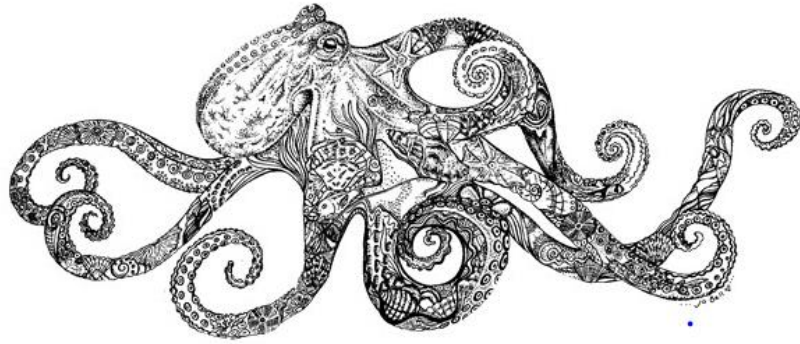


## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



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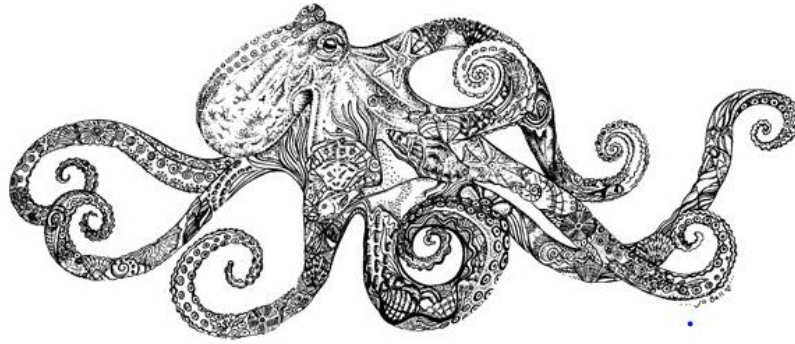
### **Proposal to have Bongin Bongin Bay, Mona Vale declared an Aquatic Reserve**



Submitted June 2023 and supported by interested local stakeholders:

- Australian Marine Conservation Society
- 'Buckettes' Swimming Group
- 'Dawnbusters' Swimming Group
- 'Mermates' Swimming Group
- Mona Vale Bush Regeneration Group
- Mona Vale SLSC
- National Parks Association NSW
- 'Stingrays' Swimming Group

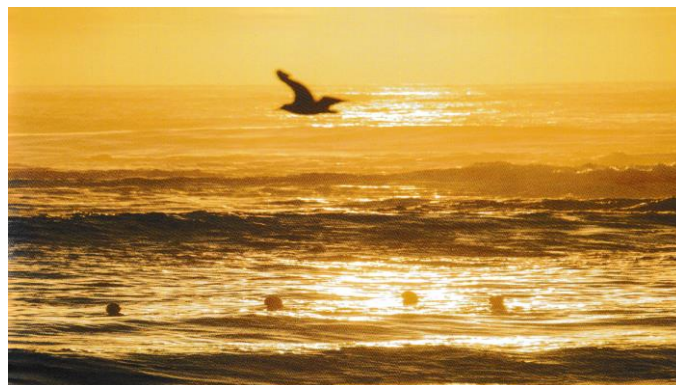
# *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



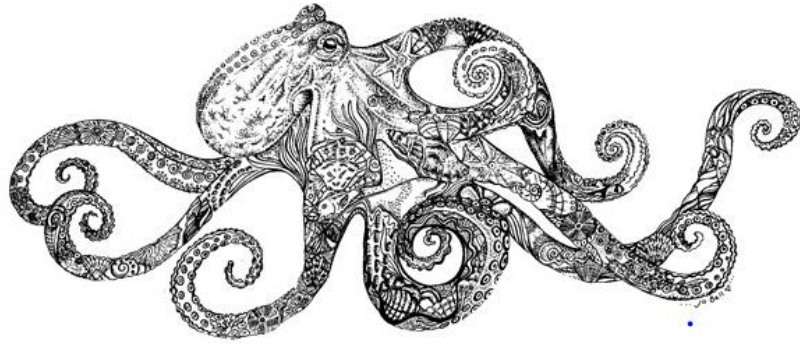
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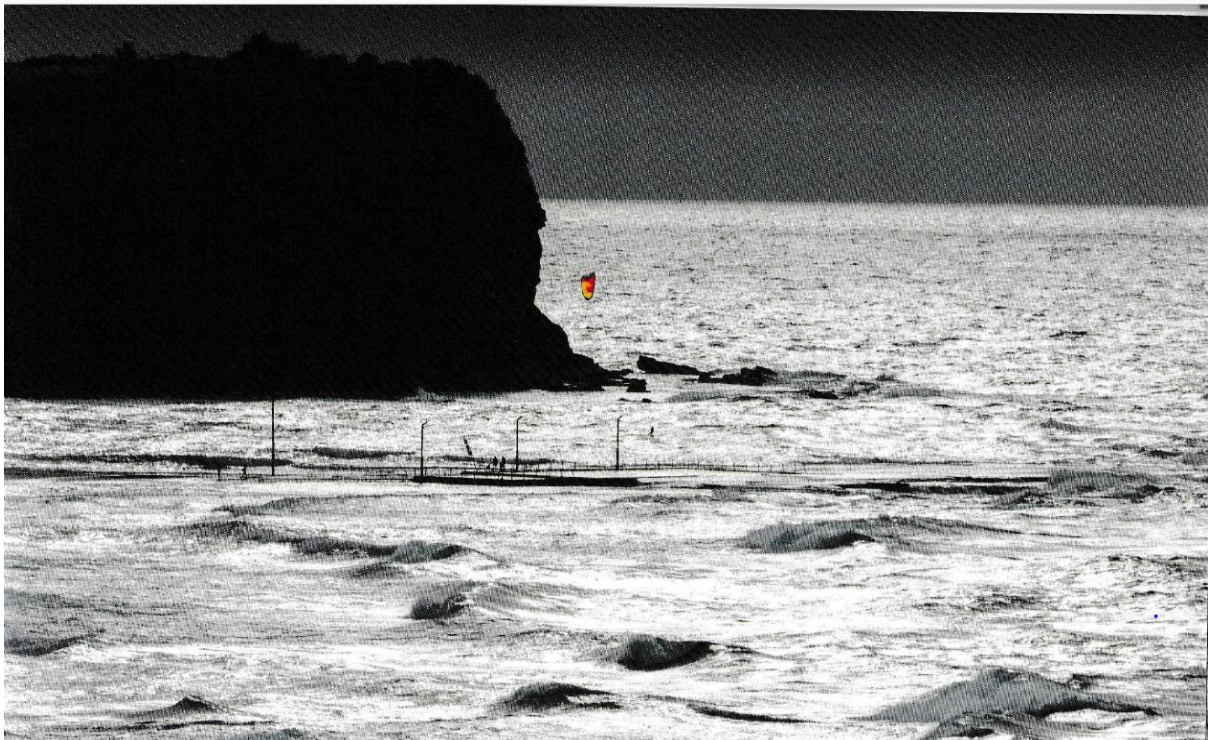
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## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



### Overview



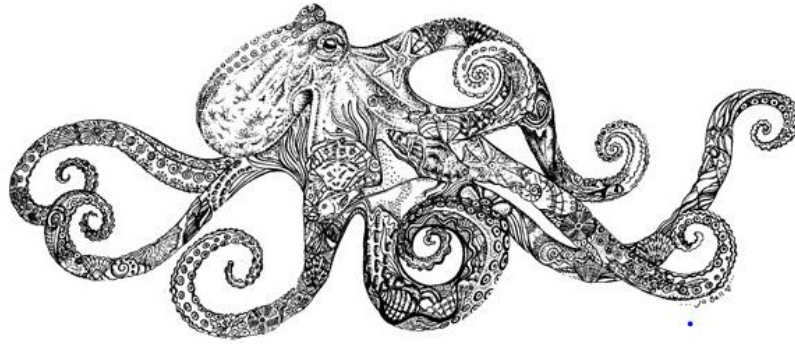
Looking north over Bay (this page) and Bird in flight (previous page) Images – David Helsham

The primary objective of aquatic reserves in NSW is to conserve the biodiversity of fish and marine vegetation. Where consistent with this objective, aquatic reserves may also aim to:

- Protect fish habitat
- Provide for species management
- Protect threatened species, populations and ecological communities
- Facilitate educational activities and scientific research

Bongin Bongin (Aboriginal for "many shells") Bay, Mona Vale is unique. It has seven types of marine habitat in close proximity, and being located midway between two other aquatic reserves, Barrenjoey Headland and Narrabeen Headland, it is, in effect, a wildlife corridor.

## Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay



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It is also consistent with the goals of the Australian High Ambition Coalition, to which Australia committed in June 2021. As part of this commitment, Australia aims to lift to the international standard '30/30' target i.e. to have 30% of marine reserves declared as 'No take' zones by 2030.

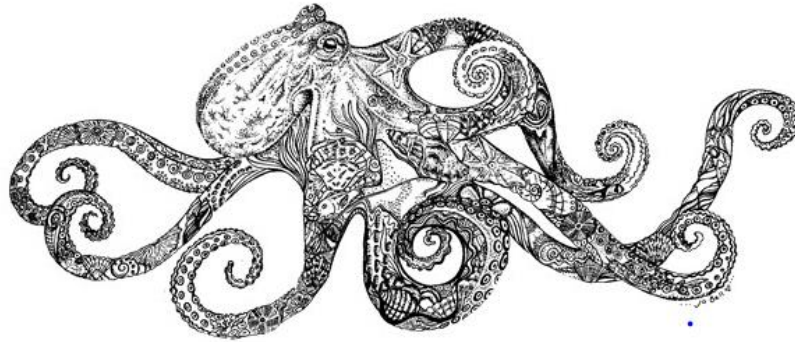


Shellfish removed and left near the outdoor showers 28 Feb 2023. The swimmers pictured returned them to the rock platform –  
Image - Bill Watkins

The NSW Department of Primary Industries web-site <https://dpi.nsw.gov.au/> provides extensive information (**content temporarily removed pending legal advice**). Extracts from this web-site are provided below.

Information is also provided by the National Parks Association NSW, Australian Marine Scientists Association and the Australian Marine Conservation Society. Overseas experiences

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



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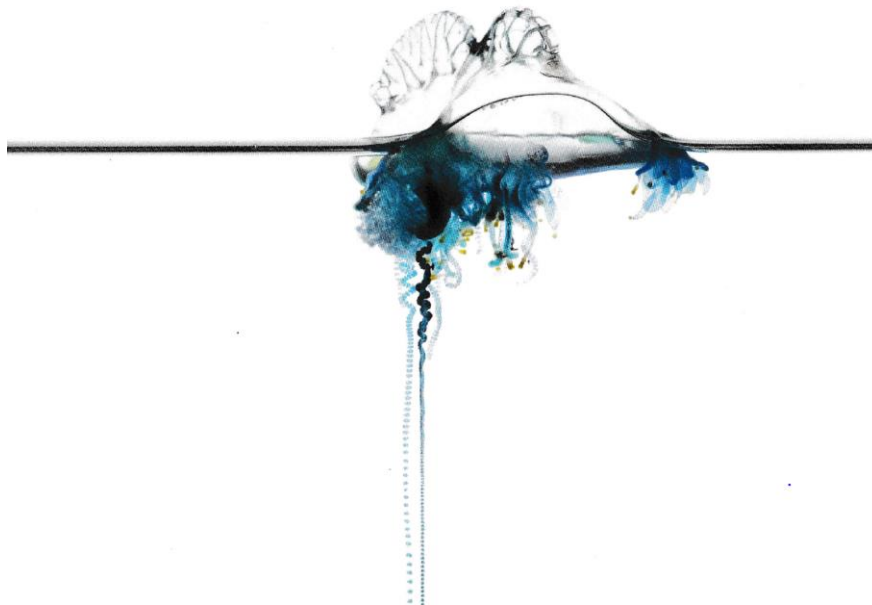
are detailed including a European site similar in concept to a number of aquatic reserves along the Northern Beaches.

