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## Background

Ten years ago the Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council (TBLALC) and Fingal Coastcare (FHC) presented at the 19th NSW Coastal Conference on an important community initiative to protect a culturally & environmentally significant coastal strip at Fingal Head.

Today's presentation is an opportunity to revisit this successful community action, share its learnings and celebrate its lasting and ongoing success.

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## Fingal Peninsula Fingal Head Village, Fingal Headland and Letitia Spit



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## Fingal Head

Fingal Head is in Northern NSW and home to many endangered fauna and flora species including migratory birds and Loggerhead turtles.

The Fingal Head Community, TBLALC and Fingal Coastcare have a history of protecting the habitat of these species from modern threats such as:

- inappropriate development
- rapidly increasing tourism
- proximity to the heavily urbanised Gold Coast
- off road 4WD's
- illegal fishing, fires and camping
- depletion of Indigenous food sources due to over harvesting of under sized fish and shellfish stock
- low flying aircraft from the rapidly expanding Gold Coast airport.

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## Letitia Spit campaign – 10 years ago

In 2011, a number of vulnerable green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) laid their eggs at Fingal Head resulting in the birth of sixty-seven (67) live baby turtles.

This event energised TBLALC and the community to take a stand against a long standing problem of illegal off road 4WD'ers who were destroying turtle nesting sites by illegally driving, camping and parking on the beach and dunes.

This illegal camping and 4WD activity was also causing illegal rubbish dumping and creating an unsafe environment on TBLALC land on Letitia Spit.

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Illegal 4WD's and camping on sensitive migratory bird habitat

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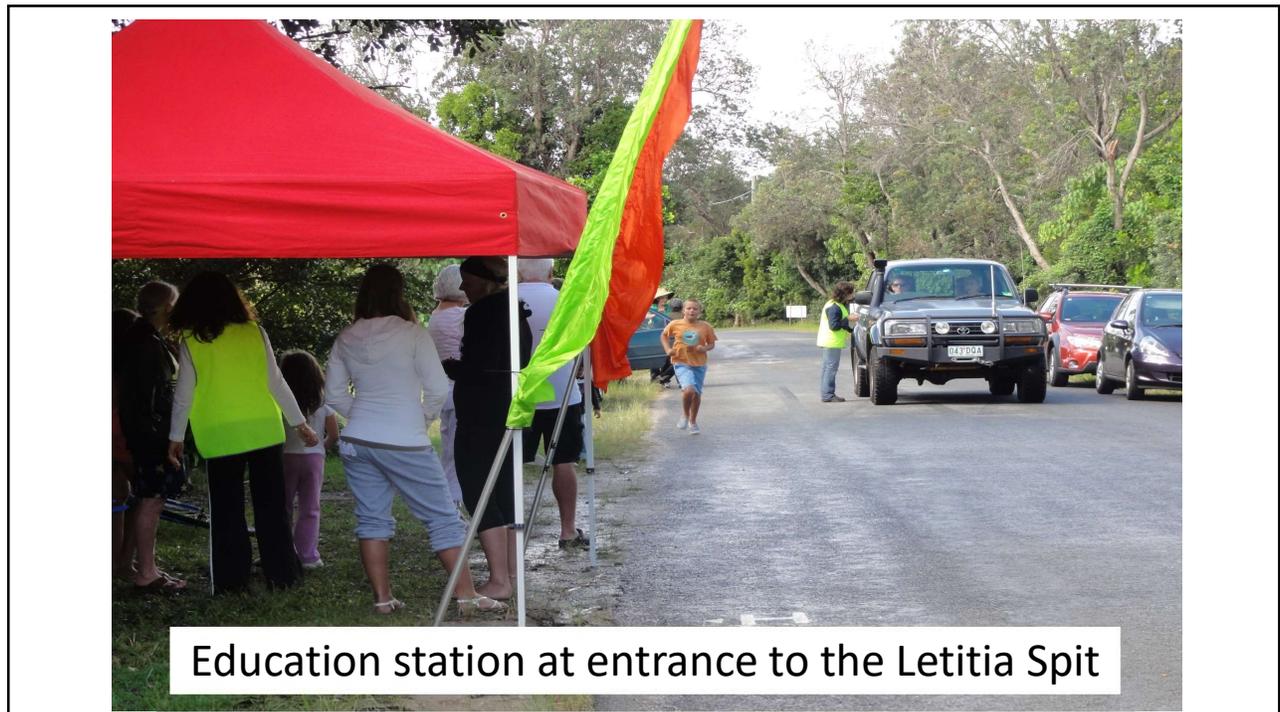
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## The Letitia Spit campaign 2011

- Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council, Fingal Head Coastcare and the Fingal Head Community Association worked on a strategy to stop the illegal 4WD access to TBLALC land by setting up an information booth at the entrance to Letitia Spit.
- During the Easter break every vehicle was stopped, given a brochure outlining the local wildlife and significance of the area and inviting them to park in the designated car park and walk to the beach rather than drive over the dunes.

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Education station at entrance to the Letitia Spit

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## Education station at entrance to the Letitia Spit



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## Tweed Shire Council & Tweed Byron Police

- The campaign had the support of Tweed Shire Council and the Tweed/Byron Police to educate the wider public on the damage that illegal 4WD access was having to TBLALC's land and the fragile dune systems.



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## Community action at entrance to Letitia Spit



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## Fingal Head Community Unite To Save Letitia Spit

### Drivers warned: beach off limits

By NIKKI TODD  
toddan@gcbe.newell.com.au

FINGAL Head residents are upping the ante in their campaign to save Letitia spit, by joining with police this Easter to enforce trespassing laws in the environmentally sensitive area.

Residents will be out in force over the long weekend to educate visitors – particularly 4WD owners – that all areas other than the main dirt access road to the spit and two pedestrian tracks to the beach are private property and out of bounds.

Much of the spit, including the sand dunes and pristine wetlands, belong to the Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council (TBLALC), whose ancestors have lived in the area for generations.

Constable Andrew Cameron, from the Tweed Byron Local Area Command's new pro-active task-force, said police would target illegal four-wheel driving and campers during increased patrols over the weekend.

Const Cameron said depending on the situation, criminal charges of trespassing could apply.

Residents plan to blockade illegal tracks and hand out brochures highlighting the fact it is illegal to drive on beaches in the Tweed Shire without a valid per-

### Boaties' log

EASTER water traffic will increase across the Tweed bar this week and Marine Rescue Point Danger is urging boaties to log on with them for safety. Unit Commander Bernie Gabriel said about a third of boaties did not log on with the radio tower before crossing the bar. "Boaties need to tell us how many people are on the boat, where they are going and when they will return." Visit [www.marinerescue.nsw.com.au](http://www.marinerescue.nsw.com.au)

mit. Fines may also apply to anyone allowing dogs off leads, removing vegetation, starting an open fire, camping or dumping rubbish.

Lewena Williams, acting CEO of TBLALC, said she hoped the action would protect the area.

"Walkers are very welcome to come and enjoy this special area and now illegal off-road tracks have been blocked off and signs erected, we hope it becomes a safe place for wildlife lovers, fishermen and women and families to enjoy again in peace," she said.



Fingal Head Coast Care and police will remind drivers not to access the beach at Letitia Spit this weekend. (Front, from left) Beck Couch, Constable Andrew Cameron, Kay Bolton, Lewena Williams and Janggalay Comerford-Williams.

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## Signs and blocking illegal tracks

- Signs were erected to signify dedicated parking areas and illegal tracks were blocked off.
- When break-through activity was identified it was re-blocked immediately to encourage compliance.



