



ANGELS BEACH DUNE CARE & REAFFORESTATION GROUP INC.

ANNUAL REPORT 2006-2007

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Dear members and supporters

Last year was one of considerable achievement on all fronts. It benefited by being a period of little or no political warfare, so for most of the time we were able to concentrate on our real work.

The result was strong consolidation of the 17 years of previous achievement, plus substantial advances into the rapidly diminishing areas of remaining weed-infestation in the Angels Beach Reserve.

AWARDS AND GRANTS

On the strength of what has been achieved over the past several National Tree Days, we applied for - and to our delight won - the inaugural Planet Ark Endangered Ecosystems National Award which gave us a handsome trophy (above) plus cash grant.

We chose Southern Cross K-12 School as location for the presentation because of the School's partnership with us on all Tree Days. Tony Parkes did the honours on behalf of Planet Ark, and the event was well covered by the local media.

For the second year running our Group took out the Clean Beach Challenge State Award for Community Action, as well as several other regional awards. Lee attended the ceremony at Balmoral beach Sydney to receive the plaque (see above) which now resides near the previous year's plaque on the east face of the Underpass Tunnel.

The only external funding currently being expended has been the Threatened Species Network/WWF Grant which has been used for revegetating the area south of The Overpass and will eventually provide temporary fencing around the areas containing threatened species and endangered ecosystems at that site. The work is on-going through 2008.

Due to a Council ban on signage in the Coastal Reserve, signage provided by the funding body has not been able to be put on display to inform local residents about the restoration being done there.

However, during February we received an inspection visit from the TSN representative, Samantha Vine, who found the site impressive and saw the work proceeding satisfactorily.

During June two NHT Envirofund Round 10 Grants were prepared for submission: one for Ground Asparagus control along the entire beach, the other for replacement of viewing platforms at Flat Rock. [At the time of reporting we have been informed that both applications have been successful]

MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

Mean membership during the year was stable, and attendance at weekly working bees has also been maintained at more or less the previous year's level. Stability is not in itself cause for concern, but it remains unsatisfactory. The fact is we need all those numbers to be increasing in order to manage the annually growing maintenance task.

The more we clear and plant the more we have to take care of and, after 18 years work, that equates to virtually the whole of the 70+ hectare Reserve! It's a mammoth responsibility for such a small band.

The obvious fact that things do not slip backwards is thus entirely due to the extraordinary commitment and sacrificial investment of time and energy by the volunteers. They deserve a great round of applause, particularly as no public recognition event was held at last year's end to thank coastal volunteers.

SCHOOLS COLLABORATION

Thanks to those who represented the group at a Teachers' Conference run by Dorrroughby Environmental Education Centre at Southern Cross

K-12 School in September, and to the Centre for its excellent support rendered to us by organising school groups to visit the Coast and undertake restoration work on our sites all year round. This partnership remains one of our most enduring and valuable connections.

In addition to the many regular Ballina and Lismore schools who visit for hands-on study and work, we hosted two S-E Queensland schools during the year. One, from Goodna, is an old friend who visits annually and a new school from the Gold Coast promises to become a regular visitor on its annual coastal camping excursion.

RESTORATION SITES

A small grant from Wetland Care Australia, supplemented from our own resources, was expended at the Flat Rock wetland early in the reporting year. This has provided new post-and-rail fencing west of the surfing beach access road to replace the previous collapsed fence, plus many hundreds of native trees planted behind the fenceline and opposite the Tent Park entrance. The opening was reported in the local Press.

Planet Ark National Tree Day in July 2006 was celebrated with a massive planting in a previously cleared and mulched site south of The Overpass where extensive traffic-calming and safety fencing was necessary along the Coast Road verge. A Southern Cross K-12 School site was also planted north of the Overpass track near the beach.

The group supported its sister group, East Ballina Landcare Inc., by helping clear weeds from the West Shelly Beach wetland ("Joan James forest") site during November 2006.

VOLUNTEER INPUT

The year's statistics, as supplied to Council for its State of the Environment Report, are:

Site	Hours	Events	Mean per event
Overpass	1359	76	18
Black Head	567	39	15
Flat Rock	871	78	11
Shelly Beach	30	2	15
Whole Beach	133	34	4
	2960	229	13
Av persons per event		4	

[Note: "Whole Beach" refers to activities involving the beach as a whole rather than specific sites, such as rubbish collection]

Approximately 2000 site-specific native vegetation items, all of local or regional provenance, were planted on restoration sites, with a very high survival and subsequent growth rate due to the favourable rainfall patterns.

HERITAGE

During May we launched the "Jingi Wahla" Black Head Reconciliation Tunnel brochure (see above). Council provided a venue and morning tea at the Information centre, the Bundjalung artists were present together with many other guests and the

event was very well covered by the media. Thanks to the Mayor for officiating at the launch and to all others involved in the great event. The Brochure has been in popular demand at all outlets.

During the second half of the reporting year, Richmond Landcare Inc has taken up – at our request – the task of representing to Council the need for an Interpretive Shelter to be constructed at Flat Rock. We have naturally been represented at all stages in this process.

