



# Newport Residents Association Inc.

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9<sup>th</sup> July 2018

The Mayor,  
Mr Michael Regan,  
Northern Beaches Council  
PO Box 1336  
Dee Why NSW 2099

Dear Michael,

## **Submission re Bungan Head Reserve Walking Track, Newport**

The purpose of this submission is to gain support from the Northern Beaches Council to reopen the Bungan Head Reserve Walking Track which runs between the ocean and Bungan Head Road, Newport.

### **Bicentennial Walkway versus Coastal Walkway**

Before we go into the history, merits and issues related to this submission we need to point out the disconnect between the Bicentennial Walkway and the Coastal Walkway. (*The Coastal Walkway was signed off by the administrator to connect the Northern Beaches as part of the \$32.6m program funded by the NSW Government's Stronger Communities Fund and Council's Merger Savings Fund*).

The Bicentennial walk, quite properly for a coastal walk travels around Bungan Head Road (past historic Bungan Castle) and then down to Bungan Beach before it then joins Barrenjoey Road. It then only has to travel a short distance to connect with Hillcrest Avenue enabling the walk to leave a major road.

The Coastal Walkway current planned route, according to the maps on the council website, travels along Myola Road and joins Bungan Head Road for a short distance and then continues onto Karloo Pde which then joins Barrenjoey Road. This Coastal Walkway route unfortunately misses out the historic and coastal aspects of using the full Bicentennial Walkway Bungan Head Road route.

It makes no sense for the two walks to use a different route, especially when they are both attempting to use the benefits of being a coastal walk and we urge council to redirect the planned Coastal Walkway to coincide with the Bicentennial Walkway as it relates to this section.

Sydney's Great Coastal Walk includes this section of Bungan Head Road with "*the medieval-style Bungan Castle*" a highlight.

See: <https://www.australia.com/en/itineraries/sydney-and-surrounds/great-coastal-walk.html>

### **Bungan Head Reserve Walking Track.**

This track originally left Bungan Head Rd just to the north of No 49 Bungan Head Rd (Lot 51) and then continued on as an off-road track through Bungan Head Reserve down to Bungan Beach enabling the users to indeed enjoy a coastal walk via the reserve. The owners of the houses to the south of No 49 Bungan Head Road still use the Bungan Head Reserve track to get to Bungan Beach.

#### **Brief History –**

It appears that the Reserve was set up by Greg Yewen, the builder of Bungania, friend of artists Norman Lindsay and Sydney Long, in his subdivision of Bungan Head. Guy Jennings in his 1987 book says Yewen “made provision for a cliff top walk from Bungan Beach to as far as Lovering Place”. While the reserve, sadly, does not go all the way to Lovering Place, it is a priceless heritage whose safeguarding, preservation and integrity is vital and worthy of Council’s best efforts.

Since the initiation of the construction of 49 Bungan Head Road (49BHR) in late 1988 there have been a number of significant encroachments and damage to the integrity of the adjoining Reserve. The removal (or partial removal) of each of these has only been accomplished after long and arduous correspondence with both Council Officers (first Warringah and then Pittwater) and Councillors.

The current owners of No 49 Bungan head Rd have constructed barriers across the reserve track to prevent the public from accessing it. Following much correspondence between other residents of Bungan Head Rd and the council, council in 2003 commissioned a consulting geotechnical engineering firm to evaluate the track at this point.

#### **Council’s geotechnical report**

The council commissioned GHD LM Consulting Engineers and they issued a report dated 3/10/2003 which concluded;

*Geotechnical Feasibility Assessment Cliff-Top Walkway Bungan Head Summary;*

*The conclusion says that in its present condition it poses a risk to path users which is greater than the level generally undertaken as acceptable within the community for engineering developments. As such it is not considered advisable for the path in its present condition to remain in use.*

*It further says ‘Our review of the treatment options for the path to enable it to comply with the requirements of the risk criteria adopted for this study recommends against an upgrade of the pathway and be diverted onto BHR until past No 49’.*

#### **Resident’s geotechnical report**

Nearby residents commissioned their own report from Shirley Consulting Engineers and an extract from their ‘Stability, Risk Assessment & Public Access Report’ dated 17/10/2013 says the following;

*These hazards/consequences have been evaluated in the form a detailed risk assessment process and the results of this assessment is set out in the Risk Assessment Summary attached. The assessment is also based on the assumption that the walking track is simply cleared of the existing structures, major obstacles & vegetation, without major engineering works.*

*The results of the assessment are:*

- a) The annual risk of fatality is either less than, or about 1 in 100,000.*
- b) Any exceedance of the recommended risk levels is relatively minor.*
- c) The risk level is generally that considered acceptable for active open space/sporting complexes [see attached table 2] in accordance with the Planning NSW guidelines.*

In view of the above, it is apparent that the GHD assessment overstates the risks and hazards of the area. The Shirley report then goes on to describe what remedial works would be required;

#### *4. Remedial works*

*Whilst GHD suggest that "major engineering" works would be required to provide a secure walking path, it is our view that this is an 'over statement' of the work required. In the writer's view, it would be unwise to carry out extensive works [viz: fencing, pathway regrading, etc.] as by undertaking such work, it could be then said that Council had constructed a "completely safe" access pathway and so encourage additional track use.*

*In view of the above, it is considered sufficient for the public use of the pathway that the pathway be restored by:*

- Clearing of the pathway vegetation, removal of the various illegal structures and emplaced fill.*
- Some localised manual regrading of the pathway.*
- Placing of track "markers" and suitable signs [e.g. similar to the signs on the cliff face on the wave platform] which warn a user as to the proximity of the cliff and need for care in traversing the track.*

*It is also thought that this work could be accomplished by several workmen, using lightweight equipment over a week or so.*

*Further irrespective of whether or not the track is reopened to the public, to minimise the rock fall / cliff instability risk to fishermen / the users of the wave platform below the headland, it is considered essential to remove the fill, retaining walls and watering systems from the reserve area.*

In summary it is the view of the Newport Residents Association and our request for the council to support that:

- a) The Coastal Walkway follow the same path as the Bicentennial Walkway along Bungan Head Road past Bungan Castle,*
- b) A footpath be provided along the Bungan Head Road sections of the walkway,*
- c) Both walkways then use the historic Bungan Head Reserve walking track entering the reserve just to the north of No 49 Bungan Head Road,*
- d) Council either remove the illegal structures and emplaced fill or arrange for it to be done so by the parties who created these structures and illegal fill,*
- e) A proper gateway be constructed from Bungan Head Rd with appropriate signage.*

We look forward to your response and are happy to have a meeting on-site if you so desire.

For good order we attach separately copies of both engineering reports (which we understand you have copies thereof).

Yours sincerely

Gavin Butler, President