



Threatened shorebirds in Bega Valley Shire: Action Plan

Supported by Bega Valley Shire Council

October 2020

(corrections December 2020)



Little tern chicks. Leo Berzins/DPIE

1. Introduction

Bega Valley Shire Council (BVSC), the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), threatened species officers from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE), researchers, educators and, most importantly, community volunteers have been working together for more than 20 years to manage the Bega Valley habitat of a number of threatened shorebirds. These shorebirds, despite many threats both locally and abroad, continue their presence on Bega Valley beaches and estuaries alongside a growing Bega Valley population of locals and tourists who are also drawn to the beaches of the valley.

Having beaches and estuaries that support threatened shorebirds is an amazing achievement and something of which the Bega Valley community can be immensely proud. This shows the world that the Bega Valley coastline is truly special.

BVSC, NPWS, DPIE and our community have pooled their knowledge to bring together existing and proposed actions to help Bega Valley continue to be an important shorebird conservation area.

2. Background

2.1 Threatened biodiversity: legislated roles and responsibilities

There are a range of Acts and Agreements that relate to the threatened shorebirds found in Bega Valley Shire.

The Environment, Energy and Science Branch (EES) of DPIE has responsibilities and functions under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2015 (BC Act) and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).






Bilateral migratory bird agreements signed by the Australian Government exist with Japan (JAMBA), China (CAMBA) and the Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA). Other Agreements include the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) and through the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership. Actions covered by these agreements include investigating and enforcing non-compliance with the legislation, preventing the extinction and promoting the recovery of threatened species and ecological communities.

Local Government also has responsibilities related to the listed Acts and Agreements and has an essential role to play in the conservation and management of biodiversity and threatened species in NSW through implementing and regulating land use and management regulations and by actively working with their communities on projects and programs to protect biodiversity.

Local governments and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) are responsible for implementing and managing compliance with regulations related to NSW coastal beaches and estuaries including those that support priority threatened shorebird habitat and breeding sites.

2.2 Threatened Shorebirds in Bega Valley Shire

The beaches, estuaries, sand spits, rocky headlands and offshore islands of the south coast support a range of threatened resident and migratory shorebirds. There are three main threatened shorebirds of concern and several threatened migratory species that use the Bega Valley shores to breed and forage.

Species	Conservation status	Local conservation value	
<u>Hooded plover</u> <i>Thinornis rubricollis</i>	NSW: Critically Endangered Commonwealth: Vulnerable	60 pairs in NSW 12 breeding pairs in Bega Valley Shire (BVS)	
			Image: Leo Berzins/DPIE
<u>Pied oystercatcher</u> <i>Thinornis rubricollis</i>	NSW: Endangered Commonwealth: Not listed	Scattered breeding pairs along BVS coast	
			Image: Lachlan Copeland/DPIE
<u>Little tern</u> <i>Sternula albifrons</i>	NSW: Endangered Commonwealth: Not listed	16 colonies in NSW Major colony at Mogareeka - Wallagoot Lake over summer. Major colony previously at Wallaga Lake, unoccupied since 2003 due to human disturbance.	
			Image: Geoff Roscoe/DPIE
<u>Eastern curlew</u> <i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>	NSW: Not listed Commonwealth: Critically endangered	Migratory bird, arrives at Spencer Park and Mogareeka in August to rest and feed over summer then migrate to Arctic	
			Image: Jackie Miles/DPIE
<u>Bar-tailed godwit</u> <i>Limosa laonica</i>	NSW: Not listed Commonwealth: Critically Endangered	Migratory bird, arrives at Spencer Park and Mogareeka in August to rest and feed over summer then migrate to Arctic	
			Image: Leo Berzins/DPIE

