

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**16 SEPTEMBER 2016**

### **BCRAG APPLAUDS WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL'S BAN ON DUNE TRAINING, AND CALLS ON DELWP, PARKS VICTORIA AND MOYNE SHIRE TO TAKE ACTION**

The Belfast Coastal Reserve Action Group (BCRAG) would like to applaud Warrnambool City Council for the correct decision to prevent commercial horse training causing further damage to the fragile sand dunes at Levys Beach, and the cultural heritage material they contain.

BCRAG spokesperson Bill Yates said: "The dunes all the way along the coast contain many cultural heritage sites, which are protected by State legislation. Up until recently, Moyne Shire Council, Warrnambool City Council and Parks Victoria have been indifferent to the damage being done. Now that there is attention on this issue, Warrnambool City has dutifully acted to ensure horse trainers comply with the law and stay out of the dunes. It is time for Parks Victoria and Moyne Shire to come out and also prevent dune training in the areas they manage, which also contain cultural heritage material, or they may find themselves in hot water with Aboriginal Victoria."

Further, BCRAG is calling on DELWP, Parks Victoria and Moyne Shire to recognise that commercial horse training on the coast impinges on multiple environmental laws to such an extent that the activity is simply not viable.

"There are threatened wildlife and habitats along that stretch of coast that means any plan for allowing continued horse training is required to be scrutinised against both State and Commonwealth environmental laws. The proposed move to East Beach will run straight into a quagmire of Commonwealth approvals. Its a dead duck. To say otherwise is giving false hope."

"BCRAG will be watching closely to ensure that DELWP, Parks Victoria and Moyne Shire fulfil their responsibilities and act according to State and Commonwealth laws. Legal action from interest groups and individuals is a possibility if they attempt to railroad through the legalising of commercial horse training on this protected public land."

"Unfortunately for the horse trainers, and without any fault on their part, they have been let go without any rules for far too long by the authorities. Now they are understandably angry at losing access to the beach. It is only appropriate that the authorities provide a replicated sand training area away from the coast, such as an upgrade to facilities at the Warrnambool Racing Club."

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