

CLARENCE COAST RESERVE TRUST

DIGGERS HEADLAND RESERVE PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

PART A



JANUARY 2009



Department of Lands



DIGGERS HEADLAND RESERVE
PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

PART A

**Prepared by Department of Lands and Clarence Valley Council
on behalf of the Clarence Coast Reserve Trust**

Adopted by the Minister for Lands on 23 January 2009

| A copy of this plan may be viewed at: www.lands.nsw.gov.au

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Executive Summary

Diggers Headland Reserve is a picturesque Crown recreation reserve surrounding the small coastal hamlet of Diggers Camp on the North Coast of New South Wales. It is a special place appreciated by locals and visitors for over a century and is one of the jewels of the North Coast Crown reserve system.

Clarence Valley Council is the appointed corporate manager of the Clarence Coast Reserve Trust that is responsible for care, control and management of the reserve. The challenge for management is to carefully integrate public recreation with the important environmental values of the reserve and adjacent environs and to guide its use and development in a way that meets the future needs and expectations of the community, including local residents and visitors alike, and the NSW Minister for Lands.

The Department of Lands has an ongoing commitment to optimise the environmental, social and economic outcomes on Crown land for the benefit of the people of New South Wales. This revised plan of management adopts a more holistic, flexible and responsive approach consistent with contemporary Crown land management policies. While it is primarily based on the principles of Crown land management, it also emphasises the importance of the Trust management partnership with Clarence Valley Council by incorporating the core elements of Council's adopted sustainability strategy.

The plan re-evaluates the various issues and challenges associated with the popularity of Diggers Headland Reserve and its ongoing protection. In addition to the existing level of public use it also considers the implications of future demands associated with the rapid regional population growth and tourism on the NSW North Coast.

The aim of the plan is to maintain a balanced range of recreational opportunities for the whole community while preserving the special values and character of the reserve. The plan recognises the strong ties that exist between a wide cross-section of the community and the reserve. The needs and expectations of local residents have been carefully considered and the plan includes enhanced strategies to foster and manage community stewardship of the reserve.


Other key elements include;

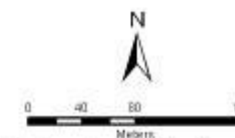
- Improvements to recreational and environmental management including enhanced public facilities subject to a landscape management and facilities plan,
- Provision for a vegetation management plan to guide the long-term management of vegetation on the reserve, and
- A revised camping management strategy and a structured camping assessment and review process over a two year timeframe to determine the future of the activity.

Through this revised plan the Trust will be well placed to ensure that locals and visitors alike will continue to enjoy the unique legacy of Diggers Headland Reserve without diminishing the very qualities that the community are attracted to in the first place.

Figure 1.
Locality Map

Legend

 Diggers Headland Reserve



Aerial Photography: LPI Orthoview
Date of Photography: 2004 9438 Run 6
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Zone: 56 Datum: GDA94

Prepared By: Crown Lands Division, Grafton



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Plan Structure

This plan of management is presented in two parts;

Part A sets out the basis for management including land status, administrative requirements, documentation and assessment of values, analysis of issues and management challenges facing Diggers Headland Reserve.

Part B provides the best practice management framework and mechanisms to achieve the vision and objectives set by the Trust for the Reserve. Management actions have been prioritised on a strategic risk management basis consistent with Clarence Valley Councils sustainability management framework and the projected resources of the Trust.

Strategic Action Plans

Strategic Action Plans give clarity and transparency to the implementation process. They focus on operational matters and provide the necessary detailed guidance to the Trust for implementing on ground works and other practical elements of reserve management.

Strategic Action Plans to be prepared in conjunction with this plan of management include;

- Landscape Management & Facilities Plan
- Vegetation Management Plan
- Camping Management Strategy
- Camping Sustainability Assessment

Related Plans

- North Coast Regional Environmental Plan (REP) 1988
- Ulmarra Local Environmental Plan (LEP)1992
- Diggers Headland Reserve Plan of Management 1999
- Yuraygir National Park Plan of Management (NP&WS) 2003
- Solitary Islands Marine Park Operational Plan 2003
- Nature in Tourism: A Plan for NSW 2004-2007
- NSW State Plan
- Clarence Valley Council Sustainability Initiative 2006

Introduction to Diggers Headland Reserve

Diggers Headland Reserve is a special place. It provides an idyllic setting for residents of the small coastal hamlet of Diggers Camp and is a unique drawcard for locals and visitors to the Clarence Valley with its magnificent coastal setting and outstanding scenery. The Reserve is integral to the nature-based tourist attractions of the region being surrounded by Yuraygir National Park and overlooking the Solitary Islands Marine Park. It provides a range of outdoor recreational opportunities for the local community and visitors alike; from camping, picnicking, bushwalking and sightseeing with good access to popular water-based activities such as fishing, swimming and surfing at Diggers Beach.

Location

Diggers Headland Reserve is situated at Diggers Camp on the Far North Coast of New South Wales approximately 45 kilometres south east of the regional centre of Grafton (See Figure 1).

Surrounding Land Uses

The adjoining Yuraygir National Park complex covers over 38,000 hectares and contains the longest stretch of undeveloped coastline in NSW with some of the States most isolated and unspoilt beaches. The magnificent scenery and wide range of recreational opportunities attract over 60,000 visitors each year. The Park contains a number of designated public camping areas including Boorkoom Camping Area located a short distance from Diggers Camp. The access track to Boorkoom commences within Diggers Headland Reserve.

On the seaward side of the Reserve the Solitary Islands Marine Park contains the most significant and diverse group of island reefs along the NSW coast. It provides habitat for over 280 species of fish and up to 90 species of coral. The Marine Park is also home to several species of marine mammals and is visited by migrating humpback whales. It is important to ensure that all activities on Diggers Headland Reserve are conducted in such a way that any potential impacts on these significant surrounding environments are minimised.

Whilst Diggers Headland Reserve shares many of the values of the adjoining Parks, its management under the Crown Lands Act reflects a much broader set of values and community expectations. In addition to providing for the recreational needs of the community the reserve has vital strategic importance as a buffer between Diggers Camp and the adjoining Parks.

The Reserve effectively encloses 44 freehold residential allotments and associated Public road reserves that make up Diggers Camp. The resident population is small but increases markedly during holiday periods. The settlement has no power, water or sewerage however there is a telephone service and regular garbage collection. A number of houses on the western side benefit from elevated water tanks and other structures that encroach on the reserve. The surrounding Crown Reserve and National Park is a major constraint to any future expansion or servicing of Diggers Camp. The provision of essential future infrastructure to service the Diggers Camp residential community may well be dependent on the availability of suitable Crown land within the existing reserve.

The close proximity of residential development places environmental and social pressures on many of the significant values of the reserve. The impacts of weeds, domestic animals, septic systems, encroachments and social pressures relating to public use of the reserve are some of the management issues recognised in this plan.

Regional Context

Diggers Headland Reserve lies within the Clarence Valley Local Government Area on the North Coast of New South Wales. The region is one of the most diverse in NSW and ranks extremely high in terms of environmental significance and tourism values.

The Reserve is an integral component of the North Coast coastal Crown reserves system. Many Crown reserves service small coastal villages and are enclosed in turn within the coastal National Parks system. Similar local examples include Minnie Waters Foreshore Reserve to the north and Wooli Coastal Reserve to the south. The Crown reserve system makes a significant contribution to the regions biodiversity, recreation and tourism values and contributes significantly to the character of the small coastal villages in the Clarence Valley.

Diggers Headland Reserve is important for the diversity it contributes to the Crown reserve system and the unique social and recreational opportunities it provides the local community and visitors. The provision of caravan parks and camping grounds is an established feature of many coastal Crown recreation reserves. However whilst the public demand for such facilities is steadily increasing the opportunities have declined markedly. Diggers Headland Reserve is presently one of only two authorised primitive camping grounds within the North Coast Crown reserve system.

Land Description

Diggers Headland Reserve is Crown land comprising Reserve 44430 for Public Recreation notified 16 October 1909.

The land is described as Lot 20 DP 45976 (excluding Public Roads) in the Parish of Scope, County of Clarence.

The Reserve has an area of approximately 23.0 hectares and has its seaward boundary to the Mean High Water Mark. It is surrounded by Yuraygir National Park with the Solitary Islands Marine Park extending below the Mean High Water Mark on the seaward boundary. (Note: the proclaimed area of Yuraygir NP also includes that part of the intertidal zone covering the large area of rock shelf below Diggers Headland.)

The internal boundary of the Reserve is complex as it encloses the small coastal hamlet of Diggers Camp with its 44 freehold residential allotments and associated Public road reserves.

Crown Reserve Trust Management

The Clarence Coast Reserve Trust is charged with the care, control and management of Diggers Headland Reserve pursuant to Section 92 – Crown Lands Act 1989. The Trust is responsible for 27 coastal Crown reserves within the Clarence Valley Local Government Area.

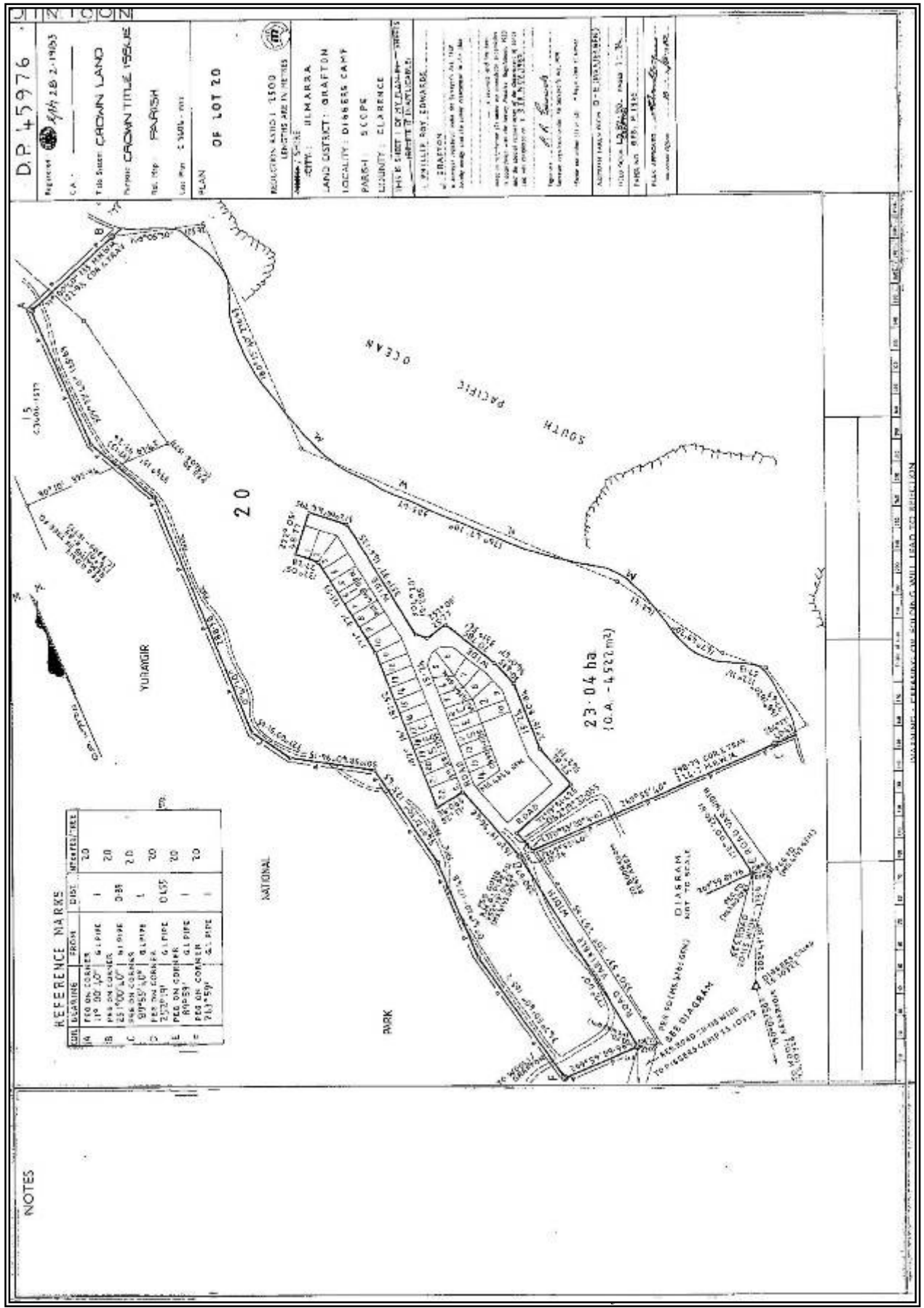
Clarence Valley Council is the appointed corporate manager of the Trust pursuant to Section 95 of the Act.