2.3 Threatened shorebird sites managed by Bega Valley Shire

Sites	Priority	Control Status	Threatened Species	Timing
Barragoot Beach Nth	High	Dogs on leash	Hooded plover	On site all year Breeding period August - March
			Pied oystercatcher	On site all year Breeding period August - March
Bermagui Harbour	High	None	Pied oystercatcher	On site all year Breeding period August - March
Boydton Beach	Medium	None	Hooded plover	On site all year Breeding period August- March
Brandy Beach	Medium	Dogs prohibited	Pied oystercatcher	On site all year Breeding period August- March
Corcora Beach	Medium	Summer dogs prohibited	Pied oystercatcher	On site all year Breeding period August- March
Cuttagee Beach	High	Dogs prohibited/leash free	Hooded plover	On site all year Breeding period August- March
Mogareeka	High	Formerly dog prohibited, some areas changed to dog on-leash	Hooded plover	On site all year Breeding period August - March
			Pied oystercatcher	On site all year Breeding period August - March
			Eastern curlew	Resting and feeding August-March
			Bar-tailed godwit	Resting and feeding August-March
Murrah Beach	Medium	Dogs prohibited	Pied oystercatcher	On site all year Breeding period August - March
			Hooded plover	On site all year Breeding period August - March
			Little tern	No longer nesting due to disturbance
Pambula River mouth	High	Formerly dog prohibited, changed to dogs on-leash	Hooded plover	On site all year Breeding period August- March
			Pied oystercatcher	On site all year Breeding period August- March
Short Point Beach	High	Dogs on leash	Pied oystercatcher	On site all year Breeding period September - March

Threatened shorebirds in Bega Valley Shire: Action Plan

Sites	Priority	Control Status	Threatened Species	Timing
Spencer Park, Pambula	High	Formerly dog prohibited, changed to dogs on-leash	Hooded plover	On site all year Breeding period September - March
			Pied oystercatcher	On site all year Breeding period August-March
			Eastern curlew	Resting and feeding – August- March
			Bar-tailed godwit	Resting and feeding August - March
Tura Beach North of Dolphin Cove Headland	High	Southern section including Dolphin Cove, on-leash. Dogs prohibited in Bournda National Park.	Hooded plover	On site all year Breeding period August- March
Wallaga Lake	High	Dogs prohibited	Pied oystercatcher	On site all year Breeding period August - March
			Little tern	No longer nesting due to disturbance
			Hooded plover	On site all year Breeding period August - March



Pambula River mouth. Amanda Cutlack/DPIE

2.4 Key threats to shorebirds in Bega Valley Shire

The key threats to shorebirds are predation, disturbance of nesting sites leading to poor breeding success, disturbance to and loss of foraging habitats and stormy weather, king tides and storm surges.

2.4.1 Predation

Foxes, dogs, ravens, goannas, silver gulls, and cats are all responsible for predating on eggs, chicks and adult shorebirds. The Far South Coast shorebird program (FSCSP) deploys volunteers to vulnerable and priority sites where they monitor for predation and organise controls where possible including fox shooters and fencing. Baiting programs are carried out away from high-visitation areas where safe. The FSCSP works with BVSC to improve regulation compliance and management of domestic dogs.

2.4.2 Storms, tides and surges

Inundation and destruction of nests by high tides, storms and other flooding are natural dangers faced by shorebirds. The conservation strategy to combat the impact of natural disturbances to nesting and foraging areas is to ensure there are a range of nesting and foraging sites available so birds can relocate when necessary

2.4.3 Intentional and unintentional community disturbance

Disturbance to shorebird nesting and foraging sites in BVS is often accidental due to a lack of knowledge or understanding about how even the mildest disturbance by humans or dogs 'checking-out' a nest or walking close-by can cause shorebirds to abandon their nests or even an entire a breeding site in the case of little terns. Unfortunately, there have also been incidences of deliberate destruction of sites, usually at night.

BVS and DPIE actions to diminish disturbance include:

- locating volunteers from the FSCSP at the highest priority sites
- increasing local and visitor awareness of the threat of disturbance to shorebird survival
- providing information about how to minimise disturbance to shorebirds
- identifying sensitive sites so people can implement personal and dog management actions
- targeting BVS and NPWS compliance staff to sites subjected to high levels of non-compliance with NSW and BVSC regulations related to beach use.



Dog near little tern nesting area: Michael Jarman/DPIE

3. Shorebird site disturbance: action plan

As discussed, disturbance by people and dogs has a major impact on shorebird survival in Bega Valley.

Actions to address disturbance are best separated into short-term actions that attempt to directly limit immediate disturbance, and long-term focussed actions that seek to build a positive connection between beach-users and shorebird survival.

