



## Five Lands Walk 2013

*bigger and better than ever*

***This year's 5 Lands Walk was an outstanding success, resulting in a huge turnout of participants enjoying the activities at the various locations. Organisers reported a 60% increase in registered walkers from 1,880 to 2,800, and an estimated 13,000 people enjoying the day across the different venues. The organisation of the event was superb with buses ferrying walkers to various locations as required.***

At each stop along the walk there were different cultural groups to entertain the walkers. A Chinese group performed traditional dance and music at MacMaster's Beach as well as offered samples of Chinese food. At Copacabana the Latinos and groups from nine South American countries performed their traditional dances dressed in their colourful clothing and at Avoca Beach there was the Irish River Dance.

Africa culture and music was celebrated at North Avoca, and Afro Moses had the whole crowd dancing to the sounds of the African beat. Finally, if you made it to Terrigal, the Filipinos entertained you with workshops, parade, food and music.

For the first time, the Aboriginal programme was developed by the Aboriginal Action Committee and, instead of having a base; it flowed across the 5 lands with smoking ceremonies, bush tucker, message stick, corroboree and story-telling. Participants were attracted to the cultural offerings of the Aboriginal community. Significantly for the Darkinjung people, whales were sighted at every vantage point along the way and talks about whales were conducted by Jeannie Lawson, a marine biologist, at the new Captain Cook Look-out.

A photographic exhibition was displayed at MacMasters Beach Surf Club and Connections Art and ephemeral sculpture exhibitions were displayed at Copacabana and Avoca surf clubs. A primary schools poster competition was conducted at the North Avoca Surf Club using the Five Lands Walk theme – Living in the Land with Joy as the inspiration.

A variety of other activities were conducted including art workshops at Terrigal waterfront and kite flying at North Avoca,



*One of the artworks at Avoca*

where children could make their own kites and fly them with kite experts. There was also a "coolest dog on the beach" contest with record entries of innovative and creative outfits which was won by Cathy Crouch's dog.

To continue the ongoing expansion 5 Lands Walk pathways, funding is being sought to upgrade the existing track off Del Monte Drive, Copacabana and, as part of the approved Master Plan, a new pathway is being planned from the Captain Cook Look out to follow the cliff face to Winnie Bay and, on completion, will provide the most spectacular views and significantly increase the capacity for walkers in future events.

Unfortunately, on Sunday the complementary events, The Taste of Avoca and the Copacabana School fete had to be cancelled due to the shocking wet and cold weather conditions. Despite the setbacks of the Sunday, the 5 Lands Walk has established itself on the Central Coast calendar as one of the premier events.



# President's Message

**IAN ESPLIN**

**Welcome to our newsletter. It has been a while since our last one and whilst we aim to publish them on a regular basis we also want to include information of real value to the local community and such articles can be irregular in timing.**

The committee has been active in trying to get some impetus to the Southern Foreshore Masterplan by lobbying the local federal election candidates Deborah O'Neill and Lucy Wicks for commitments of some federal government grant funding for the project.

The Council staff have advised us that without additional outside funding, the current status is that whilst the plan is approved the Council has not allocated any funding to it. In addition the priority of the project is low compared with other projects. What all this means is that there is little likelihood of anything actually happening within the foreseeable future without some extra input.

Considering that Avoca is within a marginal federal seat, we thought there may be some extra incentive for some grant money to come our way. Such funding is normally provided on a dollar for dollar basis in partnership with the Council and has recently been used with the current on-going project to upgrade the Ettalong foreshore which is a \$5.5M project.

We have been told by the landscape section of the council that the first step of the project would be build the new seawall and foreshore structures as this would stabilise the area and provide the foundation for the remaining work. The Council has estimated that this portion alone would cost in the order of \$500,000 including the design and construction components.

As the total cost is unknown at this stage we decided that if we asked for funding for the initial stage this might be a more attractive proposition in these budget constrained times. So this was the argument put to both candidates. The response we got was very positive although as to be expected no promises were made and we were also informed that as this year's budget is signed off any possible funding would need to come from next year's budget at the earliest.

One question that was raised by both candidates was how this plan married with the current redevelopment proposals for the cinema. The reality is that grants are only handed out where there is broad based support for a project thus providing a political "payback" to the government of the day. Unfortunately the situation in Avoca is that there is a lack of consistency between the approved Masterplan and the cinema redevelopment proposal.

