



Summer Newsletter 2006/07

Visitors on the up

THE Lightstation just keeps breaking records.

Annual visitor numbers were the best ever in 2005/06 and we have just recorded our busiest November and December since opening in 1995-96.

Although anecdotally there appears to be fewer Australians visiting the heritage precinct, the number of international visitors beating a path to the Lightstation's door looks like we're on track for yet another record year in 2006/07.

We're looking good

NEXT time you visit the Lightstation you'll notice some important changes.

On arrival you will park in a new \$480,000 car park, funded by VicRoads and the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

You will also enjoy a new circuit walk which links the heritage buildings - the Old Telegraph Station, the Lighthouse and Radar Station.

The walk, which in places follows the towering sea cliffs, shows off some fabulous views, which haven't been seen for 20 years.

Selective clearing to make the precinct safe during the bush fire season has opened up some perfect vantage points.

A group of 22 Conservation Volunteers Australia have just spent a busy fortnight at the Lightstation working on tracks, painting heritage fences, weed removal and restoring the radar bunker.



Psst! How did you guys get to the top of the lighthouse?

CANADIAN tourists Rooth MacMillan and Sherree Clark couldn't believe their eyes when they glanced down from lighthouse viewing deck to see what they thought was a "monkey" trying to scale the historic beacon.

A second glance confirmed that it was a koala.

"He seemed a bit disoriented as he was trying to scale the lighthouse door jamb and then tried the down spout without success," Rooth said.

"It was a big thrill for us to see a wild koala ...

especially in such an unusual location. Thanks for the experience."

The Lightstation's stunning location and parade of photogenic visitors - koalas, kangaroos, whales and sea eagles to mention a few - brings out the photographer in many visitors, who often forward their photos to the lightstation.

We've decided to post some of the most outstanding photos on our website. See the Visitors' Photos link on the home page at www.lightstation.com.

Koori heritage trail is right on track

BUILDING work is set to begin on a new \$140,000 Koori interpretive trail in the grounds of the Cape Otway Lightstation.

The heritage trail which is planned to open in Autumn is being created by a local indigenous group SOIG. Lightstation staff are assisting SOIG where required to provide administrative, project planning and interpretation support. Australian Conservation Volunteers are helping with the manual work.

Lightstation assistant manager Craig Donahoo said the survey revealed strong evidence of the site's rich Koori history.

"The area surveyed for the trail has revealed a number of sensitive sites that include evidence of tool making. Some of the stone fragments found indicate that he rock has come from other areas, perhaps traded with other tribal groups.

"There are many significant midden sites in the Otways area, indicating the prolonged and extensive indigenous occupation of the area, and as expected there are several middens

protected within the Lightstation Grounds. One of the major objectives of the project is to identify and protect sensitive sites. Most of these areas will not be open for public access, however some areas will be interpreted for visitors to appreciate and learn."

Craig said they hoped the walk would help achieve positive outcomes.

"We want to educate people about the site's heritage values; help them understand how to walk through this country in a sensitive way; to celebrate Koori culture past and present; and to provide funding for indigenous cultural activities which would include employment for indigenous guides leading cultural interpretation activities.

"There's been some local oral history work done and some academic research which will help with the interpretation of the site."

The trail is funded through a \$96,000 Commonwealth Indigenous Heritage Program grant, with the Lightstation funding \$40,000 worth of labour.

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Highlight of the Great Ocean Road - Café Tours Accommodation Events Schools

Saw your light on and thought we'd pop in



CAPE Otway Lightstation staff took a hop, step and a jump from one Bass Strait "door post" to another, when they visited Cape Wickham on King Island in mid December.

The Capes are 50 miles apart but they seemed horribly close together for the dozens of mariners who came to grief in the western approach to Bass Strait before the lighthouses were built as navigators' 'Beacons of Hope'.

Cape Otway Lightstation's manager Paul Thompson said the trip was planned as a staff training weekend, to help guides become more familiar with Bass Strait history, and as a reward for people who had worked at the station for three years or more. Five staff flew in a Cape Otway Aviation six-seater Cessna from Apollo Bay to King Island where they explored the wreck sites of the Cataraqui and the Netherby.

The emigrant ship Cataraqui, which was wrecked in the early hours on August 4, 1854, remains Australia's greatest peacetime shipping disaster - 400 passengers and crew perished.

Cape Otway staff also visited their opposite "door post" - the Cape Wickham Lighthouse, and the Currie Lighthouse and maritime museum. Pictured are Robyn Ivens, Adrian Ivens, Peter Livesey and Hugh Clark.

Hundreds of students take up the challenge

MORE than 750 children are already booked in for the Lighthouse Keeper's Quest and other experiential learning programs at Cape Otway during 2007.

The Lightstation offers students active education experiences tailored to meet schools' specific learning outcomes.

Apollo Bay's Kristen Lees has been appointed to devote one day per week to develop school programs and formalise learning outcomes in keeping with Victorian education standards.

The historic location, surrounding Great Otway National Park and variety of marine environments allows the Lightstation to offer programs encompassing Koori culture, maritime history, pioneering, immigration, communication technologies, geography, conservation and environment.

The programs are adapted to individual groups' needs for short excursions of one to two hours, a full day or up to five days.

The Lighthouse Keeper's Quest leadership and development programs equip young people with the skills to understand their capabilities and the confidence to put them into action.

Lightstation spirits keep the ghostbusters guessing

THERE might be something strange in the neighbourhood, but folk at Cape Otway don't need to call the Ghostbusters - because paranormal researchers keep calling them.

Cape Otway Lightstation was the recent subject of a paranormal investigation by Hide and Seek Paranormal Research - also known as Haspar, the Friendly Ghost-Hunting Outfit.

The group of six staked out the Lighthouse, Telegraph Station and other historic buildings with a view to tracking down ghosts by monitoring temperatures and electromagnetic fields.

Their trials and tribulations during a long, dark, wet night at the Cape made for an amusing read in the Melbourne Age Good Weekend magazine on January 6.

Perhaps the best known ghost at Cape Otway is the Lady in Grey, the ghost of an assistant keeper's wife, who was incarcerated for what may have been post natal depression.

Disconnected phones have reportedly rung in the middle of the night, and some

staff refuse to enter the Telegraph Station after dark.

Both humans and dogs are affected by the ghost of an infant in the old Telegraph house where a young child who had died from whooping cough was kept in a cupboard for three days.

Although the Age writer John van Tiggelen tried his best to maintain a serious account of his uneventful night out with the Ghostbusters, it got the better of him and he wrote: "Suddenly, just as I step out into the rain and shut the lighthouse door behind me, I'm slapped in the back of head with what feels like a wet fish. I wheel around: there is no one there. Then I realise it was just the hood of my jacket, whipped up by the wind."

Mr van Tiggelen may jest, but he doesn't have to live on site where things that go bump in the night are a constant source of fascination for contemporary lighthouse keepers and their paranormal guests.

The Lightstation's next round of ghostbusting guests are already booked in.