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Victorian nudists won't stand for a filthy beach



Naturists at Point Impossible beach, near Torquay, got their rubbish bags out yesterday for Clean Up Australia Day. It is one of four "clothing optional" beaches in the state.

Photo: *Drew Ryan*

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STROLLING naked along a chilly surf beach and collecting other people's rubbish is not everyone's idea of fun. But the nudists of Point Impossible, near Torquay, are on a mission — to keep their beach bare of rubbish — and of compulsory swimwear.

As nudists await a State Government decision on the fate of the beach's "clothing optional" status, a small group of regulars yesterday took part in the annual Clean Up Australia Day to help keep their beloved strip pristine.

Nude sunbather — and spokesman for the Victorian branch of Free Beaches Australia — Rob, who declined to have his surname published, braved the cold conditions yesterday.

"Beach users are prepared to take responsibility and make a contribution ... to ensure that Point Impossible remains (the state's) best clothing optional beach," he said.

In 1983, Point Impossible was allocated — along with three other beaches in Victoria — as clothing-optional. But the debate about whether beach users should keep their bathers on flared again last year when Surf Coast Shire asked the State Government to revoke the optional dress status of the beach.

The council was advised to undertake further community consultation.

Mayor Rose Hodge said public submissions on whether the beach should be revoked of its clothing-optional status ended on Friday.

Responses will then be sent to Planning Minister Justin Madden, who will make a final decision.

Meanwhile, Point Impossible nudists remain uneasy.

"Optional bathing is an expression of our freedom and humanity. We should have the right to be nude without any persecution," said Justin, who declined to have his surname published.

Ron, a nudist at the beach for more than 30 years, agreed. He said the beach had always maintained a family-oriented feel. He denounced critics who claim nudism is sexually provocative.

Clean Up Australia chairman Ian Kiernan said an estimated 1 million people took part in yesterday's Clean Up, at more than 7000 sites. "I just think it's great we've got so many diverse groups ... we've

got churches and schools and governments and now nudists," he said.

More than 8000 tonnes of rubbish had been collected.

Mr Kiernan said beverage containers still ranked as one of the most littered objects.

The more unusual items found this year included a parking meter, four wallets containing 30 credit cards, half a boat and a mannequin's leg.

<http://www.fbanavic.org>

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