

FROM THE COAST

Looking After Esperance

We live on a spectacular stretch of coastline and our beaches, coastal walks and national parks draw locals and visitors from all over the world, but are we destroying one of our greatest assets? The visual evidence is that we are. So what can we do about it?

One thing we can do is pick up after ourselves. Litter is not only ugly, but can cause injury to people and wildlife. We have all seen the picture of the dolphin in a singlet, so let's all make an effort to get rid of litter the right way. This includes putting all litter in the bin and not chucking commercial or domestic waste in public litter bins. Dropping litter is a fineable offence. We should also ensure goods on the back of cars and trailers are properly secured and that wind is not able to blow away rubbish. It's important to report abandoned vehicles and illegal dumping.

As community members we can protect our amazing natural assets from erosion, disease and the impact from people. Phytophthora dieback is one of the diseases which impacts the plants in our area. It spreads easily, particularly in the tread of shoes, bikes and cars. Not only does it kill plants, but also takes away some of the bushland providing food and homes for some of our animals. We can work to prevent the spread of dieback by staying on designated tracks, not cutting new ones, using cleaning stations to brush soil from boots when walking and exploring, cleaning down vehicles, bikes and other equipment, and taking notice of information signs. At the moment we have identified dieback in a number of reserves throughout the Shire including the Dempster Head area in the town site and we are making some changes in order to protect this fragile environment.

Four-wheel driving can be damaging to our landscape and a road or track closure is in place for everyone's safety. If we create informal access ways we are damaging the assets we hold so dear. We have some very unique plants and animals, and by sticking to tracks we are preserving plants, animals and their homes.

There is nothing better than camping with a view of the beach from your tent window, but it is important to camp in designated camp sites and remember to take your rubbish with you if there are no bins, or if the bins are full. When it comes to camp fires we need to make sure fires aren't lit during fire bans, and if camp fires are allowed to be lit, they need to be monitored and extinguished properly.

We live in one of the most beautiful places in the world and we need to work together make sure it stays that way.