



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY

Coast to Coast 2010

During August I was fortunate in being able to attend the National Coastal Conference in Adelaide. This is a forum where all those with an interest in coastal, estuarine and marine matters get together, every two years, to celebrate Australia's coasts, and share knowledge and experiences on management, science, policy, governance, activism and many other topics.

The conference always attracts a wide range of speakers, which vary from international and national keynotes to community group representatives wanting to share their challenges and successes. It's really inspiring to be amongst such a dedicated crowd of 'coasties' – learning about what other states, countries and communities are doing in regards to climate change adaptation, coastal and marine NRM, research and everything related!

A pre-conference workshop looked at integrated coastal zone management, with several speakers and a panel of representatives from each state discussing the issues associated with implementing ICZM across Australia. Local government amalgamations, a lack of data sharing across departments, and the fact that marine reserve policies are often completely distanced from coastal policies were all raised as key points for discussion and learning.

Representatives from the Federal Government were obviously going to be under pressure to respond to queries about the future of Caring for our Country, a response to the Standing Committee's report on climate change, and the implementation of

the 47 recommendations that came out of this report. While these were not directly forthcoming, we were assured that they were happening...watch this space!! There was a generally positive response to the achievements of the Community Coastcare aspect of CFOC including the ongoing support of coastal project facilitators, so with any luck we will see a continuation of this arrangement.

There was always going to be a strong focus on climate change adaptation, and this was talked about from all perspectives – planning, policy making, legality and insurance, and even just the general attitude and perception of the public toward it. It's heartening to note that whilst never quickly, all levels of government ARE beginning to initiate active changes and implement new policies relating to climate change with some degree of confidence. From a local perspective, it was interesting to hear about the work of the Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges NRM Board, who have some great environmental initiatives – I also attended a field trip around Adelaide's metropolitan beaches and got to see some of the management issues they face – ie moving A LOT of sand every year!

At a community level, I find these forums always to be motivating and encouraging. While sometimes it feels like we are fighting a losing battle to conserve and restore our natural coastal habitats, being surrounded by people and groups that are all working toward the same outcomes really shows that what we are doing is meaningful, valuable and highly supported.

There were way too many speakers, presentations, conversations and exhibits for me to discuss in this short article, but if you are interested in taking a look at some of the presentations from the conference do visit the website, www.coast2coast.org.au – I also have a whole heap of resources that I will probably wave at you from time to time as they are relevant! Several other websites that may be of interest are as follows:

Australian Coastal Society: www.australiancoastalsociety.org

Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists: www.wentworthgroup.org

Ozcoasts Australia: www.ozcoasts.org.au

Geoscience Australia: www.ga.gov.au

All in all – a really worthwhile and enjoyable week – I recommend attending the next C2C if you get the chance!



Conference dinner – marine theme!

South Fremantle Primary students capture the coast

The coastal environment of South Beach was presented for all to see when Year 6 students completed a coastal mural now on show near the school library.

Through the generous support of Verve Energy and under the direction of local artist Angela Rossen, students spent a morning at the beach sketching the plants and animals that were found. Over the following week, students completed the mural while receiving instruction from Angela on how to show perspective, mix paints and artistically present the subjects depicted in the mural.

South Metro Coastcare Officer Craig Wilson coordinated the project in association with teacher Lynda Turk and Principal Paul Burke. "The schools Adopt a Beach project has provided an outdoor classroom for students to learn about the coastal environment and an opportunity to combine art with the environment within an educational context" Craig said. "I am delighted that the school sees value in the Adopt a Beach project and we are looking forward to more activities on the coast".



Coastcare Officer Craig Wilson and Verve Energy's Bethany Challen at the coastal mural launch

State Planning Policy 2.6 - State Coastal Planning Review

Western Australia is currently undergoing a review of the State Planning Policy 2.6 as it relates to coastal setbacks – which will bring it into line with other states of Australia. Whilst there is no national consistency for a sea level rise benchmark, the majority of states have adopted a figure of at least 0.8 metres by 2100.

