MACMASTERS BEACH
PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

A voice for our community

May 2025 newsletter

Website: https://www.macmastersbeachprogress.com/

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Membership

Thank you to everyone who has paid the 2025 membership subscription and also to those who donated extra. Membership is only $10 per person per calendar year. Membership is climbing and is now 170.

To renew or join, please go to the website macmastersbeachprogress.com and select the Membership tab. Complete and submit the simple form and then pay direct to our bank account giving your name as a reference.

Report on April 28 Special General Meeting

This meeting was part of our cycle of bi-monthly public meetings, but with some special guests.

Your Association has been increasingly concerned at the lack of progress on the works needed to protect the Surf Lifesaving Club's building and grounds from further storm damage.

The embankment that holds up the paved area and the building is under severe attack from storms and may collapse. It was damaged in 2016 and the temporary fix of sand/cement filled polypropylene bulka bags are still there but deteriorating fast. It is the site of iconic Norfolk Island pines and our ANZAC Memorial glass wall. Additionally, the whole site has Aboriginal heritage values as an occupancy site.

So we invited representatives of the Surf Club and Macs Own Boardriders to meet with Association members to discuss what support the project has from the wider community and present a united front to Council.

A rock-bag wall design has been completed, and the necessary funds are available. It just needs Council's final go-ahead. Our other special guest was our Ward Councillor, Jared Wright, (pictured right) so it was very valuable for him to hear the community's view and be able to report back tohis fellow Councillors.

The three community Groups agreed that each supported the project as the protection of the Surf Club building and grounds is critical for the Club's ongoing ability to provide lifesaving services and for the protection of the meeting space that the Club provides for the wider community.

Before the meeting we put 6 questions to Cr Wright, and he provided written answers before the meeting and then spoke to them on the night. Here is an edited version of his responses. The full answers are on our website. Access them by clicking here.

Question 1: Speeding on The Scenic Road: Is there a plan or technique that has been successfully implemented by council to slow motorists down in 50 zones. Locals and visitors are equally guilty of speeding on the Scenic Road. What can we do?

The NSW Police Force is the responsible authority for enforcement of speed limits and residents are encouraged to report any instances of excessive speed and/or anti-social driver behaviour witnessed to the NSW Police Assistance Line by telephoning 131 444.

Council implements a range of techniques and infrastructure to address identified speed concerns across the road network.

Measures used to calm traffic and minimise speed include various line markings; sign postings; education; shared zones, with a lower speed limit; traffic calming devices, such as roundabouts or raised treatments; and newer technology such as vehicle activated speed signage.

Due consideration is required in the placement of raised treatments in residential areas, such as speed cushions, due to the noise associated with travelling over these devices; any impacts on private driveway access; ability for accessible buses to traverse these devices and discomfort for bus passengers. Many residents object to the placement of these devices due to the associated noise and is not generally an engineered treatment used in residential areas.

In recent years, Council has been using vehicle activated speed signage which is designed to calm traffic by alerting approaching motorists to their current speed in real time. The placement of this vehicle activated speed signage is generally placed on a temporary basis and rotated throughout known locations across the local government area where speed is occurring, however does not warrant the placement of engineered traffic calming.

The opportunity to temporarily place this portable vehicle activated speed signage on The Scenic Road was previously identified and has previously been utilised on The Scenic Road. In the coming months the vehicle activated signage will again be temporarily placed on The Scenic Road. It is anticipated that this specialised signage will be in place for a period between 4-6 weeks, before being relocated and returning at a future time. The rotation of this specialised signage allows speed to be addressed across a number of locations and has the greatest impact when placed on a temporary basis.

Question 2: The dunes at Macmasters Beach carpark: The fencing at the beach at Macmasters Beach Marine Parade is failing and some is broken. Is it possible to re fence this area (we suggest with a wire mesh also) to stop people walking down straight through the dunes and killing the plants and degrading the dunes. People also snap off branches so they can see the surf. A better fence would direct people to the paths and stop them from hurting the dune areas.

Council staff inspected the beach infrastructure at MacMasters Beach including beach accessways and fencing and will undertake repairs to the fences where these have been damaged.

Question 3: The unresolved development on Marine Parade next to the park: This is referred to as the 'hole in the ground' and has been in its current derelict state for many years (at least 17). The block is surrounded by rusting metal fencing and the block itself littered with metal rubbish and weeds. Does the council have any powers to get the landowner to clean this up?