3.1 Shorebird disturbance; community behaviour management

The types of actions that can directly influence community behaviour at shorebird sites include on-site monitoring, directive signs, fences and enforcing compliance.

3.1.1 Key messages

The very simple key messages we want to share with the local and visiting community to drive their behaviour within shorebird zones are:

When in a shorebird zone:

1. Always leash your dog
2. Walk on the wet sand
3. Pay attention to shorebird nesting signs
4. #sharingourshoreline

3.1.2 Direct shorebird disturbance behaviour management

Action	Lead org.	Applicable site(s)	To do	Timing
On-site monitoring	NPWS – FSCSP Coordinator	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise FSCSP volunteers at the sites 	August – March
Site fencing	NPWS – FSCSP Coordinator	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify nesting sites • Erect mobile fencing 	August – March
Temporary on-site shorebird alert signage	NPWS - FSCSP Coordinator	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing signs for effectiveness • Organise new signs 	August – March
Permanent on-site dog management signage	BVSC/ seasonal NPWS	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify sites where signs are needed or need to be upgraded • Organise new permanent signs 	All year
Beach entry dog management signage	BVSC/ seasonal NPWS	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify sites where signs are needed or need to be upgraded • Organise new permanent signs 	All year
Permanent beach entry shorebird alert signage	BVSC/ NPWS	All sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify sites where signs are needed or need to be upgraded • Organise new permanent signs 	August – March

Threatened shorebirds in Bega Valley Shire: Action Plan

Action	Lead org.	Applicable site(s)	To do	Timing
Council - managed site compliance	BVSC	Barragoot North Bermagui Harbour Boydton Beach Brandy Creek Corcora Beach Cuttagee Beach Mogareeka Murrah Beach Pambula River Short Point Beach Spencer Park Tura Beach Sth Wallaga Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BVSC rangers and FSCSP Coordinator prioritise sites and timing to get maximum benefit from compliance checks/patrols BVSC rangers and FSCSP volunteers manage emergency reporting lines and response when compliance breaches are identified and in progress 	All year
NPWS - managed site compliance	NPWS	Aragunnu Barragoot Beach Bithry Inlet Bournda Beach Bunga Beach South Cowdroys Beach Disaster Bay Beach Gillards Beach Haycock Beach Jane Spiers Beach Merrica River Middle Beach Nelsons Beach Newtons Beach North Long Beach North Tura Beach Picnic Beach Pinnacles Beach Quondolo Beach Saltwater Creek Wallagoot Lake Wonboyn Beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPWS compliance staff and FSCSP Coordinator prioritise sites and timing to get maximum benefit from compliance checks/patrols NPWS compliance staff and FSCSP volunteers manage emergency reporting lines and response when compliance breaches are identified and in progress 	All year
Targeted stakeholder engagement	EES & BVS	All, focus new dog control zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder maps for priority sites Contact and engage priority stakeholders Identify issues, work through solutions 	ASAP

3.2 Building a positive connection between beach-users and shorebird conservation

Many of the direct behaviour management actions around shorebirds will need to continue in the long-term, beach-users cannot take care around shorebird sites if they are not aware of the site locations. However, positive adoption by beach-users of management practices that protect shorebirds will lead to long-term outcomes for shorebirds. This goal will be reached when behaviours that impact on shorebird survival are considered unacceptable by the broader community and the community takes pride in the presence of threatened shorebirds along their coastline.

3.2.1 Key messages

The very simple key messages we want to share with the local and visiting community to drive pride in the presence of shorebirds and the unacceptability of disturbance.

1. We ♥ our shorebirds
2. We share the shore
3. We live in one of the best parts of the world, let's work together to keep it that way
4. #sharetheshore

3.2.2 Actions to build positive connection between beach-users and shorebird conservation

Digital communications and media				
Outcome	Responsible / partner org.	Focus audience	Action(s)	Timing
BVSC website dedicated shorebird page	BVSC	General	BVSC prepare website page showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorebird zones in BVS • Dogs on leash & prohibited areas • Key messages • Shorebird videos • This Final Action Plan 	ASAP
Social media and other comms channel videos <u>Saving our South Coast shorebirds</u> <u>How dog walkers can share the shore</u> <u>Saving our shorebirds with Starlo</u>	Development: DPIE Sharing: DPIE & BVSC	Dog owners General	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All shares hash-tagged #sharetheshore • DPIE share via targeted local social media channels • BVSC share via council social media channels • DPIE share via DPIE social media channels • BVSC embed video on BVSC website • Local cinemas during holiday season (Narooma, Batemans Bay etc). 	Files available for sharing via BVSC social media channels and website