The Role of the Clarence Coast Reserve Trust

The Trust is an autonomous body incorporated under the Crown Lands Act 1989. It holds legal ownership of Diggers Headland Reserve and is responsible for its management. The Trust must act in the best interests of the reserve and the public consistent with the requirements of the Act. Any income generated by the Trust is returned directly to fund reserve management. The Trust may enter into a range of dealings in respect of the reserve with the Ministers consent. The Trust can appoint or employ others to assist it in fulfilling its role. In addition, it may delegate (with the Ministers consent) certain functions to a committee,

organisation, group or individual. This provides options to foster community participation and stewardship by involving the local community in advisory and operational activities.

Figure 2. Deposited Plan 45976



The Role of the appointed Trust Manager

As Trust Manager, Clarence Valley Council is responsible for all aspects of reserve management and must administer the affairs of the Trust in a transparent and accountable manner. As such, it is incumbent on Council to implement the adopted plan of management.

The Trust must furnish a report on its activities to the Minister for Lands each year pursuant to Section 32 – Crown Lands Regulation 2006. As a corporate Trust manager, the Regulation requires Council to keep records that enable dissection of all monetary details in respect of revenue received from the reserve, details of improvements and details of all leases and licences.

Planning Framework

This plan of management has been prepared in accordance with Section 112 - Crown Lands Act 1989 and all other relevant legislation and policies applying to Crown reserve management. Once adopted by the Minister for Lands the plan of management is a legal instrument that documents how the reserve is to be managed in the years ahead.

Legislation and Policy

A broad range of legislation, policies and planning instruments are relevant to the management of Crown reserves and have been considered in the formulation of this plan of management. These are summarised in Annexure 1 Table 1.

The following Acts and policies have particular relevance to the management of Diggers Headland Reserve;

Crown Lands Act 1989

Crown reserves in New South Wales are subject to the general land management objectives and provisions of the Crown Lands Act 1989 particularly the reserve management provisions set out in Part 5.

The *Principles of Crown Land Management*, as defined in Section 11 of the Act, prescribe the basis for the management and administration of Crown land. They are:

- That environmental protection principles be observed in relation to the management and administration of Crown land;
- That the natural resources of Crown land (including water, soil, flora, fauna and scenic quality) be conserved wherever possible;
- That public use and enjoyment of appropriate Crown land be encouraged;
- Where appropriate multiple use of Crown land is encouraged;
- Where appropriate Crown land should be used and managed in such a way that both the land and its resources are sustained in perpetuity;
- That Crown land be occupied, used, sold, leased, licensed or otherwise dealt with in the best interests of the State consistent with the above principles.

The proposed use, development and management practices of a reserve must be consistent with the notified public purpose of the reserve. The Act and associated departmental policies encourage the appropriate commercial use of reserved Crown land.

It should be noted that the Act requires that the proceeds of activities on Crown reserves be applied by the appointed Reserve Trust towards the management of the reserve/s for which it is responsible, unless otherwise directed by the Minister. Thus any revenue generated by the Clarence Coast Reserve Trust from Diggers Headland Reserve contributes directly to the funds required for the on-going management of the Reserve.

Crown Lands Regulation 2006

The Regulation is made under the Crown lands Act 1989 and deals with a range of matters relating to Crown reserves and reserve trusts including the purposes for which temporary licences may be granted and the exhibition of draft plans of management.

Crown Lands (General Reserves) By-law 2006

The affairs of certain Crown reserves are covered by the Crown Lands (General Reserves) By-law 2006. The By-law is made under the Crown Lands Act 1989 and deals with a range of reserve management matters including;

- Procedures to be followed by reserve trusts
- Administrative matters relating to trust boards
- The regulation of entry and conduct on reserves, and
- The setting of fees and charges and the provision of certain services by reserve trusts

The By-law does not currently apply to Diggers Headland Reserve but does apply to other reserves managed by the Clarence Coast Reserve Trust. This plan of management recommends that the reserve be added to Schedule 1 of the By-law to enhance the effective regulation of activities on the reserve.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) provides the statutory planning framework to control the use and development of land in New South Wales. A range of planning instruments (Local and Regional Environmental Plans & State Environmental Planning Policies) need to be considered when planning the future use and development of Diggers Headland Reserve.

Zoning

The *Ulmarra Local Environmental Plan 1992* is currently the relevant local planning instrument used by Clarence Valley Council (pending adoption of a new LEP). Diggers Headland Reserve is zoned 6(a)-Open Space, while the adjoining residential area of Diggers Camp is zoned 2-Village.

Zone No 6 (a) (Open Space Zone)

Objectives of zone

- (a) to recognise publicly owned land used or capable of being used for recreational purposes,
- (b) to ensure that there is an adequate provision of open space areas to meet the present open space and recreational needs of all residents,
- (c) to enable the development of land for purposes associated with recreation,
- (d) to provide opportunities to enhance the total environmental quality of the (former) Shire of Ulmarra,
- (e) to ensure that there is adequate provision of both active and passive open space to serve the present and future recreational needs of residents and visitors,
- (f) to protect littoral rainforests occurring in the zone,
- (g) to prevent development which would adversely affect, or be adversely affected by, in both the long and short term, coastal processes,

- (h) to protect and preserve areas of urban bushland which are considered valuable in terms of their natural heritage significance and recreational, educational, aesthetic and scientific value, and
- (i) to enable the development of the land for other purposes where it can be demonstrated by the applicant for development consent that suitable lands or buildings for the proposed purpose are not available elsewhere and that such a use can be designed to minimise the impact of the development on the land and nearby land.

State Environmental Planning Policy No.71 – Coastal Protection

SEPP 71 was introduced in 2002 as part of the NSW Governments coastal protection package. The policy gives statutory force to elements of the NSW Coastal Policy and makes the Minister the consent authority for developments within the coastal zone that are designated State significant development.

The aims of SEPP 71 are:

1. to protect and manage the natural, cultural, recreational and economic attributes of the New South Wales coast,
2. to protect and improve existing public access to and along coastal foreshores to the extent that this is compatible with the natural attributes of the coastal foreshore,
3. to ensure that new opportunities for public access to and along coastal foreshores are identified and realised to the extent that this is compatible with the natural attributes of the coastal foreshore,
4. to protect and preserve Aboriginal cultural heritage, and Aboriginal places, values, customs, beliefs and traditional knowledge,
5. to ensure that the visual amenity of the coast is protected,
6. to protect and preserve beach environments and beach amenity,
7. to protect and preserve native coastal vegetation,
8. to protect and preserve the marine environment of New South Wales,
9. to protect and preserve rock platforms,
10. to manage the coastal zone in accordance with the principles of ecologically sustainable,
11. development (within the meaning of section 6 (2) of the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*),
12. to ensure that the type, bulk, scale and size of development is appropriate for the location and protects and improves the natural scenic quality of the surrounding area, and
13. to encourage a strategic approach to coastal management.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007

SEPP (Infrastructure) was introduced on 1 January 2008 to simplify planning processes applying to the provision of infrastructure throughout NSW. The SEPP consolidates and updates 20 previous State planning instruments and amends a large number of local, regional and State instruments. Key provisions include;

1. Additional uses being permitted on certain State land (including some classes of Crown land) which would otherwise be prohibited under an LEP.
2. Exempt development categories for public authorities. Categories relevant to Crown reserves include access ramps, bush fire protection, car parks, fencing, landscaping, lighting, signage and boundary adjustments
3. Infrastructure planning provisions, including works and activities on Crown land, such as emergency services facilities, bushfire hazard reduction, parks and public reserves, flood mitigation works, port, wharf and boating facilities, waterway or foreshore management activities, etc
4. Consultation requirements when undertaking development subject to the SEPP
5. Development for any purpose may be carried out without consent on a Crown reserve by or on behalf of the appointed trustee where the development relates to the implementation of a plan of management adopted under the Crown lands Act 1989.
6. In addition, where local councils are Trust managers, they are permitted to do the following without consent;
 - Roads, cycle ways, single story car parks, ticketing facilities and viewing platforms
 - Outdoor recreational facilities including playing fields but not including grandstands
 - Information facilities such as visitor centres and information boards
 - Lighting, if light spill and artificial sky glow is minimised in accordance with AS/NZS 1158:2007 Lighting for Roads & Public Places
 - Landscaping, including irrigation schemes (whether they use recycled or other water)
 - Amenity facilities
 - Maintenance depots
 - Environmental management works
7. The SEPP does not remove any existing requirements to obtain relevant approvals under other legislation such as : National Parks & Wildlife Act 1974, Rural Fires Act 1997 etc

Local Government Act 1993

The Local Government Act sets out the role and responsibilities of Clarence Valley Council and gives Council power to control local activities through an approval process under Section 68 of the Act. The operation of caravan parks and camping grounds is subject to an *operational approval* issued under the Act in accordance with the Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds & Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2005.

Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds & Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2005

In 1986 the introduction of Ordinance 71 "Caravan Parks & Moveable Dwellings" under the former Local Government Act 1919 led to the first regulatory consideration of camping activities on Diggers Headland Reserve. The current Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds & Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2005 specifies standards for caravan parks and camping grounds including the level of service required in a primitive camping ground.

Diggers Headland Reserve is authorised as a primitive camping ground under the Regulation.

This PoM ensures that the management of camping on Diggers Headland Reserve meets the requirements of the Regulation through a comprehensive Camping Management Strategy.

NSW Coastal Policy

The New South Wales Coastal Policy 1997 provides a whole-of-government framework for the coordinated management of the coastal zone and seeks to integrate the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) into coastal planning.

The coastal zone includes areas within one kilometre of the ocean and within one kilometre around coastal lakes, lagoons, rivers and estuaries. Therefore, Diggers Headland Reserve is subject to the policy.

Under the policy the onus is on public land managers to develop management plans to deliver best practices and ensure the sustainable development and use of resources. Plans of management prepared under the Crown Lands Act 1989 are an important strategic action to achieve the objectives of the policy.

This Plan of Management addresses the nine goals of the Coastal Policy as follows:

1. Protecting, rehabilitating and improving the natural environment of the coastal zone.
 - *Defining areas for protection and rehabilitation to improve the natural environment.*
2. Recognising and accommodating the natural processes of the coastal zone.
 - *Defining and protecting natural areas and providing designated recreation areas within Diggers Headland Reserve.*
3. Protecting and enhancing the aesthetic qualities of the coastal zone.
 - *Defining and protecting natural areas, open space and views. Restricting intensive recreation and access from areas of high aesthetic value to ensure those qualities of the coastal zone are protected and enhanced.*
4. Protecting and conserving the cultural heritage of the coastal zone.
 - *Defining and protecting natural areas. Recognising links to the European and Aboriginal cultural heritage of the area.*
5. Providing for ecologically sustainable development and use of resources.
 - *Defining and protecting natural areas. Analysing and managing land use on the basis of principles of ESD*
6. Providing for ecologically sustainable human settlement in the coastal zone.
 - *Providing a balance between protecting natural areas and providing opportunities for appropriate public use of the land.*
7. Providing for appropriate public access and use.
 - *Providing public access to appropriate reserve areas for a diversity of recreational and nature-based tourism activities. Informing the community of the values and constraints that govern public use of the reserve.*
8. Providing information to enable effective management of the coastal zone.
 - *Preparation and review of the adopted Plan of Management. Strategies to improve resource assessment and provide appropriate interpretive material.*
9. Providing for integrated planning and management of the coastal zone.
 - *Preparation and review of the adopted Plan of Management incorporating input from all stakeholders including relevant Government agencies.*

Plate 1. Diggers Beach



NSW State Plan

In November 2006 the NSW Government released the State Plan for the next 10 years. This plan of management makes relevant contributions to the following State Plan priorities;

Building harmonious communities

- more harmonious communities through public participation in social activities and reserve management

Delivering better services

- provision of appropriate facilities on Crown reserves
- healthier communities through increased participation in recreational activities

Practical environmental solutions

- improved environmental outcomes for natural resources
- enhanced opportunities for people to use Crown reserves and recreational facilities

Sustainability

In 2006 Clarence Valley Council adopted the *Clarence Valley Sustainability Initiative* to provide a contemporary planning and decision-making framework to deliver sustainable outcomes for the Clarence Valley. The *Initiative* is based on the principles of Ecological Sustainable Development (ESD) and provides a platform for integrated management of ecological, social, cultural and economic values. In this respect it complements the principles of Crown land management and has direct application to the Crown reserve planning process. The values and issues identified in this plan of management have been considered in terms of the principles set out in the *Initiative*. This plan also reflects the following key elements of Council's *Sustainability Framework* to help deliver best practice in reserve management;

- an effective system of governance,
- meaningful engagement and participation of stakeholders,
- practical management tools and processes,
- co-ordinated resourcing and support, and
- strategic planning and action for sustainability.

