



RED HEAD VILLAGES ASSOCIATION (Inc)

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

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Shoalhaven City Council
council@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au

Re: Illegal camping in coastal car parks in the Manyana- Bendalong area

To whom it may concern

The Red Head Villages Association Inc (RHVA), the community consultative body for the 5 villages of Manyana, Bendalong, North Bendalong, Cunjurong Point and Berringer Lake, requests immediate and strong action by Council to address the increase in illegal camping (also referred to as “free camping”) at beach-side Council car parks in our 5 villages.

Our residents have observed an increasing volume of illegal over-night camping in all kinds of vehicles – campers, vans, caravans and also tents at our local coastal beach car parks, some of which have no toilet facilities. Carparks such as those at Cunjurong, Inyadda, Washerwomans, Flat Rock, Boat Harbour and Dee beaches are of particular note.

The following are the impacts caused to our area by the growing number of illegal campers:

- Campers frequently leave litter behind, including broken glass which locals are left to clean up
- Dogs are left unrestrained
- Loss of habitat for wildlife caused by expanding car park areas
- Dislocation of native animals through increased night time activity
- Illegal campers at Dee Beach, for example typically defecate in the surrounding bushland. This creates a public health risk.
- Removal of vegetation for fires
- Very importantly, illegal camping also poses a serious fire risk. On several occasions locals have had to put our fires lit and left smouldering by campers

The overnight campers totally ignore the clear signage about the illegality of overnight camping. We suspect the *word* has obviously spread far and wide that camping at our beach car parks is poorly monitored and hence freely available.

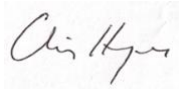
Our members have frequently contacted Council or spoken to rangers only to be told that stretched resources and ranger daily work rosters mean that monitoring and imposition of fines are greatly constrained. This has led to an escalating problem of illegal camping throughout the year, not only during peak holiday periods.

Unrestrained illegal camping in our 5 villages poses serious environmental and safety risks for community which includes fragile coastal and forest environments. The RHVA therefore urges Council:

1. To work collaboratively with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services as well as NSW Police to crack down on illegal camping using the recent example of MidCoast Council, who are struggling with the same issue
2. We would urge the council to review unpowered camping site fees at our local caravan park as they are excessive for a simple overnight camp and hence encourage illegal free camping

We are hoping council enforces their rules for a period of three to six months to circuit break this ongoing problem within our community. We look forward to an open dialogue on this issue and working with you to get the best outcome for our natural environments, residents and visitors.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Chris Hayes', written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Chris Hayes
President
RHVA Inc