

Judge Report

CLEAN BEACHES 2014

Raspins Beach, Tasmania



Keep Australia Beautiful National Association

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Introduction

Community

Raspins Beach, Tasmania

Population

553

Date judged

26 May 2014

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Overview

Raspins Beach is the first beach tourists travelling north from Hobart are likely to see. Many years as a popular camping location, combined with ongoing coastal erosion processes had left the site significantly degraded and in need of substantial rehabilitation. Today, what makes Raspins Beach extraordinary is the degree of success achieved through the stewardship undertaken by the local community.

The success of the work to control erosion of the beach, to remove pressures associated with overnight camping, and to safeguard habitat for threatened species will likely continue to inspire and attract new investment and partners. Most notably, the inspiring work that has been undertaken demonstrates the effective development of ongoing partnerships formed to care for the beach. It has effectively drawn families and tourists back to Raspins Beach, and allows them to share and appreciate the beautiful beach and wonderful views of Maria Island.

New investment in upgrading the old shed on the site to include facilities for the school and sailing club will continue to improve the site's amenity and accessibility, as will further investment in towards public area recycling facilities and education in areas on and around the beach and associated picnic areas and walkways.

Community Action & Partnerships

Recognises achievement in community and civic beautification, presentation, health, wellbeing and pride. Also recognises partnerships between government, business, industry and local community networks.

The new vision for Raspins Beach was initially developed by members of the Orford community as a result of efforts by the land-manager, Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife, to improve the beach's condition and amenity. Initially, the community, through bodies including the Orford Community Group (OCG), Lions, Rotary and the Golf Club, played a vital role in highlighting problems with the site, such as litter, unserviced toilets, issues of public safety arising from cars parked on side of highway, and large infestations of weeds.

The effectiveness of the Orford community in defining and communicating their concerns for the site, and their capacity to build partnerships with the relevant land-managers has been and continues to be key in achieving on ground solutions on the beach. The engagement of the community and the vision that developed has inspired ongoing partnerships between Glamorgan Spring Bay Council (GSBC), Tasmania's Department of PIPWE (Parks & Wildlife) and the Orford Community Group (OCG), and has attracted a range of funding partners including council, state and federal governments. Members of OCG have volunteered over a 1,000 hours to the project, and have averaged ten working bees per year with an average of 6 people attending. Occasionally, when larger elements of the project were underway, more help was requested and between 19 and 14 people volunteered.

The partnership work has been particularly effective in ensuring that the beach returned to a condition of families using the beach. It also continues to be a work in progress. During the site visit, it was clear that previous success in rehabilitating the beach is catalyzing and inspiring new partnerships, for example with Spring Bay Boat Club and Triabunna School. The newly created amenities arising from the rehabilitation of Raspins Beach will continue to deliver what the submission lists as the key outcomes from the program, that is:

- a clean well maintained inviting beach and reserve with recreational facilities;
- a weed free reserve with ongoing re-vegetation work undertaken by volunteers and supported by Parks and Council;
- an increased level of erosion control and re-vegetation which will help to maintain this;
- more controlled access to the beach, solving the problems arising from overnight use in the past;
- an increased level of community use of the area in general a sense of pride in the entry to our town.

Dame Phyllis Frost Litter Prevention

Recognises achievement in community litter management and reduction initiatives including the undertaking of litter audits, and litter education programs.

Litter management at Raspins Beach has improved as the condition of the site has improved. The Council supplies garbage bins to all areas and these are emptied at least three times per week, with capacity available for more frequent servicing during high peak periods in summer. Recycling bins have been installed at Raspins and material collected is taken to a recycling plant in Hobart. Future plans include improving public place recycling by placing customised recycling bins in strategic locations throughout the municipality.

Other relevant elements of litter prevention and control include:

- The Council has a municipal dog policy and Raspins has been provided with poo bags and signs have been installed relating to dog control on the beach and reserve;
- Hand dryers have been installed in the toilets reducing the need for paper towel;
- A cigarette receptor has been installed at the toilet block;
- Local community members regularly walk along the beach and remove rubbish as they find it;
- Community encourage Council to remove graffiti immediately. Since public buildings at the beach have been renovated graffiti has declined markedly;
- Students from Triabunna and Orford School use the area regularly. The school has a policy of leaving the beach clean and litter free, and include recycling and litter prevention as part of their curricula.

