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MEDIA RELEASE

DSSG has called on authorities to stop the unlawful use of vehicles on Wonga Beach and run a public education program with beach driving permit holders about the limitations on speed, safety and where not to drive

Despite Council sanction for access for Wonga residents only, there has been a steady expansion of daily traffic and an explosion of it over Easter, unlikely to be all local, according to local residents

“Speed limits and safe driving requirements have been ignored, people are driving on and across the soft sands and dunes and there is no enforcement of the local only use,” DSSG President Didge McDonald said yesterday

Entire sections of tide -shaped, smooth sands have been obliterated by vehicle tracks, not just the obvious tracks of a considerate, sedate beach driven vehicle, but high-speed doughnuts, burnouts and drag-racing over several days and kilometres.

“Shorebirds that frequent this area specifically were forced to leave and one of the main draw-cards for them to that beach section, the burrowing sand crabs, were crushed in huge numbers,” McDonald said

“Will the shorebirds return, probably, but to what? Their beach ecosystem has taken a real hit.

“It is council’s job to enforce the law. But for the vehicle impact, Wonga Beach is near pristine in parts and is host to a lively ecosystem that is heavily impacted by all vehicles but especially those unlawful ones driven badly.”

DSSG is opposed to the recreational use of vehicles on beaches because they are a refuge for nature and for us all

Vehicles are banned from beaches in most of Australia with rare exceptions. DSSG sees no reason why Wonga should be an exception, especially because of the variety and number of shore (and migratory) birds that live and feed there. However, if Council is going to permit restricted use, it should ensure the rules about speed, safety and the environment are enforced

“There is total disregard for Council permit requirements and vehicles are pushing tracks into the Littoral Rainforest - a “critically endangered” ecosystem living behind the beaches,” McDonald said

“Every beach ‘belongs’ to us all so why should we tolerate that kind of behaviour by anyone on any beach in the Shire, whether in Wonga or elsewhere”.

Contact for comment: Didge McDonald 0418852545

See attached images and captions which may be used in publication