Figure 3. Clarence Valley Council Sustainability Planning Process

Our Clarence Valley - It's a living thing ...
Clarence Valley Council - Sustainability planning web.

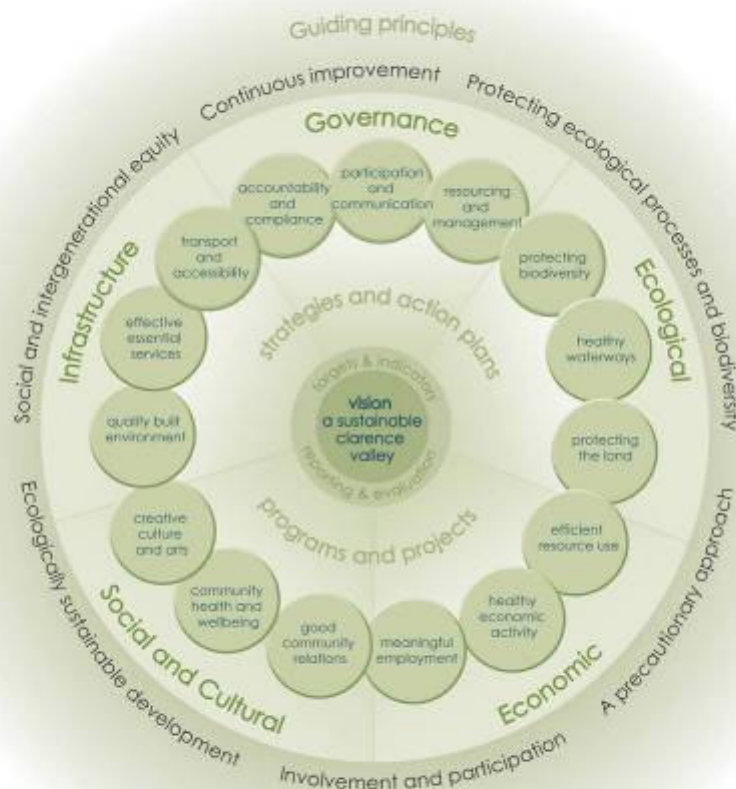


Plate 2. Northern end of Diggers Beach



Reserve Values

Geology and Landform

The fascinating variety of local land forms contained within Diggers Headland Reserve is representative of the unique geomorphology of this part of the Clarence coast. The landscape reflects the extensive deposition of Quaternary marine sands over the much older Palaeozoic metamorphics of the New England Fold Belt revealed in the foreshore outcrops and intertidal rock shelves. Steep frontal dunes rise up at the coastal edge of the reserve and in places freshwater springs run out to the beach. Further inland are excellent examples of vegetated barrier dune formations and associated drainage depressions and swamps that characterise this part of the coastline.

The marine sediments contain concentrations of heavy minerals. These are evident as sorted strandlines of dark material to be found on Diggers Beach. In the Diggers Headland area local concentrations of gold, platinum and other minerals were sought by miners at the beginning of the last century.

The soils within the reserve are mainly derived from the Quaternary marine sands. These soils are free draining with a poorly developed A-horizon. Sandy soils present particular management constraints and tend to be infertile, poorly structured and extremely unstable if exposed. It is important that good vegetation cover be maintained to minimise the risk of erosion. Further constraints are imposed by the high permeability. Whilst this assists in the dispersal of surface water runoff it also implies a low residence time for waste waters associated with septic tank systems.

The soils derived from the Palaeozoic bedrock are also poorly structured with an infertile and highly dispersible topsoil and heavy clay subsoil. Subsurface flows are restricted to the sandy A horizon which again implies a low residence time for wastewaters.

Plate 3. Diggers Headland Reserve- view south.



Flora and Fauna

The natural environment of Diggers Headland Reserve is representative of the great diversity of vegetation and coastal landforms found in the adjoining national park. Some areas of the reserve away from the immediate influence of Diggers Camp residences and the open space areas are in pristine condition.

The various plant communities reflect the different landforms and changing influences in topography, soil development, drainage and exposure to coastal influences. These include;

- Bloodwood/ /Angophora Woodland with Banksia/Casuarina/ Blackbutt/Turpentine
- Tallowood/Swamp Box Open Forest
- Banksia Heathland
- Melaleuca Swamp Forest
- Fore dune complex

There has been no formal assessment of the wildlife of the reserve. However it is reasonable to assume that the range of fauna that inhabit the adjoining Yuraygir National Park are also present on the reserve including many vulnerable and threatened species.

Plate 4. Coastal Emus



Photo courtesy : Clarence Valley Council (Scott Lenton)

A number of formed trails provide excellent opportunities for bushwalkers to observe and appreciate the native flora and fauna of the reserve.

The reserve plays an important strategic role as a buffer zone between the residential development of Diggers Camp and Yuraygir National Park. The adopted Village Protection Strategy for Diggers Camp prepared by Clarence Valley Bush Fire Management Committee (see Appendices) applies to the whole reserve and has significant implications for the management of vegetation on the reserve. Most of the forested area is identified as a Strategic Fire Advantage Zone (SFAZ) requiring a prescribed burning regime.

The open spaces areas of the reserve play a critical role as an Asset Protection Zone (APZ) requiring a prescribed maintenance regime.

A key recommendation of this plan of management is the completion of an ecological survey to form the basis of a comprehensive Vegetation Management Plan for the reserve. This will include a flora and fauna survey, description of habitats and vegetation communities with identification of threatened species and key threatening processes. Other issues and management considerations include;

- control and eradication of noxious pests and weeds,
- unauthorised clearing of sensitive coastal vegetation,
- control of public access into sensitive areas, and
- provision of interpretive signage and other materials.

The plan will complement management strategies employed in Yuraygir National Park and will strengthen the capacity of the Trust and other stewardship partners to adequately protect and enhance the important ecological values of the Reserve.

Further research and monitoring should also be encouraged to build a complete and balanced ecological picture of the reserve.

Aboriginal Cultural Values

Diggers Headland and surrounding areas are significant to local Aboriginal people. The southern headland (known as “Bleeding Rock”) has mythological and spiritual significance and is known as one of the sites where Nguloongoora (Clever) men camped in traditional times when they visited the coast for ceremonial purposes.

There are a number of registered Aboriginal sites in the locality including shell middens, campsites, stone tool workshops and ochre sites. This plan of management recognises the cultural importance of all Aboriginal sites, relics and places to the Aboriginal community, and also the scientific, educational and aesthetic significance of Aboriginal cultural values to society as a whole.

Aboriginal places and objects are protected under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and should not be disturbed in any way without prior consultation with the Department of Environment and Climate Change. Where there is any confusion regarding Aboriginal cultural values or relics appropriate expertise should be sought. If necessary a formal site assessment or archaeological study should be undertaken.

Historic Cultural Values

The Diggers Headland Reserve has an interesting post-European history associated with early grazing, mining, fishing and recreational activities in the locality.

During the 1870s the isolated coastline around Diggers Headland formed part of the original Matildadale Run which included the country east of the Coastal Range between the Woolli and Sandon Rivers.

The Government subsequently excluded the coastal strip from the early grazing runs due to its strategic importance as a public access corridor. Reserve 785 for Roadway and Other Public Purposes was gazetted 17 October 1881 and covered the coastal strip within 3 chains (approx 60 metres) of the high water mark between the Tweed and Bellinger Rivers. This was expanded to a width of 5 chains (approx 100 metres) when Reserve 1082 for Roadway and Other Public Purposes was gazetted 21 January 1884.

Reserve 44430 for Public Recreation (Diggers Headland Reserve) was gazetted 6 October 1909. It originally covered approximately 2 kilometres of coastline north from Wilsons Headland and stretched 800 metres inland with an area of about 450 acres (over 180 hectares).

The “Council for the Shire of Orara” was appointed Trustee of Reserve 44430 by gazette 22 November 1911.

“Diggers Camp” was named after the early miners that operated in the area. It is known from local newspaper reports that prospectors were actively seeking gold in the black mineral sands found on beaches south of the Clarence River by the 1880s. In 1889 the coastline between the Clarence River and Red Rock was officially proclaimed part of the northern extension of the Orara Goldfield.

Between 1908 and 1915 a number of mining leases were issued to the North Coast Gold & Platinum Co Ltd along the stretch of coastline between Diggers Headland and Minnie Water. The minerals specified in the leases included gold, platinum and tin. A mining lease issued in 1914 covered the northern extension of the current reserve down to the beach and included the freshwater spring. Oral records suggest that sluicing took place in the freshwater springs that flow onto the beach to the north of Diggers Camp.

In 1920 the Crown lands within 60 chains (approx. 1200 metres) of the coastline from Wilsons Headland to the Sandon River were reserved under the Mining Act “from alienation for Mining

and Mining Purposes” which reflects the general expansion and significance of coastal mining activities at the time.

By the late 1930s professional fisherman were permanently camped with their families at Diggers Camp. The earliest records of formal occupation date from 1935 when a small number of Permissive Occupancies were granted for “Weekend Camp” and similar purposes. Many of the original dwellings were located near the edge of escarpment on what is now open space known as “the common”.

The area of the reserve increased to 556 acres (over 220 hectares) in 1938 when the adjoining Portion 15 to the north was also gazetted for Public Recreation.

Over the next few decades further Permissive Occupancies were granted for “Weekend Residence” as Diggers Camp evolved into a semi-permanent enclave.

A new era of mining activity commenced in the area during the 1940s with mining leases issued over the coastal dune systems for zircon and rutile. In 1943 a mining lease was issued over a 2 1/2 chain (approx 50 metre) strip along the front of Diggers Headland Reserve. However it is unknown whether any actual mining of mineral sands took place in the locality during the later period.

In 1960 the Department of Lands completed a survey to rationalise occupation of the reserve and released 28 residential allotments for sale. This facilitated the removal of private temporary dwellings from the scenic escarpment camping area however a prime area of the reserve was offered for disposal. Further residential blocks were released in 1967 and in 1984 the public road into Diggers Camp was formally placed under the control of Council. The final release of blocks took place in 1991 with a total of 44 residential lots created.

The permanent establishment of Diggers Camp as a residential area marked a major turning point for the reserve. However an even more significant change occurred when most of Reserve 44430 was incorporated in the new Yuraygir National Park with its proclamation on 25 January 1980.

These two important events marked the end of an era for Diggers Headland Reserve. The reduced reserve area and freehold residential development within the prime open space precinct is now a major constraint to active recreational activities such as camping which are now so much in demand by a more mobile community.

There is an opportunity to promote the unique history of the site through appropriate interpretative material and signage. There is also potential to incorporate local names for some reserve features in future landscape planning for the reserve. However further investigations should be undertaken to verify relevant details.

Tourism

In the past decade tourism throughout Australia and New South Wales has experienced strong growth. Internationally, nature-based tourism is the faster growing tourism sector. On the domestic level it has the highest participation rates of any tourism activity and generates significant wealth for NSW. In particular, the Northern Rivers Region is a major attraction with the majority of visitors seeking coastal destinations and activities focussed on the beaches and fishing.

The NSW North Coast Crown reserve system includes many key coastal caravan parks and is a major contributor to tourism in the Clarence Valley and the region. Diggers Headland Reserve is a unique element of the Crown reserve system and its special values combine to offer a unique sample of the nature-based experience sort by tourists. It is an idyllic place renowned for its natural beauty and outstanding coastal scenery. The reserve supports a diversity of natural bushland in a picturesque setting with scenic vistas and accessible beach and water-based recreation opportunities. For generations the reserve has been a popular

day trip destination for Clarence Valley residents and is a unique attraction for visitors to the region.

This plan of management provides for the protection and appropriate promotion of the reserves unique tourism values.