DA/51209/2016 was granted consent by the Land and Environment Court on 4 June 2019 for a three storey mixed use development including a kiosk, café, basement parking and six residential apartments at 77 Marine Parade, MacMasters Beach (that being the unresolved development on Marine Parade next to the park). The consent operated from 4 June 2019 – 4 June 2024. the lapsing date of this consent was extended during the COVID pandemic to 4 June 2026. Once development consent has been granted Council does not interfere with a proponent demonstrating commencement, nor construction management of land holdings where Council is not the asset owner. It is the responsibility of the owner/developer to commence development works within the consent timeframes to activate the consent so that it does not lapse.

Notwithstanding the above, Council will intervene where the site and surrounds are not being maintained appropriately. In this respect, the matter has been referred to Environmental Compliance Services for investigation on behalf of the Macmasters Beach Progress Association. Council will contact the Macmasters Beach Progress Association in due course once an investigation has been completed and advise of the outcome (CX 250417-000271).

Question 4: Can you please update us on the proposed Sea Wall at Macmasters Beach following the recent community consultation period?

In consideration of the results from the community consultation, a report is being prepared for Council through the Environment and Planning Committee to determine the next steps for the project. Further updates will be made available following the decision from Council in the coming months.

(Editor's Note: This matter was considered by Council's Environment and Planning Committee on Tuesday 7 May and it was resolved to recommend to the Council at its 27 May meeting to proceed with the works.)

Question 5: Does Council support the concept of tall tree planting on open spaces in a community, to replace trees lost through development? If so, what form does this support take?

Councils Central_Coast_Greener_Places_Strategy identifies a two-for-one tree replacement target (contained on page 42 of the Strategy) however this policy does not apply to works on private land as part of Development Applications, but rather, to Public Trees (i.e. trees in parks, reserves and road verges). It is intended to cover trees removed by Council asset works (road upgrades, park and reserve maintenance, and the like).

(*Editor's Note: The question was concerned with public land, but the answer provided dealt in part with private land, so has been deleted for brevity for this newsletter. The full text of the answer is available on the Association's website by clicking here)*

Trees on Public Land: Council also has responsibility for managing trees on public land (in reserves, open spaces, and roadsides). A team of Council arborists respond to customer requests in relation to dangerous, diseased or damaged trees on public lands, and undertake either pruning or removal as necessary (noting that there is an aspect of community safety in respect to diseased or damaged trees). Trees may also be removed to facilitate infrastructure upgrades (roads and drainage, for example). The Roads and Drainage teams implement both the Greener Places Strategy and the aims and principles of the Street Design Guideline when undertaking road upgrades across the Central Coast. This includes the target of 2 for 1 tree replacement as set out in the 'Greener Places Strategy' (note that the 2 for 1 tree replacement principle within the Greener Places Strategy applies to public trees only, and is constrained by resourcing for the program). Note that there are separate exemption arrangements for pruning of some public trees, particularly for infrastructure providers such as AusGrid.

Compliance of Tree Vandalism: Councils Environmental Compliance team, in conjunction with other specialist staff (arborists and ecologists) investigate complaints in relation to tree vandalism and damage. Compliance action is pursued in accordance with Councils Regulatory Policy. Council has the power to issue Notices, Orders and Penalty Infringement Notices (depending on the nature of any compliance breach), as well as commencement of legal proceedings, and Council staff exercise these powers as appropriate. You may be aware that Council recently pursued successful legal prosecution of a landowner in Mangrove Mountain for illegal clearing of native vegetation (September 2024), as an example of the compliance team in action: https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/council/council-news/court-decision-supports-councils-prosecution-illegal-tree-clearing

Tree Planting Programs: Council's Parks & Reserves currently have $39,000 allocated for tree planting this financial year, and approximately $35,000 for next financial year, which allows for approximately 60-70 new trees being planted each year. Council will typically plant trees in response to tree planting requests from residents. These trees are planted on a case-by-case basis and are dependent on any physical or environmental factors such as adequate planting space, existing services, soil conditions etc. Where private tree requests have been exhausted, Council then focuses its remaining budget to planting trees in and around parks, reserves and playgrounds. Separate, dedicated tree planting and landscaping

arrangements are included in specific asset projects and upgrades (for example, planting associated with sporting field/playground upgrades).