Threatened shorebirds in Bega Valley Shire: Action Plan

Digital communications and media				
Outcome	Responsible / partner org.	Focus audience	Action(s)	Timing
Shorebird 'key message' social media tiles. These 'memes' can be shared on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.	Development: DPIE Sharing: DPIE & BVSC	Dog owners Locals Holiday-makers Wildlife enthusiasts	1. All shares hash-tagged #sharetheshore • DPIE share via targeted local social media channels • BVSC share via council social media channels • DPIE share via DPIE social media channels	ASAP
Develop shorebird postcards for local mail-outs.	Development: DPIE Sharing: DPIE & BVSC	Locals Dog owners	• Positive messages about shorebirds • Highlight key messages • #sharetheshore • BVSC & FSCSP shorebird contact details	ASAP
Info posters and leaflets	Development: FSCSP coordinator / SoS program Sharing: FSCSP coordinator & BVSC	Local beach users Visiting beach users	• Review existing material, check key messages, update if required • Review current distribution venues including caravan parks and other visitor accommodation, council offices, visitor centres etc. (update material if required) • Visit and leave info material with surf clubs, high visitation cafes, dog-friendly cafes, vet surgeries, pet supply businesses, tackle shops, fishing clubs, local clubs etc	ASAP
Media releases	BVSC / NPWS (depending on the site land manager)	All sites: general messages Identified sites: as need arises	BVSC/NPWS staff and FSCSP coordinator identify specific concerns or issues and alert respective media teams. All media releases should: • identify key messages • note the cooperation between BVSC and NPWS/DPIE.	Ongoing



My Property & Neighbourhood

Community & Leisure

Planning & Development

Environment & Health

Business & Investment

Council & Infrastructure



Environment & Health

Learn about our natural environment, health & safety and strategies to conserve our biodiversity.

Biosecurity & weed management

- Biosecurity
- Weed identification
- Weed management
- Post-fire Biosecurity Information
- Organic Farming & Chemical
- Sensitivities
- Pesticides Use Notification Plan
- Contacts & information

Health & Safety

- Asbestos and hazardous waste
- Beachwatch
- Burials on Private Property
- Back Yard Burning
- Pollution incident management
- Food safety
- Onsite sewage management
- Skin Penetration Regulation
- Stormwater and your business
- Swimming pool fencing
- Wood Heaters and Open Fires
- COVID-19 (coronavirus)

Environment

- Environmental grants
- Floodplain management
- Coastal Zone Management
- Overgrown land/properties
- Programs and partnerships
- SOE Reporting
- Tree Management
- Tura Reserves Management Plan

Climate Change & Sustainability

- Clean Energy Plan
- Climate change and sustainability
- Climate Resilience Strategy
- Community Solar Farm



Existing BVSC website, could include a page on threatened shorebirds within Environment section.



Sample social media tiles



Hi,

Just letting you know the baby bird on the front of this card is a hooded plover. There are less than 60 breeding pairs left in NSW. They make their nests in the dry sand above the tide line. Please help us look after them, they are hard to see and dogs love to take a look if they are left to roam.

All we ask is when you are at the beach:

- Always leash your dog
- Always walk on the wet sand below the high tide line and,
- Pay attention to shorebird nesting signs

We have volunteers and rangers out looking after the birds. Feel free ask them about hooded plovers and other shorebirds, they will be happy to tell you more.

Thank you, Bega Valley Shire and the Far South Coast Shorebird team.



To: Locals and visitors

This is one of the best places in the world, lets work together to keep it that way.



