



## Bangaloe Stud – Victory to the Community

The Avoca Beach and Kincumber community can breathe a sigh of relief for now, over the recent announcement that the controversial Bangaloe Stud development on Avoca Drive for 202 manufactured homes and associated buildings has been unanimously rejected on a number of levels by the Local Regional Planning Panel.

Council Officers & staff did a thorough job exposing a raft of issues with the development proposal, citing (amongst others) potential contamination and pollution of Avoca Lagoon catchment, flooding, heritage impacts, bush fire hazard and tree retention all of which severely compromised the visual and local character of the area. The scenic buffer which our predominantly green hinterland provides was recognized as being important not only visually but also ecologically with the green corridors that pass through the site, vital in linking the ecosystems of Kincumba Mountain to Avoca Lagoon and onwards to Boudii National Park. A number of endangered faunas have been documented throughout these areas and they are also important as cultural linkages for local indigenous people with this being part of ancient pathways from coastal areas to the important sites of Kincumba Mountain. All in all, the proposal was seen as being an overdevelopment of the site and contravening the intent of the E4 zoning which it falls under.

It is somewhat comforting and reassuring that both the Council and the Panel has taken a stance against what the majority of locals saw as a rather audacious and brazen attempt by Living Choice (or Choice Living Avoca as this project is named) to take advantage of a loop-hole within the zoning to get this development approved (over 4,500 people signed petitions and some 110 official objections were made against the proposal). As quoted from the panel's minutes "the proposal is

an overdevelopment of the site, inconsistent with the current & future desired character of the locality & approval is not in the public interest".

Whilst the developers are considering their options, it is hoped that they will go back to the 'drawing board' and come up with something significantly more sympathetic to the property and respectful of both the zoning intent and local community's expectations and concerns.

This victory against the interstate developer bears testament to the hard work of many individuals and the local community groups and associations of Avoca, Copacabana, Picketts Valley & Kincumber who combined to make this issue a part of the local narrative over the last nine months. "People and community before profits" became somewhat of a slogan to reinforce the ideal that united people power can never be underestimated.

Graham Murray





# It was sad to lose her



I'm sure you've noticed that she's gone. Our smiling Dessa has gone from the supermarket for more than two months now. Gone to fulfil her life's dream to be a nurse in Western Sydney. Dessa had never worked in a shop when she came to Eric's supermarket in 2003. At that point she'd been six years in Australia having arrived from her native Philippines 1997.

She loved working in Avoca, loved getting to know the locals and felt that she and Eric complemented each other perfectly. "Eric has been the father I never had," she says. He was very sorry to lose her after 17 years during which she says proudly, she never took a sickie. No wonder he's sorry! She says that Filipinos are very hard workers by nature and very friendly as well. Maybe it's because they're so close to their families. "Our old people never end up in nursing homes," she says. "They stay with the family to the end." Now she is carrying on that same caring attitude having studied the last five years part-time to be a nurse

I've always shopped at the supermarket for this and that, but the place really shone when at the beginning of the Virus, our little market was the only place you could get toilet paper, a dollar a role any day every day. Eric had found a supply in Sydney, rented a truck and come back with a load. A precious roll in hand, a lot of Avocans saw the market through new eyes.

Funny memories? A guy came in for a can of Coke and thought he might as well take another can as well. So he picked up the donation tin for the Fieries and ran. Eric chased him and got the money back.

Dessa reminded me of our first meeting in 2003. I'd come into the store with my camera rolling. I must have heard about a scam whereby people would hand over a \$10 and then claim it had been a \$ 20. "How would you handle that?" I asked the new girl and she explained how she'd put the note on the top of the till, verbally announce the amount, etc. " You helped me a lot that day, Mike," she says, "getting it straight and I never got scammed in 17 years."

I then reminded her that I had recruited her to help with the Tuckeroos. I was doing a Newsletter article on the trees in front of the store which, strangely, were growing much less well than others in the village. Dessa agreed to water them every day with a bucket and since then they've done much better. We've all loved Dessa. When her town at home, Tacloben, was hit by a tsunami in 2013, the family lost everything but Avocans helped with generous donations.