Given the sensitive environmental values of Diggers Headland Reserve it is preferable that the promotion or development of tourism at Diggers Camp be eco-tourism based and carefully managed. Any future eco-tourism promotion or development proposals based on the reserve must be considered carefully in terms of best practices utilising accepted sustainable development principles in eco-tourism.

Recreation

Diggers Camp Reserve provides an unparalleled setting for the small number of freehold residential allotments at Diggers Camp. The unique situation and natural values of the reserve provide a range of outdoor recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors alike.

Whilst the locality maintains a sense of isolation, access is available for normal vehicles by an unsealed public road and the reserve is a popular day trip destination. Restricted 4WD access is available to Diggers Beach for boat launching purposes.

Recreational activities based on and around the reserve include sightseeing and beachcombing, camping, bird watching, picnicking, bushwalking, fishing, boating and swimming. The Reserve is popular for family picnics, with its open spaces overlooking Diggers Beach providing the perfect setting for a game of cricket or simply relaxing in the sun and soaking up the views.

A number of formed service trails and pedestrian pathways through the reserve provide an excellent access network for walkers. Panoramic coastal views from various points of the reserve are a feature.

Keen bushwalkers can use the reserve as a base to explore the coastline and walking circuits in the adjoining National Park. The maintenance and enhancement of the walking track network on the reserve and links to the wider coastal walking trail network are important public recreation management considerations.

Opportunities for family camping on public land in such coastal settings have been considerably diminished in recent times. Therefore planning for the continuation or cessation of this use must take into consideration the special nature of this activity in terms of its recreation and tourism values.

This plan makes provision for the enhanced assessment and management of all recreational activities on the reserve with particular emphasis placed on addressing the impacts of camping and other active recreational pursuits.

Research & Educational Values

Diggers Headland Reserve and the adjoining National Park and Marine Park provide a range of practical research and educational opportunities for schools and universities. Specialist research carried out within the Reserve is limited and further research in a broad range of fields should be encouraged. Any additional information and enhanced understanding of reserve values will assist greatly in refining future management of the reserve. This plan provides mechanisms for identifying research needs and co-ordinating future research efforts.

Research activities may include: ecological studies and surveys of flora and fauna, geomorphologic studies and detailed topographic mapping, survey of Aboriginal and post-

European cultural sites and history, collection and analysis of data on public visitation and tourism and assessment of the impact of such visitation on natural and cultural resources.

Scenic & Aesthetic Values

Diggers Headland Reserve has a special sense of place that is an inspiration to all who visit. For residents of Diggers Camp the reserve provides an idyllic setting in what is arguably one of the most unique residential locations on the NSW coastline. For other Clarence Valley locals and tourists the reserve provides a refreshing sense of isolation allowing visitors to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life. The magnificent coastal scenery invites reserve users to relax and absorb the natural surroundings of the reserve and its environs.

Plate 4. Diggers Headland Reserve



The coastline has particularly high scenic value with spectacular landforms, wide views of the Pacific Ocean, unspoilt beaches and diverse natural bushland. Diggers Headland Reserve is particularly important for the practical access opportunity it provides the general public to experience the natural coastal environments of northern NSW.

In terms of aesthetic and ethical values, the reserve enjoys a high level of public ownership, being managed by a Reserve Trust, as part of the Crown reserve system. It is important for the well-being of the community to know that the reserve is protected for the future and is available to all the people of NSW (without someone necessarily having the opportunity to experience it first hand).

This plan of management includes strategies to ensure the scenic and aesthetic values of the reserve are maintained and enhanced for future generations to enjoy.

Economic Values

Diggers Headland Reserve is a significant asset for local residents of Diggers Camp as well as the broader community of NSW. It also contributes to the growing economic benefits of tourism in the Clarence Valley by adding to the scope and attractiveness of local tourism assets.

Management Issues and Challenges

Camping

Camping on the coast is an Australian tradition and a popular low cost holiday option. Developed caravan parks and camping grounds are an established feature of many coastal Crown recreation reserves. However opportunities for the more traditional informal style of camping in settings like Diggers Headland have diminished considerably. This is due in part to the unsustainable environmental impacts from unregulated camping in sensitive coastal locations in the past as well as significant changes in management regimes for coastal public lands.

Diggers Headland Reserve has been a well-known camping area since the early 1900's particularly with residents of the Clarence Valley. Traditionally, camping occurred on a relatively informal basis. Prior to the proclamation of Yuraygir National Park in 1980 the camping area at Diggers Camp was linked by a network of tracks to other camping areas in the vicinity including Wilsons Headland, Bare Point and what is now Boorkoom Camping Area. Public toilets and change rooms were provided on the reserve adjacent to the village area.

With the establishment of the National Park and closure of many traditional bush camping areas the focus has been on the remaining camping area adjacent to Diggers Camp. Diggers Headland Reserve is now one of the only authorised primitive camping grounds within the North Coast Crown reserve system

In 1986 the introduction of Ordinance 71 "Caravan Parks & Moveable Dwellings" under the former Local Government Act 1919 led to the first regulatory consideration of camping activities on the Reserve. Management arrangements were imposed by the former Ulmarra Shire Council in 1989 when it stipulated basic requirements and constraints in its authorisation of primitive camping under the Ordinance. The key elements introduced were delineation of the camping area, setting of fees, appointment of a supervisor and restricting camping to Queensland and New South Wales school holidays.

For many years shortcomings in addressing operational matters have been the cause for complaints by some local residents. These ongoing concerns together with calls to ban camping altogether present the Trust with a significant management challenge.

Diggers Headland Reserve is authorised as a Primitive Camping Ground under the Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2005. The Regulation determines the level of service and site requirements in a primitive camp ground. The Regulation is administered by Clarence Valley Council as Local Government Authority. The Approval under the Regulation is issued to the Reserve Trust.

The Plan of Management adopted by the Minister in 1999 was initiated in part to address the camping issues. The plan endorsed camping with the emphasis on managing the activity in a way that balanced the expectations of the wider community and local residents. It recognised

the strong desire of local residents to maintain the low key atmosphere of the reserve and the need to carefully integrate camping with its important environmental values.

The 1999 plan restricts camping to two defined areas within the reserve between 1 December to 31 January and during NSW & QLD School holiday periods (approximately 15 weeks per year) subject to a Camping Management Strategy.

The small area set aside for camping and its proximity to local residences is a major constraint to the activity. As well as downgrading the camping experience it concentrates the potential impacts – both on the reserve and adjoining lands - and has intensified the level of management required to effectively address camping issues. As a result the sustainability of camping at Diggers Headland Reserve is dependent to a great extent on the carrying capacity of the defined camping precinct and the operational resources of the Trust.

The restriction of the activity to school holiday periods of highest demand highlights the social and political dimension of the situation. The restriction has questionable merit on environmental grounds and could be considered unreasonable or inequitable by people wishing to camp at other times.

The requisite Camping Management Strategy and an accompanying Code of Conduct for Campers was introduced by the Trust in 2004 and served to clarify the restrictions on camping. Although implementation of the Strategy and Code of Conduct has assisted at an operational level it has not in itself effectively resolved the fundamental concerns of some local residents. Significantly the key strategic restrictions governing camping, including the limited availability, have not been subject to an assessment process to support their continued effectiveness and/or relevance.

As Trust Manager, Clarence Valley Council has attempted to address the social issues in a balanced manner that both respects the concerns of local residents and acknowledges the passionate connection the camping fraternity holds to the reserve. In November 2005, Council initiated a community reconciliation meeting facilitated by the NSW Attorney Generals Community Justice Centre to examine issues associated with the reserve. The future of camping proved to be the most contentious item at the well-attended forum confirming that the differing views are well entrenched.

Plate 5 – Reserve Camping Area



Issues relating to camping

A broad range of concerns have been raised by the community in relation to camping on the reserve. These include;

- **Size of camping area** - The camping area is too small to cater for demand and impacts are concentrated on a small section of the reserve.
- **Proximity of camping area to local residences** - The camping area is too close to adjacent residential properties.
- **Site definition** - Clear delineation of camping area and camp sites is desirable.
- **Camping area approval & regulatory compliance** - Concerns over site density and compliance with the Local Government regulation.
- **Complaint handling** – Concerns relating to the inadequate response of the Trust to a range of camping and reserve management issues
- **Camping supervision** – The level of supervision of camping and policing of activities by the Trust is of particular concern given the remote location.
- **Traditional attachment to the reserve** - Campers emphasize a long-held attachment to the reserve and feel threatened that the connection will be lost.
- **Community cohesion** - Opposing views are entrenched and have created community division however long-term relationships have also been forged between campers and residents
- **Security and loss of privacy** - Complaints that campers trespass on adjoining lands and invade the privacy of local residents.
- **Maintenance of access road** - Residents believe the dirt access road can't handle the traffic in peak holiday seasons.
- **Noise pollution and anti-social behavior** - Complaints that campers make excessive noise at night and engage in anti-social behavior reducing the quality of life for local residents.

Other Common Themes

Community consultation also reveals the following common themes on camping;

- All parties acknowledge camping will never be universally accepted.
- Camping in such a location will always polarise views as it is a social activity that impacts on other people who are not involved – either directly (local residents and other reserve users) or indirectly (due to peoples sensibilities and values).
- Camping at Diggers Headland has historically provided many people with a unique family holiday experience that can't be found elsewhere. It is highly valued by a relatively close circle of people with very strong ties to the reserve.
- There is general acceptance of the constraints/compromises that have led to the existing camping arrangements
- There is considerable support to maintain the existing camping arrangements.
- The issue of camping primarily concerns impacts on local residents
- The reserve is too small to effectively meet the expectations of local residents and campers alike. It cannot be all things to all people.
- The delineation of functional camping areas is limiting planning options for most effective day use

- The general community expects a whole-of-government approach to the availability of camping opportunities in the local area

The Future of Camping

In many ways the camping issue presents a microcosm of the broad range of concerns associated with coastal development, increased demands on limited public resources and social change. While some people regard camping on Diggers Headland Reserve as an anachronism and an unsupportable impost on local residents. To many others the tenuous continuation of camping on the reserve represents a disappearing way of life that Australian families have long held dear. Either way the issue has a significant social dimension that can't be ignored.

In considering the future of camping it is vital to acknowledge and evaluate the passionate feelings and views of all affected members of the community on a fair and equitable basis. Any proposal to remove the existing right of the public to camp on the reserve requires careful consideration and adequate information to make an objective and informed decision. This plan of management sets in place improvements to the way camping is managed and provides an objective process for its monitoring and assessment.

Camping Sustainability Assessment

The key issue to be resolved by the Trust is whether camping on the reserve is sustainable in terms of its impacts on significant reserve values, its impact on adjoining landholders and the availability of necessary management resources. Given the level of public interest, the future sustainability of the activity can only be objectively assessed by the Trust if it is being conducted under the most appropriate terms and subject to best practices. It is therefore important to ensure that the Camping Management Strategy effectively addresses the operational issues involved and is also being implemented in a responsive and effective manner.

As part of this plan of management the Trust will implement a Strategic Action Plan comprising a formal camping sustainability assessment within a two year timeframe. This will have two components;

1. Revised camping management strategy, and
2. A structured two year review of the activity.

Improved camping management

In tandem with the camping impact assessment process a number of improvements will be implemented to maintain best practices in camping management over the ensuing period. While additional resources would aid better management, the emphasis is on better systems to improve efficiency and effectiveness of camping management.

To improve the regulation of all activities on the reserve it is recommended that Diggers Headland Reserve be added to Schedule 1 of the Crown Lands (General Reserves) By-law 2006. In addition the following matters have either been included in the revised Camping Management Strategy (see appendices) and/or will be incorporated in the Landscape Management and Facilities Plan for the reserve;

- A review of camping fees to ensure that camping management is financially viable;
- A review of the area designated for camping and whether it should be expanded, maintained or reduced;
- A review of the number and size of sites and whether they should be increased, maintained or reduced;
- A review of the style of camping available;
- Improved delineation of campsites;

- Engagement of a supervisor to oversee camping activities;
- An improved booking system and registration process;
- Use of locally endemic vegetation and planned landscaping to provide strategic visual barriers and screen noise and lights from the camping area;
- Erect appropriate fencing at the perimeter of open space areas where necessary to protect vegetation and other environmentally sensitive areas ;
- Improved waste management during the camping period;
- Improved regulatory and interpretive signage and other information for reserve users;
- Improved communications and complaints handling processes

Camping Review Process

The camping sustainability assessment will include the following elements;

- Quantitative analysis of the physical environment,
- Standardised impact assessment criteria,
- Established limits of acceptable change,
- Regular monitoring and reporting program by an appointed campground supervisor,
- Data collection including traffic counters, periodic visitor and resident surveys, camping registrations, and
- Economic assessment.