Sydney's Northern Beaches have five existing aquatic reserves providing important protection for marine wildlife habitat and each of these is described below.

The seven critical marine habitats to be found in the Bay are also each described below. They provide the scientific grounding/reasons to extend the current limited Intertidal Protected Area (IPA) to become a greater area and for it to be declared an aquatic reserve.

Also detailed are three man-made features – a rock pool, new dressing sheds adjacent to the beach, and a stormwater outfall.

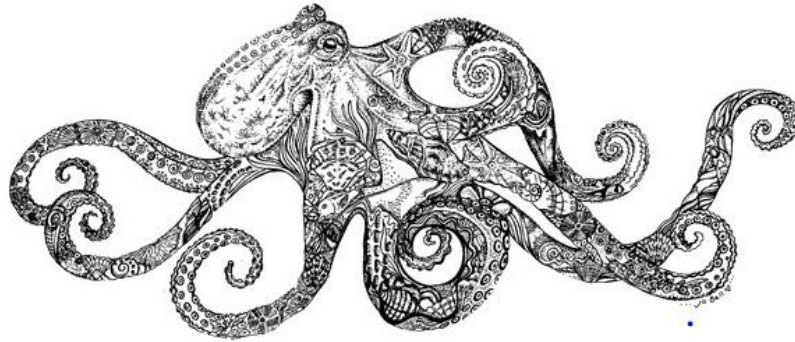
There have been no new aquatic reserves declared in NSW for over 20 years, despite the increasing pressures from urbanisation, and threats from climate change and offshore gas exploration under PEP-11 arrangements.



Bluebottle Image – David Helsham

**Here is the opportunity to replicate the 'gold standard' example of Cabbage Tree Bay, Manly, by having Bongin Bongin Bay declared an aquatic reserve.**

## Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay



### Proposed Area

Since 1993, along with Shelly Beach Headland, Dee Why Headland and Bungan/Newport Headland, Mona Vale Headland has been classified as an Intertidal Protected Area (IPA), detailed in the map below left. Of significance is the non-inclusion of the rock platform surrounding the rock pool – an area that has been heavily impacted by urbanisation and recreational fishing activities.

**The purpose of this submission is to seek an extension of the Mona Vale Headland IPA to include Bongin Bongin Bay, and for the combined area (see map below right) to be declared an aquatic reserve.**

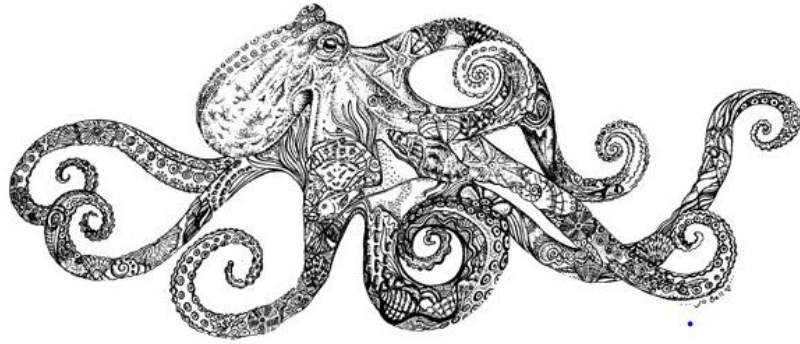


Map –Mark Buhagiar

Located approx. 10 nm north of Sydney Harbour at latitude 33°40'37.2"S\*\* and longitude 151°19'01.2"E\*\* the proposed area is bounded in the south by a line drawn east of the new Mona Vale Surf Club, in the north by the rock platforms between Bungan Beach and Bongin Bongin Bay, and in the east by a line drawn 100m east of the southern rock platform and northern headland – a total area of approx. 45 ha.

The bay is located midway between Barrenjoey Headland and Narrabeen Headland.

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



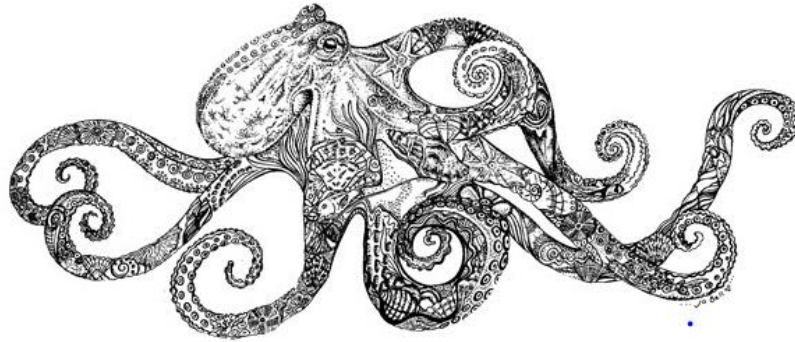
### **Purpose of Aquatic Reserves**

***Image temporarily removed pending legal advice.***

Aquatic reserves are designed to work together with other marine and coastal management programs to ensure that marine biodiversity in NSW coastal waters is conserved and to support ecologically sustainable use of the marine environment.

Some reserves aim to conserve particular aspects of marine biodiversity such rocky shore habitats and species, while others aim to conserve areas of marine ecosystems more generally, such as the estuarine wetlands conserved in Botany Bay (Towra Point Aquatic Reserve), island fringing reefs (Cook Island) or small coastal bays (Cabbage Tree Bay, Bushrangers Bay, *and possibly Bongin Bongin Bay*) and their associated marine life.

## Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay



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### The Marine Scientists' **(Content temporarily removed)** Position

#### Australian Marine Scientists Association (AMSA)

In January 2022 AMSA - the peak body of some 700 Marine Scientists in Australia produced a submission commenting on the NSW Marine Parks Draft Plan, Stage 1 (Objectives and Actions).

*“AMSA has developed a Position Statement on MPAs, based on years of consultation with expert members in the fields of protected areas, fisheries and marine conservation, and the comments on the proposal are in accord with it. The Position Statement is accessible at <https://www.amsa.asn.au/>”*

*AMSA supports the design and implementation of an effective network of MPAs in NSW, however the current NSW Marine Parks Draft Plan is not adequate to ensure this is achieved.*

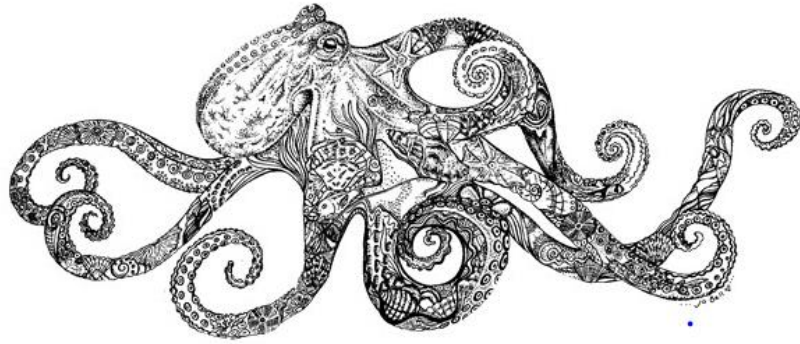
*The NSW Marine Parks Draft Plan should provide a clear goal and a mechanism to increase to at least 30% sanctuary (no-take, IUCN I or II) zone. In addition, MPAs should be effectively enforced, monitored and adaptively managed, left in place for the long term, large in size and located to maximise their ecological benefits.*



Decorative Crab – Image Jo Bell



## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



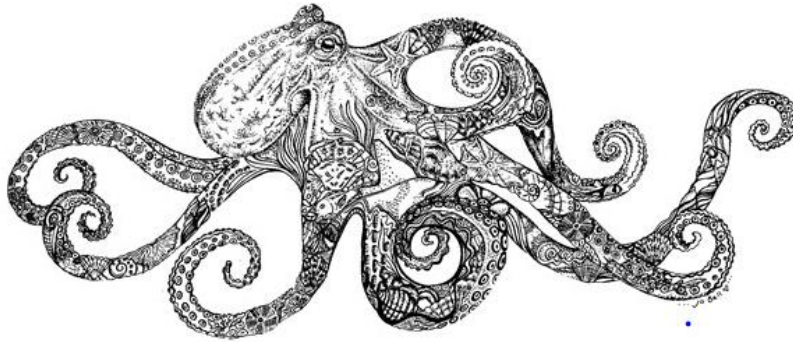
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One of five small octopus individuals that have since disappeared from the rock platform next to the swimming pool. Image – Jo Bell.

**This proposal is consistent with the values and goals of the Australian Marine Scientists' Association (*Content temporarily removed*) as described in the above extracts.**

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



### **Applying the scientific 'big picture' to a single coastal bay**

Marine sanctuaries provide a refuge for fish from being caught, allowing them to aggregate freely, grow large, and reproduce. Sanctuaries are an important tool not just to halt biodiversity loss and to create climate resilience, but to ensure food security. As fish and invertebrates grow larger they produce exponentially more eggs; the bigger the fish, the more babies they produce.

Therefore, establishing areas where larger fish can proliferate free from extractive pressures is of great value to areas adjacent that are open to fishing. Current fisheries regulations already acknowledge the importance of these larger fish to the breeding potential of a population. For example, the Dusky Flathead has a minimum (36cm) and maximum (70cm) size limit to protect important breeding females (Department of Primary Industries

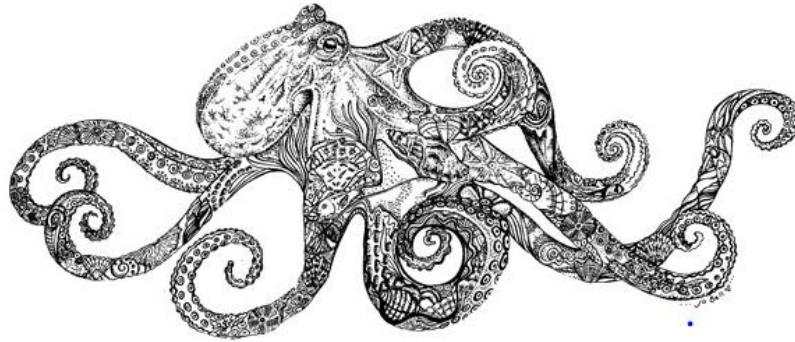
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The graphics on the following two pages are courtesy of an information fact sheet jointly used by

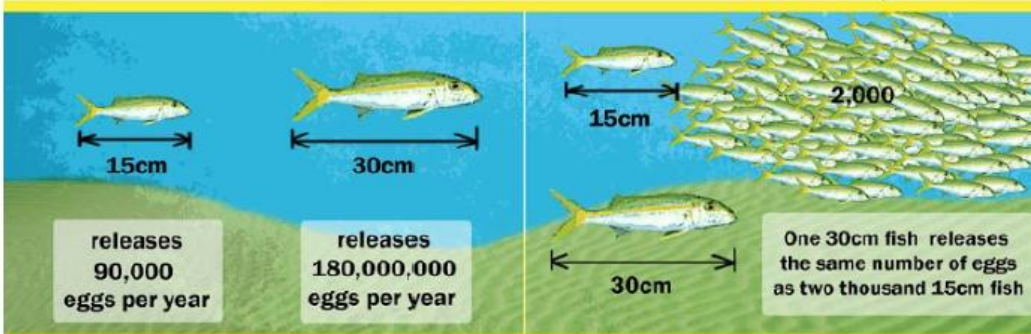
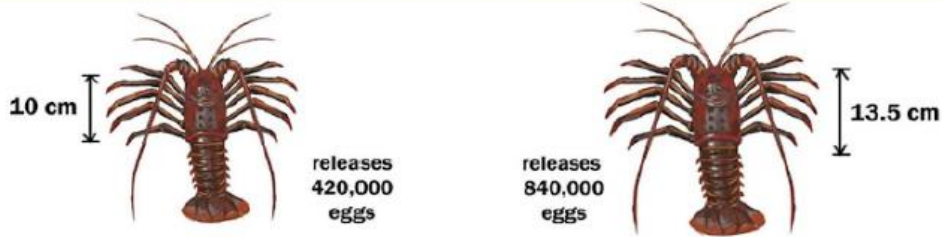
- Natural Conservation Council of NSW (the peak conservation Council of over 150 community groups)
- National Parks Association of NSW
- Australian Marine Conservation Association

in the submission (like AMSA above) commenting on the NSW Marine Parks Draft Plan, Stage 1 (Objectives and Actions).

