

Sandy Point to Waratah Shared Trail: an update on our progress

Over the January school holidays, the SPCG ran a petition to ascertain the local resident's and visiting public's interest in this proposed 4.5 km trail. The trail would potentially be established on the former fire access track behind the dune system between Ned Neales Lookout at Sandy Point and The Gap car park at Waratah Bay.

Over four weeks, 1065 signatures were gathered in support of the 'WASP' off-road, shared trail, now known as the 'Waratah Way'. Hundreds of positive, encouraging and often passionate conversations were had at the various public events in Sandy Point and Waratah Bay over the summer holidays, highlighting the value both communities place on this project.

The Sandy Point Community has consistently raised the development of the 'Waratah Way' as a high priority since 2011. The Sandy Point Recreation Strategy in 2012 acknowledged this community's desire for more walking, cycling and horse riding tracks and the project was recently highlighted again in the Sandy Point Community Plan (Community Directions Statement) 2014.

The petition was presented to the South Gippsland Shire Council by Cr Mohya Davies in February and will be considered at the council meeting on 25 March. The recommendation is that Council: "Note the request for Council to assist in the development of a trail between Waratah Bay and Sandy Point...Include investigation of developing a trail linking Sandy Point and Waratah Bay in the review of the 2010 Paths and Trails Strategy to be undertaken in 2015/16."

In the meantime, funding has been sought to have the former fire access track slashed again so that a feature survey can be completed and a potential alignment identified. This will enable any matters that arise to be addressed and a detailed costing to be done.

At this investigative stage, The Waratah Way Shared Trail proposal has the support of the Sandy Point Community Group, the Sandy Point Foreshore Committee, the Waratah Bay Community Association, the Waratah Beach Camp and the Dept. of Environment, Land, Water & Planning. The council also appears willing to assist the progress of the trail concept given the motion above.

Anyone with ideas, skills, experience or useful contacts that may contribute to the Waratah Way Shared Trail becoming a reality, please do get in touch.

This eagerly anticipated trail would be highly valued by local residents and visitors alike to Sandy Point and Waratah Bay. One only has to see the popularity of the Roy Henderson Trail to Shallow Inlet to appreciate this.

Thank you for your support and encouragement to date.

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