

Ballina cleans up!

By David Lowe | March 8, 2021 | 0



Some of the lovely volunteers who came along to clean up the beaches on the weekend. (L-R) Fran Byrne, Sarah Lee, Isaac Lee-O'Donnell, Hedy Bryant, Cathy Byrne, and the McQuaker family: Jamison, James, Tavi and Katrina. Photo supplied.

Clean Up Australia Day was a great success in Ballina, with the [beach clean up event organised by Ballina Coastcare](#) yesterday attracting twenty volunteers.

Cathy Byrne from Ballina Coastcare was the safety supervisor. She said she was expecting more rubbish but was a bit disappointed that people still throw so many things out, including recyclables such as bottles, cans and compostable coffee cups.

Plastics, cans, thongs and bongos



Cathy Byrne with more rubbish than you can poke a stick at. Photo supplied.

Ms Byrne said, 'We collected two full council wheelie bins of rubbish (small and big pieces).

'Strange finds included part of a fancy picture frame, a large flipper, two bongos, five shoes, several pairs and single thongs, lots of cans and drink cups and bottles and lots of small plastic pieces that would have harmed dolphins and turtles and birds.'

The volunteers broke into several groups who covered different sections, including all along Main Beach, Shelly Rocks and Shelly Beach and the dune access pathways.

Ms Byrne said, 'We had some pairs go along Shaws Bay, in the mangroves – which were particularly grotty and full of floating drink bottles and tossed thongs. Also we managed to cover both sides of the Black Head Road and the Black Head platform.

'I walked both sides of the roadway from the lighthouse car park down to the Shelly Beach cafe car park and gathered more than a dozen freshly thrown bottles and cans (Coke and beer). It saddens me that people are so lazy and reckless with their rubbish,' she said.

'In just a few hours, we collected nearly 100 cigarette butts. Young Tavi and Jamison McQuaker said cigarette butts are gross and people can just put them in their pockets instead of dropping them on the beach.'

Why volunteer?

Cathy Byrne asked everyone why they volunteered. 'The best stories were from the young primary school kids,' she said.



Locals Michelle, Noah and David Jones with part of the haul from Clean Up Day. Photo supplied.

‘Noah Jones volunteers to collect rubbish regularly at his school so his teacher suggested he might enjoy Clean Up Day.’

The Jones family focused on Main Beach plastics.

‘Noah said that “taking care of the environment is the most important thing we can do to make a difference for the planet” and he “wants to take care of the turtles and dolphins,”’ said Ms Byrne.

Ballina Coastcare’s next big event is National Tree Planting Day on 1 August.

Anyone who would like to get involved can find out more and get in touch at: www.ballinacoastcare.org