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## Signage and Bollards



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## Campaign success led to more projects

- The action was peaceful and educative and most people were understanding and compliant. Residents in the area estimate a 75% drop in traffic to the illegal off road access areas.
- The model of co-operation and collective resident participation has resulted in ongoing projects together including a Fingal community turtle preservation project on TBLALC land.

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**NOT HAPPY:** Kay Bolton, Leveena Williams and Dawn Walker in front of the illegal wakeboard structure in Sponsors Lagoon, Fingal. *PHOTO: Blainey Woodham TWE07081twakef*

## Wakeboarders in troubled waters

By David Stuart  
*David.Stuart@mydailynews.com.au*

AN ILLEGAL wakeboard structure has been found in a protected Fingal lagoon.

Internet videos show two professional wakeboarders being towed behind a boat in Sponsors Lagoon before sliding along the 30-metre structure.

Fingal Head Community Association president Dawn Walker said such activities in a sensitive area amounted to environmental vandalism.

"Both the community and

visitors are concerned to see this total disrespect for both the local community and its environment," she said.

Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council acting CEO Leveena Williams said legal advice was being sought.

"This lagoon is on Aboriginal land. It is protected under the State Environmental Protec-

tion Act," she said.

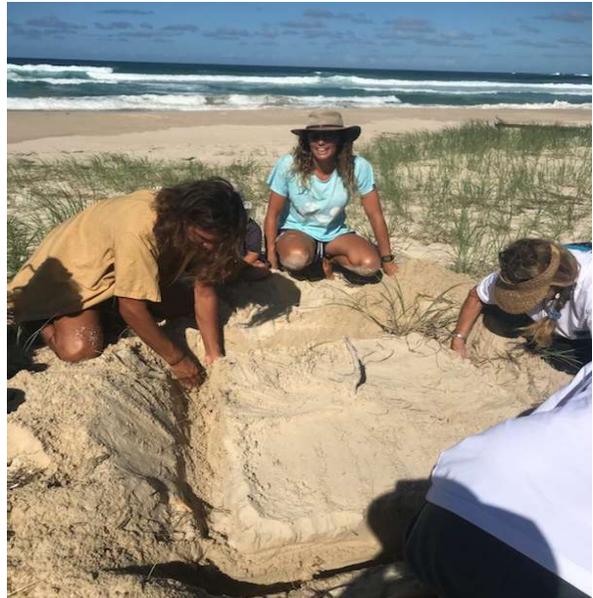
Jetpilot Australian marketing manager Chris Apps said both wakeboarders, whom Jetpilot sponsors, did not know the area was protected.

"Both those guys are now in the States... they are apologetic," he said.

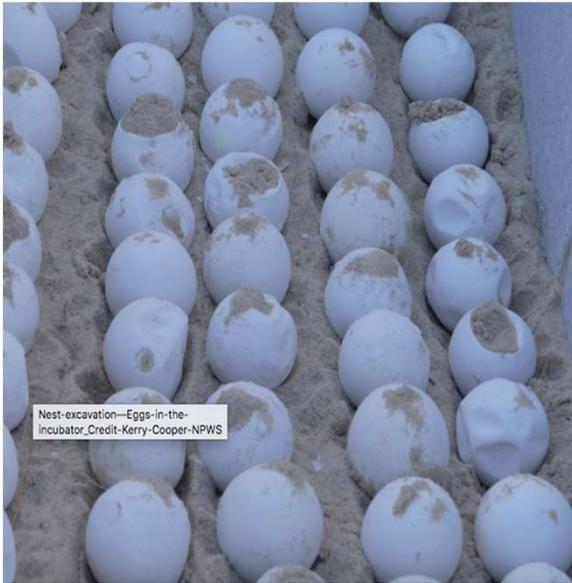
A Tweed Heads Shire Council spokesman said a letter was sent to two people asking them to cease using the rail, explain the operation, and show cause why the council should not prosecute.

