

Keeping Fingal Special: A case study of a coastal community working together

D Walker¹, L Williams², K Bolton³

¹President Fingal Head Community Association

²Acting CEO Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council

³President Fingal Head Coast Care Group

Introduction

Fingal Head is a small coastal community located between the river and the ocean on the QLD/NSW border. The village is surrounded by Crown Land and land owned by the Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council which has been revegetated by indigenous teams and Fingal Head Coastcare.



Fingal Head is home to endangered migratory birds that are protected by international treaties, endangered flora, protected marine life, Littoral Rainforests and SEPP 14 Wetlands. TBLALC and the wider community have a history of successful battles against inappropriate development and are currently working together to protect the fragile environment from modern threats such as rapidly increasing tourism, proximity to the heavily urbanised Gold Coast, jet skis, off road 4WD's, illegal wakeboarding activities, illegal fishing and depletion of Indigenous food sources due to over harvesting of under sized shellfish stock and low flying aircraft from the rapidly expanding Gold Coast airport.

Case Study: Illegal 4WD activity - A community response

Recently endangered green turtles have come to Fingal Head to lay their eggs and many locals witnessed the birth of 67 live baby turtles. This energised the community to take a stand against illegal off road 4WD'ers who were destroying the turtle nesting sites by driving on the beach and parking in the dunes.

Letitia Spit - Fingal Head

River



Beach



Dunes





Raising community awareness



First sign



Blocking illegal track

Letitia Spit - Fingal Head

Over the busy Easter period, members of the Local Aboriginal Land Council and Fingal Head village set up an information booth and every vehicle entering the off road region was stopped, given a brochure and invited to park in the designated carpark to walk to the beach.



Press releases were written to manage the outgoing message of the campaign. The action was peaceful and educative and most people were understanding and compliant. Residents in the area estimate a 75% drop in traffic on the once busy road to the illegal off road access areas.

The model of co-operation and collective resident participation is now being applied to other community challenges.

Dawn Walker

Ms Walker moved to Fingal Head in 2006 with her partner and three children. She was recently voted President of the Fingal Head Community Association. Her previous experience is as a Policy Advisor for the Victorian Government on small business training and development. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and post graduate qualifications in adult education and visual arts.

Leweena Williams

Ms Williams is the acting CEO of the Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council (TBLALC), an organisation of over 600 members. Ms Williams has worked with TBLALC since 1993 and is experienced in all facets of this dynamic organisation. TBLALC is a major land holder in the Fingal Head area.

Kay Bolton

Ms Bolton has been President of the Fingal Head Coastcare (FHC) since 2002. FHC has been operating for 26 years and is the oldest dunecare group on the North Coast and one of the oldest in NSW. FHC has re-established Littoral Rainforests, woodlands, wetlands, headland and dunal vegetation.



Keeping Fingal Special