine the impact, multiplied by 8 billion people.



To read the rest of our ‘Discover
Port Phillip: Water & Wildlife
stories’ scan the QR code.