Now, guess who's never been married but hopes to be lucky in love in her new life. I'm allowed to announce that Dessa is looking for a guy between 40 and 60 with, as she puts it, "No baggage." That means no smoking no drinking and no kids. "Just me and him starting a new life together." What a catch she'd be with her Philippine family values and now, her nursing skills. She's promised to keep in touch and so maybe we'll find out. Mike Rubbo.

**Editorial credits: Steve Fortey: Editor | Julie Pickett: Advertising, Proof reading**

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# President's Report



I can't think of a better place to be in 'lock down' than Avoca Beach. We are incredibly lucky to be largely untouched by this dreadful virus. At the same time, a big thank you to those who are keeping 'Covid safe' by adhering to all the guidelines. Fingers crossed for the coming months.

What an amazing winter. A few east coast lows have battered our beaches but on the bright side generated

fabulous surf for those who brave the cold waters. Those who swim year-round have enjoyed the little bit chilly but mostly beautiful, clear water. A coffee in the early morning sun after a swim.... Is there a better way to start the day? I guess I'm speaking as a recent retiree, to those still hard at work, is there a better place to come home to?

Probably the biggest local news so far this year is the victory by locals over the big developers who proposed putting 202 houses on E4 zoned land at the old Bangaloe Stud. It's great to see the state government's newly formed Local Planning Panel agree with Central Coast Council in rejecting an unsuitable DA. The ABCA was happy to speak against this proposal at a zoom meeting and to be a small part of the hard-working resident's action group. (See the front page for more). The ABCA has made 4 detailed submissions to Council in the last 12 months in order to protect and maintain what is precious about our special part of the world.

Of course we are not the only special part of the world. Our South Coast friends from the Lake Conjola district have had major disruptions and are still recovering. First the fires that destroyed 120 homes in January, then the floods a month later, then Covid 19 further devastating the economy, then floods again. Many who lost their homes in January are still in temporary dwellings and are only

just getting new DAs approved. It's a long, slow, heartbreaking process.

So, our offer to provide free accommodation at Avoca in a holiday home for a week's respite is slowly being taken up and greatly appreciated by those severely affected. A chance to recharge the batteries. Once again, huge thanks to Michelle Harvey at George Brand Real Estate and the 30 holiday homeowners that have been so generous. Thanks too, to the good people at Accom. It's good to know we can do something to lighten the load.

A big congratulations to Avoca Kayak Club for holding their first big regatta on Avoca Lake recently. Over 90 entries made it a big one and one this new little club can be proud of. It was great to see the enthusiasm and competitive spirit so professionally managed. Well done to all competitors!

A shout out to Avoca Beach Rugby as well. The boys and girls have shown such a positive approach to a disrupted season and having around 100 players to training each week is a sure sign things are going well. The 'rebuilding' phase is paying off.

I'm constantly in awe of the very many volunteers who work so well together in so many ways to benefit our community. It's dangerous to name names for obvious reasons, but if you're involved in the Surf Club, the Rugby Club, the Kayak Club, the Boardriders, Avoca Football, the Tennis or any of the major charities such as Red Cross, well done and thank you.

Looking forward to spring and summer.  
Steve Fortey

*Winter Waves at Avoca Beach  
Michael Hruby Photography*





# Coastal Erosion 101



The East Coast low batters Avoca, but Council's rock revetment holds up.

Coastal Erosion is a hot topic, not just for the Central Coast, but for all coastal communities and it is not going to go away. The ABCA consulted experts in the field and they told us understanding and combating beach erosion is a complex issue.

Here is what we know to be true: Firstly, the science behind climate change and sea level rise is no longer debated, it's accepted as fact which means an increase in sea level and an increase in the number and severity of storm events, bringing big swell. Secondly, coastal erosion is not a new phenomenon. We have records of adverse coastal erosion impacts in NSW from storms as far back as 1857 with major events threatening property occurring every 10-20 years.

Before we look at what history has taught us, let's look at the process of Coastal Erosion. There are two main ways that sand movement occurs on and off our beaches.