"We found out after you sailed on. That was the first we heard about it." - not Apps

## Endangered Turtle hatchlings on TBLALC Land



## Fingal turtle release with TBLALC and Green Heroes volunteers

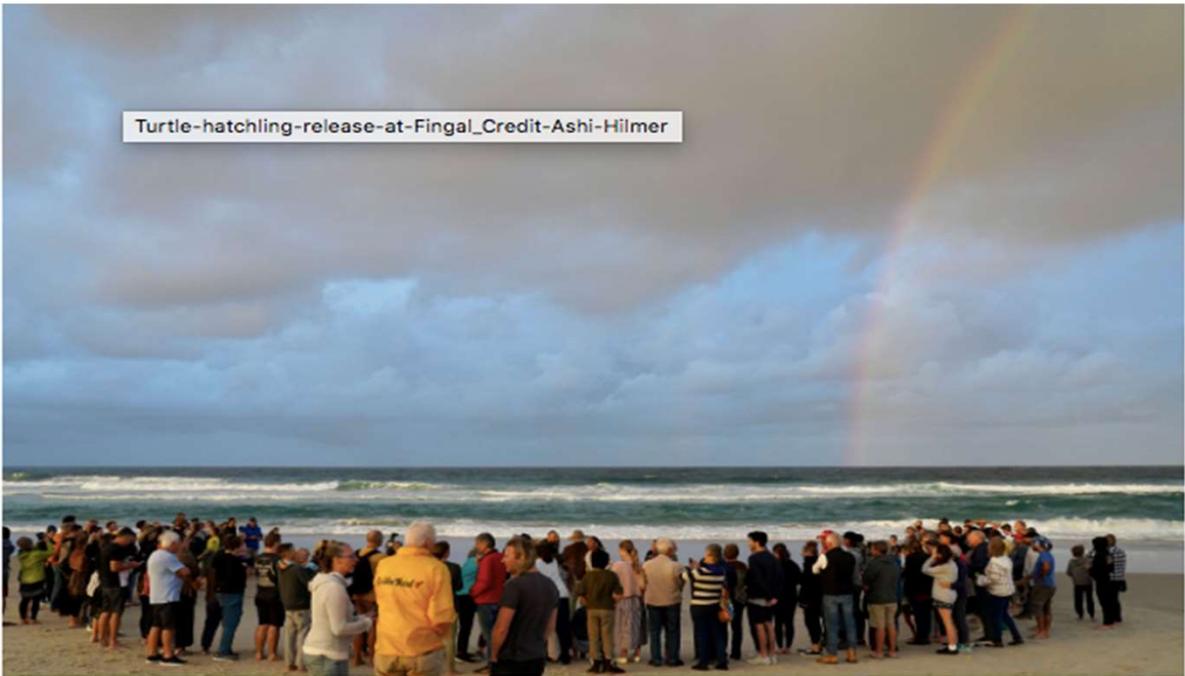


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Turtle-hatchling-release-at-Fingal\_Credit-Ashi-Hilmer



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TBLALC and community working together on Clean Up Australia Day



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TBLALC and FHC working together on installing nesting boxes



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TBLALC Rangers working with Tweed Shire Council and Coastcare in feral fox control



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# Graffiti Off Days



# Protecting Our Place Project



**Birds Eye View** – A local shorebirds program with TBLALC, Fingal Head Public School Local Artists, Birding Australia and Tweed Shire Council



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**TBLALC, Tweed Landcare Inc and FHC**



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## New cultural programs on Aboriginal land

- Now that Letitia Spit is safer and 4WD's are staying in the designated parking areas, Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council has embarked on a number of cultural education programs on Letitia Spit and they include the TBLALC Cultural Immersion Project & the Booningbah Aboriginal Language Program
- These programs teach the young participants about the stories of the land and how to care for country including;
  - Beach & waterways clean ups
  - Collecting & propagating local native seeds for revegetation
  - Planting & establishing endangered habitat
  - Fishing, shellfish and pippi collection
  - Bush Tucker collection and preparation

