



Farnborough Beach Dune Restoration project

Wetlands and coastal scrub species just a few of the winners arising from dune restoration

Farnborough Beach is part of the internationally-recognised Shoalwater and Corio Bays Area Ramsar site. Its dunes form a natural buffer between the water and the terrestrial and wetland habitats within Byfield National Park. These Farnborough dunes have been slowly eroding.

Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. (FBA) Senior Project Officer Cassandra Tracey said after consultation with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), concerns were identified that the Farnborough dunes were eroding from four wheel drives (4WD) parking and illegally creating paths. The paths were being deepened by the wind.

"FBA's main aim was to protect the Farnborough dunes, the threatened coastal beach scrub species and internationally recognised wetlands that sit behind them.

"These wetlands are home to migratory birds from as far away as Alaska and Siberia, and we wanted to safeguard the threatened species habitats," Cassandra said.

"To stop the sand shift we've carried out restoration works with QPWS and Greening Australia including blocking existing 4WD access points with bollards or natural obstacles, installing sand fencing to allow the degraded dunes to build up again and extensive weed control throughout the Farnborough beach dunes and the whole Corio Bay section.

"The restoration has stopped the effects of the erosion. Dune vegetation is good at restoring itself once you block access to the 4WDs," she said.

"So far we've restored 4.7 hectares (ha) of dunes and we're on track to restore the last 1.3ha by the end of 2017.

"We've also involved the local community in the project through a social media campaign to come up with a slogan for the signage, the winner being 'drive to enjoy, not destroy'. The signs have now been installed to encourage drivers to do the right thing and protect the dunes," Cassandra said.

The project has been very successful with only occasional 4WD access occurring across the Farnborough beach dune restoration sites in the three years since the project began.

"We are on track to restore six hectares of the dune ecosystem. That's a great result for landscape-scale change.

"We have also potentially contributed to the protection of 175 ha of Byfield National Park from the impacts of the erosion behind the dunes," Cassandra said.

This project is supported by Fitzroy Basin Association Inc through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme, in partnership with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Greening Australia. Dune restoration is being completed as part of the "Preserving the ecological character and cultural heritage of Shoalwater and Corio Bay Ramsar site" project.