The first is cross shore sand transport, where sand is moved perpendicular to the coastline. During extended calm conditions (typically in summer), when the waves are small, sand is moved from offshore reserves onto the upper beach above the water line. During storm events (typically in winter), the opposite occurs and as big waves retreat, sand is moved from the beach, causing erosion on the beach and the deposit of sand

to the offshore reserves. So, beach erosion is the loss of sand from a beach and is most obvious when we get more big storm events than periods of fine weather.

The second way sand is moved on and off our beaches is longshore drift. This is the transport of sediment parallel to the coast due to waves. Along the NSW coast, we get waves predominantly from the south-east. Sand is transported up the beach at the same angle as the waves, then the sand is backwashed perpendicular to the shoreline. These predominant south east swells push sand north along the east coast, which is replaced by sand coming from the south.

History has demonstrated very clearly what happens when hard structures are constructed along our ever-changing coastline, interfering with cross shore and longshore sand transport. When we build a seawall in an area subject to erosion, the seawall does not stop the erosive forces from existing. Vertical seawalls reflect some of the wave energy, accelerating the erosion of the beach both in front of the wall and at the ends of it. The wall also fixes the location of the shoreline and prevents cross shore sand transport. Graduated rock revetment seawalls cause less reflection of wave energy but their construction footprint requires approximately the same distance horizontally as the vertical height. This is no longer an option in some areas as the width of the revetment wall could take up the existing beach.

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Other types of hard structures such as groynes, breakwaters and training walls have also been used along our coastline to maintain the entrance to rivers or estuaries. Again, history has shown us how this impacts beaches to the north of these structures. For example, the breakwaters constructed to allow the passage of large vessels in and out of Newcastle harbour have prevented the longshore flow of sand from Nobbys Beach to Stockton Beach, leading to massive erosion issues at Stockton Beach. Another well-known case is the impact of the training walls installed on the Tweed River, which have resulted in devastating sand erosion on the Gold Coast. The only way to then save the beaches to the north of these types of hard structures, are expensive coastal engineering solutions such as constant sand bypassing, dredging and beach nourishment.

So what is the solution for a beach like Wamberal?



Wamberal Beach under siege

A study conducted in 2017 by Coastal Engineers using State Government guidelines considered 8 options to protect beachfront properties at Wamberal and the surrounding lagoon properties from the effects of coastal erosion. None of the seawall options were found to be effective in protecting properties long term nor would they provide a net public benefit for the local community “ the only beneficiaries were 60 beachfront property owners at Wamberal, 32% of which were only occupied occasionally” (Marsden Jacobs, 2017).

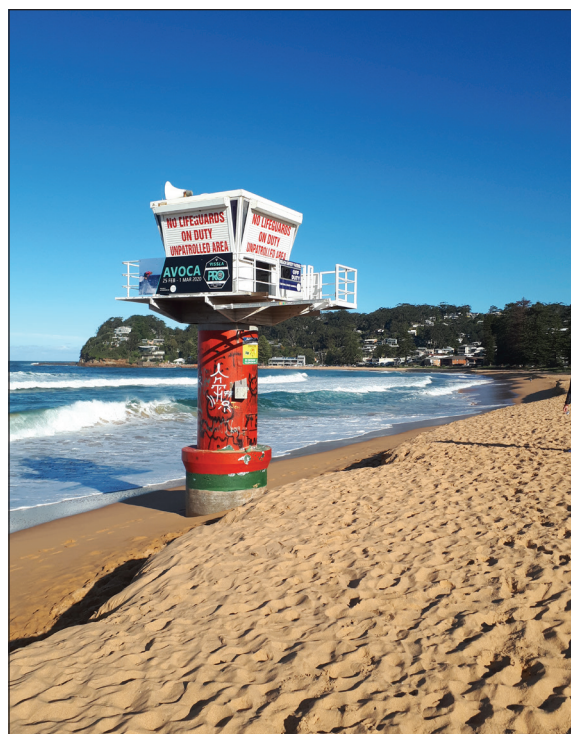
A planned retreat option (restricting the type and intensity of further development on the dune) provided the greatest cost benefit to the community while the second-best cost benefit option was to “do nothing”.

