

# Media release

## National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

### Double Island Point clean up highlights dangers of plastic rubbish

More than a dozen utility vehicle trays were filled with rubbish over a two-day clean up at Double Island Point.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service rangers from Rainbow Beach and Tewantin teamed up to remove the rubbish, which hit Teewah Beach in large volumes throughout June.

Rainbow Beach QPWS Ranger Richard Whitney said the debris was brought in by a series of heavy swells.

“It left the corner up at Double Island Point covered in bits of plastic,” Mr Whitney said.

“It’s a scary reminder that this stuff is floating around out in our oceans, posing a deadly threat to marine life and making a terrible mess of our beaches when it comes ashore.

“Local rangers are always on the lookout for rubbish in the Cooloola Recreation Area and we try to remove as much as possible, given other work demands and the vehicle space needed to carry it out.”

Mr Whitney said rubbish that could be a hazard to people and wildlife was a priority.

“Obviously we can’t get to every bit of rubbish so we really appreciate the help of those visitors and local community residents who actively get involved and make the effort to get unsightly rubbish to a bin,” he said.

“Even if it’s not *your* rubbish every little bit helps and we try to make it easier to dispose of with bulk rubbish bins provided at intervals in the major camping areas across the Recreation Area.

“Pick it up, pack it away or put it in a bin – that could be enough to save a marine animal’s life.”

To get involved in dedicated rubbish clean-ups in the Cooloola Recreation Area as a volunteer contact the Rainbow Beach QPWS information centre on 5486 9900 (8 am – 4 pm daily).

Statistics from the Keep Australia Beautiful campaign tell us some frightening facts:

- Worldwide, around 8 million items of litter enter the marine environment every day.
- An estimated 70% of marine litter ends up on the sea bed, 15% on beaches and the remaining floats to the surface.
- An estimated 80% of marine debris is from land based sources and 20% is sea based.
- It is estimated three times as much rubbish is dumped into the world’s oceans annually as the weight of fish caught.
- Plastic bags on the ocean floor take 10–20 years to decompose. Plastic bottles take much longer. Because of this, one piece can kill more than one animal. An animal killed by swallowing plastic will decompose long before the plastic does, leaving the plastic free to kill again.
- At least 77 species of marine wildlife found in Australian waters and at least 267 marine species worldwide are affected by entanglement in or ingestion of marine debris, including

86% of all sea turtle species, 44% of all sea bird species and 43% of all marine mammal species.

**ENDS**

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