The structured review process will commence on adoption of this plan and will be conducted over a two year period. The final report will provide the necessary detailed information to objectively assess impacts on the reserve to enable the Trust to make an informed decision that is in the best interests of the reserve and fair and equitable to all members of the community. If necessary a formal review of the adopted plan of management will follow the determination in order to accommodate any necessary changes.

Reserve Facilities

Plate 6. Public Amenities



There is significant scope to improve the limited facilities on the reserve. This plan proposes the installation of some public day use facilities including picnic tables, BBQ facilities and seating in keeping with the diversity of recreation opportunities. It also recommends reconfiguring the existing weather shed and rationalising the proliferation of bollards to improve the amenity and presentation of the reserve. However any development must be sympathetic to the distinctive low key simplicity of the reserve that is so highly valued by a large cross-section of the community.

The extent of new facilities will be limited to meet necessary management requirements and the basic public expectations of visitors. Standards of construction should also reflect the high level of reserve presentation envisaged by the Trust.

It is acknowledged that historically there has been some resistance from local residents to the introduction of new facilities. However with appropriate planning and design of new facilities will significantly improve the amenity of the reserve without compromising its essential character to create a family friendly location for both locals and day visitors that can be enjoyed throughout the year.

Signage

The provision of regulatory signage to inform reserve users of appropriate behaviour is important to effectively manage use of the reserve and limit public liability. The existing ad hoc and irrelevant signage is unsightly and reduces the impact of the message. All such signage should be removed and replaced with appropriate signage that is integrated in terms of design and content and located in a way that does not detract from the scenic amenity and character of the reserve.

The village notice board has a central role with the local community and is also a focal point for visitor information. It is a key facility for the reserve and should be upgraded and maintained accordingly in consultation with the local community.

At Diggers Headland Reserve there is also an excellent opportunity to provide enhanced interpretive signage through more co-operative partnerships with adjoining Park managers and introduce other informative material regarding the environmental values of the reserve and its environs and how to care for them.

Risk Management

The on-going assessment of risk and liabilities is a critical element of reserve management. A simple risk assessment process has been used in preparation of this plan and will remain an important risk management tool for the Trust. Key risk areas for the Trust to address include;

- Occupational Health & Safety
- Environmental management including erosion, water quality and dangerous trees
- Liability including visitor safety and signage
- Emergency management including bushfire risk and evacuation planning
- Contract management and authorisation of volunteers
- Asset management including management and maintenance of facilities
- Beach and water activities (in partnership with Marine Parks Authority)

Bush Fire & Other Emergencies

Diggers Headland is located within a moderate to high bushfire risk area, primarily due to a high incidence of arson within the adjoining Yuraygir National Park. Fire from natural causes is considered negligible (NP&WS 2003). The most recent significant fire event in the vicinity of Diggers Camp occurred in 1994 and damaged a large area of Yuraygir National Park.

Ecologically Sustainable Bush Fire Hazard Reduction strategies based on managed fuel loads and fire intervals are required to effectively manage both fire and ecology within the Diggers Headland Reserve.

Fuel management strategies, including a Village Protection Strategy for Diggers Camp (see Appendices), have been implemented by Clarence Valley Council, Department of Lands and the Department of Environment and Climate Change in co-operation with the Rural Fire Service and Clarence Valley Bushfire Management Committee. A reserve evacuation plan should be prepared in conjunction with other relevant authorities to complement the Village Protection Strategy.

Pollution

Diggers Headland Reserve is surrounded by Yuraygir National Park and the Solitary Islands Marine Park and all adjoining landowners, land managers, residents and visitors play a vital role in protecting the health of the local environment. It is imperative that the Reserve Trust carefully considers potential adverse effects on neighbouring properties resulting from activities on the reserve. Therefore this plan makes provision for the management of pollution of the reserve.

Pollution below the mean high water mark falls under the jurisdiction of the Marine Parks Authority however adjacent land managers have an obligation to ensure their actions do not lead to pollution issues in the first instance.

The Operational Plan for the Solitary Islands Marine Park identifies actions for Pollution Control and Incident Management in conjunction with key stakeholders including adjoining Crown Reserve Trusts.

Pollution within Diggers Headland Reserve generally occurs in relatively innocuous forms ranging from dog faeces and litter to effluent from failing septic systems. Given the low residence of effluent within the permeable coastal soils it is very important that ground water sources accessed by the community, such as the beach spring, be monitored on a regular basis in conjunction with Council's onsite waste water inspection program.

The issue of litter is of particular concern to local residents. The costing and placement of appropriate litter receptacles; public information and signage on the reserve should be considered on a strategic basis in conjunction with existing service arrangements for Diggers Camp.

Vegetation Management

Diggers Camp Dune Care Group commenced in 1992 and has been very active in dune care/land care activities, including weed control and vegetation restoration, throughout the reserve and the adjoining National Park. Participants contribute significantly to stewardship of the reserve and the group is an important stakeholder in its future management.

It is vital that all Dune Care and other volunteer activities on the reserve are subject to appropriate supervision in recognition of Occupational Health and Safety requirements with authorisation based on endorsed work plans to ensure that they complement the strategic objectives of the plan of management. Ad hoc plantings, particularly in open space areas and pedestrian corridors have been counterproductive, resulting in conflict and the loss of public amenity.

To assist in effectively co-ordinating vegetation management on the reserve it is proposed that a comprehensive Vegetation Management Plan be prepared and implemented. The plan will be informed by an ecological study of the reserve and, in turn, will complement the Landscape Management and Facilities Plan for the reserve. The Vegetation Management Plan must address the vegetation management implications of the Village Bushfire Protection Strategy and the maintenance of the important asset protection zones within the reserve.

Clearing and vandalism of vegetation on the reserve to enhance coastal views diminishes environmental values and creates potential erosion problems on the steep coastal escarpment. As lack of action in this area sends the wrong message to the community, persons found causing such damage in the future should be prosecuted and other contingencies employed to discourage the activity. The Vegetation and Landscape Management Plans will include strategies to identify and preserve key viewing areas as part of a carefully balanced range of mechanisms to address any continuing loss of vegetation in areas of high coastal hazard and erosion sensitivity.

Pest and Weed Management

It is incumbent on the Diggers Headland Reserve Trust to control the spread of pests and weeds on the reserve particularly where they officially declared noxious or represent a threatening process to significant environmental values. Whilst some pests and weeds are pre-existing others have been introduced with settlement of Diggers Camp either through innocuous avenues or more blatantly such as a result of garden waste being dumped on the reserve. Development of appropriate strategies to address these problems is a key consideration in managing the reserve.

As a public authority the Trust is responsible for the control of declared Noxious Weeds on the reserve under the provisions of the Noxious Weeds Act 1993 to the extent necessary to prevent the weeds from spreading to adjoining lands. For example Bitou Bush (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*) occurs on the reserve and is an ongoing challenge to control. It is declared noxious in NSW and is a notified weed of national significance. Invasion by Bitou Bush is also listed as a key threatening process under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. An operational weed control program will be an important component of the Vegetation Management Plan for the reserve.

Under the provisions of the Rural Lands Protection Act 1998 the Trust also has an obligation to eradicate declared pest animals on the reserve. To maximise the effectiveness of all control programs the Trust should develop strategic partnerships with neighbouring land managers including the Department of Environment and Climate Change and local residents.

Coastal Processes and Hazards

Coastal processes affecting Diggers Headland Reserve include wave action, storm events, ocean currents and sediment transport, dune and beach deposition, and climate change. Coastal disturbances and associated biophysical changes may exacerbate these natural processes creating hazards. Potential coastal hazards include beach erosion, sea level rise and coastline recession, sea surges and inundation, slope instability, dune blowouts, and stormwater erosion.

Coastal vegetation plays a vital role in reducing the potential for coastal hazards to develop on the dunes and foreshore escarpment of the Reserve.

The long term removal of coastal vegetation from parts of the reserve to enhance ocean views has left the escarpment vulnerable to destabilisation. Strategies to address this issue will be important elements of the Vegetation and Landscape Management Plans.

Encroachments

Various water tanks and other structures have been erected on the reserve by some local residents. These are situated on the high dune that forms part of the village Asset Protection Zone at the rear of freehold blocks on the western side of the village.

The tanks significantly enhance the water storage capabilities of the adjoining residential blocks. In normal circumstances this would be an unacceptable use of the reserve. However it is recognised that they may serve as an ancillary bushfire protection measure for local residents. By virtue of their location they do not adversely affect the recreational values of the reserve. However they do have the potential to be unsightly and poorly maintained thus representing a public liability concern. In the absence of reliable water supplies for bushfire protection, this plan of management recommends the authorisation of existing encroachments by way of a suitable licence, where appropriate, as part of a strategic approach to the issue.

Plate 7. Encroaching Structures.



Photo courtesy : Clarence Valley Council (Scott Lenton)

The following principles will apply to any existing encroachments or future occupation of the reserve;

- All encroachments or future occupation of the reserve to be subject to a suitable lease/licence issued by the Trust, or direct from the Department of Lands, as appropriate
- All tenures to be subject to commercial rental principles and conditions consistent with Department of Lands guidelines
- All income raised by way of such tenures is to be used to offset costs associated with reserve maintenance and improvement
- Any unauthorised structures encroaching on the reserve are to be removed and the site rehabilitated

Strategic Analysis

A SWOT analysis compares identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It provides an effective tool for land managers to establish a basis for reserve management.

Strengths – Are the unique qualities that people value about the reserve and also those aspects that give it resilience.

Weaknesses – Are constraints and issues that prevent the reserve from achieving its full potential. Whilst some cannot be changed, many represent opportunities for change.

Opportunities – Are possibilities to enhance reserve values into the future.

Threats – Are factors that may impact negatively on the future of the reserve and its values.

The following summary for Diggers Headland Reserve is drawn from inspections, assessments of reserve values and management to date, and community feedback including public exhibition of the draft plan. (The points are not ranked in any order and the same point may fall within more than one category.)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attractive destination for tourists and visitors • good public access • relaxed character and quiet atmosphere • suitable for families • approved public camping area • ocean beach frontage • diversity of natural values and magnificent coastal views • great fishing • safe swimming area • affordable family camping holidays • good beach for boat launching and access to open waters • close proximity to National / Marine Park • local community stewardship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited public facilities and services • close proximity of freehold residential development • inadequate/inappropriate signage and delineation of reserve areas • inadequate landscape management • un-patrolled beaches • limited police presence • dirt road access • limited day use facilities • limited carrying capacity of reserve area • isolation • lack of accommodation options • bushfire risk • user conflict • no off-season camping

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expand nature based tourism experiences • improve road access • improve camping management • improve landscape planning and management • improve signage and interpretive material • improve delineation of reserve areas • improve day use facilities • upgrade access pathways • options for community stewardship • options to foster improved relations and greater acceptance amongst community stakeholders • project funding for reserve improvements and environmental enhancement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited budget for infrastructure upgrades and reserve maintenance • ongoing community conflict • over use of reserve by the public • effluent and waste water management • illegal clearing of coastal vegetation • constraints on camping area • impact of camping on local residents

The great strengths of Diggers Headland Reserve lie in the tremendous natural values of the site and its setting that present a diversity of recreational opportunities appreciated by locals and visitors – many of whom have strong connections to the reserve. However the level of public use is constrained by significant limitations due to the size and shape of the reserve and its environmental sensitivity. The enclosure of freehold residential lands within the reserve and close proximity of houses to the core recreational precinct is its major weakness. However the strong stewardship ethos of many local residents is an important strength and should be given appropriate support.

Part B of this plan of management sets in place a strategic framework that recognises and addresses the various management constraints and identified threats to the long-term sustainability of the reserve. It also provides appropriate strategies to ensure that the existing opportunities to enhance the reserve within acceptable limits can be pursued effectively by the Trust for the benefit of the people of NSW.