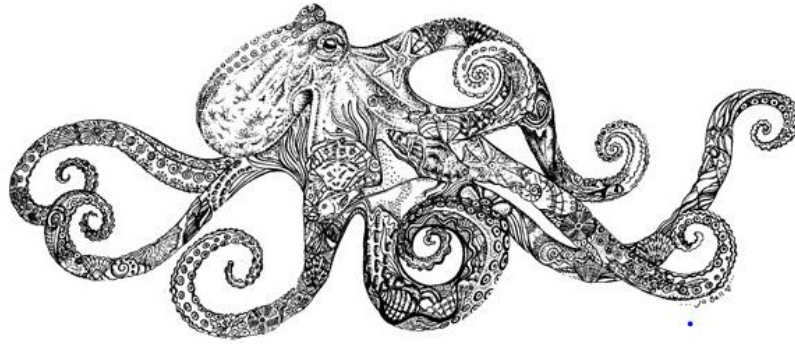
# Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay



## Big Females Make More Eggs



## Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay



### Overseas Experiences

#### Philippines & Palau - Nations creating marine sanctuaries for food security

Local communities have embraced marine sanctuaries as a way of providing food security for themselves. One example is Apo Island, where the local community, guided by scientists, implemented a marine sanctuary to help restore their fish stocks. The local fishers recognised that by protecting part of their island as marine sanctuary, they would benefit from the effects of 'spillover' and see more consistent catch rates (Russ et al. 2004, Abesamis et al. 2006, Russ & Alcala 2004).

Thanks to community stewardship and good enforcement, Apo Island is today one of the Philippines' great success stories, providing the local community a sustainable supply of local fish while offering tourists world class diving. The economic benefits of tourism and commercial diving are typified in NSW at the Cabbage Tree Bay Reserve at Shelly Beach.

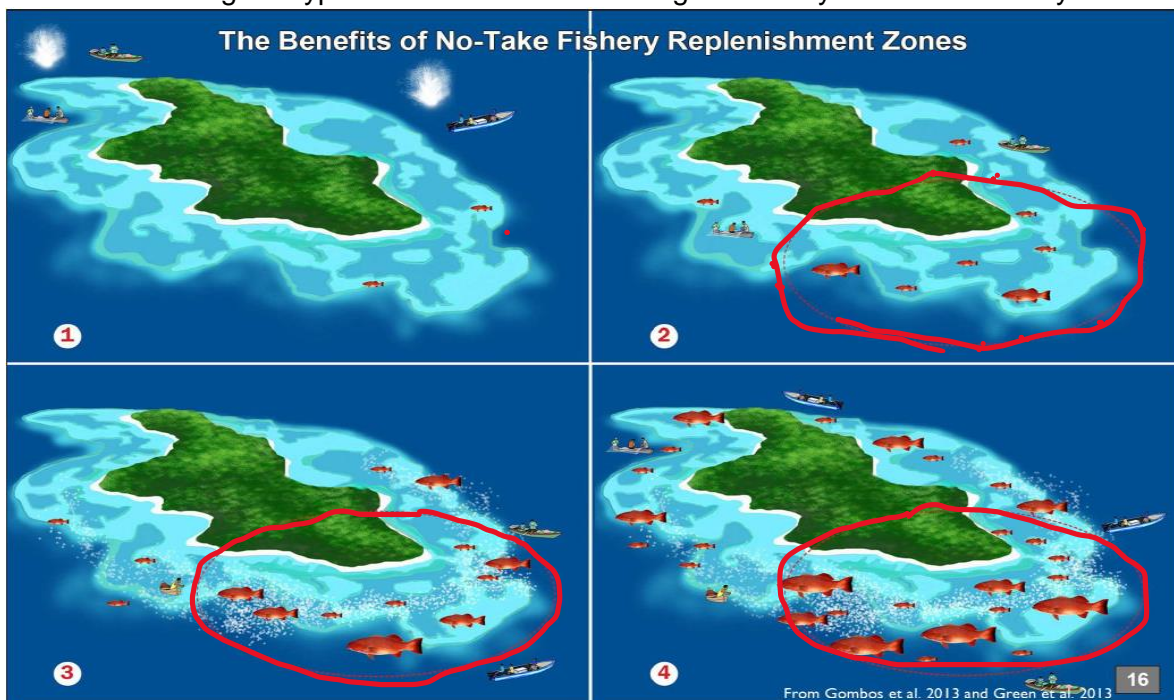
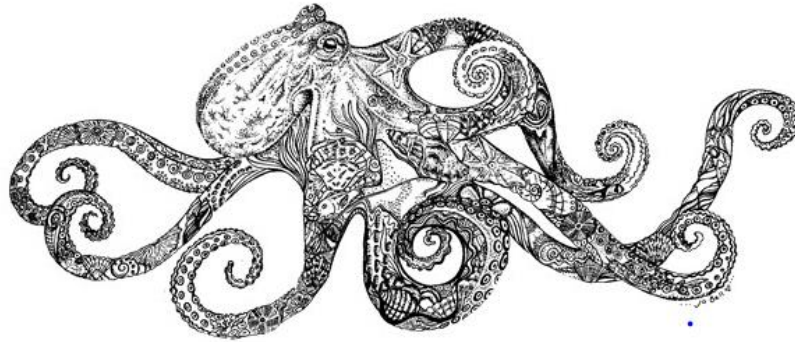


Figure 2. The benefits of spillover from sanctuary zones. 1) Before protection 2) Marine sanctuary established (red circle). 3) Protected population export larvae into adjacent areas open to fishing. 4) Fish grow larger and more abundant inside the sanctuary and continue to maintain the fish population open to fishing through larval dispersal.

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



### **Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, Hawaii**

#### **– Largest Marine Park in the World**

In 2006, President George W. Bush created the world's largest marine sanctuary at the time, 262,000km<sup>2</sup> in area. Then, in 2016 President Barack Obama expanded this sanctuary 200 nautical miles from land — making it the largest sanctuary in the world. It is just less than double all of the land in NSW.

This sanctuary shows 'the bigger the better' as high levels of marine protection have produced **increased catch rates of Yellowfin Tuna (+54%) and Bigeye Tuna (+12%)**. Presidents Obama and Bush have essentially created a marine sanctuary which has the ability to deliver food security for the people of Hawaii.

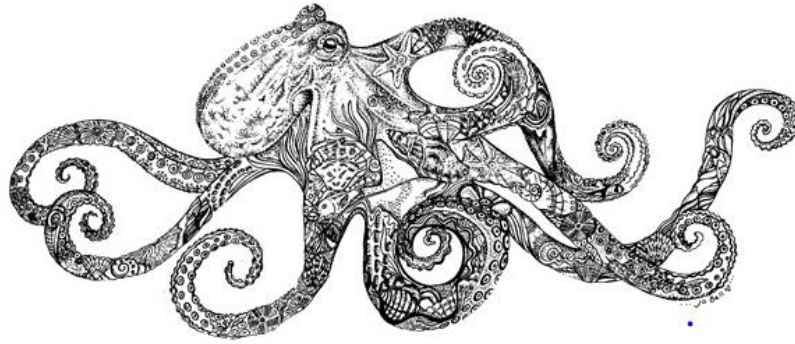
Global studies also show smaller marine sanctuaries are delivering massive benefits for artisan fishers and recreational fishers. For example, a network of five small reserves in St Lucia increased adjacent catches by between 46-90% within just five years of creation. And, since the '70s, world record-sized fish are increasingly being caught by recreational fishers adjacent to the Merritt Island National Wildlife Reserve, Florida ([Roberts et al. 2001](#)).

**There is a strong comparison in the St Lucia case study to a mid-point between the Barrenjoey Headland Reserve and the Narrabeen Headland Reserve.**



Osprey (**endangered**) eating fish – Image Lawrie Davidson

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



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### **Where are the current Northern Beaches aquatic reserves?**

There are 12 Aquatic Reserves in NSW with five of these located on Sydney's Northern Beaches. (All images courtesy Northern Beaches Council website)

#### **Long Reef Headland**



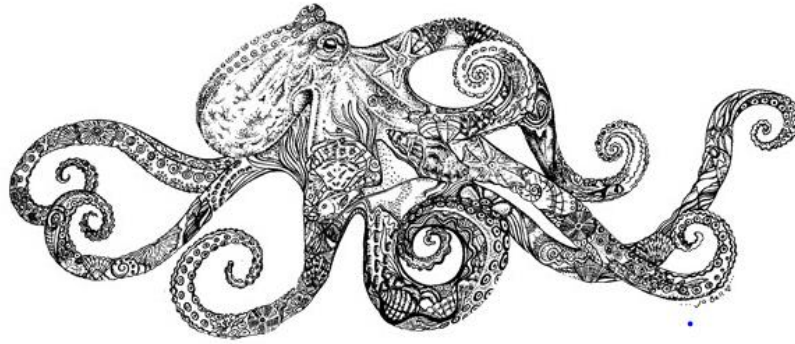
The first declared (in 1980 and covering an area of approx. 80 ha), has boundaries extending from Collaroy rock baths, south to Long Reef SLSC, and out to 100m offshore.

#### **North Harbour (Sydney) Aquatic Reserve**



Located between North Head and Dobroyd Head in the northern part of Sydney Harbour, it was declared in 1982 and is the largest Northern Beaches aquatic reserve, covering an area of approx. 260 ha.

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



The following three reserves were all declared in 2002:

### **Cabbage Tree Bay – Manly.**

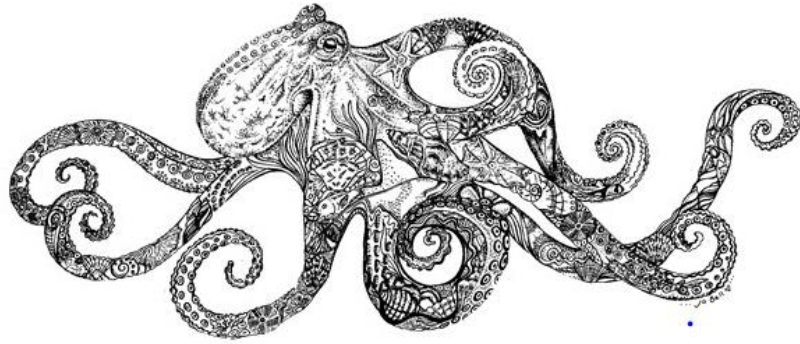


Covering approx. 20ha, this includes the entire bay, rocky shores and beaches from the southern end of Manly Beach to the northern end of the Shelly Beach Headland. An active group – the Friends of Cabbage Tree Bay records fish sightings, provides information to the public and is on watch to prevent illegal poaching. It is also the venue for Sydney's largest ocean swim, held each year.