A major component of the Masterplan is the replanning and re-balancing the carparking and pedestrian and recreational areas. The plan was developed by the Council landscape architects on the basis of no net increase in spaces and also on current and projected demands from beachgoers. The cinema proposal however nominates the South End Park area as an overflow to make up for the under provision of on-site car parking. So should the redevelopment be approved there would be an inconsistency between the two plans.

This fact has been pointed out by others as one of the major objections to the current proposal which has received strong opposition from the local community. Another point of objection is the loss of the heritage value of the existing building in the proposed redevelopment. The actual heritage value of the building and whether what is currently being proposed enhances it or detracts from it seems to be at the core of the current debate.

Much has been said by both sides of the argument and many conflicting claims and statements have been made. There is certainly not the broad consensus that we need to move forward with a clear vision of the future. In fact it seems more like an impasse at this point which as mentioned before is not a good place to be if you want to encourage politicians to support your project.

As part of our attempt to shed some light on this issue we decided to ask an independent expert in the area of heritage assessment and preservation for his comments on the significance of the current building, on the redevelopment proposal and for ideas on what could be a way forward.

Graham Quint comes with impeccable credentials and is very familiar with the Avoca cinema and also with the plight of historic cinemas throughout the state. As well as providing a well thought out response to our questions he has also come up with a positive alternative vision for the future.

Interestingly his concept would mesh completely with the Masterplan which should incorporate the cinema in any case due to its location and pivotal role in the local community. I was recently in Dungog which also has a historic cinema and was told by the locals that the cinema had the role of "town hall" or meeting place in the community due to the lack of other alternatives. As Graham points out the situation is similar here.

Maybe I'm a naïve idealist however wouldn't it be wonderful if there was an overall plan that had broad support and which accommodated our future needs as well as preserving the unique natural and historic character of the Foreshore area including the cinema.

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AVOCA BEACH





# What is the heritage value of the Avoca Cinema?

**There aren't many heritage listed items in Avoca Beach or on the Central Coast generally for that matter. Unlike historic towns in Europe and in other long established areas around the world, our history is short and we don't seem particularly keen on preserving relics from the past. It's almost as if we don't think that much of it and anything new must somehow be an improvement so heritage items just seem to get in the way of progress. The record on the heritage preservation bears this out.**

So what is it about the cinema? It is advertised as a "Historic Cinema" on street signs leading into Avoca and we are told that the proposed redevelopment currently being assessed by the Council is an attempt to "save" it. But what does this mean? What is being saved? Is what is being proposed going to actually save anything?

These questions have been asked by many people throughout the community and it is fair to say that a diversity of opinion exists. How well informed or impartial these opinions are is a good question so we decided to ask a heritage expert for his opinion.

Graham Quint is the National Trust's Conservation Manager responsible for the National Trust Register and Trust comment on heritage issues generally. He has worked with the Trust for thirty years, initially in Landscape Conservation and then the broader heritage area. He has been a member of the NSW Heritage Council and presently serves on its Religious Properties Advisory Panel and has been involved in such diverse projects as a Study of NSW Coastal Headlands and Tree Studies for Mudgee and the Sydney suburb of Lugarno.

He is also well aware of the preservation issues with historic cinemas around the state and has been following the recent history of the Avoca cinema including providing a submission on the original draft re-zoning proposal. Considering this we thought he is probably one of

the best qualified people to comment on the current redevelopment proposal from a heritage aspect.

The ABCA contacted Graham and had a broad ranging discussion about the heritage value of the building, the conservation of historic cinemas generally and also about his reaction to the current redevelopment proposal. A summary of the discussion follows:



Graham Quint

(continued page 4)



The cinema building as it was in 1985

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# What is the heritage value of the

**We asked Graham about the current heritage status of the Avoca cinema and of historic cinemas generally.**

**G.Q.** *The Avoca cinema is currently listed as a heritage item on the National Trust register. Normally listing on the local Council register follows on from this, however that is not what happened in this case.*

*A State Heritage Register listing proposal was recently submitted to the NSW Heritage Council. Following consideration it was determined that the Avoca Beach Cinema was likely to be of local heritage significance and the Heritage Division will be writing to Gosford Council requesting Council to consider adding it as a heritage item on its Local Environmental Plan.*

*The question of the heritage value of historic cinemas has been a vexed one over many decades and architectural quality has taken precedence over social significance. The social context of a cinema or theatre is arguably equally if not more important than its architectural quality, but social significance is often difficult to quantify. There are now moves to rectify this situation.*

