

ENQUIRIES: Local Laws
OUR REF: 1110368; 1114856

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17 November 2022

Mr Didge McDonald
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Dear Mr McDonald

RE: *Vehicles on Wonga Beach – Monitoring Compliance*

Please accept my apologies for delayed response to your letter dated 15 September 2022 regarding vehicles on Wonga Beach.

Please be advised of the following:

- The Wonga Beach Foreshore Management Plan adopted by Council on 26 April 2022 replaced the Interim Wonga Beach Foreshore Management Plan.
- As stated in the Terms of Reference, the Community Group's sole function is to assist with the management of any issues arising from the use of vehicles on Wonga Beach and the intention was for the group to meet three (3) times per year. However, issues such as Covid related restrictions and illness, and a lack of issues being raised, has resulted in no further meetings taking place. Council has received three (3) complaints relating to ATVs on Wonga Beach since the meeting in September 2021. A meeting will be scheduled for later this year.
- When nominations were called for the community group, 16 people responded. Twelve (12) invitations were sent and resulted in three (3) community members and two (2) Council officers attending. Members of the group are voluntary. Whilst Council's Community Liaison Officer is reaching out to residents once again, in an effort to raise the membership of the group, if residents do not believe there are issues or there is no value in the group, then the Terms of Reference for the group may be altered to reflect this.
- Council is in receipt of one (1) application from a Wonga Beach rate payer who does not reside at the property. No determination has been made on the application. Any amendments to the Foreshore Management Plan would require a resolution of Council.

- Council officers have the power to enforce conditions of approvals. Queensland Police, like Council, must prioritise their time and decide what they attend to and when. An invitation has been extended to a representative from Mossman Police to attend the forthcoming Community Group Meeting.
- Council has issued 28 approvals.
- Council's Local Laws Officers conduct patrols on a regular basis. The extent of the action is generally determined by the level of the offence and if the offence is repeated.
- Access points continue to be a challenge for Council, particularly where private property is adjacent to the beach (the old Redbacks site, South Arm Drive). While this is not ideal, staff are looking at possible solutions and the focus is on limiting access for larger vehicles, such as four wheel drives, which create significant damage to the beach and foreshore areas.

Council acknowledges your organisation's ongoing concerns regarding the use of vehicles on the beach and encourages your members to provide information or evidence of breaches directly to Council for investigation and action. A number of the matters you have raised were prevalent prior to the inception of the approval process and are an issue for local governments in coastal areas everywhere. Douglas Shire Council is taking a pro-active approach to managing the problem and will continue to work towards positive outcomes that balance the desires of the community and management of the environment.

Yours sincerely



Rachel Brophy
Chief Executive Officer



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