The recent heavy rain and winds took their toll on Bennett’s beach with much of the beach disappearing. The heavy seas deposited large amounts of weed and debris along the beach, with most of it finishing up at the south end adjacent to Yacaaba headland. The debris consisted of numerous plastic items as well as the usual glass bottles.

Two beach walkers, wandering the shoreline after the large seas, recognised the danger to marine wildlife if this plastic flotsam was washed back to sea again in subsequent tides. After discussions with some other local residents including kayakers, other beach walkers and fishermen, a clean-up of the beach area was arranged for last weekend.

Nine concerned locals filled about 20 large bags of rubbish, which were kindly collected by a passing fisherman in his 4 wheel drive and transported to a waiting trailer. Other beach walkers also started to assist when they saw the effort being carried out by the volunteers. About 1km of beach was cleared to the shoreline by the group. All the rubbish accumulated was deposited at the local tip where it was sorted, being mostly recyclable plastics and bottles.

By far the largest quantity of items collected were brightly coloured plastic bottle caps, which could easily have been ingested by marine birds or fish. Thankfully there was no evidence of the dangerous “plastic 6 pack holder”, a potential noose for any wildlife. Unfortunately no valuables or messages in bottles were located.

With this large beach area now clear of dangerous marine flotsam, we would encourage all beach users to carry a small bag to pick up any additional materials for disposal when returning from the beach. Small items collected in this way make a difference. Additionally beach drivers can remove larger items of rubbish from the beach more easily, as evidenced by the helpful fisherman who not only moved our collections, but also picked up discarded fishing net himself. Well done everyone.

June 2016