*Many cinemas used an architectural style which could have been described as "kitsch" which nevertheless is fondly regarded by the community as a reminder of its social values, a different time and life style. This is an important part of society's collective memory. Cinemas and theatres are important heritage items. For this reason I think the Avoca cinema should be heritage listed at both the local and State level.*

**We asked Graham about whether he could think of examples of other historic cinemas that had been successfully redeveloped and that could be used as a model for Avoca.**

**G.Q.** *There are cinemas in the city such as the Cremorne Orpheum and the Randwick Ritz which have been successfully expanded in size and function however there are important differences between these and Avoca. Most importantly they were big buildings to begin with and also they were sited in a built up urban context surrounded by similar sized structures.*

*With Avoca, one of the most important factors is its park-like surroundings. The context of a heritage building is as important as the building itself in terms of maintaining its integrity. The closest example that could be used as a model is the Plaza cinema in Laurieton which has a similar low key environment. In this case the extension has been limited to one smaller additional screen. The Avoca situation is also more similar to other small single screen cinemas around the state in rural areas such as in Mt. Victoria and Dungog.*

*I also question the need for additional screens with the changes in technology that are currently underway. There are new systems of movie delivery using high definition satellite downloads which effectively amount to a pay by session system. This means operators can provide highly diverse and localised programming using a single screen. Also distributors are providing payback systems to make the transition to adopting these technologies cost effective for small operators.*



*The park land setting is a part of the cinema's heritage*



*Dungog's historic cinema has become a focus for the local community.*



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# Avoca Cinema? *(continued)*

**We then asked Graham for his comments about the current DA for redevelopment.**

**G.Q.** *Essentially the problem is that the scale of what is being proposed is way out of proportion to what would be appropriate to maintain a sympathetic context for the historic cinema building. Any new structures should be sub-ordinate in scale to the cinema so as to avoid overwhelming it. This basically means single storey development.*

*I also question the mix of uses proposed, as it is hard to see how residential flat units can co-exist harmoniously with the historic cinema structure. Public uses such as a café or shop for instance would be more suitable. I appreciate that the justification for this proposal is economic however I'm sure there are better ways for financing the preservation of this historic cinema.*

*I know there have been cases with difficult heritage listed sites where Councils have stepped in and proposed a land swap with some of their operational land in a less sensitive area where the large structures being proposed could be better accommodated. Such an initiative in this case would enable the adjoining block to the cinema to be kept as a low key structure and the parkland setting for the cinema to be retained and enhanced. There would then be the historic building with a low key additional structure adjoining, all surrounded by parkland in an appropriate context.*

*There was a recent example of such a land swap arrangement in the Ku-ring-gai local government area. The other advantage of such an arrangement is that concessional treatment can be given to the historic building in terms of disabled access and carparking requirements and possibly subsidised rates and charges to make the preservation and maintenance of the historic structure more cost effective.*

## Additional Information:

### **"Paddocks, Palaces and Picture Shows" by Brendan Connolly and Les Tod.**

This excellent book outlining the colourful history of cinemas on the Central Coast is unfortunately out of print however it is available through Gosford City Library. The book contains a detailed history of the Avoca cinema as well as many others around the coast nearly all of which have disappeared.

### **The Last of the Last. Avoca Picture Theatre is heritage? Youtube video by Mike Rubbo**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pr\\_z6AxWtI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pr_z6AxWtI)

An interesting video showing many of the now demolished cinemas featured the book above. The video also argues for the commercial value of preserving the Avoca cinema as an authentic heritage tourist attraction.

### **Ross Thorne - Architect**

<http://www.rossthorne.com/theatres/lost.html>

Ross Thorne has made a life time study of heritage theatres and cinemas and his website includes many free download articles that are of great value to anyone interested in learning more about the history and the issues involved in preservation.

The National Trust, established in 1945, is a non-government, community heritage conservation organisation that relies primarily on members' fees for its operations. Please consider supporting the work of the National Trust, particularly in theatre/cinema conservation, by becoming a member - <http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/nsw/membership>

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# Altered traffic conditions along Avoca Drive during sewer upgrade

You have no doubt experienced the traffic changes along Avoca Drive as Gosford Council undertakes sewer works. Why is the work taking place, what is being done and when will it be finished?

## Why?

The existing system (officially known as the Coastal Carrier System) is almost 30 years old and cannot keep up with present requirements, let alone the future. The inadequacy of the existing system brought to attention by an article in the Central Coast Advocate on 20/2/13 referring to complaints by a North Avoca resident about sewage overflows into Avoca Lagoon after heavy rains.