Research at Cabbage Tree Bay in Manly has shown that even small marine sanctuaries are playing a critical role in the restoration of the marine environment by enhancing biomass and biodiversity (Turnbull et al. 2017). The success of the Cabbage Tree Bay marine sanctuary has spawned the VIZ - Sydney Visibility Reports Facebook group, that now has over 10,000 members that actively share experiences and photos from the abundance and uniqueness of the marine sanctuary.

**Only 7% of NSW's territorial waters are protected as sanctuary, far below the global standard. The key message from the 'spillover' studies described above is there is a need to set aside more refuge for adult fish, to grow large and reproduce in rough ocean refuges like Cabbage Tree Bay and Bongin Bongin Bay.**

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



### **Narrabeen Headland**



This reserve covers an area of approx. 10ha., including the rocky shore between the southern end of Turimetta Beach and the rock baths and extending 100m offshore.

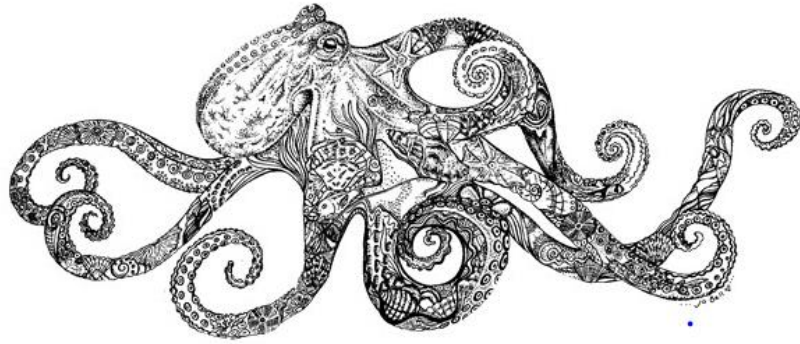
### **Barrenjoey Headland**



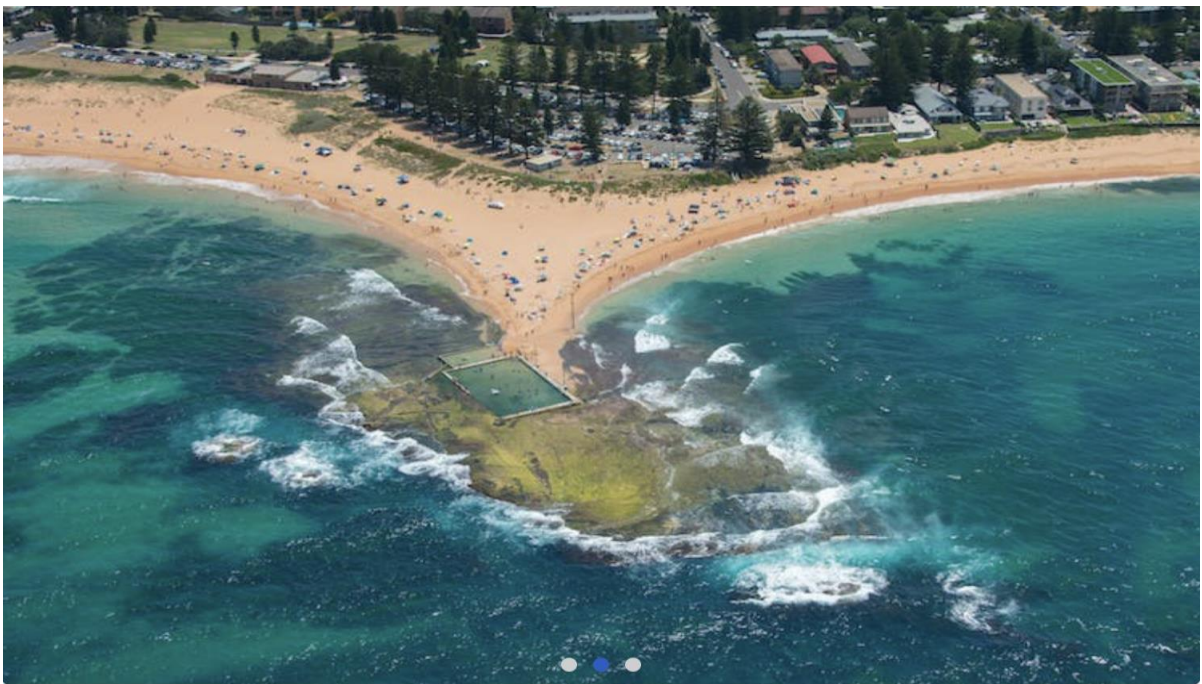
The aquatic reserve covers approx. 30ha, including the rocky shore around Barrenjoey Head and 100m offshore. The surrounding area is internationally known via the television series "Home and Away".



# *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*

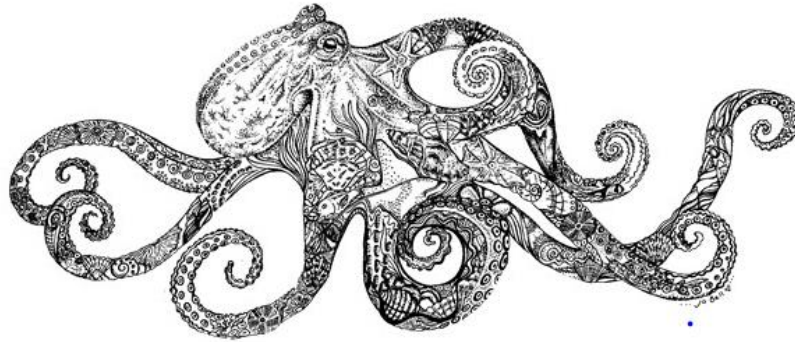


**Proposed – Bongin Bongin (Aboriginal for 'many shells') Bay, Mona Vale**



Images– David Helsham

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



### **Current Features - Natural**

Bongin Bongin Bay includes seven key types of habitat:

#### **1. Sandy beach**

Sandy and mud beaches occupy a dynamic position between sea and land. They are characterised by a large number and diversity of animals such as crabs, pipis and worms, living in or on the upper sand layers. A large number of microscopic animals live between the sand grains. Sandy beaches are some of the most common habitats along the NSW coast. Beaches often appear unproductive, but are home to a large number of species including burrowing worms, crabs, yabbies and other shellfish. These invertebrates are a major source of food for many fish species, such as flathead, flounder and whiting.



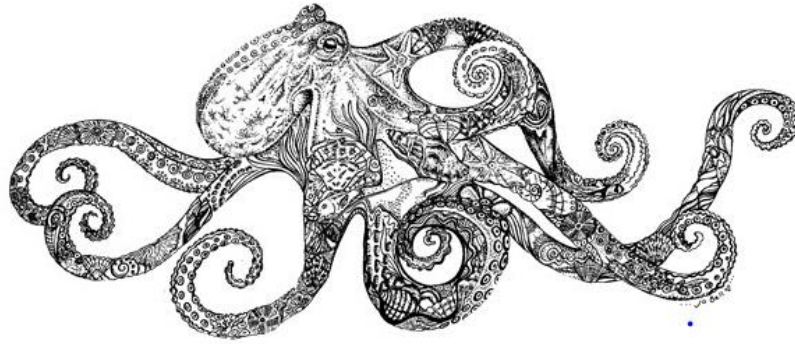
Image – Noah Deare

#### **2. Rocky Shore**

Includes a diversity of habitats and associated marine life, including examples of each of the five types of habitats described for NSW rocky shores (platform, crevice, rock pool, boulder and cobble habitats).

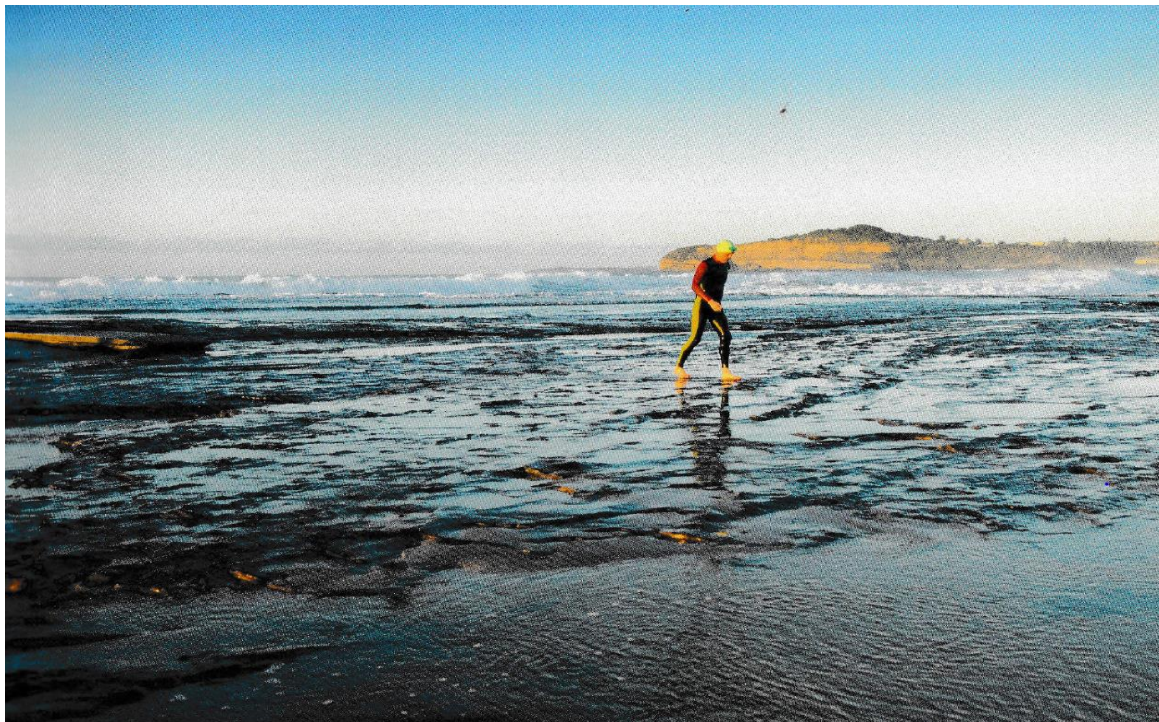
Rocky shores are unique habitats shaped by a combination of waves, tides and the type of rock present. They support a diverse mix of plants and animals which have adapted to the changes in exposure to water, sunlight and wind characterising this habitat.

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



Rocky shores are important fish nurseries. The commercially important fish found around rocky shores include blackfish, yellowfin bream, snapper, tarwhine, trevally, yellowtail and samson fish.

Bongin Bongin Bay's rocky shores include platforms, boulder fields and rock pools. Each provides habitat opportunities for different types of plants and animals ... and each presents its own challenges for survival.