Up until now, WA's Policy provided a figure of 0.38 metres when assessing the potential for erosion on sandy shores. The proposed amendment will be based on the 4th (and latest) Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC AR4), as well as further research from CSIRO, which predict a mean sea level rise of 0.9 metres to 2110.

The increase in this figure from 0.38 metres to 0.9 metres will mean that for new development on a sandy coast, the vertical sea level rise value will result in an increased horizontal setback of 52 metres, increasing the total setback for the general guide to 150 metres.

This is an important step in the climate change adaptation process and will mean future developments should be less vulnerable to storm surges and significant erosion effects. Public consultation on the review is expected to be undertaken by WAPC in late 2010.



Floreat beach, 1978



Cottesloe Beach May 2004

Marine Debris Removed from Fremantle's Beaches

Under the banner of the Tangaroa Blue Ocean Care Society, City of Fremantle, Coastcare, Keep Australia Beautiful and Coastwest; a group of nineteen dedicated community volunteers participated in a beach clean up at Port and Leighton beaches in Fremantle.

Marine debris has been identified as having a significant impact on our marine life. Discarded fishing line entangles dolphins and sea lions; plastic bags choke turtles and plastic breaks down into small

pellets that can be ingested by seabirds causing long term damage and death.

Volunteers, under the guidance of Shayne Boyle from the City of Fremantle and the South Metro Coastcare Officer, Craig Wilson, scoured the beach and dunes at Port and Leighton beaches collecting rubbish that had blown in or washed up on the shore line. Over 100 kilograms of rubbish was collected including plastic bottles, fishing line, floor tiles and even a tent.



Coastcare a finalist in the WA Environment Awards for 2010

The Perth Region NRM Coastcare program was delighted to be selected as a finalist in the WA Environment Awards for 2010 under the category Community Achievement Metropolitan.

The award recognizes the enormous effort that community groups in the Perth metro area put into their coastal rehabilitation projects. The Coastcare Officers and Perth Region NRM would like to congratulate the community volunteers, participating Local Government's and corporate sponsors including Alcoa, BHP Billiton, Kwinana Industries Council, Synergy and Verve Energy for their support of the Coastcare program.

Malibu School Rehabilitating their Adopted Beach

Students from Malibu School have joined the City of Rockingham's Adopt a Beach program to help rehabilitate the beach in Waikiki. Braving strong winds the students walked to Waikiki beach from their school, and with the assistance of City of Rockingham staff commenced the planting program that will transform their allocated section of beach.

The foreshore at Waikiki beach has been subject to erosion over the past few years from storms and tidal influences, and the City has commenced a large scale re-nourishment and infrastructure

refurbishment program. Encouraging students to participate will mean they are gaining hands-on experience in environmental rehabilitation, and develop a greater understanding of how wind and tides affect the beach

As well as the planting program, students have participated in a Creature Feature beach walk to find and identify marine animals then listened to Department of Environment and Conservation Ranger Sean Emmett talk about the plants and animals that can be found in the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park.



Waves 'Clean the Beach' Challenge

For the last two year Waves Surfwear have been supporting the Coastcare cause by running a series of 'Clean the Beach' challenges. It is great to see this local company so supportive of keeping our coastal and marine environments clean and raising the awareness of beach health amongst the community.

On Sunday 24th of October the challenge was on for Waves staff and suppliers to clean up Trigg beach and surrounds, and it was a perfect day for it! There was a fantastic turn out thanks to the hard work and organisation of Katherine from Waves, and all participants were rewarded for their great clean-up work with a BBQ and heaps of prizes.

Jason Robbins and Bill Stewart (City of Stirling councillors and Coastcare volunteers) and Penny Stewart from West Coastcare were also there to lend a hand and chat to the crowd about their coastal projects, and also gave out a whole lot of gorgeous native *Scaevola* plants that will hopefully now be happily growing around Perth!

Special thanks must go to the guys from Surfing WA who have also been a great supporter of this event.

While local governments invest a lot of resources into keeping our beaches clean and tidy, their job would be made a whole lot easier if all visitors to the coast showed the same commitment to reducing litter and looking after the environment as the Waves crew – let's hope it catches on!



photographer: David Mort

Can you name these coastal birds?