In recent years, artificial reefs have been suggested as a coastal protection option for some NSW communities, combining surfing and coastal protection objectives. Post July 2020 storms, there were similar calls by Wamberal locals. However, in a study in 2013 by the University of NSW on the use of artificial reefs, it was

concluded that their success would be limited due to NSW tidal range and multi-directional wave climate, and that any reef constructed for the objective of surfing, would ultimately not protect any significant stretch of coast. The use of artificial reefs as a method of controlling beach erosion are largely untested and if it goes wrong, it cannot be reversed. A risky venture for a community with a strong surf culture.

Since the July 2020 storms, 4,400 tonne of large rock boulders and rock bags have been deposited to protect the toe of the dune at Wamberal in accordance with the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989 (SERM Act), which was introduced to prevent inappropriate responses to emergency situations i.e. past dumping of building material and car bodies on beach dunes to protect properties, which ultimately lead to further adverse impacts on beach amenity. This deposited material now constitutes an artificial seawall along Wamberal beach!

There will be tough decisions to be made in the future but some things are certain – we cannot stop the forces of coastal erosion; continuing sea level rise is unavoidable; and we cannot reverse the fact that many properties and community infrastructure are inappropriately located in coastal hazard areas. Solving the issue of coastal erosion is like holding back the tide – just about impossible (without ramifications).





# Jack Bartlett – Living History



I first saw Jack on the steep slope of Chapman Crescent. It was Anzac Day and it had been arranged for him to get out his medals and do a short ceremonial walk down the street, inviting the neighbours to come and pay their respects, which they did. It was an intriguing moment. I wanted to know more about 96-year-old Jack Bartlett's wartime experiences.

Jack was a mine disposal specialist and on the lonely beaches of Queensland or New Guinea, he would reach inside a washed-up mine and feeling around with well-trained fingers, push down on clips and gently pull out the detonator tube. Then the 500 lbs of TNT could be safely blown up. Was he ever scared? No, he knew exactly what he was doing. But I was more interested in his boyhood days in the plains town of Ganmain where he was born in 1923. Born into a family of five girls and two boys. His dad had a team of 20 draught horses and made a modest living hauling hay and building haystacks. Jack had to pump the bellows when his dad heated a horseshoe. He remembers the smell of the burning foot nail as his dad hammered the hot shoe onto the hoof of the draught horse. As for themselves, none of the kids had shoes. On frosty mornings it was a cold walk to school. Only one kid, the banker's son, had shoes which he took off as soon as he got there, not wanting to be different. He was unable to explain to his furious mum when he got a broken toe.

Clothing was sparse too. Jack never saw singlet or

underpants as a boy. Only his sisters had underwear that their mum made by boiling calico sacks and sewing up a garment out of the somewhat softened material, his sisters indignant at having the words 'Australian flour' plastered across their bums. It was a busy happy childhood. In a simpler world. Only one bath a week in a huge tub and one lot of water for the whole family. His brother used to say that getting in at the end you'd come out dirtier than when you went in. There were rabbits in their thousands to catch and skin. Sixpence for the dried skin. Occasionally mice to catch when the mice plagues came. Jack saw two mice plagues in his early years. You'd lift a piece of tin he said, and under it would be hundreds of mice huddled together. They invented an ingenious trap to deal with the infestation. A tub of water would have a piece of wood leaning on it, a ramp going up to the lip. There the climbing mice would find at the top a tin can, just out of reach, dangling on a wire and coated with something sweet. The queueing mice would leap for the sweetness, drop into the water, and drown.

A travelling picture show used to come to Ganmain, but the kids were too poor to buy a ticket. They'd sit in the gutter listening to the soundtrack outside the hall. This was in 1929 when the talkies arrived. One day a bike mysteriously appeared, a rare thing as they cost 3 pounds. Jack thinks it had been stolen. No questions were asked. It changed his life since that bike got him a job delivering first for the chemist and then for the grocer, sixpence a delivery and great money for the boy.