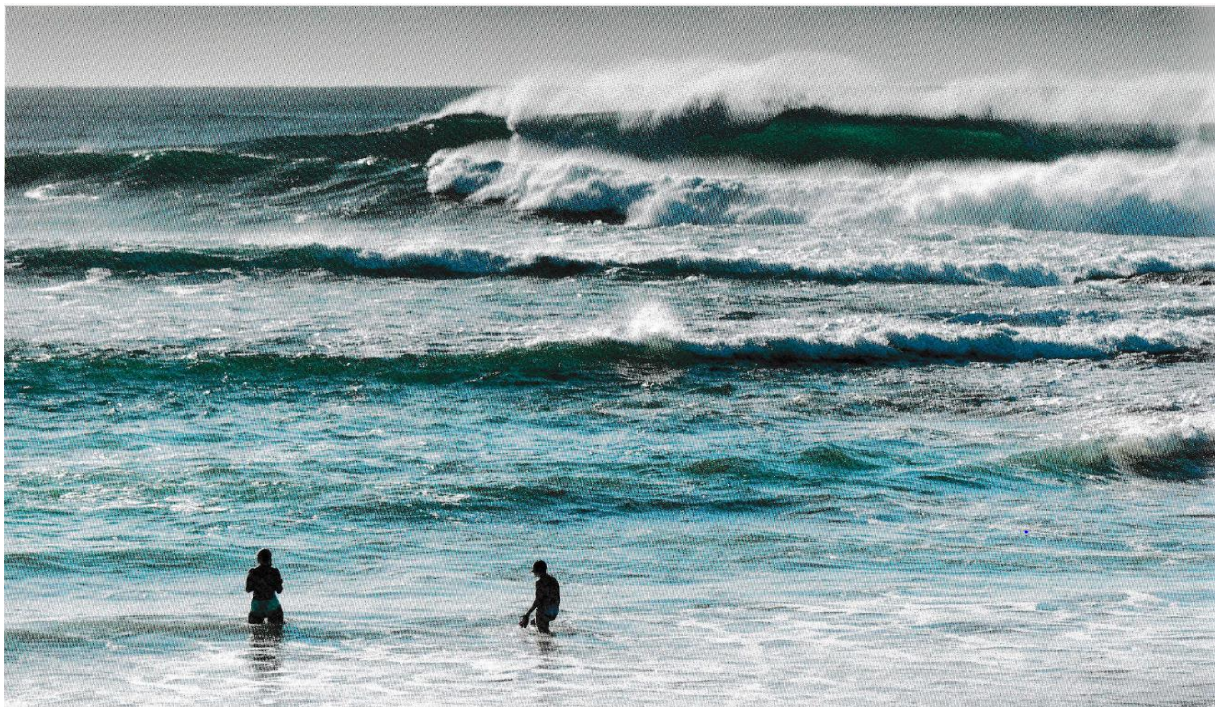
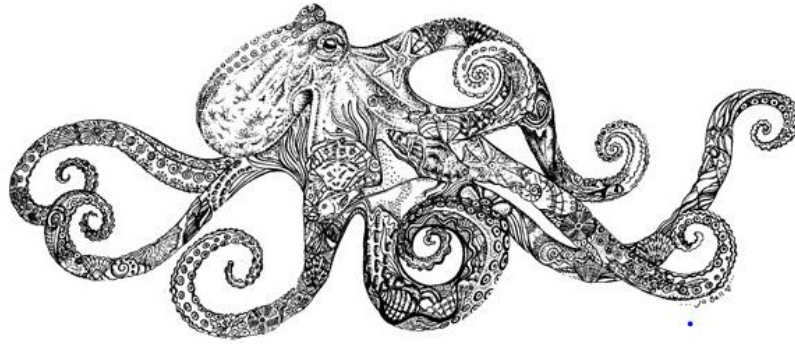
Rock platform Image – David Helsham

### **3. Open water**

Over 70% of the Earth's surface is ocean, yet little is known about the life and habitats within the open ocean. Even in the best-known regions, very little of the sea floor has been mapped.

The open sea is the largest of all habitats and the least hospitable, being very cold, very dark and subject to extreme pressure. Habitats range from deep-sea rocky reefs and ridges, sand flats, and temporary habitats created when a food source (like the carcass of a dead whale) sinks to the sea floor.

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



Surf Image – David Helsham

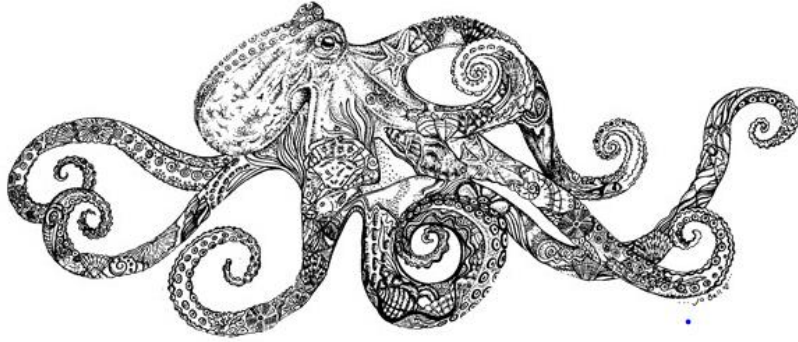
### **4. Rocky Reef**

Rocky reef refers to all areas of rocky outcrops or boulders occurring within marine and estuarine waters below the highest astronomical tide level. Macro-algae and invertebrates contribute to the physical structure of rocky reef habitats and are therefore considered part of these habitats.

Rocky reefs support hundreds of species of invertebrates including sponges, sea squirts and corals. Some groups of species such as barnacles, sponges and kelps are attached to the reef and are commonly distributed in particular areas, while other species such as fish can move between many marine habitats.

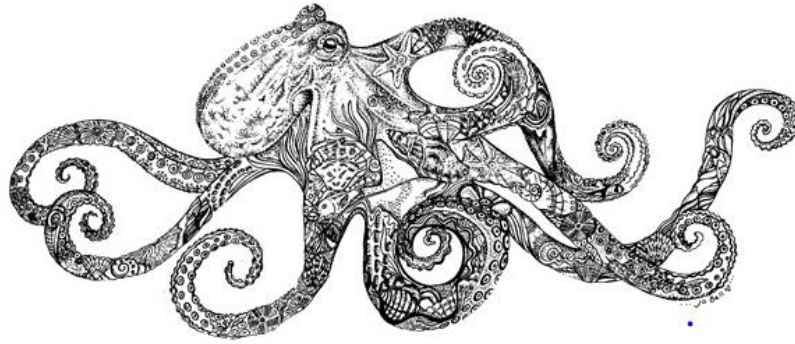
The reefs provide refuge and feeding opportunities for a wide variety of fish. Small fish can escape predators among caves and crevices, while carnivorous species, such as black cod and bream, can use the rocky habitat as cover to ambush their prey.

*Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



***Image and content temporarily removed pending legal advice.***

## Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay



### 5. Sandy seabed

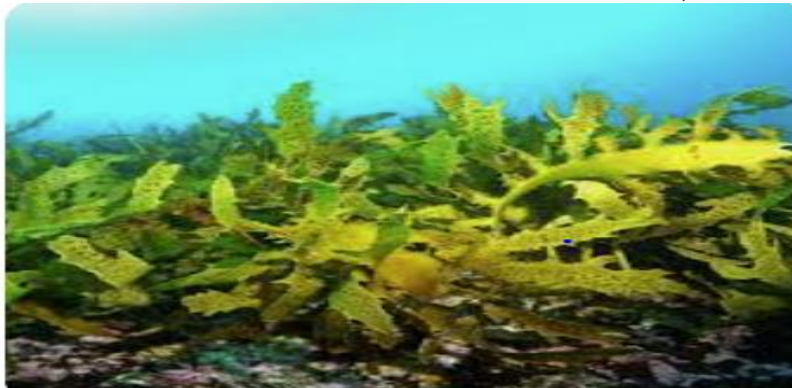
Sea stars, sea squirts, sea slugs, corals, crabs, clams, whelks (sea snails), worms, sponges, urchins, anemones all find their home on the seabed.



Sandy seabed Image - Noah Deare

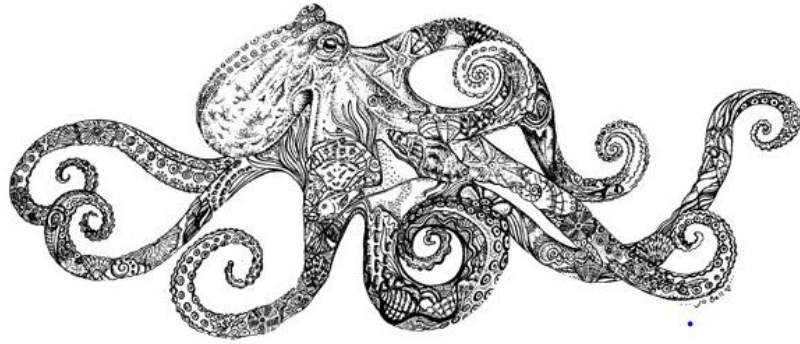
### 6. Kelp forests

Algae are important food and shelter for a large range of fish and invertebrates, and are used as shelter by hundreds of other aquatic animals and plants. Algae attached to the sea floor are generally called seaweeds. Seaweeds are found at shallow depths where light can penetrate, and large brown kelps, such as *Ecklonia radiata*, are commonly found in water depths from low tide to 20m. Dead algae and seaweeds (known as “wrack”), which drift in the water, also serve as food and shelter for fish and invertebrates, such as abalone.



Kelp forest Image – Noah Deare

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



### **Current Features – Man-made**

1. **Rock Pool** – Constructed as a Depression project in the 1930s and hence locally heritage listed, it comprises a 31m swimming pool and a 10m x 5m wading pool and is used year-round for swimming and family recreation.

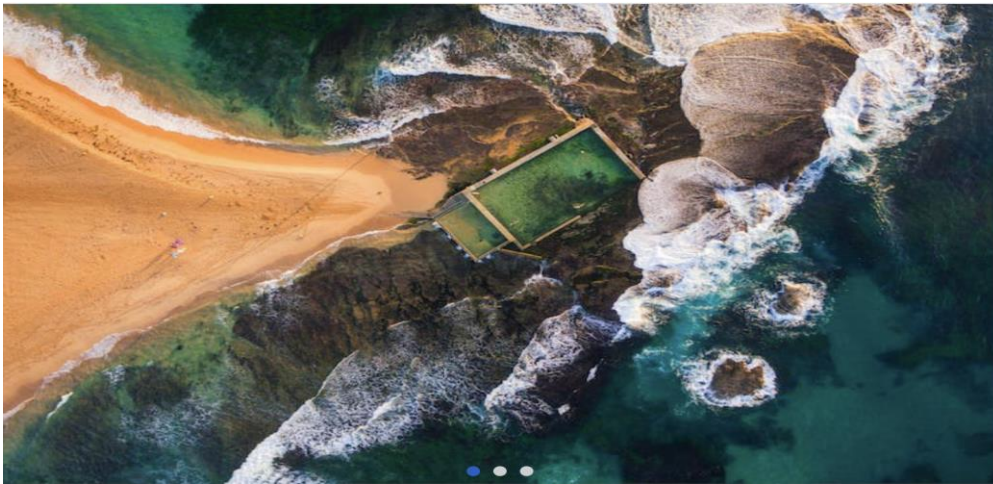
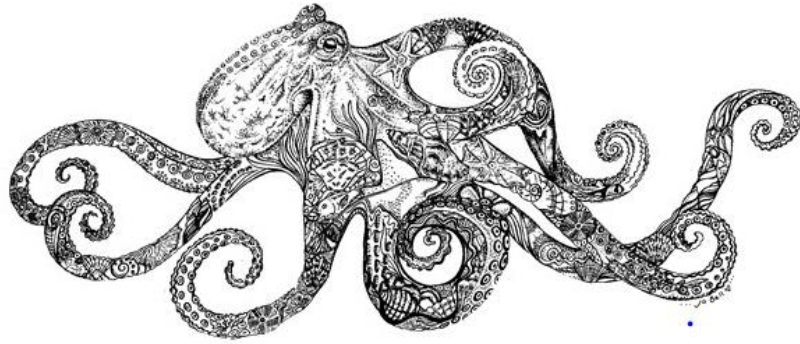


Rockpool Image – David Helsham



Sooty Oyster Catcher (**endangered**) Image – Lawrie Davidson

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



Rockpool & platform Image – Northern Beaches Council

- 2. Dressing sheds** – a new Change/Showering facility was constructed in 2022 in a similar style to the Surf Life Saving Club approx. 200m south. Included is a picnic area and outdoor showers.