Question 6: Airbnb -short term accommodation and Council's reticence to enforce the STRA rules for them. Most councils in NSW now make Airbnb's place a sign outside which states emergency contact number for problems, as well as many other conditions related to noise , numbers etc. Central Coast Council doesn't. With the huge amount of Airbnb in Mac's it's an increasing problem for permanent residents.

NSW Planning developed State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021 (SEPP), which made the use of an approved dwelling for "Short – Term Rental Accommodation" permissible without consent and is not subject to the provisions of Central Coast Council's Local Environment Plan.

In relation to specific operational requirements of a STRA, NSW Fair Trading are the appropriate regulatory authority for managing the STRA register and "Code of Conduct for the short-term rental accommodation". It is recommended that if the local community have any concerns to signage and the display of contact details to contact NSW Fair Trading on telephone number 13 32 20.

Council's responsibility's in regulating STRA relate to issues such as offensive noise under the Protection of Environment Operations Act 1997 and members of the community are encouraged to contact Council on 02 4306 7900 or on email ask@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au.

Issues such as anti-social behaviour and noise outside of business hours falls to NSW Police to regulate. NSW Police can be contacted on 131 444 or 000 in an emergency.

Where regulatory action is taken by Council for noise concerns, Council staff provide information to NSW Fair Trading to review the potential breach of the STRA Code of Conduct.

Thanks to Council staff and Cr Jared Wright for providing these answers

The Surf Club's erosion protection works – current status

As mentioned in the answer to Question 4, the matter of protecting the MacMasters Beach Surf Lifesaving's Club's building and surrounds has become critical. See the photos below.

This matter was considered by Council's Environment and Planning Committee at its meeting on 6 May. Council staff had proposed to defer the works. After a persuasive presentation by Alison McNeil, President of the Club, it was agreed that the Committee would recommend to the full Council that the works proceed. Progress Association president Ken Gardiner and Communications Manager Tony Powell also attended the meeting and were acknowledged as supporting the Surf Club's presentation.

Community representatives will now meet to discuss how to present the case to the full Council, to try to ensure that these vital works proceed.

Here's a photo of the current status of the wall, showing the deterioration of the bulka bags inserted in 2016 as temporary protection, the exposure of the roots of the pines and the general deterioration of the embankment.

2016 Bulka bags deteriorating

Erosion threats

Fallen protective rocks

While the Progress Association acknowledges that there are valid concerns about the proposal, on environmental, aesthetic and surf quality impact grounds, the Association's view is that in addition to vital lifesaving services, the Club building, its grounds and the kiosk provide important social benefit to the wider community.

It's our meeting place for community groups, for weddings, birthdays and wakes and for informal gathering of friends, families and visitors. It's where we acknowledge the service and sacrifice of our armed forces and it's the site of millennia of Aboriginal occupancy. It's loss could gut our community.

The Progress association wants you to tell us what you'd like to see in our community

Music, events, activities - what would you like to see as part of the Progress Association's social calendar?

Join us at the Progress Association Hall at the corner of Tudibaring Pde and Three Points Ave on 26 May at 7pm to share ideas on what we can be doing to connect, celebrate and enjoy in our community.

This will be an ideas session for locals to come together and be part of looking at what events we could be doing and talents people would like to share.

From this meeting we will look at what is feasible and build a social calendar of events that has been developed with the community, for the community.

Don't forget two upcoming events in Macs

The Biggest Morning - May 25

Ellen Revello is hosting our local Biggest Morning Tea on 25 May at the Progress Hall 11.00am to 1.00pm.
This is a major fund raiser for the Cancer Council's support for cancer sufferers, their carers and their families.

5 Lands Walk – 22 June

5 LANDS WALK
CENTRAL COAST · NEW SOUTH WALES

This free Central Coast walk starts at MacMasters Beach and finishes at Terrigal passing through lands hosting multicultural activities. Click here for information 5 Lands Walk

Curby – the local way to recycle soft plastics

The Central Coast is one of only four Councils in Australia that has a soft plastics recycling service. It's provided by CurbCycle through Curbyrewards.com.