In 1934, when trucks replaced horses, the family moved to Deniliquin and Jack finished off his meagre schooling. Later he got a job as a shearing hand travelling with shearers. That was a great job. The pay and the food were terrific, mountains of fluffy scones for breakfast smothered in plum jam from a tin. Jack couldn't become a shearer because he was left-handed, and the shears were right handed. But he was good at picking up the fleece that fell from the sheep and throwing it onto the table where the wool classer would judge it. Then into a bail it would go to be squashed down by those with the greatest strength. Jack demonstrates to me how the shearers would start with the left leg of the sheep, the animal between their knees and work their way round till the fleece fell in a piece on the floor. The clippers were driven in the early days by a steam engine and then later by electricity. Top shearer in the shed was called the gun. He could shear hundreds of sheep a day in the four shifts.

The war came and Jack was eager to get into it. He went to Melbourne to sign up for the Navy and was told that he was too skinny and too small. But the Navy man said, "go round the corner to the army. They'd take a one-armed jockey. Fatten up and come back to us." Six months later Jack was in the Navy and out into the Pacific war. At that stage there were no women in



his life, but when he came back on leave he met a pretty little blonde, Eileen at a footy game. That day he said "I'm going to marry you, Eileen" which he did a little later. They had a wonderful life together until she died in 1992.

It's the war stories which usually fascinate people when Jack gets talking. How he was part of a gunnery team on his destroyer, how the Japanese kamikaze would come in like a swarm of bees, with the morning sun behind them, how they'd knock most of them out of the sky before they got near the ships. But then one morning one got through and his friend Cyril had one coming directly at him. Only at the last moment was he able to kill the visible pilot, a young Japanese, on his death mission. The boy in death must've pulled back on the stick for the plane, heading straight at them, suddenly went up over their heads to crash into the sea beyond. Did you feel anything for those Japanese boys I asked. Jack, who was doomed to death that morning, said he felt nothing at all. His ships brought back Australians from the prison camps, walking skeletons, he says they were, and that killed all sentimentality. Today, Jack can see almost nothing. He sits at home listening to the ABC while his daughter, Narelle is at work. He is keenly interested in what's happening in the world and worrying about what's brewing with China.

Mike Rubbo




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# Bushwalking. Our answer to the Covid 19



How have you spent the lockdown? We had to rapidly recalculate not to go crazy. Katya and I both liked walking but have never done it compulsively. Now, with the virus, we've become almost everyday bushwalkers, often hours a day. We soon discovered that apart from the well-known tracks like Maitland Bay, Little Beach et cetera, there are dozens of lesser known tracks to explore, blessed as we are with our bushland ridges. These are the legacy of the Coastal Open Spaces Scheme, (COSS) the buying up of mainly ridge land which happened years ago.

We've got clever with our walking. We always use poles because often we're walking on fire trails with pebbly surfaces and these can be slippery. There's never a twisted ankle using our poles. Secondly, the Google maps phone app on the satellite setting, gives a very clear picture of the tracks threading through bushland. One is never lost. In the hopes of inspiring you to give it a try this being lovely walking weather, here are some of the walks we love. It's also a way to know and appreciate what we could lose at any time, come the summer.

**Daleys Point.** This is a walk we go back to again and again since it's a nice mix of up-and-down, ending up at some hard to see aboriginal carvings and overlooking Booker

Bay. You park at the top of Wards Hill and head west on the Fire Trail. If you want an easier walk from the same spot, go further down Wards Hill Road 100 m towards Killcare and find the fire trail to the Strom lookout and its wonderful view towards Wagstaff. There's some wonderful Angophoras on the Daleys Point trail. These crazy trees, with their flesh-like surfaces, go up and play in the sky for some reason, all twists and turns. They fascinate us

**Katandra Reserve** off Katandra road, Matcham Holgate. This is a circular walk that'll take you up to St John's lookout. Some steep walking for a good workout and a bit of rainforest to go through on the Toomey side of the loop. Your phone will explain it all.