The site used to be included in the Clean Up Australia Day program, however as the area has been upgraded and Council litter collection has improved it no longer requires an annual clean up.

Resource Recovery & Waste Management

Recognises achievement in resource recovery and waste management including initiatives which conserve resources, recover and reuse materials and the appropriate disposal of non-recyclable materials.

Raspins Beach has a newly installed walkway, allowing better access to the beach through the fragile dune environment, and also providing information across a range of the beach's environmental and cultural values. The walkway, which is wheelchair accessible, is constructed of Replas product Enduroplank™, a recycled-plastic decking. It is especially suitable for marine environments as salt water will not corrode the material, even when submerged. This product was chosen to construct a beach viewing platform and access path at Raspins Beach because it would have minimal impact on the landscape and cope with the coastal conditions.

Council reports that the walkway section was tested by a severe storm several weeks after installation and that the 'flexible walkway' successfully reshaped to the eroded contours. According to Council, no repairs or maintenance were required as a result of the storm and the path remained fully functional, demonstrating the success of material and design and proving the concept developed by Council's Keith Breheny.

Community volunteers and Council make the most of opportunities to reuse and recycle green waste as it arises from vegetation management and control on the site. They report that all of the re-vegetated areas at Raspins Beach have been mulched re-using gum mulch which has been chipped from tree trimming and pruning.

More broadly within the municipality, Council have supplied households with large recycling bins for ten years. The local refuse site provides bins for recycling of bottles & cans, E waste, tyres, oil, and metals. Recyclable E waste is collected from all refuse sites in the municipality and recycled.

Over the past two years GSBC have held several waste and recycling information sessions that have included presentations by municipal waste contractors Veolia and the Southern Waste Strategy Authority. They have been targeted towards school children, council staff, the general public and specific groups, such as senior citizens at Prosser House in Orford.

Environmental Protection & Innovation

Recognises innovative principles and actions associated with developing sustainable communities. Also recognises protection of the natural environment focusing on the conservation of native flora and fauna.

The most outstanding element of the environmental work that has been undertaken at Raspins Beach is the successful investment in erosion control and re-vegetation. Extensive erosion of the beach in the past caused the loss of the site's picnic tables, fences and foreshore vegetation. Erosion control required effective re-direction of the river mouth, and required substantial investment by government and Council.

The local community, including the Orford Community Group, were vital in providing momentum for this work to proceed and also in ensuring that the resulting infrastructure plan delivered not only stability for the beach, but provided for the use of features such as soft landscaping, low posts, rocks and logs to define parking, beach access, walking tracks, native plants, and protected habitat for threatened species.

OCG have re-vegetated the reserve with over 1000 native plants and grasses which initially were all hand watered. At present, Raspins Beach is a recognised Conservation Reserve of 4.7ha.

Ongoing weed control is an important part of ongoing management of the site, and also provides useful insight into the community's contribution to stewardship of the beach. OCG identify and remove Gorse, Blackberries, Gazania, Agapanthus, Boneseed and Tree Lucerne, at times with the voluntary assistance of a local machinery contractor. Temporary fencing has been installed by OCG to protect the dunes from foot traffic and allow native grasses to establish. Native grasses and trees are now beginning to re-vegetate naturally. Seedlings are sourced from the local Pulchella Nursery helping to sustain a local business and catalyse local knowledge of native plants available for other local gardens, and Council has undertaken an arborist report on the area and work has been undertaken on the various types of gums to ensure their safety and health.

Raspins Beach, particularly the sand spit, is a significant shorebird nesting site for hooded plover, red capped plover and fairy terns. Interpretation signage has been developed at two strategic locations communicating the importance of these breeding grounds to the survival of these species, and Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife, the Council and the community erect and maintain fencing and signage at the spit to encourage the public to avoid this area during bird breeding season. Students from Triabunna School demonstrated they are well aware of the importance of the bird habitat and communicated clearly the need to avoid walking through habitat areas.

Water Conservation

Recognises sustainable water management within communities which has combined innovative water conservation and water re-use initiatives at the private, industrial and municipal levels, benefiting society and nature.

It is worth noting that GSBC have for many years had a policy whereby all new dwellings and extensions are required to install a 10,000 litre water tank for the collection and use of roof water. The effect of this on the community's understanding of the value of water is difficult to quantify, however it suggests there is an understanding of water as a limited and precious resource.