CLARENCE COAST RESERVE
TRUST

DIGGERS HEADLAND RESERVE
PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

PART B



JANUARY 2009



DIGGERS HEADLAND RESERVE
PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

PART B

**Prepared by Department of Lands and Clarence Valley Council
on behalf of the Clarence Coast Reserve Trust**

Adopted by the Minister for Lands on 23 January 2009
A copy of this draft plan may be viewed at: www.lands.nsw.gov.au

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Plan of Management

The aim of this Plan of Management is to provide an integrated mechanism to address the range of issues impacting on the values of Diggers Headland Reserve and to meet the current and future recreational and social needs of the local community and visitors.

Vision

The Trust has adopted a vision for the reserve to provide a focus for the objectives, strategies and processes set out in this plan of management. The vision is a broad statement of intent that sets in place a simple, positive and achievable direction for the future.

The vision for Diggers Headland Reserve is:

“To preserve and enhance the unique values of Diggers Headland Reserve for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.”

Principles for Management

Decision-making for Diggers Headland Reserve will be guided by a set of principles covering all aspects of reserve use, management and administration. These principles establish broad guidelines for the Trust to follow in order to achieve its vision. They are an important point of reference for decision-making and will form the basis for the management objectives and strategies formulated for the reserve.

- That environmental protection and integrated coastal planning principles be observed in relation to the management of the reserve.
- That the natural and cultural resources of the reserve be conserved wherever possible
- That public use and enjoyment of the reserve be encouraged where appropriate
- That multiple use of the reserve be encouraged where appropriate
- That public understanding of the reserve and community involvement in its management is encouraged where possible.
- That the health and safety of visitors to the reserve is paramount
- That governance of the reserve is in the public interest and of the highest legal and ethical standard subject to the above principles.

Management Objectives

A set of management objectives and strategies have been formulated to achieve the vision and desired operational outcomes for Diggers Headland Reserve.

The objectives define the desired outcomes over time and reflect best practices in land use, resource management, public activities, operations and administration of the reserve.

Management Strategies

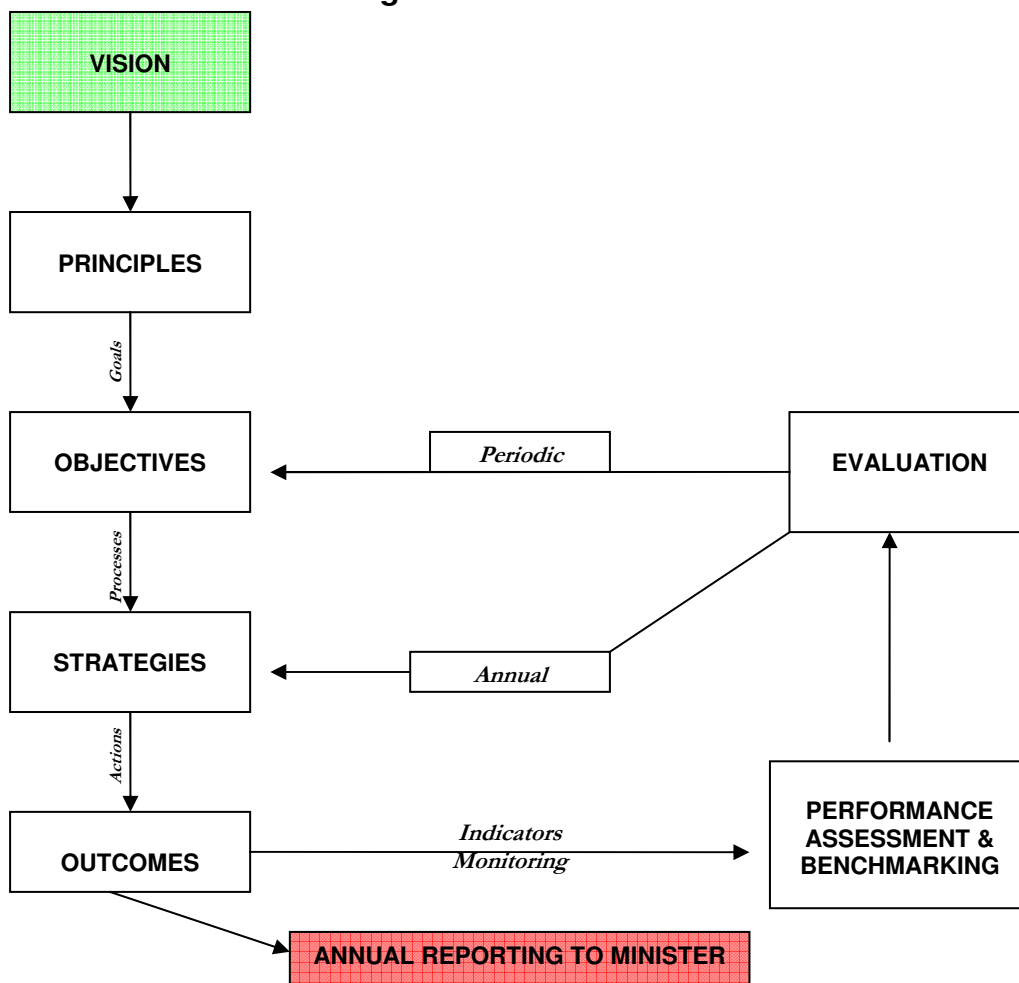
An integrated suite of management strategies has been formulated to achieve the identified management objectives for Diggers headland Reserve. The prescribed strategies are based on actions that are simple, measurable achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART). This ensures the Trust can effectively measure, assess and report on progress in implementing the plan. The strategies have been allocated a simple priority on an assessed risk management basis consistent with the principles of management and projected resources. They should be reviewed at appropriate junctures to ensure that this aspect of the plan remains dynamic and responsive to operational conditions, new information, economic factors and other unforeseen changes.

Some key strategies are program based and will require preparation of Strategic Action Plans to ensure their effective implementation. These are dynamic operational documents that coordinate actions and extend the effective life of the plan. Those recommended in relation to this Plan of Management include;

- Revised Camping Management Plan
- Camping Sustainability Assessment
- Vegetation Management Plan, and a
- Landscape Management and Facilities Plan.

The regular collection and review of relevant information to support a transparent assessment and decision-making process is an important element of this Plan of Management. It is incumbent on the Trust to ensure that the appropriate tools and mechanisms are in place to support the necessary level of evaluation. These will include structured assessment processes with specific targets and benchmarks relating to activities and their impacts on the reserve (see appendices).

Figure. 1 Crown Reserve Management Process



Financial Management

Income for the Clarence Coast Reserve Trust is currently sourced from a range of fees and charges associated with the various Crown reserves currently managed by the Trust. This is supplemented by temporary licences and camping fees obtained from Diggers Headland Reserve. Additional potential sources of income include various Government grants and sponsorship as well as discretionary funding provided by Clarence Valley Council. Financial support from the Department of Lands may be by way of limited discretionary funding or through application by the Trust to the Public Reserves Management Fund.

As sources are limited it is imperative that all income and any other contributions “in kind” be used wisely to maximise opportunities for procuring matching grant funding wherever feasible. Camping on the reserve or other authorised “user-pays” activities must be conducted on a sound commercial basis to ensure that the cost of management and other financial impacts on the reserve are covered and that the activity makes a meaningful financial contribution to the future well-being of the reserve.

Governance

The Clarence Coast Reserve Trust is an autonomous body incorporated under the provisions of the Crown Lands Act 1989 and as such is a separate legal entity from Clarence Valley Council. The Trust holds the legal ownership of Diggers Headland Reserve and is responsible for its management and administration.

The Clarence Coast Reserve Trust currently encompasses 27 coastal Crown reserves within the Clarence Valley LGA. Integrating coastal reserve management and administration under a single Trust provides Council, as Trust manager, with a more effective framework for strategic Crown reserve management.

Where a council is appointed as a Trust Manager, decisions regarding the operation of the reserve are made in accordance with the rules which govern the councils operations. However the Trust can only act in the best interests of the reserve/s and the general public in accordance with the requirements of the Crown Lands Act. Therefore local councils are encouraged to ensure an effective separation of roles and accountability in decision making by holding separate Trust meetings and keeping separate minutes.

Management Table

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT & BENCHMARKS
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT			
Preserve and enhance the significant environmental values of the reserve	Prepare an inventory and analysis of the ecological values of the reserve as a basis to developing a Vegetation Management Plan in consultation with relevant Agencies	High	Environmental surveys completed and analysed. Vegetation Management Plan prepared and implemented. Significant environmental values identified, preserved and/or enhanced.
	Identify, restore and rehabilitate degraded areas	High	Degraded areas recovering or restored
	Restrict pedestrian and vehicular access to environmentally sensitive areas	High	Adverse environmental impacts from inappropriate access prevented and/or reduced
	Foster active partnerships with environmental volunteers	Medium	Positive partnerships and environmental enhancement initiatives established
	Encourage further research into environmental values of the reserve	Medium	Knowledge and understanding of reserve values enhanced and documented
	Monitor environmental impacts of recreational use and adjoining residential development	High	Structured monitoring regime established
Maintain and enhance water quality	Implement regular monitoring of water quality and take appropriate action to protect public health where necessary	High	ANZECC water quality guidelines achieved
Eradicate and control non-indigenous flora and fauna	Implement pest and weed control program in partnership with the local community and adjoining land management agencies	High	Pest and weed control program developed. Infestations under control and noxious species eradicated

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT & BENCHMARKS
ACCESS			
Provide vehicular and pedestrian access within appropriate areas of the reserve	Review vehicular and pedestrian use considering desirable access routes and pedestrian circuits, environmental and cultural impacts, safety issues, environmentally sound track design standards and disabled access opportunities	High	Appropriate access corridors identified, established and maintained subject to a Landscape Management & Facilities Plan
	Consult with Clarence Valley Council regarding future use and maintenance of adjoining village roads under Council control (including parking, erosion and shared pedestrian zones)	Medium	Areas of concern identified and issues addressed
RECREATION			
Provide a range of sustainable public recreation opportunities	Establish and maintain suitable areas of the reserve to provide equitable opportunities for a compatible range of public recreation activities	High	A variety of equitable public recreation opportunities maintained on a sustainable basis for the future
	Maintain valid authorisation of the whole reserve as a primitive camping ground based on a supporting Camping Management Strategy	High	Valid approval under Local Government Act in place
Allow recreational camping on the reserve on an interim basis pending an objective determination of the sustainability of the activity	Maintain program of camping management improvements in conjunction with a revised Camping Management Strategy and Landscape Management & Facilities plan	High	Camping allowed on an interim basis subject to revised Camping Management Strategy. Formal data collection, monitoring and review process.
Objectively review the environmental, social and economic viability of camping on the reserve.	Undertake a camping sustainability assessment following a two year review period to support an objective determination of the future of camping	High	Camping sustainability assessment process implemented. Future of camping objectively assessed and determined.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT & BENCHMARKS
HERITAGE			
Protect and enhance Aboriginal cultural values	Sensitively identify, record and preserve Aboriginal cultural heritage values in consultation with Department of Environment & Climate Change and the local Aboriginal community	High	Aboriginal cultural values identified, respected and preserved
Protect and enhance the Reserves heritage values	Record, preserve and promote the unique cultural heritage of the reserve.	Medium	Heritage values recorded, preserved and promoted
VIEWS & VISUAL AMENITY			
Provide enhanced opportunities to enjoy coastal views	Provide appropriate designated viewing areas with seating in conjunction with a Landscape Management & Facilities Plan and Vegetation Management Plan	Medium	Designated viewing areas identified, enhanced and maintained
Maintain and enhance the visual amenity and unique character of the reserve	Prohibit unauthorised pruning poisoning or removal of vegetation and actively implement contingencies to discourage damage to sensitive coastal vegetation as part of a Vegetation Management Plan for the reserve	High	Unauthorised clearing of vegetation stopped.
	Actively manage vegetation buffers adjoining recreation areas, viewing locations and other high use areas as part of a Vegetation and Landscape Management & Facilities Plan	Medium	Vegetation buffers established, maintained or enhanced as required
Reduce any adverse impacts resulting from proximity of local residences to the reserve	Establish strategic vegetation buffers for screening between the reserve and nearby houses where appropriate as part of the Landscape Management & Facilities Plan	Medium	Appropriate vegetation buffers established and maintained. Adverse impacts and associated complaints from local residents reduced.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT & BENCHMARKS
RISK MANAGEMENT			
Proactively manage risk to protect users of the reserve and limit liability of the Reserve Trust	Maintain an operational risk assessment process at all levels of reserve management	High	Risks identified and impacts addressed in a timely manner
	Prepare an evacuation plan for the reserve in conjunction with emergency response and evacuation planning strategies for Diggers Camp	High	Emergency response and evacuation planning in place and all reserve users informed
	Provide safe public access as part of an integrated infrastructure maintenance program	High	Regular inspections of reserve infrastructure and reports to Trust
	Issue appropriate authorisation to volunteers and other reserve users as necessary	High	Appropriate authorisation issued and monitored
FIRE MANAGEMENT			
Minimise bush fire hazard on the reserve to protect life and property	Implement and participate in review of the Village Protection Strategy for Diggers Camp in conjunction with the Clarence Valley Bushfire Management Committee, Department of Lands, Department of Environment & Climate Change and other relevant agencies	High	Village Protection Strategy implemented and reviewed
	Provide and maintain adequate fire control access and Asset Protection Zones in conjunction with the Village Protection Strategy for Diggers Camp	High	Bush fire risk management strategies implemented and access routes/APZs maintained.
	Install gas/electric barbecues and discourage wood fires on the reserve	Medium	Instances of open fires and risk of bush fire outbreaks from reserve reduced