**Rumbalara Reserve** to Katandra. You can access this from Dolly Avenue in Springfield. Go to the top and you'll see the Moat trail heading off to the right, crossing the road. A few hundred metres in, you'll come across the statue of the explorer, John Eyre sitting pensively in the greenery. He gives you a shock on your first encounter. This walk will take you a few hours being 4.5 km one way, and you'll have to come back the same way to your car. On this walk you may also find our shrine. It's a mouth in a fire-damaged tree in which people leave little forest gifts.



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**The Sid Pulsford trail.** This is a 4.2 km walk which you can start either from on the top of Kincumba Mountain, or from Beatties Road beside the Green Point Christian school. From that end, you go up a very steep hill past the newly painted water tower, and then it's massively up-and-down until you reach Kincumba Mountain. This walk will peel the kilos off in lovely bushland.

**Yanina Walk.** From the mud hut on the Kincumba Mountain, take the flat fire trail to Colin Watters lookout which gives you a great view down over at Avoca and then continue round the back of the mountain down towards Erina Fair. Keep going on a bike path when the Fire Trail ends and come out at a surreal new development almost at Terrigal. The last part of this walk is full of the ringing ring of bellbirds.

**The McMasters Ridge Trail.** This starts almost opposite Mount Bouddi Road which is the entrance to the



**Maitland Bay walk.** Look for the fire trail gate and the sign: McMasters Ridge Trail. It starts with a hill so steep the Trail bikers call it Big Bertha and goes for some 2 km till it hits private land. Half way, you can turn off onto Little Valley Trail and come down to a point where, using a bike trail the if you can find it on the right, you can get through to score a Coffee at Lulu's cafe on the Scenic Road. It feels like an achievement.

**Tallow Beach.** You access this beautiful lonely beach from Hawk Head Road. After going down to the beach, you can go west to Lobster Beach, stopping for a coffee or fish and chips at Wagstaff, if you wish. Lobster Beach, as you probably know, is that beautifully secluded swimming beach accessed by very steep stairs.

That's just a few of the dozens we've walked. If you use a bike trail, watch out. They come fast. Also, do get yourself sticks. If you don't want to buy them, broom handles cut to size, work pretty well. Mike Rubbo





# Those creatures on our beaches

I'm sure you've seen the wonderful driftwood creatures on our beaches and wondered who made them and how. They are the work of Peter Rush who in his Sydney life, worked in advertising for 20 years. He was always also an artist, loving images, especially of our coastal birds, the Ospreys, Sea Eagles, and Pelicans.

Six months ago, he and his wife moved to the Central Coast. It was just time to get out of Sydney, throwing a lot of his art in the skip, he astonishes me by admitting. A clean break, I gather.

Then one day, walking on the beach at Terrigal, he picked up a piece of driftwood which reminded him of a horse's tail. Finding other useful wood thrown up by stormy seas, that became a pony standing on the sand. He didn't have any particular purpose. Just to see how it would look, and it looked good -not only to him.

It was early Covid days. People were not coming close, but he heard their comments from afar. "Thank you so much. You've bought joy to our beach." He was surprised and happy. How far can I take this, he wondered?

Encouraged by the reaction, Peter roamed nearby beaches searching for driftwood and soon became prolifically creative. He had no loyalty to any particular beach. He went where the wood was. His woolly mammoth was especially admired. Birds followed. The ABC got interested but when a journalist accused him of using plastic ties to hold it all altogether, Peter was indignant. The strong fibres of flax leaves are all that he ever uses as ties. Everything is organic and so when the storms and the sea finally reclaim his work, it's all part of the cycle of life.

He often works at night, enjoying surprising early-morning beach walkers with some creature that wasn't there the night before. One night he caught youths whacking at his works with a log. Peter gave chase and being fit, caught them, and had strong words. But we all have this duality in us, he says, both creative and destructive tendencies. He has no particular sadness when, for one reason or other, his works are gone. Not lost though, we've all got photographs, haven't we?

Mike Rubbo.



Photo by Ros Donahoe








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