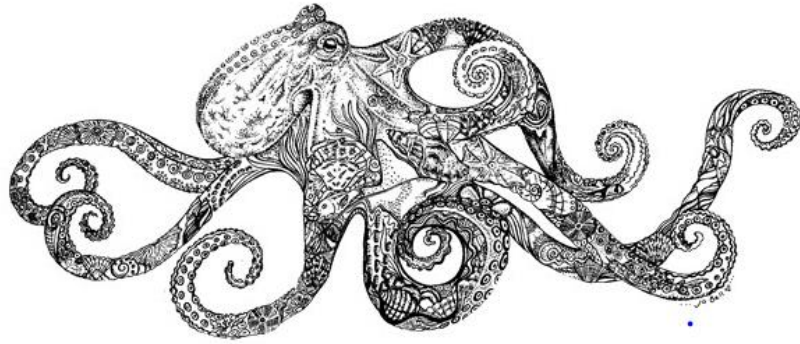


Stormwater outfall Image – Noah Deare

- 3. Stormwater Outfall** – at the northern end of the beach is a stormwater outfall that provides potential pollution after heavy rainfall. Rocky and coral reefs in NSW are susceptible to pollution from land-based activities, including agriculture, urban development, and sewage overflows.

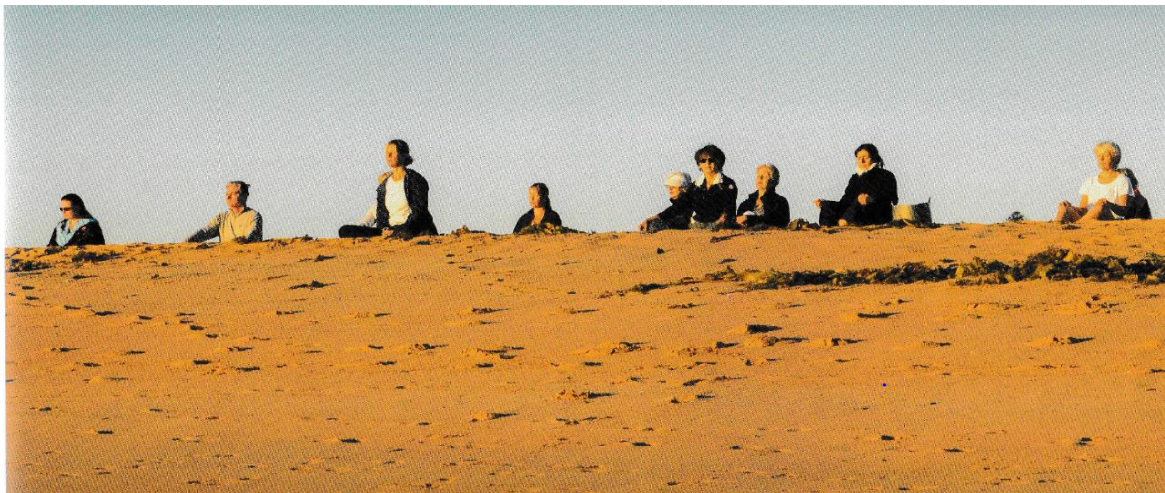


## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



### **Current Usage**

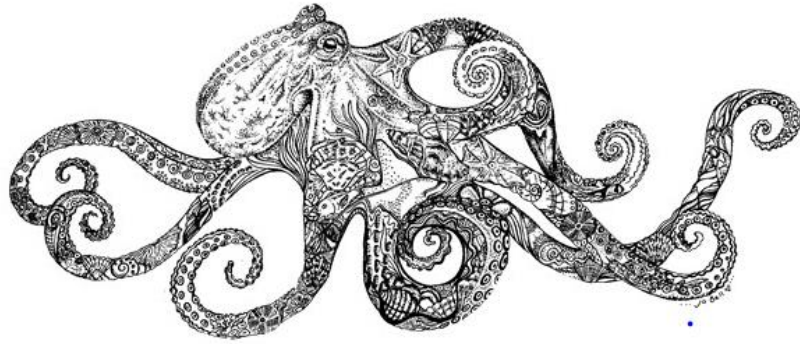
As mentioned in official literature, it is important for the community's physical and mental wellbeing that the Bay's natural features are protected, as they provide an important platform for all forms of recreational activities. Water sports include swimming, surfing, snorkelling and diving, paddle boarding, kite-surfing, and surf lifesaving. On the beach the community enjoys beach running, walking, yoga and meditation, and general family activities.



Yoga group & Ocean swim start Images– David Helsham



## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



### What of the future protection of the Bay?

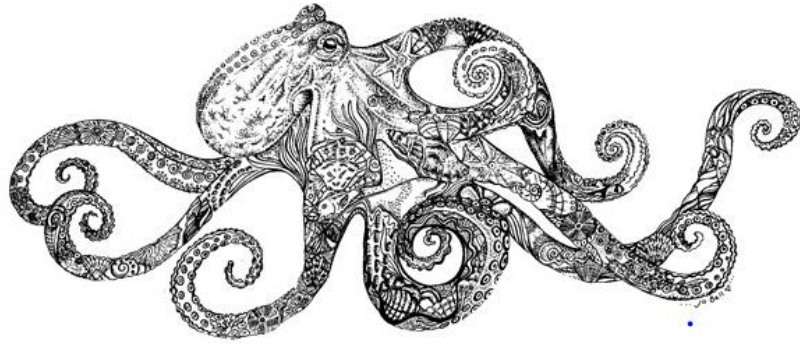
***Content temporarily removed at request of Department of Primary Industries pending legal advice.***



Great Cormorant – Image Lawrie Davidson

**The Bay is used daily by a number of groups and individuals supporting this proposal. By way of future collaboration, we wish to confirm our ongoing commitment.**

## Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay



Surfing Image- Mona Vale Boardriders

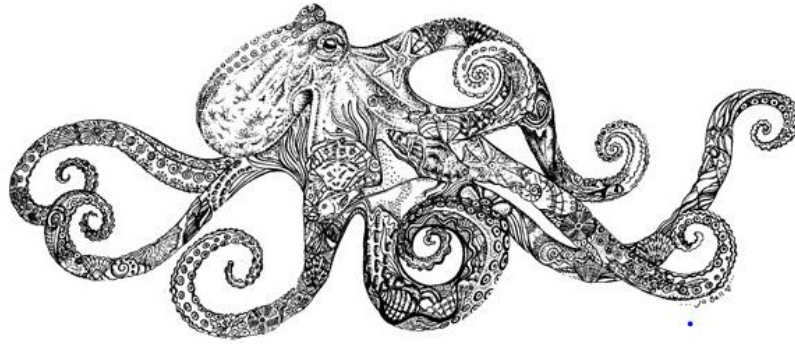
An example of this commitment has been to source a new technology developed in New Zealand that has the ability to assess the marine bio-diversity/health of a specific area via Eco-DNA testing, including:

*“Comprehensive multispecies test - single replicate. Includes multispecies analyses for fish, insects, crustaceans, molluscs, plants, algae, and bacteria. Analysis service includes DNA extraction, sample QC, library preparation/indexing, Illumina single-end sequencing and bioinformatic analysis including denoising, taxonomic identification and data provision.”*



Sooty Oyster Catchers (**endangered**) Image – Lawrie Davidson

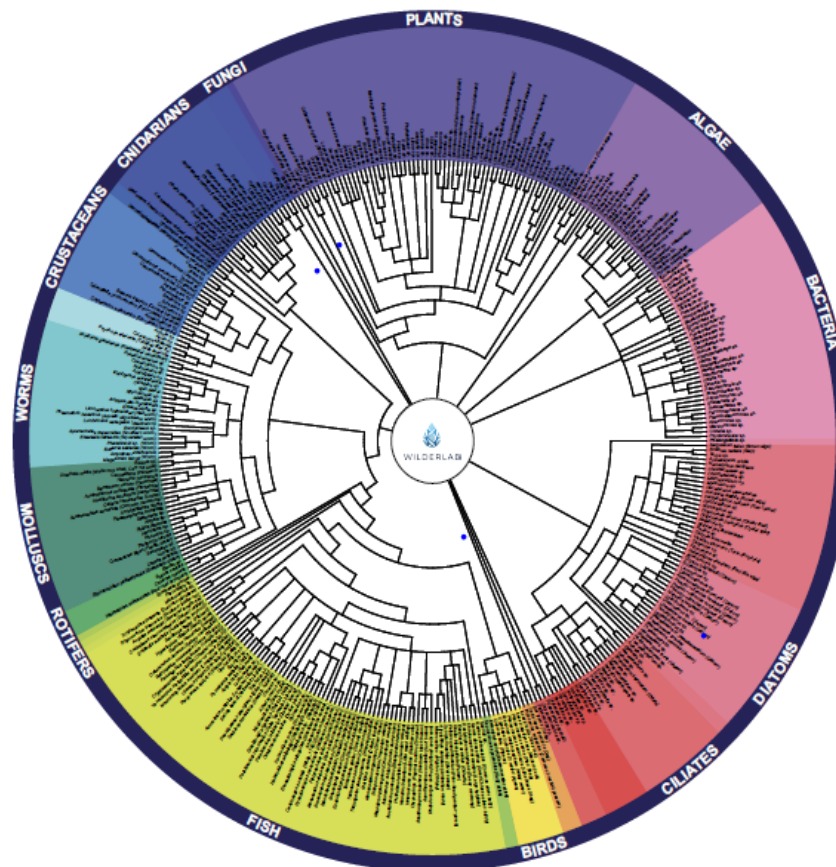
# Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay



The service (\$125 per sample) would provide an ongoing objective assessment of the recovery of the bio-diversity, and subject to relevant sponsorship could be easily implemented.