It's quite simple. You;

- collect and bag ALL your soft plastics in a soft plastic bag,
- tie the bag tight, tag it with the official orange tag,
- scan the code on their app on your phone,
- put it into your yellow recycling bin, then
- feel good about your contribution to keeping plastics out of the environment

Go to curbyrewards.com, register, collect the tags from Kincumber Library and you're ready to go.

It free, but there is a subscription service that costs, and offers rewards. But you can ignore that.

Common soft plastics include:

- Soft Plastic Snack wrappers
- Foil lined Chip packets
- Soft Plastic Fresh produce bags
- Soft Plastic Fruit netting (with the metal bits cut off)
- Soft Plastic Toilet paper wrapping
- Plastic carry bags
- Protective plastic film used in consumer goods packaging
- Dry pet food bags
- Cling wrap
- Any "scrunchable" soft plastics labelled with the 2, 4 or 5 recycling numbers
- Empty packaging with the 'Return to Store' or 'Store Drop Off' ARL (Australasian Recycling Label) symbol

Soft plastics bagged and tagged ready for the yellow bin.

Keep an ear out! Soft plastics will generally be scrunched into a ball without making a loud crunch noise. Biscuit trays are an example of something that is commonly mistaken for soft plastics.

Easter Booksale

We held a booksale at the Progress hall on Easter Saturday. Thanks for the donations of books and cakes, which allowed us to raise $1,200 to strengthen our financial position.

Better finances means we can consider a range of events or activities to enrich our community.

Voices from the Community

Bouddi Wildlife

The Dangers of Baiting Rodents and Snails: Protecting Our Wildlife

This time of year, as the cooler months settle in, many of our local animals are bunkering down to stay warm, including rodents who seek out cozy spaces to nest. In response, some residents have resorted to baiting to control these pests. Unfortunately, this has resulted in unintended consequences, with several cases of secondary poisoning affecting our local wildlife in recent weeks. When rodents or snails consume poison, predators like reptiles, owls, and even domestic pets may ingest the toxins by eating the poisoned animals. This secondary poisoning can be fatal and is devastating for wildlife populations already struggling to survive in a changing environment.

To protect our natural surroundings, we encourage residents to consider safer pest control alternatives. Using traps, non-toxic baits, or employing natural predators (e.g., encouraging habitat for owls and reptiles) are all effective, wildlife-friendly options. Information on alternative wildlife friendly baits can be found here: https://www.actforbirds.org/what-to-buy-and-avoid

Winter time also means longer nights so look out for wallabies - especially on The Scenic Rd. Please call us if you hit a Wallaby or see one on the side of the road even if it is deceased so that we can check its pouch for young. If you see an animal with a big painted 'x' on its coat, it means that the pouch has already been checked.

Paula and the team,
Bouddi Wildlife
0484520333

Bushcare

In the Progress Association's last newsletter, Bushcare told you about Lantana's fiendish survival strategy – Allelopathy. That's where plants add a toxin to the soil, to stop other plants growing. Well, some Australian plants do that too!
Ever noticed how there is often very little growing under She Oaks (Casuarinas). They use allelopathy too. Of course, that's allowed as its part of our natural process here. Unfortunately, Bushcare has noticed that Asparagus fern is one the of the few plants that seem unaffected by Casuarina's defences and often thrives where little else does.

Even Eucalyptus can be a problem, for the same reason.

Eucalyptus leaves contain **cineole and other volatile oils**, which can:

- **Inhibit seed germination** and root growth of some plants.
- **Discourage microbial activity** in the soil.

These effects are most noticeable when:

- The leaves are **fresh**.
- They are applied in **thick, uncomposted layers**.
- The mulch is used around **sensitive or shallow-rooted plants**.

Eucalyptus leaves are **waxy and tough**, so they break down slowly. This can:

- Tie up nitrogen in the soil as microbes work harder to break them down.
- Lead to a temporarily **nutrient-poor zone** near the mulch layer.

So don't use fresh Eucalyptus leaves as mulch. But if you can compost the gum leaves with other plant material - garden waste and kitchen scraps, the toxin breaks down and it's OK to use as mulch.

Meanwhile, the Bushcare group is spending some of its funds on contract spraying of asparagus fern infestation in the dunes, and on manual removal. This is being followed up by strategic planting of local native dunes species to restore native coverage to provide habitat for local fauna and erosion protection of the dunes.