Image: Jodie Dunn/DPIE

Sample postcard

Creative arts projects and events				
Outcome	Responsible / partner org.	Focus audience	Action(s)	Timing
Poetry in First Languages project at key site(s)	DPIE – SoS program	First Nations students Share results with local community	Review examples; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Room Poetry Blog • Glossies in the mist Identify grant opportunities Contact Red Room Poetry and Bournda EECS	Begin coordination and looking for grant opportunities. Post-Covid activity
Beach entry / local art installations to raise profile and awareness of shorebirds	BVSC, FSCSP Coordinator & SoS program	Beach users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with South Coast Arts • Review examples (See Appendix 1) • Identify grant opportunities • Work with community on their ideas for community art installations 	Prior to 2021 shorebird season
Photography / art events 'Our shoreline' connect all the shoreline values important to community	FSCSP Coordinator / SoS Program	Locals / visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop or connect with existing art events • Launch art installation / Poetry in First Languages (if they arise) 	Prior to 2021 shorebird season
Celebrate the arrival of the little terns	BVSC, FSCSP Coordinator	Locals/ visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fence installation and celebratory projects 	October/November
Use identity dog leads to encourage participation in events.	FSCSP Coordinator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build recognition of shorebird awareness with 'shorebird' dog-leads for dog owners. 	ASAP



Shoalhaven heads mosaic. Image: Michael Van Ewijk/DPIE

Access to on-site expertise, local commitment, capacity building				
Outcome	Responsible / partner org.	Focus audience	Action(s)	Timing
Shorebird conservation coordination	NPWS / SoS Program	Shorebird managers, volunteers and other partners	Resource FSCSP Coordinator	Ongoing
Continued volunteer participation in FSCSP	FSCSP Coordinator	Current and future FSCSP volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of DPIE volunteer portal • Share volunteer stories and reward participation • Volunteer events • Volunteer training 	Ongoing
Shorebird managers and volunteers networked across south coast	FSCSP Coordinator / SoS Program	Shorebird managers (inc BVS) and volunteers	Develop and distribute digital NSW South Coast Shorebird newsletter to share management, issues and stories	ASAP
LALC ranger wardens	FSCSP Coordinator / SoS Program	LALC staff	Re-engage with LALC and identify opportunities and resources	Ongoing
University student wardens	FSCSP Coordinator / SoS Program	University students	Engage with UOW, UC and ANU to identify opportunities	Ongoing
Presence at local markets and events	FSCSP Coordinator	Locals and visitors	Share information, answer questions, recruit potential volunteers	Ongoing



Far South Coast shorebird volunteers have been protecting shorebirds and carting signs and fencing materials for more than 20 years. Image: DPIE

Students and teachers				
Outcome	Responsible / partner org.	Focus audience	Action(s)	Timing
Develop online education materials	Bournda EEC & FSCSP Coordinator	NSW Stage 2-3 school students	Review <u>shorebirds iBook</u> to make available online	Ongoing
Online shorebird video conferences	Bournda EEC & FSCSP Coordinator	NSW Stage 2-5 school students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review school-focused online shorebird video conference material Promote online shorebird ed. opportunities via Dept of Education online delivery/booking system DART Connections 	Ongoing
In school education programs	Bournda EEC & FSCSP Coordinator	BVS school students	FSCSP Coordinator to discuss opportunities and resources available for Bournda EEC to conduct in-school shorebird education programs in local schools.	Ongoing
Train teachers in the region about shorebird conservation	Sapphire Coast Regional Science Hub Sustainability Education Network (SCRSHSEN) & FSCSP Coordinator	BVS teachers	FSCSP Coordinator to discuss teacher-training opportunities with SCRSHSEN.	Ongoing
Include shorebird information into school events	Bournda EEC & FSCSP Coordinator	BVS school students	FSCSP Coordinator support Bournda EEC to include a shorebird session into the Bournda Bird Olympics	National Bird Week, late October
Stage 5 Marine Studies (students as wardens)	FSCSP Coordinator, SoS Program	Stage 5 school students	Discuss with Bournda EEC. Development of curriculum base resources	