Other supporting groups include Dorroughby Environmental Studies Centre, Ballina High and Southern Cross K-12 Schools, and the Native Title Claimants. We have given assurances to the latter that at least half of the interpretive materials in the shelter will deal with Indigenous occupation and usage of Angels Beach.

Very constructive meetings have now been held with Open Spaces and Reserves Staff leading to good assurances towards getting an eventual DA in train for such a centre.

RLI unsuccessfully applied to the NSW Environmental Trust for funding for the Shelter under the Trust's Education Program. Re-grettably, the Trust is unwilling to fund infra-structure, so during the coming year RLI will have to look elsewhere – possibly to private and business donors - for future funding sources.

HISTORY

There have been many requests, mainly from outside the Group, for Shirley to write a history of restoration on Angels Beach. Researching Dunecare's beginnings in 1989 immediately raised the question of what created the need for the subsequent 18 years of restoration.

That led back to the discovery of fine gold (Shaws Bay 1870) followed by gold mining at Black Head (intermittently spanning 62 yrs) plus mining for black-sands (rutile, zircon, ilmenite, monazite) which intermittently spanned another 34 years.

Many oral and documentary sources have been consulted over the past 2 years for this local history project and the "work in progress" is now well under way. A book is anticipated for publication in 2008.

The Angels Beach history project is source of much of a paper entitled "*Eighteen Years of Dunecaring: A Story of the Connection between Land and People at Angels Beach, East Ballina*" which Lee will present at the NSW Coastal Conference to be held 7th-9th November at Yamba.

SOCIAL EVENTS

The usual December end-of-year party for coastal workers was held at the Byrne residence and we thank Fran and Ian for their generous hospitality.

Members joined the April "Beach to Bush" Richmond Landcare Services bus tour around restoration sites on the Plateau and beyond. We thank RLS for this great idea and its implementation, and hope that this kind of social and informative outing can be repeated in future.

TRAINING

Lee represented the group at a native grasses identification workshop in Wadeville run by Richmond Landcare Services. It is to be regretted that few if any locally accessible basic training events were available for volunteers generally to share during the reporting year. We hope that this situation will improve in the coming year, since ongoing training and upgrading is a vital part of maintaining a well-informed and competent work team.

With Council's sponsorship, Chemical Application Ticket upgrades were undertaken by several members during March.

SHIRE AND CATCHMENT

The Group attended Council's Coastal Groups Advisory Committee meetings throughout the year and congratulates Council for maintaining this important forum for sharing and discussion.

A regular supply of locally collected seeds was sent to Council's Gap Road nursery during the year, and the nursery has been performing an increasingly valuable role of supplying much-needed locally-propagated seedlings thanks to the excellent work of nurseryman Paul Brown and his team of helpers.

It became evident during the year that the numerous viewing platforms installed years ago in the first stages of Dunecare restoration were approaching their use-by date. Some have had to be closed for public safety.

They are regarded as too expensive to continue repairing and will need progressive replacement with more permanent structures. Discussions about their future and how to attract grant funding for replacement continued through the latter part of the reporting year.

In May, Richmond Landcare Inc. acquired enough in donations to underwrite repairs and de-rusting of the landcare trailer. Thanks to the great generosity of the firm to whom we took the trailer for de-rusting and under-proofing, those jobs were done *gratis*, hence the donations we received can go towards other trailer maintenance and re-registration costs.

During May Council undertook repair welding on the trailer and has agreed to help with paint when the time comes to repaint it. We are grateful for this ongoing Council support to the Group, which includes – as in previous years – reimbursing our annual insurance premium.

OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

The Group has continued to be represented on Richmond Landcare Inc's executive committee by Shirley White and we are grateful for her ongoing support and commitment even in her hard-earned retirement.

In August 2006 Byron Bay Surf School brought a group of overseas students to work planting trees at Flat Rock and during the reporting year Southern Cross University brought several groups of International students to do similar work.

A lively party of Scouts and Guides visited Flat Rock in September and made a great impression on the work-site there.

Throughout the year we continued to receive regular Community Service Placements and maintained our close and mutually beneficial relationship with the Parole Board in Lismore.

Thanks to Neil Denison and Kathy Brady for representing us at Big Scrub Day in September, where bad weather failed to dampen the great spirit that has made this day a major event in the annual Landcare calendar.

In March we managed to turn the astonishing success of revegetation on the Flat Rock dunes and associated blow-out repairs into a media event, which was well covered by The North Coast Advocate who sent its photographer.

EnvITE continued to provide its legendary high standard of professional service and support for which we are always grateful. During May their Work for the Dole Team helped our own volunteers sandbag the erosion gullies east of The Underpass, and the resulting stormwater stabilisation system is now working very effectively.

THANKS

In conclusion I once again thank all our members, sponsors and friends for their generous support during another Dunecare Year. The Committee has again rendered sterling service, managing the Association's affairs at the same high standard as previously – thank you, every one.

Above all, I congratulate the volunteers who come out in all weather all year round, some twice a week, and who display such an unfailing spirit of enthusiasm and goodwill that it restores one's faith in the goodness of human nature to be part of their teams.

Thank you - and hearty congratulations - one and all.

Lee Andresen
Hon. President
13th October 2007