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT & BENCHMARKS
<i>FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE</i>			
Provide an appropriate level of public facilities and amenities on the reserve	Review facility requirements in conjunction with preparation of a Landscape Management & Facilities Plan	High	Landscape management plan prepared.
	Install and maintain an appropriate range and quality of aesthetically pleasing public facilities to enhance the amenity of the reserve and meet the needs of reserve users in accordance with the Landscape Management & Facilities Plan	Medium	Enhanced public facilities installed, maintained and in use. Character and aesthetic values of the reserve maintained. Positive community feedback.
	Install all facilities, signage and other infrastructure utilising sound environmental, energy efficient and crime-proof design and construction principles	Medium	All facilities and infrastructure constructed using best practices in environmental design and choice of materials
	Maintain an asset register and review condition of reserve facilities on a regular basis.	High	Asset register and regular reviews implemented. Reserve facilities maintained to a high standard.
Ensure that grounds of public use areas and general amenity of reserve are maintained to a high standard	Prepare & implement an integrated works program for ongoing reserve maintenance	High	Maintenance program designed & implemented. Reserve presentation maintained to a high standard. Positive public feedback and reduced complaints.
<i>POLLUTION</i>			
Minimise litter and other pollutants on the reserve	Promote the reserve as a "Litter Free" area. Monitor all pollutants. Provide and service appropriate litter receptacles on a regular basis in consultation with the local community.	Medium	Reduction in litter and other pollutants on the reserve.
	Provide opportunities for recycling litter in collaboration with local residents and Clarence Valley Council.	Medium	Recycling program implemented. Reduction in recyclable litter on the reserve.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT & BENCHMARKS
INFORMATION & PUBLIC AWARENESS			
Promote community awareness and appreciation of reserve values and the Crown reserve system	Develop appropriate interpretive signage and related material to foster an appreciation and understanding of the significant values and natural processes of the reserve.	Medium	Installation of interpretative signage and development of other interpretive material. Increased level of community involvement and feedback. Decline in adverse impacts from inappropriate public use.
	Install appropriate signage to inform reserve users of any safety issues and how to use and care for the reserve	High	Improved safety of reserve users. Reduced number of public complaints regarding inappropriate use of the reserve
RESEARCH & EDUCATION			
Foster education and research opportunities based on the reserve	Encourage education, research programs and related activities involving schools, tertiary institutions and other interested parties	Medium	Level of interest and participation from schools. Increased knowledge and documentation of reserve values and improved understanding of reserve issues
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT			
Maximise financial sustainability of the reserve and the Reserve Trust	Review all fees and charges including an assessment of the economics of camping on the reserve	High	Review of user fees completed. Reserve budget improved. Annual Trust reports provided to the Minister
	Maximise reserve funding opportunities through grants, sponsors and other appropriate partnerships	High	Number of successful funding applications increased

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT & BENCHMARKS
REGULATION OF ACTIVITIES			
Discourage inappropriate activities and prevent unacceptable use of the reserve	Add Diggers Headland Reserve to Schedule 1 of the Crown Lands (General Reserves) By-law 2006	High	Diggers Headland Reserve covered by the Crown Lands (General Reserves) By-law 2006. Enhanced management of public use based on wider regulatory options.
	Provide adequate regulatory signage, public information and reserve supervision supported by an effective public complaint handling system to prevent unacceptable activities and behaviour	High	Regulatory program in place. Instances of unacceptable behaviour and complaints reduced. Enforcement of public notices by authorised personnel. Quantified feedback from public complaint handling system
Prevent any unauthorised occupation of Diggers Headland Reserve	Review all encroachments and authorise where appropriate with a suitable tenure.	High	Suitable tenures in place and reviewed on a regular basis. All unauthorised structures removed from reserve.
COMMUNITY			
Foster community stewardship and participation in reserve management	Provide suitable opportunities for volunteer participation in maintaining & enhancing reserve values	Medium	Levels of positive community involvement maintained and enhanced.
	Co-ordinate and authorise appropriate volunteer work plans with community groups and funding bodies consistent with the plan of management and associated strategic action plans.	Medium	Work plans implemented successfully by community volunteers to the practical benefit of the reserve and the community.
	Encourage community stewardship through formal advisory arrangements with the Trust	Medium	Appropriate community advisory committee or reference group established and functional

Appendices

1. Maintenance & Improvement Program

(Indicative format only – program and budget to be completed by Clarence Valley Council as Trust manager following adoption of Plan of Management)

2. Camping Management Strategy

3. Village Protection Strategy

4. Reserve Evacuation Plan

(To be completed by Clarence Valley Council, as Trust manager, in consultation with relevant public authorities following adoption of Plan of Management)

5. Landscape Management and Facilities Plan

6. Vegetation Management Plan

(To be completed by Clarence Valley Council, as Trust manager, in consultation with relevant public authorities following adoption of Plan of Management)

7. Camping Impact Assessment and Review

(Draft pro-forma to be finalised by Clarence Valley Council, as Trust manager, in consultation with Department of Lands. Assessment and review process to commence on adoption of Plan of Management)



Camping Management Strategy

Diggers Headland Reserve



CLARENCE COAST RESERVE TRUST



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INTRODUCTION

This strategy has been prepared by the Clarence Coast Reserve Trust to provide a clear operational management framework for recreational camping on Diggers Headland Reserve.

Diggers Headland Reserve is Crown land comprising Reserve 44430 for Public Recreation notified 16 October 1909. The reserve area is approximately 23.0 hectares.

Clarence Valley Council is the appointed corporate manager of the Clarence Coast Reserve Trust that is charged with care, control and management of the reserve pursuant to Section 92 - Crown Lands Act 1989.

The use and management of Diggers Headland Reserve is subject to a statutory plan of management (PoM) adopted by the Minister for Lands pursuant to Section 114 of the Act. Recreational camping is consistent with the notified reserve purpose and is endorsed by the Trust subject to the requirements of the adopted PoM. A key requirement of the PoM is that camping is subject to a Camping Management Strategy (CMS).

Camping on Diggers Headland Reserve has been a contentious issue for many years and its continuation presents a management challenge for the Trust. Following a review of the adopted PoM, a two year camping assessment and review process has been implemented to objectively determine the future of camping. The CMS has been updated to ensure that it is consistent with the revised PoM and continues to provide a solid basis to manage camping over the interim review period.

The aims of this strategy are:

- To minimise any unacceptable impacts of camping on reserve values and surrounding environs;
- To ensure that camping on the reserve meets all statutory requirements;
- To ensure best practices in recreational camping management are implemented on the reserve;
- To ensure that due consideration is given to the amenity of adjoining residents;
- To ensure the activity is conducted on an economically viable basis;
- To maximise the safety of campers and other reserve users; and
- To provide the basis for a positive and enjoyable camping experience.

Statutory Framework

Crown Lands Act 1989

Crown reserves in New South Wales are managed according to the provisions of the Crown Lands Act 1989.

The *Principles of Crown Land Management* as set out in Section 11 of the Act prescribe the basis for the management and administration of Crown land. They are:

- That environmental protection principles be observed in relation to the management and administration of Crown land;
- That the natural resources of Crown land (including water, soil, flora, fauna and scenic quality) be conserved wherever possible;
- That public use and enjoyment of appropriate Crown land be encouraged;
- Where appropriate multiple use of Crown land is encouraged;
- Where appropriate Crown land should be used and managed in such a way that both the land and its resources are sustained in perpetuity;
- That Crown land be occupied, used, sold, leased, licensed or otherwise dealt with in the best interests of the State consistent with the above principles.

Part 5 of the Act sets out the requirements for the reservation and management of Crown land including the formation of reserve Trusts, plans of management and the administration of reserves.

The use, development and management of a reserve must be consistent with its notified public purpose and any adopted plan of management. Recreational camping on Diggers Headland Reserve is consistent with the notified purpose of Public Recreation and is supported by an adopted plan of management.

The Act and departmental policies encourage the appropriate commercial use of reserved Crown land. Any proceeds from activities on a reserve must be applied by the Trust towards the management of the reserve, unless otherwise directed by the Minister. Thus any revenue generated on Diggers Headland Reserve from recreational camping contributes to the funds required for its on-going management.

Crown Lands Regulation 2000

Under Section 108 of the Act a reserve Trust may grant temporary licences for a range of purposes prescribed under the Crown Lands Regulation 2000. These include "camping using a tent, caravan or otherwise".

Crown Lands (General Reserves) By-law 2006

The affairs of certain Crown reserves are covered by the Crown Lands (General Reserves) By-law 2006. The By-law is made under the Crown Lands Act 1989 and deals with a range of reserve management matters including;

- Procedures to be followed by reserve trusts
- Administrative matters relating to trust boards
- The regulation of entry and conduct on reserves, and

- The setting of fees and charges and the provision of certain services by reserve trusts

The By-law does not currently apply to Diggers Headland Reserve. However the plan of management recommends that the reserve be added to Schedule 1 of the By-law to enhance the effective management and regulation of recreational camping on the reserve.

Diggers Headland Reserve Plan of Management

The management of Diggers Headland Reserve is subject to a statutory Plan of Management adopted by the Minister for Lands under Section 114 of the Act. The plan was adopted in 1999 and revised in 2008.

Recreational camping on the reserve is endorsed under the plan of management. The plan of management requires that camping is subject to a Camping Management Strategy implemented by the Trust.

The revised plan of management provides for a structured assessment and review of the activity over two years to objectively evaluate its long-term sustainability and determine continuation of the activity.

This Strategy has been revised to complement the 2008 plan of management and to ensure that a solid operational framework is in place to manage camping on the reserve during the two year assessment period.

Local Government Act 1993

Clarence Valley Council controls a range of activities by approval under Section 68 of the Local Government Act 1993. The operation of camping grounds is subject to an *operational approval* issued under the Act in accordance with the Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds & Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2005.

Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2005

The Local Government (Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwelling) Regulation 1995 regulates the approval to operate caravan parks, camping grounds and manufactured home estates, and sets out the requirements for the design, construction and installation of moveable dwellings and associated structures. Moveable dwellings include mobile homes, tents and caravans.

Camping on Diggers Headland Reserve falls within the scope of “primitive camping ground” under the Regulation. The reserve is approved by Council as a primitive camping ground with 26 sites. Under the terms of the approval camping is only permitted between 1 December and 31 January and during New South Wales and Queensland school holiday periods.

The term “primitive camping” is not defined in the Regulation however Clause 132 sets out the conditions that apply to a “primitive camping ground”. The following are relevant to camping on Diggers Headland Reserve:

(1) Where the approval designates one or more camp sites within that ground, then the maximum number of designated camp sites is not to exceed a mean average of 2 per hectare of the camping ground (where that figure is the average calculated over the total area of the primitive camping ground).

(2) The following conditions apply:

(a) where the approval to operate designates one or more camp sites - camping is not permitted other than on those designated camp sites,

(b) a caravan, annexe or campervan must not be installed closer than 6 metres to any other caravan, annexe, campervan or tent,

(c) a tent must not be installed closer than 6 metres to any caravan, annexe or campervan or closer than 3 metres to any other tent,

(d) the camping ground must be provided with a water supply, toilet and refuse disposal facilities,

(e) unoccupied caravans, campervans and tents are not to remain in the camping ground for more than 24 hours,

(f) where a fee is charged, a register of occupiers must be kept that contains entries concerning the following;

(i) the persons name and address

(ii) the dates of arrival and departure

(iii) identification of the site occupied

(iv) the registration number of the caravan or campervan

(v) the size of the group (if any) with whom the person listed in the register camped,

(g) such fire fighting facilities as may be specified in the approval are to be provided at the camping ground.