Shorebird in-schools program 2017. Image Jodie Dunn/DPIE

4. Contacts

Organisation	Contact	Role	Contact details
Bournda Environmental Education Centre	Doug Reckord	Principal	Douglas.Reckord@det.nsw.edu.au
Sapphire Coast Regional Science Hub Sustainability Education Network	Doug Reckord	Coordinator	www.aaeensw.org.au/networks/sapphire-coast-regional-science-hub-sustainability-education-network
BVSC	Rachel Duczynski	Coastal Management Officer	RDuczynski@begavalley.nsw.gov.au
BVSC	Andrew Morrison	Environmental Officer	amorrison@begavalley.nsw.gov.au
BVSC	Sara Keeley Smith	Ag. Co-ordinator Community Safety & Compliance	SKeeleySmith@begavalley.nsw.gov.au
BVSC	Sharon Wellard	Communications and Events Manager	SWellard@begavalley.nsw.gov.au
BVSC	Iain Dawson	Director Bega Valley Regional Gallery (Public Art Policy)	IDawson@begavalley.nsw.gov.au
NPWS	Sophie Hall-Aspland	Shorebird Recovery Coordinator Far South Coast	Sophie.Hall-Aspland@environment.nsw.gov.au
NPWS	David McCreery	Senior SOS project Officer	David.mccreery@environment.nsw.gov.au
NPWS	Max Beukers	Senior Conservation Planner, South Coast Branch	Max.beukers@environment.nsw.gov.au
DPIE	Alex Pike	Community Engagement and Communications Officer, Saving our Species, South Hub	alex.pike@environment.nsw.gov.au
DPIE	Lorraine Oliver	Community Engagement Team Leader, south East	Lorraine.oliver@environment.nsw.gov.au
DPIE	Damon Oliver	Ecosystems and Threatened Species Senior Team Leader, South East	Damon.oliver@environment.nsw.gov.au
Red Room Poetry	Lyndsay Urquhart	Poetry in First Languages	lyndsay@redroomcompany.org
Red Room Poetry	Ethan Bell	Poetry in First Languages	ethan@redroomcompany.org
Red Room Poetry	Sally Marwood	Director of External Relations	sally@redroomcompany.org

Appendix 1

Examples of threatened species creative arts projects

These are a range of examples of works done in other regional areas. An important aspect of developing art installations is that they reflect community aspirations.



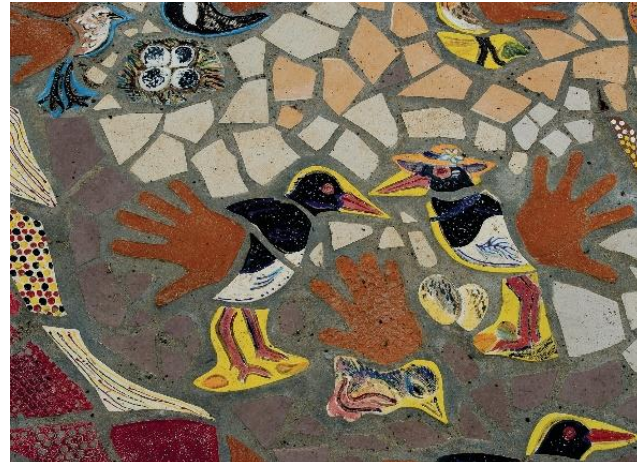
Shoalhaven heads sculptures & mural. Images: Michael Van Ewijk/DPIE

Letter of appreciation re Shoalhaven Heads:

To NPWS senior managers and officers responsible for bird signage at Lake Conjola (south coast NSW),

I am writing to congratulate the National Parks and Wildlife Service for the excellent bird signage (bearing the NPWS logo) located at Lake Conjola on the south coast of NSW – see attached photos. I came across this signage and associated mural during my recent holiday to NSW, and can honestly say that this is the best bird signage I have seen in my 30+ years' experience of working in national parks and World Heritage management. I was particularly impressed by the simplicity of the pictorial 'dogs this way; birds that way' sign, and with the mural of shorebirds on the nearby toilets which feature informative images of adults, eggs and juveniles of vulnerable local shorebirds. This is a marvellous and 'light-handed' way of communicating important management messages and raising community and visitor awareness and support for the protection of local shore birds. No need for words; just simple images that convey key messages, and also serve to inspire and inform. Well done to all those involved, and what a great model for others to emulate! ...

*Kind regards,
Glenys Jones*



Shoalhaven Heads River Road Picnic Area Images: Michael Van Ewijk/DPIE



Nowra school murals Image: Jodie Dunn



Poetry in First Languages – Glossy black-cockatoo project
Images courtesy Tad Souden photography