

Media Release



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Workshop Agrees Pt Impossible Actions

Participants at the 22 January workshop have agreed upon a series of actions to better manage the Pt Impossible Optional Dress Beach in future.

Workshop members agreed to work in partnership to provide improved signage and access management, enforcement and presence and environmental management of the area.

They agreed that there had been instances of inappropriate or anti social behaviour in the vicinity of the declared optional dress beach at Pt Impossible.

Other issues identified included:

1. Environmental damage to the sand dunes.
2. Lack of effective signage designating the Optional Dress Beach.
3. Litter.
4. Inability of the police to enforce relevant regulations, partly due to the lack of signage.

However, the majority did not want to advocate for the State Government to revoke the optional dress status without first trying to improve behaviour through the measures identified. This included allowing sufficient time and monitoring to gauge the effect of these improvements before talking any further action.

The Surf Coast Shire hosted the workshop, which included representatives from the Council, Australian Nudist Federation, Surf Coast Tourism, Great Ocean Road Coast Committee, Surf Coast Community and Ratepayers Association, Free Beaches Australia, Victoria Police, Department of Sustainability and Environment, and community representatives.

In June 2006 the Council passed a motion to ask the Victorian Government to revoke the optional dress status of Point Impossible Beach. This was referred to Minister Hulls, the responsible Minister at the time.

His advice was for the Surf Coast Shire to undertake further community consultation before he would make a final decision on the request to revoke the optional dress status. The workshop was one step in this consultation process.

Surf Coast chief executive officer Peter Bollen said that the actions determined at the workshop were now being made public.

“As agreed at the workshop, we now need to allow time for the various improvements to be implemented and to see what the impact of these changes is on behaviour at Pt Impossible, Mr Bollen said.

“We will then be in a better position to consider any further action that may be required.”

“Meanwhile the public is invited to comment on whether they believe the optional dress status of the Pt Impossible beach should remain, and on the proposed actions that came from the workshop.”

Mr Bollen said that the Council would make copies of the workshop outcomes available at the shire offices, on its website and by advertisements in local papers. Written public responses would be accepted during the next month, closing on Friday 9 March, he said

“The way remains open for future public and stakeholder input on the status of the beach and for further consideration by Council, before it decides whether to pursue the closure of the optional dress area at Pt Impossible with the Minister.”

“Ultimately the Pt Impossible area is not controlled by the Council and the final decision about its status rests with the State Government, not us,” Mr Bollen said.

SUMMARY OF THE AGREED OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP

Improved Signage and Access Management

The Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC) committed to improving signage on the entrance roads, the carparks and the beach access points, focussing on identifying the nude beach area and restricting access to the dunes. Closure of a small informal carpark and fencing to limit access points is also contemplated.

Improved Enforcement and Presence

Representatives from the Victoria Police and the Surf Coast Shire Council agreed to resource share where the Council would provide four-wheel drive vehicles to assist the police in accessing the beach. Other stakeholder groups agreed to encourage their members to report instances of obscene /anti social behaviour.

Partnerships

There was general agreement that there should be a balance between the needs of the different stakeholders and that this workshop had gone some way in achieving this. GORCC has suggested that logos from the various organisations involved in the workshop could be placed on the signage to reflect the partnership approach.

Improved Environmental Management

Access to the dune area needs to be limited. Fencing and additional signage is required highlighting that it is an offence to enter the dune area. GORCC has given a commitment to undertake a weed and rabbit control program as well as additional focus on litter control.

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