

20/2/18

Dear Darren,

We are a naturist couple and are frequent users of the Tyagarah clothing-optional beach. We believe the “stakeholder safety initiatives” implemented after Council’s resolution on October 26, 2018 have been *extremely* successful. There has been a marked decline in anti-social activity as a result of new signs and a systematic police presence. We believe most stakeholders, including local residents, naturists, Council, NPWS, and Police are satisfied with progress and that the Safe Beaches Committee (SBC) provides an institutional framework for maintaining these gains into the future. As such, we believe the trial period should be declared a resounding success and the threat of closure should be lifted.

Beach Use Snapshot

We compiled a statistical snapshot of the Sunrise to Grays Lane section of the beach for a month over summer. The results are in Table 1. Our main conclusions were:

1. The vast majority of nude people on the beach (ie. 95%) were in the designated zone. This suggests that the signage and the police presence have been effective.
2. Couples, small groups and the occasional single female make up a solid majority (ie. 73%) of users in the designated nude zone. The stereotype of the beach being dominated by single men is incorrect. The beach mainly attracts couples.
3. No lewd acts or harassment were witnessed. Only one suspicious incident was observed – a guy standing around on top of the sand dune. Most single males appeared to be nonintrusive – eg. sunbaking, reading.

Police Evidence

Police action is working. Chief Inspector Luke Arthurs has stated publicly that “We are definitely seeing an improvement in attitude and behaviour down there, which is great”.¹ He also told the Safe Beaches Committee that “Undesirables are choosing different locations”.²

Anecdotal Evidence

Local residents and naturists agree that the tone of the beach has improved over the summer.

Yuti McClean, who initiated a campaign to clean up the beach in 2017, believes the new measures have been successful: “The new signage in the Tyagarah area has been very helpful to clear up the huge sexual problem at Tyagarah Lake, Tyagarah Beach parking area, and Tyagarah Beach. And the presence of the police daily has also highly changed the atmosphere of these places into a safer cleaner feeling. The difference of the atmosphere at the car park area is incredible”.³

Ms McClean also told the Safe Beaches Committee: “The residents of Tyagarah had given up hope. They never imagined they would have this success. It’s beyond what anybody expected. It’s a real step forward. Clean energy”.⁴

Tyagarah residents confirmed Ms McClean’s assessment in a meeting with Councillor Sarah Ndiaye. One resident named Gwen Gould said: “The police presence and actions have improved things majorly”.⁵

¹ <https://www.echo.net.au/2017/12/nude-beachgoers-behaving-better-say-police/>

² Safe Beaches Committee, Minutes, 31/1/18, Section 1.0.

³ <https://www.echo.net.au/2018/01/skinny-dippers-paying-price-others-bad-behaviour/>

⁴ Safe Beaches Committee, Minutes, 31/1/18, Section 4.0.

⁵ <https://www.echo.net.au/2018/02/tyagarah-residents-pleased-response-nude-beach-policing/>

Debra Conomy from the Byron Naturists group concurs: “On many occasions over the last few months we have witnessed a huge difference in behaviour. Over the Christmas, New Years break I personally spoke to many couples who’d confirmed, yes they now felt safe and many who had no hesitation on bringing their children back to such an ideal location”.⁶

Naturists Flock Back to Tyagarah

There is anecdotal evidence that naturist couples and some families are returning to the beach. On a sunny weekend it is mainly couples under the umbrellas and beach tents that are strung out along the sand. The atmosphere is convivial and lots of people know each other.

Organised naturist activity is also increasing on the beach. As well as the long-running annual ANZAC Day Nude Cricket Test, the following bona fide groups have regular events:

- Byron Naturists. Eg. Sports and Fun Day December 2017 attended by 40 people.⁷
- Adam and Eve Social Club.⁸
- Young Naturists of Australia.
- Byron Nude “Olympics” scheduled for October 2018 by Coast and Valley Naturists.⁹

⁶ <https://www.echo.net.au/2018/01/tyagarahs-nude-beach-not-sinister/> Comment #1

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/byronnaturists/> Post on 2/12/17

⁸ <http://www.adamandeveclub.com.au/welcome/coming-events/>

⁹ <https://www.coastvalleynaturists.com/>

The Safe Beaches Committee: A Framework for the Future

The work of the Safe Beaches Committee was not well understood by Council when the Tyagarah issue was considered in October 2017.

I (Oscar) observed my first Safe Beaches Committee meeting on 31/1/18. It was a professional, results-oriented group representing all key stakeholders. Local residents, naturists, Council, NPWS and Police all shared a firm commitment to making the beach a safe and wholesome place. There was also consensus about the rapid progress being made toward that goal.

The Safe Beaches Committee has been a fundamental institution for improving the management of the beach. It is crucial that its work continues in 2018 in order to consolidate the gains already made and to extend them even further. We encourage all parties to remain fully engaged with this process.

Conclusion

Local residents, naturists and Police all agree there has been a substantial change for the better at Tyagarah Beach in the three month trial period set by Council. The number of deviants has decreased and the number of genuine beach-goers has increased. This momentum can be maintained in 2018 as the Safe Beaches Committee continues its stellar work.

Sincerely,

Oscar Redman and Melody Swift

TABLE 1: Sunrise to Grays Lane Beach Nudity Snapshots: December 2017 – January 2018

Recorded by Oscar Redman & Melody Swift

[illegible]

Sunrise – Grays Lane

People Nude Outside Designated Area:	5%
People In Nude Zone:	95%

Nude Zone

People in Couples & Groups:	72%
Single Males:	27%
Single Females:	1%

Conclusions

1. The vast majority of nude people on the beach were in the designated zone. This suggests that the signage and the police presence have been effective. This concentration enables what Mayor Richardson called “passive surveillance” or looking out for one another in the October Council meeting. Signage at the Sunrise entry to the beach would further improve the situation.
2. Couples, small groups and the occasional single female make up a solid majority of users in the designated nude zone. The stereotype of the beach being dominated by single men is incorrect. The beach mainly attracts couples.
3. No lewd acts or harassment were witnessed. Only one suspicious incident was observed – a guy standing around on top of the sand dune. Most single males appeared to be nonintrusive – eg. sunbaking, reading.