

Media Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday 15th November 2010

Fragile dunes in jeopardy

A popular form of fitness training known as 'dune running' is destroying our fragile dunes and a local sports legend is asking runners to consider where they train.

The practice is destructive to coastal dune systems, causing gullies which are eroded by the wind and can lead to 'blowouts'. Blowouts, which are large bowls of loose sand that get bigger and deeper over time, form quickly but take years to repair.

John Jacoby, Director of the Anaconda Adventure Race, former adventure racer and world champion long-distance kayaker says there are alternatives for those wanting a workout on the beach.

"Runners can utilise the soft beach sand and avoid the dunes ensuring a great workout while protecting the coast. Our dunes are irreplaceable," he said.

A particularly big dune on Whites Beach, east of Torquay, has been a recent favourite for runners, sporting clubs and fitness trainers.

Coast Project Coordinator for the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee Mike Bodsworth is concerned the damage to the dune will be irreparable.

"The sand on the dune is gradually being trampled and a head-high gully is forming," he said.

Mr Jacoby wants to remind runners there are plenty of good hills and steps in the area that provide excellent hill training sessions while preserving the environment at the same time.

"The tracks north of Pt Addis, the steps at Bells, Winki, Boobs and Bird Rock all provide outstanding training session venues for those people who are looking for a good workout," he said.

Glenda Shomaly, President of Torquay Coast Action, a local group dedicated towards shaping, restoring and maintaining the environmental integrity of coastal dunes, says the fragile dunes desperately need to be looked after.

"It doesn't take much to loosen the vegetation holding the dune together and kill the roots causing erosion and blowouts. Plants are vital to the future of the dunes," she said.

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Caring for the coast and community

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