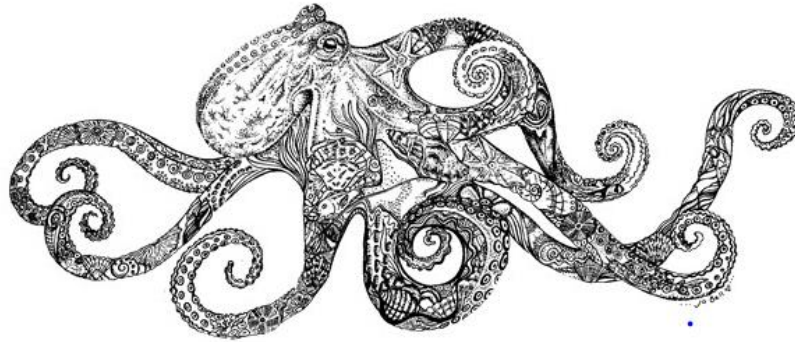
See below sample report for Parsley Bay, Sydney Harbour

## Parsley Bay Biodiversity Audit



Infographic - Joey DiBattista

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*

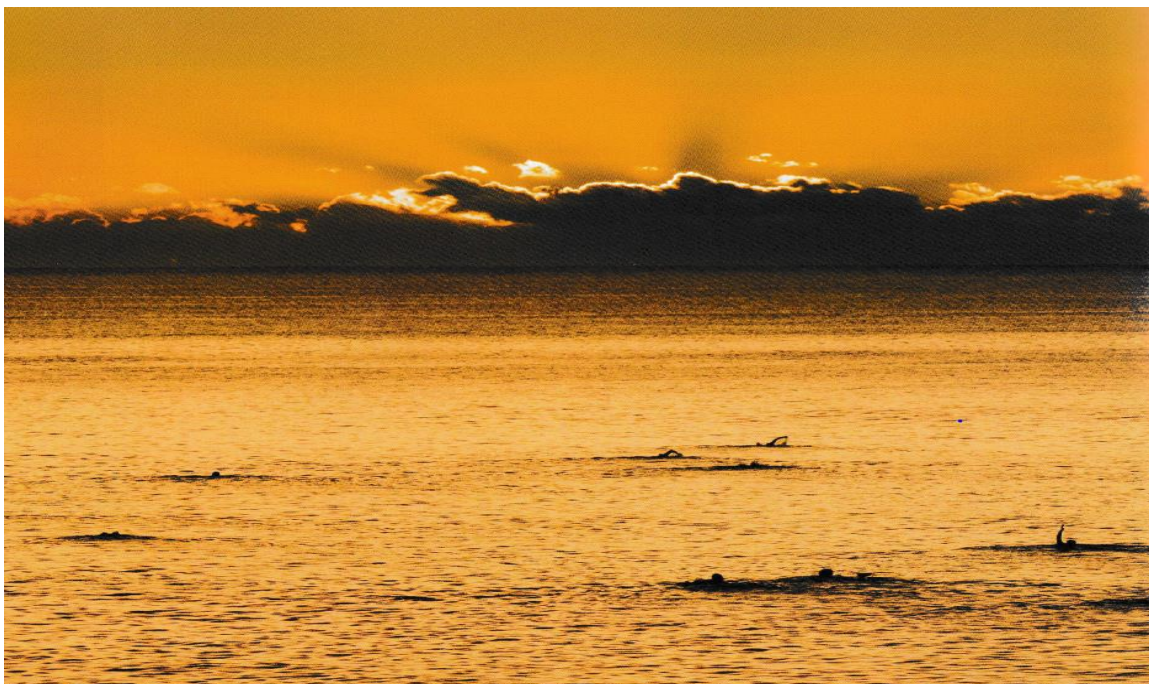


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### **Conclusion - What we are seeking:**

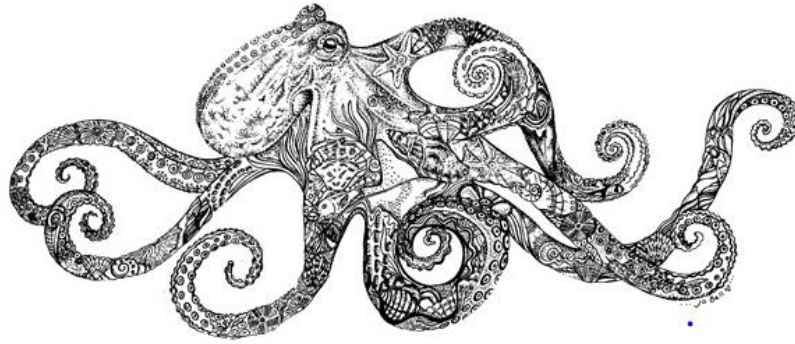
- 1. Intertidal Protected Area at Mona Vale Headland be reclassified as an Aquatic Reserve and this reserve is to include Bongin Bongin Bay and its adjacent rock platforms.**
- 2. The entire reserve is to have a “no take’ status as per Australia’s “30/30” commitment. (i.e. 30% of the marine reserves be declared as “no take” zones by 2030).**
- 3. Similar to Cabbage Tree Bay Aquatic Reserve, we express a willingness to collaborate with all relevant authorities in the ongoing education/protection/assessment of the Aquatic Reserve.**

A committed group of people have contributed to creating this proposal. In the spirit of “*think globally, act locally*” we hope this commitment can be mirrored in the prompt declaration of Bongin Bongin Bay as NSW’s newest aquatic reserve.



Sunrise swimmers Image – David Helsham

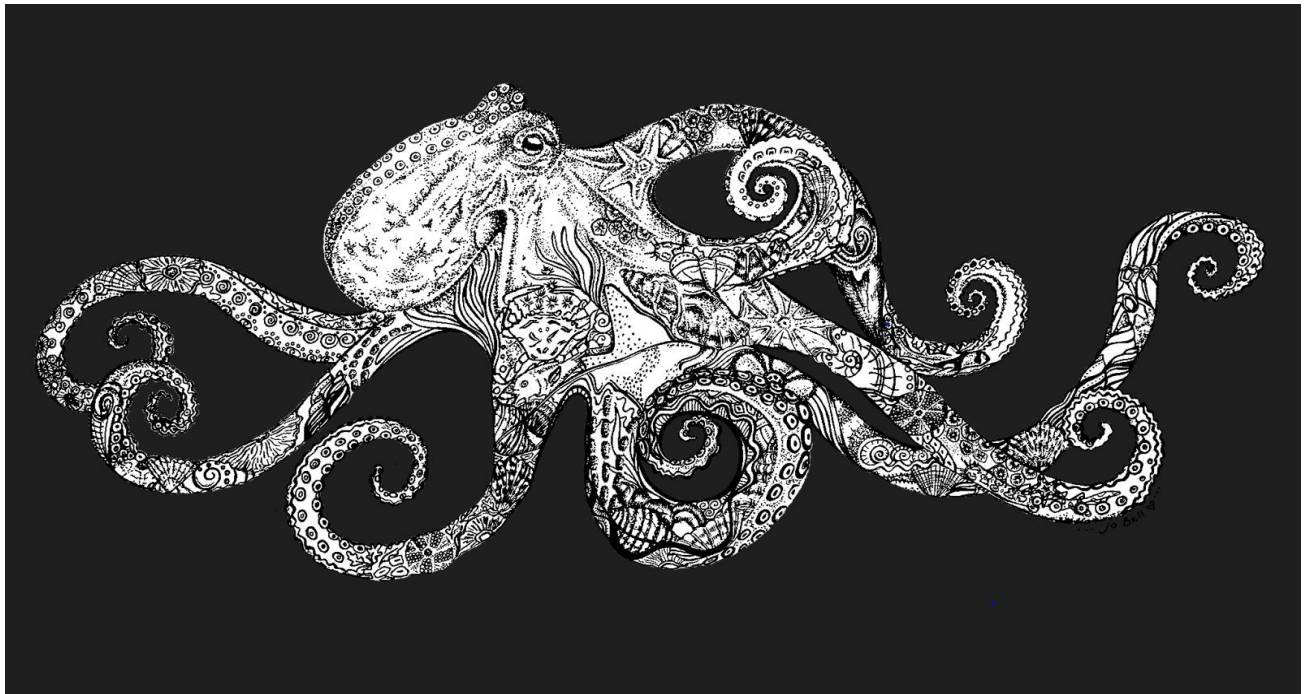
## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



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### **Acknowledgements:**

#### **'My friend Ned' - Our Logo**



'My friend Ned' is an original artwork created by Jo Bell of Ocean Love Art & Design, donated to the group and has been entered in Northern Beaches Council's Environmental Art & Design Awards.

The intricate design has in Jo's words "*I've tried to incorporate as many of our marine friends as possible that we see and swim with into the drawing, as well as the sea grasses, seaweed and shells*".

We thank Jo for her 'labour of love' as well as the many others listed below.

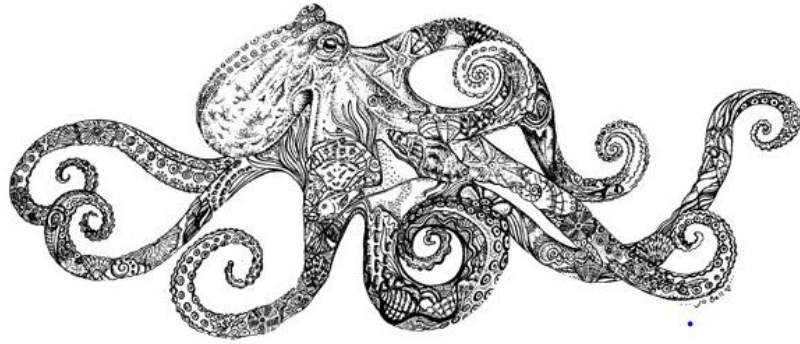
#### **[www.bonginbonginbay.com.au](http://www.bonginbonginbay.com.au) website creation**

- Mark Buhagiar – Technical Director Opal Logic Pty Ltd & regular swimmer

#### **Online Petition & Posters/Flyer**

- David Hayes – Principal, David Hayes Media & regular swimmer

## Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay



### Submission

- Greg Pride – regular swimmer

### Images

- Bill Watkins – regular swimmer
- David Helsham - Retired graphic artist & regular swimmer
- **Temporarily removed pending legal advice**
- Greg Pride – regular swimmer
- Jo Bell – Principal, Ocean Love Art & Design & regular swimmer
- Lawrie Davidson – regular swimmer
- Noah Deare – regular swimmer
- Northern Beaches Council
- **Temporarily removed pending legal advice**

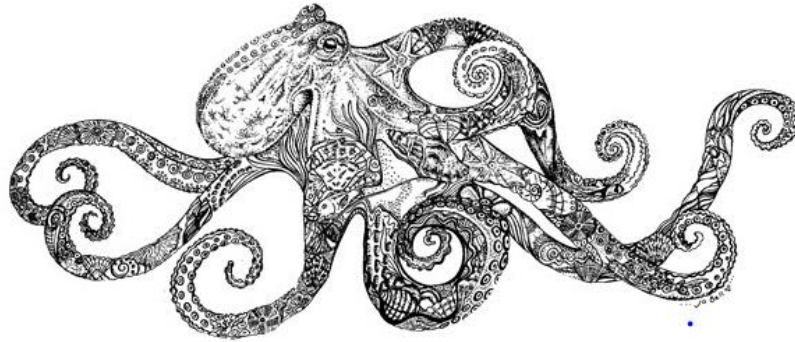


Fishing boat Image – Greg Pride

### Proof-reading

- Ross Pride – Pride & Partners

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



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### **Technical Review**

- Professor David Booth – Professor, School of Life Sciences UTS Sydney

### **Scientific and Conservation Aspects**

- Australian Marine Scientists Association
- Danielle Ryan - National Parks Assoc.NSW/Australian Marine Conservation Society
- Lisa Grauaug & Dr Katie Frankish – Scientific Liaison
- Phil Colman – co-author “Exploring Tidal Waters on Australia’s Temperate Coast”

### **Video – “Spirit of the Basin”**

- Phil Sheppard

### **Petition**

- Glenn Harrington – Lead & regular swimmer

### **Steering Committee**

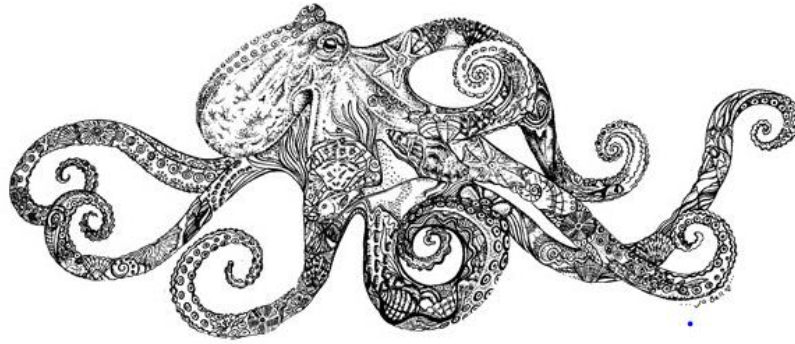
- Jo Bell
- Mark Buhagiar
- Dr Katie Frankish
- Lisa Grauaug
- Glenn Harrington
- David Hayes
- Greg Pride



Osprey (**endangered**) – Image -Lawrie Davidson



## Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay



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### Appendix - Benefits of declaring Bongin Bongin Bay an Aquatic Reserve

#### Scientific Benefits

1. The Bay is home to several endangered species e.g. there have been sightings of Weedy Sea-dragons as well as bird life such as Kestrels and Sooty Oyster Catchers.
2. Declaring an aquatic reserve would promote further research and educational opportunities regarding its unique biodiversity. A 'no take' zone would provide a scientific reference area to monitor the potential impacts of neighbouring activities on other less restricted zones.
3. General benefits of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs):

Quoting from <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/benefits-mpas.pdf>:

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) “help protect important habitats and representative samples of marine life. They can assist in restoring the productivity of the oceans and avoid further degradation...”