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Collecting seeds on Fingal Headland

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## Protecting our waterways



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Junior Rangers  
Caring for Country

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JUNIOR RANGERS  
**PROJECT VISION 2021**  
 IN COLLABORATION WITH GREEN HEROES



<p>FEBRUARY</p>  <p>Turtle talk and training</p>	<p>MARCH</p>  <p>Dune Care headland restoration begins</p>	<p>APRIL</p>  <p>Native bee workshop + two native bee hives for Letitia Spit - continue headland restoration</p>
<p>MAY</p>  <p>Native animal encounter and wildlife rescue workshop for kids AND edible gardens</p>	<p>JUNE</p>  <p>Nest box workshop and installation</p>	<p>JULY</p>  <p>Astronomy and weather patterns (night walk)</p>
<p>AUGUST</p>  <p>Sea grass restoration and planting Kerosine Inlet</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER</p>  <p>Marine science month and Whale watching tour</p>	<p>OCTOBER</p>  <p>introductory dive course for teens and responsible dive cook island</p>
<p>NOVEMBER</p>  <p>Tree planting ?koala corridor restoration</p>	 <p>Break up party and Junior Ranger graduation</p>	<p>Extras</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fingal seed Library</li> <li>Paper daisy planting</li> <li>Snorkel clean up around headland</li> <li>Water for Wildlife</li> <li>Land for Wildlife</li> </ul>

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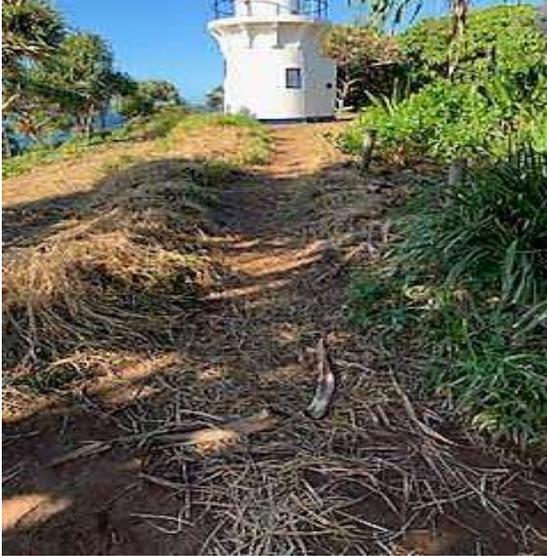
## Fingal Headland Restoration and Protection Project

- This collaboration culminated in the formalisation of a community project to protect Fingal Headland from being 'loved to death'.
- This collaboration includes a whole of community approach - TBLALC, FHC, Fingal Head Community Association, Fingal Public School, Fingal Rovers SLSC, Tweed Shire Council and community members.
- The project involves erosion repair, formal pathway construction and the re-establishment of Themeda Grasslands on Sea Cliffs and Coastal Headlands.



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## Formalising Pathways and Revegetating



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## Erosion Repair, Step Construction and Revegetation



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## New Crown Land Managers

In December 2021 TBLALC was appointed manager of the Crown Land reserve on Fingal Headland.

Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council are the first Aboriginal land council in NSW to be appointed Crown Land Managers.

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## Handing Over Ceremony



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## New TBLALC Indigenous Rangers



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## TBLALC and FHC working together on Fingal Headland Project Planning



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## TBLALC and FHC working together on Fingal Headland



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## TBLALC and FHC planting on Fingal Headland



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## Conclusion

- The Letitia campaign ten years ago was an excellent example of a community coming together to protect its people and natural habitat.
- The success of the education campaign galvanized working relationships in the community and showed what could be achieved by working collaboratively.
- These relationships have gone from strength to strength and the success of the resulting projects is a testament to the power of working together.

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