Such events have usually been followed by council opening the lagoon to the ocean. On that occasion Gosford Council apologised and said that because of the rain the capacity of the system had been exceeded.

Council had already begun to address the problems. In March 2010 they engaged NSW Public Works to finalise detailed design and environmental assessments for the upgrade and to manage all construction works for the project.



## What?

A new pipeline is being built as part of the Council's \$30 million Coastal Carrier System Upgrade Project to upgrade the major sewage transfer network servicing Forrester's Beach, Wamberal, Terrigal, North Avoca, Avoca and Kincumber.

The Avoca section of the pipeline will be around three kilometres long and run from Ficus Avenue, around Heazlett Park, along Avoca Drive, underneath the Scenic Highway and through Pickett's Valley before linking up with the existing system.

Part of the upgrade includes the installation of a new electrical transformer at the sewage pump station located in the Council reserve adjacent to the Heazlett Park car park – off Ficus Avenue, Avoca Beach. There will also be an upgrade of two minor pump stations in Avoca. The total upgrade will boost the pump station's capacity to handle extra sewage flows.

Council says these works will improve the operation of the existing system located in the vicinity of Avoca Lake and protect the community and environment against overflows and odours.

## When?

Council has not given a clear completion date for the upgrade. High levels of rainfall in June have no doubt delayed their plans. Check their website for the latest news.



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<p><b>AVOCA BEACH BOWLING CLUB</b></p>  <p>Avoca Drive, Avoca Beach Ph: 4382 1342</p>	<p><b>FIRE BRIGADE</b></p>  <p>Leigh Pilkington PO Box 16 Avoca Beach 2251 Mob. 0409 770 061</p>	<p><b>RUGBY</b></p>  <p>Terry Sturgess (Pres.) PO Box 145 Avoca Beach Mob. 0415 796 346</p>
<p><b>AVOCA BEACH PLAY GROUP</b></p>  <p>Tuesday 10am-12noon Lucy - 0426 817 374 at Rugby Club</p>	<p><b>AVOCA BEACH GARDEN CLUB</b></p>  <p>Robert Hickel Mob. 0412 405 888 Meets 2nd Monday</p>	<p><b>LANTERN</b></p>  <p>Marie Fuller Ph: 4382 2264</p> <p><i>Fundraisers for The Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children</i></p>
<p><b>BOARD RIDERS</b></p>  <p>Anthony Love (Pres.) PO Box 161, Avoca Beach Mob. 0418 669 265</p>	<p><b>SOCCER</b></p>  <p>David Brooks Mob. 0414 431 340 www.avocaafc.com</p>	
<p><b>WILDLIFE A.R.C</b></p>  <p>Animal Rescue &amp; Care Central Coast 24 Hours 0500 551 121</p>	<p><b>AVOCA BEACH TENNIS CLUB</b></p>  <p>Telephone bookings 4381 1118 or book online www.avocabeachtennis.com</p>	
<p><b>ROTARY CLUB</b></p>  <p>The Rotary Club of Kincumber meets on Mondays 7pm at Avoca Beach Hotel. Visitors welcome. Millar McCowan Mob. 0407 890 722</p>	<p><b>SURF CLUB</b></p>  <p>Garry Clarke (Pres.) PO Box 22, Avoca Beach 2251 Ph: 4382 1514</p>	

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**October 1**  
**December 3**

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9.15am - 11.15am  
Contact Anneke 4382 3372

**September 12**  
**October 10**  
**November 14**

**BUSH CARE 2**

26 Reynolds Rd  
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9.30am - 11.30am  
Contact Carol 4381 0175

**September 19**  
**October 17**  
**November 21**

**BUSH CARE 3**

27 Reynolds Rd  
4th Monday  
9.30am - 11.30am  
Contact Eve 4382 2123

**September 26**  
**October 24**  
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*Avoca Beach Community Association Inc.*

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ABCA is a community group for residents and non-resident property owners which tries to protect the relatively relaxed lifestyle that Avoca's village character and natural beauty offers. We support and initiate plans which promote this lifestyle and work to oppose proposals that threaten it.

ABCA meets at 7.30pm on the first Monday of every second month.

The Association's newsletter The Avoca Beach Review is published three times per year.

It is financed by advertisements from local businesses who can show their support for the community and promote themselves to the community through the advertising. Rates \$40 for 6cm x 6cm.

Contributions and letters are welcome. Please send to:  
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