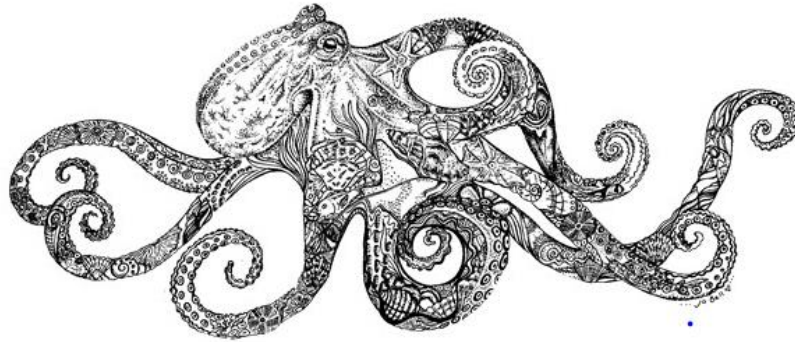
“Without measures such as MPAs and ‘no-take’ reserves, marine biodiversity is likely to be lost before we of know of its existence or importance for humanity, or how it should be managed for long-term sustainability...”

“The most immediate benefits of MPAs are that they provide natural areas with lower human impacts...”

- For example: Lord Howe Island (from above reference)

*“ Situated within a World Heritage Area, 700 kilometres north-east of Sydney, Australia, the 300,510 ha Lord Howe Island Marine Park (Commonwealth waters) is an example of multiple-use management designed to protect marine biodiversity, habitats and ecological processes associated with the volcanic seamount system. The management arrangements for the Park also ensure the long-term maintenance of the Island's tourism industry and the traditions and lifestyle of the local community. Approximately 70% of the Park is assigned to*

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



*IUCN Category IV (Habitat Protection Zone) and allows for hand lining, trolling and strictly controlled drop line fishing to occur...*

*“The remaining 30% of the Park has a very high level of protection and has been assigned to IUCN Category 1a (Strict Nature Reserve), prohibiting all forms of fishing and other extractive activity. These Sanctuary Zones ensure that the area is managed in as undisturbed state as possible and provide scientific reference areas to monitor the potential impacts of neighbouring activities...”*

- Similar to the above, from Fraser Island Defenders Organisation:  
<https://fido.org.au/moonbi/backgrounders/24%20Marine%20Parks%20Benefits.pdf>

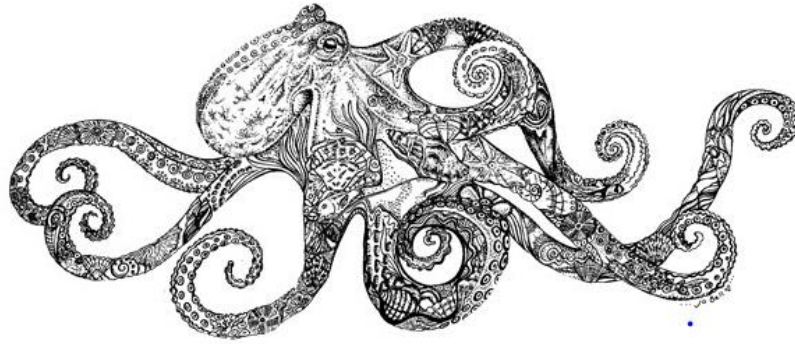
*“Reserves protect marine habitats in a particular place and the diversity of animals and plants that live in those habitats. Consequently, many animals and plants that live in reserves tend to: live in greater numbers, grow larger, and reproduce more than their counterparts outside reserves”*

*“A comprehensive review of studies in 80 diverse ‘no-take’ marine reserves showed that most well-enforced marine reserves resulted in relatively large, rapid, and long-lasting increases in the biomass, density, size, and diversity of species living within their boundaries. This has also been shown to spill over to increase the productivity of the surrounding marine areas outside the reserves”.*



Image – Donovan Callaghan

## Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay



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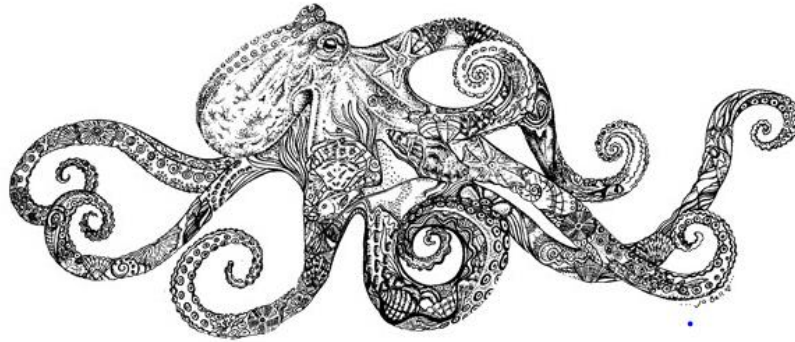
### Community/Individual Benefits

1. As with Cabbage Tree Bay, Manly, (a 'no take' Aquatic Reserve) the Bay allows year-round recreational swimming even in rough surf conditions. There are few other sheltered open water swimming options on the Northern Beaches.
2. Attracts many family groups with children to participate in:
  - local 'Nippers' junior surf lifesaving groups
  - swimming in the relatively calm waters of the Bay
  - snorkelling and exploring the rockpools
3. Protection of the Bay and its biodiversity is likely to make it more appealing to visitors from across Sydney and beyond. The Bay is a community/tourism hub. Located at the end of Mona Vale Road which connects to many outer suburbs, it boasts:
  - a new surf club and associated facilities
  - new change amenities including hot showers
  - a new restaurant and a new cafeall of which are attractive to visitors and tourism in general.
4. There are well documented physical and mental health benefits for communities accessing 'blue space'. This has become ever more important in the wake of the COVID-19 epidemic.

Quoting from <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20221108-the-doctors-prescribing-blue-therapy>

*"The concept of blue health emerged almost 10 years ago when researchers at the University of Sussex asked 20,000 people to record their feelings at random times. They collected over a million responses and found that people were by far the happiest when they were in blue spaces. More recently, experts from Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) have found that spending time in blue spaces lowers the risk of stress, anxiety, obesity, cardiovascular disease and premature death. Niamh Smith, a researcher at GCU and co-author of the study, says the team found an impact on both mental and general health from spending time in blue spaces. The research also linked time spent in blue space to a reduction in body mass index (BMI) and a lower risk of mortality".*

# Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay



## Our Story

'The Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay' evolved in February 2023 from a group of swimmers who traverse the bay each morning taking in the wonders of nature.

The group is currently seeking to mobilise the community via a petition to Northern Beaches Council seeking its support in having the area declared by the Department of Environment as a 'no take' aquatic reserve.

The primary objective of aquatic reserves in NSW is to conserve the biodiversity of fish and marine vegetation. Where consistent with this objective, aquatic reserves may also aim to:

- Protect fish habitat
- Provide for species management
- Protect threatened species, populations and ecological communities
- Facilitate educational activities and scientific research

Bongin Bongin (Aboriginal for "many shells") Bay, Mona Vale is unique. It has seven types of marine habitat in close proximity, and being located midway between two other aquatic reserves, Barrenjoey Headland and Narrabeen Headland, it is, in effect, a wildlife corridor.

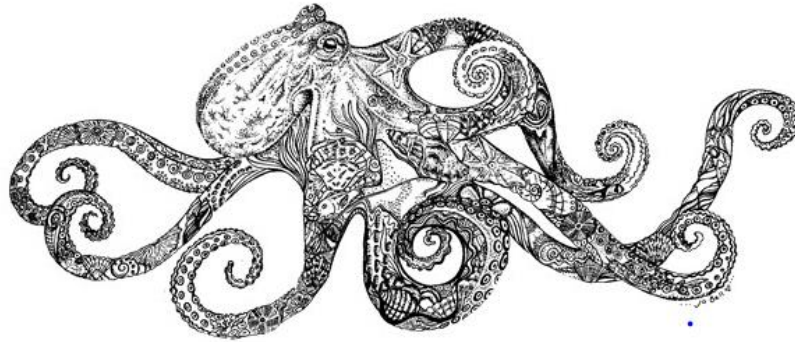
Sydney's Northern Beaches have five existing aquatic reserves providing important protection for marine wildlife habitat. However, there have been no new aquatic reserves declared in NSW for over 20 years, despite the increasing pressures from urbanisation, and threats from climate change and offshore gas exploration under PEP-11 arrangements.

Since 1993, along with Shelly Beach Headland, Dee Why Headland and Bungan/Newport Headland, Mona Vale Headland has been classified as an Intertidal Protected Area (IPA). Of significance is the non-inclusion of the rock platform surrounding the rock pool – an area that has been heavily impacted by urbanisation and recreational fishing activities.

The purpose of this submission is to seek an extension of the Mona Vale Headland IPA to include Bongin Bongin Bay, and for the combined area totalling 45 hectares to be declared a 'no take' aquatic reserve.

This proposal is consistent with the values and goals of **(content temporarily removed pending legal advice)**, the Australian Marine Scientist's Association **(content temporarily removed pending legal advice)**. It is also consistent with the goals of the Australian High Ambition Coalition, to which Australia committed in June 2021. As part of this commitment,

## *Friends of Bongin Bongin Bay*



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Australia aims to lift to the international standard '30/30' target i.e. to have 30% of marine reserves declared as 'No take' zones by 2030.

We are not anti-fishing.

Marine sanctuaries provide a refuge for fish from being caught, allowing them to aggregate freely, grow large, and reproduce. Sanctuaries are an important tool not just to halt biodiversity loss and to create climate resilience, but to ensure food security. As fish and invertebrates grow larger they produce exponentially more eggs; the bigger the fish, the more babies they produce.

Therefore, establishing areas where larger fish can proliferate free from extractive pressures is of great value to areas adjacent that are open to fishing. Current fisheries regulations already acknowledge the importance of these larger fish to the breeding potential of a population. Research at Cabbage Tree Bay in Manly has shown that even small marine sanctuaries are playing a critical role in the restoration of the marine environment by enhancing biomass and biodiversity (Turnbull et al. 2017). The success of the Cabbage Tree Bay marine sanctuary has spawned the VIZ - Sydney Visibility Reports Facebook group, that now has over 10,000 members that actively share experiences and photos from the abundance and uniqueness of the marine sanctuary.

Only 7% of NSW's territorial waters are protected as sanctuary, far below the global standard. The key message from the 'spillover' studies described above is there is a need to set aside more refuge for adult fish, to grow large and reproduce in rough ocean refuges like Cabbage Tree Bay and Bongin Bongin Bay.

### **Conclusion - What we are seeking:**

- 1. The Intertidal Protected Area at Mona Vale Headland be reclassified as an Aquatic Reserve and this reserve is to include Bongin Bongin Bay and its adjacent rock platforms.**
- 2. The entire reserve is to have a 'no take' status as per Australia's "30/30" commitment. (i.e. 30% of the marine reserves be declared as "no take" zones by 2030).**
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