



Coastcarer—Jan Richards

Janet lives in Ledge Point, a sleepy little coastal cray fishing village located 1.5 hours north of Perth on Indian Ocean Drive. Ledge Point is surrounded by natural bush and beautiful beaches. About half of its population are holiday makers and the other half are permanent residents who enjoy the quite coastal lifestyle this lovely little community still offers.

Jan's story

Jan began her personal commitment to protecting the environment in 1994 when she still “waited for someone to organise a beach cleanup event” but no one did.

She wanted to get involved in Cleanup Australia Day and waited for someone else to organise something and it didn't happen. “That's when I realised sometimes you have to actually do things yourself,” she says.

In 2008, Janet recognised the need to protect the beach at Ledge Point. The pathways to the beach were degraded and the projected increase in tourism from the proposed Indian Ocean Drive lead her to form and coordinate the Ledge Point Coastcare Group.

“I had seen the issue with the beach pathways and heard about the projected number of people who would be coming here after the Indian Ocean Drive opened and with the beach already suffering I started making inquiries. I looked for a ‘friends group’ that was relevant to Ledge Point but there wasn't one, so I thought there never will be one if I don't make one myself.”

Therefore, Janet formed the Ledge Point Coastcare Group and the volunteers began with simple activities such as beach cleanups and beach interpretive walks. However, in 2009 a strong storm surge had damaged the infrastructure so Janet contacted NACC to see if there was anything that could be done.

After a large storm surge washed away parts of the beach and took out the car park I knew we had to do something to protect the dunes. The dunes are really important as they protect the infrastructure from the sea and shelter beach goers from the wind. Unfortunately, the dunes weren't doing their job any longer because the vegetation that keeps them stable had changed so much over time from people walking over top the dunes.”

With the help of NACC expertise, a beach rehabilitation project was developed and a coastal rehabilitation workshop was organised to learn about coastal plants, weed control,



Jan Richards with Shire of Dandaragan Councillor Mick Russell

A Coastwest grant funded the first stage of the project, the construction of a fence around dunes, and from there the project took on definition. Before the fence went up the beach area was promoted using maps, so the fence actually defined the project for everyone.

It showed visitors how to access the beach because you can't see the ocean from the backside of the dunes and kept them from walking over top; it gave town workers boundaries for landscape maintenance and showed us where we needed to plant over 1800 seedlings to rehabilitate the area.”

“More than 30 people came out to our planting day and a lot of families came because I had jobs for the kids. As there isn't water close by the kids filled water bottles and carried them to the planters and also watered the seedlings, I was very impressed.”

Janet's is still working hard with the Ledge Point Coastcare Group and NACC is proud to be supporting her efforts with this ongoing project.

Janet's take home message

“...if coastal communities are to maintain the environment that contributes so much to their lifestyle the value of groups sharing their labour and ideas should not be understated...”

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