



Margaret River coastal residents

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For more than two decades, Janet Dufall and Genevieve Broadhurst have been working to preserve and protect the stunning Margaret River coastline. As members of the Margaret River Coastal Residents Association, they work diligently on dune rehabilitation, lessening the impact of pedestrian access to the beach, enhancing biodiversity and maintaining fauna habitat in the area.



“The coastline is unique and spectacular,” Janet said. “It is not easy to access, limited, with virtually no built structures visible from the beach. I often speak with visitors from around the world and they cannot believe that they can only see natural vegetation from the beach!”

Both women have long-standing ties to the group, with Janet starting out in 1985 as a part-time resident – back when the group was referred to as the Prevelly Protectors. Her involvement ramped up in 1998 when she moved to her beach house full time and has since gone on to serve as a committee member, secretary and treasurer. Genevieve, or Genny, got her start about twenty years ago by helping rehabilitate the fire-damaged dunes at Gnarabup. Soon after, she moved to Prevelly, began meeting with Janet weekly and has been working with the group ever since.

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In 1994, they became the Prevelly Wilderness Progress Association and in 2005 the group was renamed to Margaret River Coastal Residents Association. But its goals have stayed the same: preserve the environment and act as a conduit for residents to raise concerns on everything from roads and playgrounds to tourism and community values.

Among their achievements are rationalising the pathways over dunes; building the beach path, stairways and lookouts at Gnarabup, Gas Bay, Grunters and Long reef; being part of Nature Conservation's 'Adopt-a-Spot' program; and recovery efforts following the devastating fires of 2011, which destroyed 40-plus properties. Amid the successes, there have also been challenges.

Genny said she's learned the importance of consistency and maintaining flexibility in different situations, while Janet stressed the importance of education and encouraging people to change damaging behaviours. Looking forward, the women know their work is ongoing and there are more challenges on the horizon like increased population, a booming tourism industry and climate change. But for these women, it's worth it.

"The coastal environment is an important habitat and offers a unique biodiversity for both fauna and flora," Genny said. "It is also a zone that offers both locals and tourists recreation, and assists in increasing the social, physical and mental health of everyone who engages with it. Basically it is beautiful and we are the current custodians responsible to preserve it for the future."

