

Combating erosion with Baden Powell Park



By JOHN & ANN SCHOLES

Baden Powell Park Scout Group has been assisting the Mount Eliza community in preventing erosion along Williams Road Beach. In 2015 a plan was established to build a 14.4 metre erosion control barrier, designed to deflect wave energy. Its success resulted in subsequent extensions and in autumn 2019 it was completed. This structure now protects 43 metres of primary dune.

The Scouts worked alongside Friends of Williams Road Beach, the Mt. Eliza Association for Environmental Care and the Mornington Peninsula Shire. In addition, the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP) have aided approvals and permits. Aboriginal Victoria is also cognisant of work undertaken.

The structure was designed by John Scholes, a long-standing member of Baden Powell Park Scout Group. It was organised as a hands-on skills development project for Scouts. Construction

work was implemented by Venturers and Rovers, overseen by Venturer Leader, Tony Gustus.

Triangular wall frame modules were built in the Scout Hall. Scouts then carried the sections to prepared shallow trenches. They were carefully placed in the prepared spaces and levels checked. Timber wall sections were then lined with geotextile and filled with beach sand, sloping ribbed capping was then applied. This achieves to exhaust wave energy, by lifting and back-spinning the wave. The sand behind these walls is trapped by the geotextile and capping, and gives the wall its mass and strength. The area above the wall was then filled with sand and carefully planted using site indigenous species grown on site under a DELWP seed and plant collection permit.

The performance of the barrier has been observed over recent winters. During this time there has not been any physical

damage or movement of the structure, nor has there been any scouring of the sand behind the structure. It is also pleasing to see that plantings have thrived.

Whilst the sand on the beach comes and goes according to season, the overall effect has been a build up of sand against the structure, with the beach becoming steeper. In places, much of the structure has become buried. It is hoped that in time the structure may become part of a newly formed primary dune. Meanwhile, the community are enjoying the structure, using its slope as impromptu seating, while respecting the re-established vegetation above the wall. The Scouts are proud of their achievements and have undertaken activities which have contributed to the Scout award scheme.

John and Ann Scholes are Office Bearers at Baden Powell Park.

