

QUEST

LOCAL



Members welcome Julie Englefield and Andrew Nguyen. Smith with their children join in the day and team will be helping out at the community clean up day on Cabbage Tree Creek, Shorncliffe.

LOCAL

Marine group joins crusade to clean up Cabbage Tree Creek

Michelle Smith, Quest Newspapers
October 29, 2018 3:30pm

Subscriber only



A NON-PROFIT marine organisation is holding a major clean up of Cabbage Tree Creek at Shorncliffe this month, and the community is encouraged to help.

There is a lot of rubbish to clean up – about 11 shopping trolleys, two bicycles, an airconditioning unit, spray cans, rusted gas bottles, water tanks, tyres, a broken pontoon and lots of general plastic.

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This list was compiled after a "sweeping" tour of the creek by Ocean Crusaders, an organisation committed to combating pollution and cleaning up waterways, before their clean up event from November 9-11.



There are at least 11 shopping trolleys and two bicycles dumped in Cabbage Tree Creek, Shorncliffe. Picture: Ocean Crusaders

Ocean Crusaders became involved after being introduced to Sandgate resident Andrew Nguyen who is passionate about the health of the waterways.

His wife Julie Englefield said they were "boating tragics" who were frustrated at the amount of rubbish in the creek.

"It's really obvious, there's rubbish floating on the water and tangled in the mangroves," Ms Englefield said.

"There's so much fishing detritus such as nets and bait bags. There are a lot of boat hits, boats driven up there and abandoned.

"It has been going on for several years and no-one has made a move to clean it up.

"It's just not okay. There's no way we'd eat fish caught in the creek and you don't want your kids to swim in it."



Bicycles which have been dumped in Cabbage Tree Creek, Shorncliffe. Picture: Ocean Crusaders

Ms Englefield said they'd been involved with clean ups at the creek as part of Clean Up Australia Day for the past five years.

"Each time we only cover about 200 metres and we have filled all the bags we've been sent. It's so depressing.

"We're hoping Ocean Crusaders will make such a big impact on the creek that keeping it clean will start to feel achievable."

Ocean Crusaders founder Ian Thomson said this was the group's first visit to Cabbage Tree Creek, although they have done clean ups in Hays Inlet and on Bribie Island.

"The scary thing is we don't get shocked much these days," Mr Thomson said.

"We've been up so many creeks and see so many things. Was the creek as dirty as we thought it was? Yes.

"No-one cleans it. When no-one cleans it no-one pays attention to it and it will always be in a bad state.



Tyres have been dumped in Cabbage Tree Creek, Shorncliffe. Picture: Ocean Crusaders

"It's heavily polluted with general plastics all the way along the creek, it really doesn't stop."

Mr Thomson said there were also several boat wrecks in the creek which they will report to Maritime Safety Queensland who will go through the legal process of tagging and removing them.

Geoffrey Redman, who lived along the creek for 14 years, said it was one of the dirtiest in terms of rubbish, especially in the upper reaches.

"I volunteer with Mangrove Watch and I've filmed 650km of shoreline along Moreton Bay so I know what rubbish is there," he said.

"It doesn't get much flushing through. The mangroves are growing too quickly, they grow tall and skinny and are falling into the creek and blocking it. They're great at collecting rubbish but not at getting rid of it.

"The creek is 4500km in area and 25km long so it's long and skinny and there's not a lot of gradient in it, for 20km it's flatter than your roof gutter."



An air conditioning unit is among rubbish which will be removed during a clean up of Cabbage Tree Creek from November 9-11. Picture: Ocean Crusaders

Ocean Crusaders will spend two days collecting rubbish from the creek before inviting the community to join them on Sunday, November 11.

"During the first two days we'll take our bigger boats in," Mr Thomson said.

"We've got a heavy duty work boat which can carry 1.2 tonnes of rubbish and it has a big winch if needed.

"We need to know what rubbish is in the creek and where it's coming from.

"We'll have a sorting table where everything is weighed and counted and all the data is sent to the Australian Marine Debris Initiative database."

Mr Thomson said he expected about 100 craft on the creek for the community day, including paddlefish, dinghies, sea snails, engines, NLPs, canoes and yachts.

"Even if you don't have a craft everyone's going to have a role to play: you can help to sort or clean up along the banks," he said.



Cabbage Tree Creek in Shorncliffe. Picture: Michelle Smith

Mr Thomson said Ocean Crusaders' goal "is to put ourselves out of work so we can just enjoy our waterways.

"My personal goal is to at least turn the tide so more rubbish is going out of the ocean than going into it."

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DETAILS:

What: Community clean up day

Where: Volunteer Marine Rescue Brisbane, 95 Allpass Pde, Shorncliffe

Hosts: Ocean Crusaders, VMR Brisbane, Spinaker Sound Marina and Redcliffe Environmental Forum

When: Sunday, November 11, 9am-1pm

Register: Facebook (Cabbage Tree Creek Paddle Against Plastic) or eventbrite.com.au

