



## **RED HEAD VILLAGES ASSOCIATION (Inc)**

North Bendalong, Bendalong, Berringer Lake, Cunjurong Point, Manyana

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To whom it may concern

### **RE: STINGRAYS AT BOAT HARBOUR BENDALONG**

The Red Head Villages Association Inc (RHVA) is the local Shoalhaven City Council Community Consultative Body for the villages of Manyana, Bendalong, North Bendalong, Cunjurong point and Berringer Lake, on the NSW South Coast. The RHVA is writing to seek your assistance with the improved management of the interaction between visitors and stingrays at Bendalong's Boat Harbour.

Google 'Bendalong' and one of the first things that will come up is the Bendalong stingrays. This is an iconic tourist attraction which lures people to our beautiful location with promises of interacting with and feeding these wild animals. The RHVA and local community understand the importance of the relationship between humans and stingrays, and the increased education about ocean wildlife and the enjoyment which can result. We are not trying to stop this, merely better manage it.

Lately there have been concerns raised regarding the unregulated nature of this interaction and the proliferation of feeding and close encounters with these animals. These concerns include:

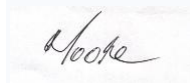
- Large numbers of people gathering (up to 40-50) to feed stingrays with locally bought commercial fishing bait.
- Inappropriate interactions with stingrays including 'pranking' with them and very small children wading with them.

- Suspected over-feeding, with a suggestion this may be leading to the stingrays becoming less likely to source their own food
- Gathering of stingrays in a location close to a boat ramp and potential consequences of that location.
- Recent mortality of a mature adult stingray potentially from boat propeller strike.

The RHVA recognises that the issue is to some extent seasonal in nature, however is also of the view that a 'soft' regulation approach would be worth trialing. In this regard, the installation of interpretive signage at Boat Harbour is a suggested light touch approach, but we remain open to other options. The signage could document some facts about stingrays, as well as educational material concerning the most appropriate ways to behave around and interact with them.

Please contact Richard Pearson from the RHVA Inc Committee if you would like to discuss this further, otherwise we look forward to your positive response. Richard's email address is [pearson.pps@gmail.com](mailto:pearson.pps@gmail.com)

Yours sincerely



Secretary  
RHVA Inc