As well as this, there are a number of water-saving elements in use at Raspins Beach including:

- Timed water saving taps;
- Dual flush toilets;
- Waterless urinal in the male toilets;
- Use of native plants in re-vegetation which, once established, require no watering.

Glamorgan Spring Bay Council have been involved in the production and distribution of native garden brochures in an effort to encourage residents to plant natives and be water-wise.

Energy Innovation

Recognises sustainable energy management which focuses on innovative energy efficiency measures and climate change issues

At the site itself, the Council has installed time regulated gas BBQs and electric lights in toilets and BBQ shelters which are automatically activated in the evening only. It is proposed that the new Raspins sailing building will use solar power for lighting and hot water and a water tank to collect water from the roof.

As well, Raspins Beach is part of the TASMARC initiative, started in 2004 and designed to address a lack of historical information relating to the Tasmanian shoreline and the way it is responding to storm events and sea-level rise, including those associated with climate change. Orford Community Group volunteers record these measurements of shoreline positions and beach profiles at Raspins and Main Beach in Orford and provide information about seasonal and long term changes in the shape and position of the beach to the state-wide TASMARC program.

Also at Seafest 2014, a local festival organised by GSBC and Triabunna School in collaboration with various groups from the local community, a representative from a project called Better Boating, run by Environment Tasmania and funded by the Climate Change Office, was able to directly interact with the fishing community to look at ways to improve efficiencies in boating practices to reduce carbon emissions.

Heritage & Culture

Recognises how communities proudly preserve and value cultural history.

The heritage and culture of Orford and Maria Island is highlighted in the interpretive signage at Raspins Beach, which was completed by one of the OCG volunteers, Louise Coghill. They touch on the area's Indigenous and European history as well as providing information on the area's environmental importance.

The Council has undertaken Indigenous heritage surveys on the foreshore around Orford, in particular in places likely to be affected by the area's extensive network of walking tracks. These areas have all been surveyed for signs of Aboriginal Heritage and the construction of these tracks was been undertaken by a contractor who is able to identify Aboriginal Heritage sites and recognises their importance.

The Orford area has an active historical society, and supports Council and OCG in their efforts to reflect the area's European history on interpretive signage. There are plans to provide further interpretive signage around the town to highlighting the area's recent history, for example about the convict road which runs alongside the Prosser River.

The area holds an annual local festival called Seafest, which is organised by GSBC, Triabunna School and other groups from the local community. Seafest provides an opportunity for the school and families to celebrate the area's coastal and marine environments. It provides a range of interactive activities and displays for school students and the general public focus on marine and coastal education and information.

In 2014, Seafest included a game fishing tournament. In keeping with the Seafest commitment to marine and coastal information and protection, the associated fishing event was designed to include prizes for many categories on the basis of tag and release only and care was taken to not sensationalise or seek media attention for species caught such as large sharks. The inclusion of this tournament also provided opportunities to educate and inform the fishing community about local Marine Reserves such as is associated with Maria Island, and sustainable fishing practices generally.

The community also has a strong element of French culture, and the beach includes facilities for playing of petanque.

Young Legends

Recognises environmental achievement through youth initiative and/or by a community, which encourages and promotes youth initiative and environmental education programs and/or achievement.

As well as being involved in the organization of Seafest, both Orford & Triabunna Schools use the beach for school and after school beach activity. They participate in sailing, surfing and lifesaving. After school activities involve the whole family. Students from Orford School regularly participate in weeding, re-vegetation and protection of shorebird habitat at Raspins Beach, both as part of their school activities, and as part of the local community.

Other elements relevant to this category are:

- Triabunna students as part of their chosen curriculum have been learning how to and participating in growing their own oysters. They learn that pollution of our seas, beaches and water ways can have a detrimental effect on aqua culture.
- Triabunna School, Spring Bay Boat Club, GSBC and OCG are proposing to construct a building at Raspins to be used by the school's students to house their six sailing boats. All groups will be working together to raise money and committed volunteer labour to help ensure the success of the project.
- Louise Coghill from OCG and previously a wild care rescuer has talked with Orford students about native animals and birds that can be found on and around the area's foreshores and creeks.
- A new project, 'It's Sorted' funded by KAB Tasmania will see a comprehensive upgrade in local school recycling infrastructure and education. Each classroom will be provided with a range of small colour coded bins so that they can take responsibility for separating resources for either waste or recycling. These bins include green waste collection for the school's own kitchen gardens. This project will enable even the youngest students to understand how resources should be separated.