Under the Regulation Diggers Headland Reserve may not have more than 46 sites as an approved primitive camping ground, i.e. Av. of 2 per Ha. However the camp site plan formulated under this strategy is based on the current assessed carrying capacity of the designated camping precinct in the adopted Plan of Management. In such cases the Regulation stipulates that a "*community map*" prepared to scale is required to designate the number, size and location of camp sites as well as the location of amenities, access roads, off-site parking spaces and other features.

The attached community map has been prepared to meet the requirements of the Regulation and designates 26 camp sites and other features of the camping precinct.

Exemptions to the Local Government Act and Regulation

Within the approval framework under the Local Government Act certain exemptions apply to Crown reserves under the Regulation. Thus in the absence of a primitive camping area approval, the Reserve Trust may still authorise camping on a limited or casual basis by way of temporary licences issued under the Crown Lands Act.

CAMPING ON DIGGERS HEADLAND RESERVE

CAMPING AREA

The extent of the designated camping area is shown on the attached Diggers Headland Reserve Camping Area Community Map.

CAMP SITES

26 camp sites are delineated on the Community Map. The corners of each site are to be identified by numbered hardwood dumpy pegs at ground level.

The Community Map and other relevant public information relating to camping on the reserve will be clearly displayed near the entrance to the camping area.

Campsites are delineated on the basis that they will be occupied by either:-

- one campervan, or
- one caravan, or
- one four person (or larger) tent, or
- up to two small tents (i.e. two person tents).

All sites include a single car space.

Two sizes of camp sites are available:- large @ 60 sqm and standard @ 30 sqm.

The number of persons per site has been set at 8 per large site and 6 per small site and will be subject to the discretion of the appointed campsite supervisor.

Additional vehicles are to be parked in the day use parking areas shown on the community plan.

A tent may not be located closer than 3 metres to any other tent (Clause 132 - Reg)

A campervan or caravan may not be closer than 6 metres to any other caravan, annexe, campervan or tent. (Clause 132 – Reg)

A clear buffer is to be maintained between a camp sites and any adjoining vegetation at all times. Guy ropes and pegs may be located within the buffer area but should not encroach into vegetated areas. No guy ropes or other camping equipment may be tied to vegetation, fencing or other reserve infrastructure.

AVAILABILITY

Camping on Diggers Headland Reserve is only available from 1 December until 31 January each year and during those periods allocated as a New South Wales and Queensland public school vacation. Camping is not currently permitted on the Reserve outside these periods. Up-to-date information on specific camping dates can be obtained by contacting Clarence Valley Council on (02) 66430200 or www.clarence.nsw.gov.au.

Other nearby camping and caravanning opportunities within the Crown reserve system are available at the Woolli Caravan Park and Minnie Water Caravan Park which are also operated by Clarence Valley Council, as the appointed manager of the respective Reserve Trusts.

Rustic camping is available all year round at nearby Boorkoom camping area within Yuraygir National Park managed by the Department of Environment & Climate Change (DECC) through the National Parks & Wildlife Service.

Illaroo Camping Area is also located in Yuraygir National Park adjacent to Minnie Water. It is larger than Boorkoom and has frontage to Sandon Beach.

AMENITIES

Amenities to support recreational camping within the Reserve include:

- One toilet block with 2 compost toilets (Disabled access)
- One concrete rain water tank (non-potable water only)
- Garbage skip bin/s

Provision of amenities and rubbish removal is to be reviewed by the appointed campsite supervisor and the Trust in consultation with Clarence Valley Council on a regular basis during camping periods. Appropriate signage will inform reserve users of requirements relating to the use of rubbish receptacles on the reserve.

The water contained in the concrete rain water tank is only available on the basis that it is not provided for drinking. Appropriate signage will clearly inform the public that the water is not potable.

BOOKING AND SITE REGISTRATION

As Trust Manager, Clarence Valley Council will operate a booking and registration system for camping on Diggers Headland Reserve. Bookings and registration will not be site specific. (Until an appropriate booking system is available, payment and registration on site without booking shall continue on an interim basis with vacant sites available on a "first come/first served" basis.)

SITE FEES

Site fees will be reviewed regularly at the discretion of the Trust and will reflect comparable commercial rates in line with Government policy on competitive neutrality.

Site fees for 2008/09 are;

- \$10 per adult per night
- \$5 per child (5-15 years) per night.
- or \$30 per family per night

Until other arrangements are available, site fees will be collected daily during camping periods at Diggers Headland Reserve by an authorised person.

REFUNDS

No refunds will be given for wet or inclement weather.

In the event that a booking system is introduced, fees will be refunded if cancellation is made 10 days or more before the start of the camping period booked. If less notice is provided, written confirmation is essential stating reasons for cancellation. Refunds will be paid in full less a 10% charge for administration costs. Cancellations may be made by phone.

MONITORING OF CAMPING ACTIVITIES

A Council/Trust representative and/or appointed campsite supervisor will visit the Reserve regularly over the holiday periods. The Trust will monitor the usage of the camping ground on an ongoing basis and review this Strategy as necessary.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Appropriate signage will inform campers and other users of Diggers Headland Reserve of the provisions in this Strategy where necessary.

A brochure summarising the Strategy and the Campers Code of Conduct is to be publicly available and issued with camping receipts.

CONDUCT

All camping on the Reserve is to be conducted in accordance with the established Campers Code of Conduct for Diggers Headland Reserve.

All campers are requested to ensure that their activities do not unreasonably impact on the amenity of local residents and the quiet use and enjoyment of the reserve by other visitors.

In order to facilitate implementation of the Code of Conduct campers will be asked to sign a copy at the time of registration.

CAMPERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Diggers Headland Reserve is unique area of public land set aside for the use and enjoyment of the people of NSW. The continuation of camping on the reserve is dependent to a great degree on the good will and respect shown by campers to the reserve and its neighbours. All campers are asked to comply with the Code of Conduct to ensure that impacts on the sensitive coastal environment are minimised and the peaceful amenity of the reserve is preserved for all to enjoy.

CAMP SITES

- Please camp within designated camp sites

ACCESS

- Please access the reserve via the formed tracks and roadways provided.
- Do not enter or pass through private property without permission.

RUBBISH

- Tread lightly when camping. If you bring it with you – you can take it away.
- Try to minimise waste by limiting disposable packaging.
- Where necessary please use skip bin provided to dispose of rubbish. Skip bins are provided by the Trust for campers and day visitors only.
- Recyclable materials; aluminium cans, glass jars & bottles (unbroken), cardboard, paper and any plastics (except those coded 1, 2, 5, RR) may be separated for recycling.

FIRES & GAS BURNERS

- NO OPEN FIRES are allowed within the reserve.
- Use of camping gas stoves or installed gas barbeques is permissible for cooking purposes.
- Carefully select a cooking site away from vegetation and other combustible materials and camping equipment.
- Gas burners for cooking purposes may be used during a total fire ban subject to the following:
 - a. The appliance is under the direct control of a responsible adult at all times while it is operating.
 - b. A system of applying an adequate quantity of water to the appliance and its surrounds is available for immediate and continuous use.

TOILETS

- Please use compost toilets provided.
- DO NOT throw rubbish, nappies or sanitary products down toilet. This will destroy the biological waste treatment process and cause failure.

FLORA & FAUNA

- Please use formed tracks provided. Do not use or start informal tracks. This may damage native vegetation, disturb wildlife and cause erosion.
- Do not damage vegetation or attach equipment to trees.
- Please minimise disturbance to native wildlife and habitat.

BEACH & FORESHORES

- Diggers Beach and the surrounding ocean are within a designated Habitat Protection Zone in the Solitary Islands Marine Park. The Zone Plan sets out activities permitted in the various management zones within the Marine Park. Collection of marine life is not permitted from the Diggers Camp Rock Platform habitat protection zone.
- Vehicles are not permitted on Diggers Beach, except for boat launching and retrieval purposes.
- Avoid contaminating water with substances that may pollute such as soap, dishwater, food scraps and rubbish.
- Diggers Beach is an unpatrolled beach, please adopt appropriate beach safety measures.

POWER

- There are no powered camping sites on Diggers Headland Reserve.
- Strictly no portable electric generators to be used by campers.
- Other portable power sources, such as battery or solar power, may be used provided that all equipment (leads, wires, etc) is contained within the camp site.

PARKING

- Strictly no parking within the camping area unless the vehicle is contained within a campsite. Additional cars may be parked in the identified roadside parking area
- Please do not obstruct access to the reserve or hinder legal access along adjoining roads or to local residences.

DOMESTIC ANIMALS

- No domestic animals may be brought into a Marine Park or National Park including a public road traversing a Park.
- Visitors are requested not to bring pets onto Diggers Headland Reserve.

NOISE

- Campers are requested to respect the peace and amenity of all reserve users and local residents.
- Please keep noisy activities, including the use of radios or loud music, to a minimum particularly after 10.00 pm.

UNATTENDED CAMPING

- All camp sites must be attended with absences to not exceed 24 hours.

I have read and agree to abide by the provisions in this Code of Conduct.

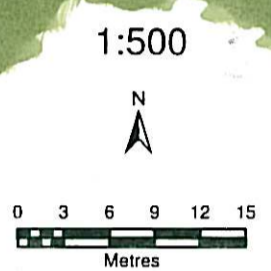
Signed:
Camp Site No:

LEGEND

-  EXTENT OF CAMPING AREA
(Defined by bollards and vegetation)
-  PROPOSED CAMPSITES
(Corners defined by dumpy pegs)
-  EXISTING TREES WITHIN CAMPGROUND
-  PROPOSED NEW TREE/SHRUB PLANTINGS
-  NEW GAS BBQS
-  CAR PARKING

NORTHERN CAMPGROUND
(8 sites)

SOUTHERN CAMPGROUND
(18 sites)



clarence valley
COUNCIL

Department of Lands

**DIGGERS HEADLAND RESERVE
CAMPING AREA COMMUNITY PLAN**

PLAN OF MANAGEMENT - JANUARY 2008





Clarence Valley Bush Fire Management Committee Village Protection Strategy Diggers Camp

Last modified 16/06/2004



Zone	Type of Zone ¹	Action & Objective	Minimum Ecological Fire Interval (years)	Maximum Fuel Load ² tonnes per hectare	Responsible Authority
1	APZ ³	Creation & maintenance of APZ by slashing, in line with <i>Guidelines for Asset Protection Zones</i> ⁴ .	NA	NA – maintain fuel to a minimum	CVC Trust Manager & Private Property
2	FEZ ⁵	Fire exclusion to prevent the spread of Bitou Bush, to promote restoration of the heath vegetation community and protect the Turpentine Forest.	NA	NA	NPWS & CVC Trust Manager
3	SFAZ	<u>Mechanical</u> hazard reduction methods (e.g. hand clearing) to be predominant, use prescribed burning where unavoidable.	10	10	CVC Trust Manager
4	SFAZ ⁶	Use prescribed burning to reduce spotting potential & reduce fire intensity.	7	15	NPWS & CVC Trust Manager
5 - 7	SFAZ	Use prescribed burning to reduce spotting potential & reduce fire intensity.	7	15	CVC Trust Manager
8 - 10	SFAZ	Use prescribed burning to reduce spotting potential & reduce fire intensity.	10	15	NPWS
Roads & Fire Trails		Maintenance as per agency policies & guidelines.	NA	NA	NPWS & CVC

Adopted by Clarence Valley Council 18 May 2004.

Adopted by Clarence Valley Bush Fire Management Committee 02 June 2004.

¹ For the objectives of the different types of zone see the Clarence Valley Bush Fire Risk Management Plan (Clarence Valley Bush Fire Management Committee, 2002).

² Fuel loads must be measured in accordance with the Overall Fuel Hazard Guide (Natural Resources and Environment, 1999).

³ APZ – Asset Protection Zone.

⁴ *Guidelines for Asset Protection Zones* (NSW Rural Fire Service, 2003).

⁵ FEZ - Fire Exclusion Zone.

⁶ SFAZ – Strategic Fire Advantage Zone.

