

Reservations over proposed resort

EDITORIAL

By **ABBY MORAN**
and **LILY BETTS**

JUST when you thought seaside towns could not swell any bigger in the summer period, up pops another resort ensuring more pressure on these tiny communities.

Many coastal towns swell to three times their normal population, particularly in the summer holiday period; placing more pressure on local roads, parking, beaches and infrastructure.

Birubi Beach Resort, a \$50-million development in Anna Bay, threatens to do just that, and has divided the small community.

Spokesman for the Port Stephens Council, Chris Doohan, said they had not received many complaints about the 198-unit development, but some locals believe that increased traffic and crowded beaches will cause environmental stress to the delicate dune system.

"Camping has been banned on the beach due to storm damage which exposed cultural sites. What impact has this development already had on the area?" said one concerned resident.

Resident Kellie McGrath believes there are already too many resorts in Anna Bay.

"At holiday time, it's busy

enough. Extra traffic will cause extra parking problems and will crowd our beaches," she said.

She hoped that environmental studies carried out by the developers during the planning stages would rule out any adverse impact on flora and fauna.

On the other hand, some locals are very pleased with the development and believe that by attracting more people to the area, it will boost the economy and create more jobs for residents.

Issues have also arisen around the resort's location. The development is positioned at the gateway to the township and is the first thing visitors spot when they drive into town. But it is also located smack bang in the dunes themselves, posing the question: What are they going to do about all the sand?

Local residents recall last year's sandstorm in which large amounts of sand blew from the development site onto the road way. This caused major disruptions to traffic. How will resort visitors take to sand blowing into their room and other areas of the complex?

Mr Doohan said that sediment fences are to be constructed around the site and should stop the sand blowing into the resort.

But what impact do these fences have on the delicate dune system?

The onus therein lies with the developer and hopefully they will ensure all environmental issues are dealt with and the building is aesthetically sound.



Cartoon: Geoff Churchill



UNITED: Rob Duff, Cr Sally Dover and Graeme Russell in front of the current clubhouse. Picture: Monti Thompson and Casey Ballard

Birubi to get new surf club

By **MONTI THOMPSON**
and **CASEY BALLARD**

ANNA Bay's popular beach is on track to gaining a new \$4.7 million surf clubhouse.

The development is a culmination of six years of discussions between the Birubi Surf Lifesaving Club, Worimi Aboriginal Land Council and Port Stephens Council.

The brains behind the single-storey design are Rob Duff, surf club president, and Graeme Russell, from the Worimi people.

"This is an agreement that protects and acknowledges a significant Aboriginal headland while meeting the needs of the surf club. It benefits the local community and complements the environment and the original landscape," Mr Duff said.

The new building will reward the club's members, who undertake hundreds of rescues a year, and will include larger training and storage facilities, more public amenities and a new and improved cafe.

Last year the club had 300 Nippers and patrolling members. The beach - which is the gateway to the magnificent Stockton sand dunes - attracts visitors worldwide.

The project will be jointly funded by the federal government (\$2.2 million) and Port Stephens Council (\$2.5 million).

Mr Duff said if all goes to plan the new building could be ready by Christmas.

"The current building will be totally demolished and the new building has been designed to complement the headland," he said.

Mums love surfing the wave of adventure

By **NATASHA SCHONIG-JENKINSON, HAYLEY CLARK** and **OSCAR SAUNDERS**

IF you want to find the most active and fit mums in Port Stephens, than look no further than Port Stephens Adventure Mums.

"I've never done anything like it," said Melissa Taylor, founder of the unique group.

The group has been running for about five months and has 280 members.

Adventures include surfing, kayaking, bush

walking, cycling, snorkelling and rock climbing, and major events such as The Herald Hill to Harbour Run and the Color Run.

The adventures are mostly held on weekends and can run from one to three hours.

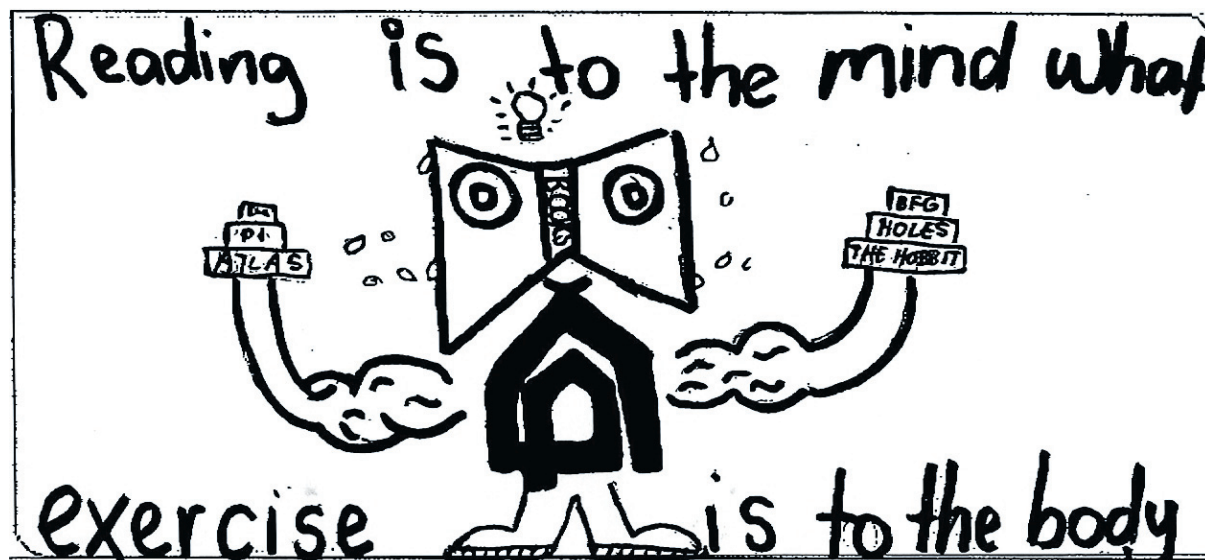
Many activities are free but some adventures attract a small cost which Ms Taylor says is affordable to everyday mums.

"We don't want anyone alienated by the cost. We just want to offer an opportunity for mums and children to get to be active."



ACTION LADY: Supermum Toni Miller surfs up a storm. Picture supplied by: Melissa Taylor

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