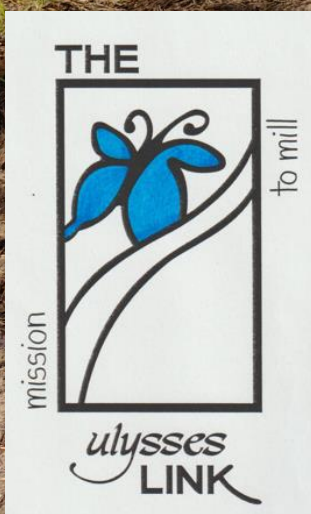


CONNECTING COMMUNITIES ... A VISION REALISED

Penny Phillips and the *Ulysses Link* foreshore trails



KEN GRAY

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Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the following people for their generous assistance with stories, images and edits to make this story possible: Penny Phillips, David and Sandy Devine, Steve Russell, Truus Biddlecombe, and Meryl Harding.

Cover: A small spur track from *Ulysses Link* foreshore track to the sand on Mission Beach overlooking Dunk Island.

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PENNY PHILLIPS – ULYSSES VISION

Penny and Roger Phillips came from South Australia to live in Mission Beach in 1994. They established the popular *Flying Pig Delicatessen*, in a shopping centre at Mission Beach which was promoted widely using a pink fibreglass flying pig on top of a red sign.

Once the deli was up and running, Penny was on the lookout for another challenging project to apply here boundless energy and belief to. Her daughter, Joanne, joined the Mission Beach Girl Guides which was at MARCS Park as this area would be named sometime later. Penny attended a meeting of the Park's Management Committee to understand the place and the people who were responsible for the venue that her daughter attended.

She was utterly surprised when she left the meeting... as the president!



Penny Phillips, a positive force: Coordinator Medical Training, James Cook University, Cairns, supporting med students in their clinical years.

Penny came up with the idea of building a walking and cycling track that runs along the entire length of the Mission Beach district foreshore. Penny's vision was to have a foreshore path linking all the district's beachside communities ... a track linking the *Kennedy Walking Track* to Bingil Bay.

It would be accessible to all, safe for children, with interesting art features and stopping points. The *Ulysses Link* would be a fantastic community and tourism asset that would add a free tourist attraction to our destination and encourage more leisure activity for all.

Few could argue with this beachside track, but Penny faced strident opposition from some quarters, as invariably happens in small towns. The same thing happened when Len Staff, a former resident of Wongaling Beach, proposed building the *Edmund Kennedy Memorial Walking Track* in 1984. He had little community support and faced vigorous opposition from some influential residents, the Tully newspaper, and even many Cardwell Shire Council people. Nonetheless, he gathered together an enthusiastic community team and constructed it.

Penny and her team decided that the initial stage of the project would be to build a small section of the link from the Visitor Information Centre to Koda Street in Wongaling Beach with a bridge over Porters Creek. Much work was done on the plans, but red tape stood in the way of her plan to build the bridge

over Porters Creek. She negotiated at length with Brigadier George Mansford AM (Retired) who had been heavily involved in the Jungle Warfare School in Tully. The idea was to work with Army engineers who would design and help to build the Porters Creek bridge as a local project. When that fell through, Penny decided to lower her sights a little and build a section from the *Cutten Walking Track* to the Visitors Information Centre with an Art Plazza near the Johnstone Shire Council foreshore camping ground.

She had hoped to provide a safe way for children to cycle to and from school between Wongaling Beach and Mission Beach. That dream was partly fulfilled later by the Cassowary Coast Regional Council when they raised government funds and built a concrete path along Tully Mission Beach Road.

Ever the optimist, Penny, who in 2023 is at the start of a long overseas adventure, remains convinced that completion of the full foreshore trail will eventually happen. When departing on her exciting new journey, she said, *I would still love to see a bridge over Porters Creek, that would be the jewel in the crown. It is such a pivotal piece of infrastructure for Mission Beach that would provide access to a unique section of coastal vegetation, providing a real contrast to the other more inhabited sections of the Ulysses Link.*

Like Len Staff before her, Penny Phillips was not merely a dreamer with big ideas, she was an amazingly effective organizer and planner, and an influencer who was determined to deliver for the community. Penny persevered, assembled a community team, consulted extensively, found acceptable compromises, and collaborated with all relevant organizations to construct the first section of the *Ulysses Link*.

Len and Penny were both unphased by opposition to their ideas and worked hard to fight community apathy and demonstrate the benefits of their vision. However, these projects were just like *The Little Red Hen* fairy tale... while no one wanted to make the bread, when it was baked and smelling great, everyone came eagerly to eat it.

Both of these projects were tremendous successes and brought enormous benefits to the community and its economy. This is the story of what our *Little Red Hen*, Penny Philips, did to show our community what was possible and to make a start and build a section of the path for the world to see and appreciate.

This was her first foray into formal community volunteering and when she left town in 2005, the school's popular PE Teacher, a member of the MARCS Park Committee, published a glowing review of her time in the role of President:

I am writing to thank Penny Philips for the contribution she has made to the Mission Beach community during the years she has lived and worked here. When Penny and her family move to Cairns in September she will be missed, in particular by the MARCS Park management committee of which she is currently president... (Under her leadership) from relatively haphazard and uncoordinated beginnings MARCS Park has become an important community asset which brings together people of Mission Beach and provides healthy options for all. Penny has been successful in implementing a cooperative management approach by all that use the park and has provided vital energy and leadership in developing a plan for the future... This should be the best place in the world to live and I thank you Penny for your sincere contribution to it.

Chris Cattarossi Mission Beach.

In her eleven years as a resident here, Penny Phillips had made an indelible mark on our small community and showed us all a better way forward.

ULYSSES LINK PLANNING

To turn her vision into reality, Penny recruited a steering group of interested residents and business owners and shared with them what she hoped to achieve, inviting their input and involvement in July 1998. Many of these people were office bearers in important community groups in Mission Beach.

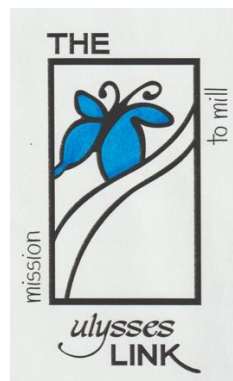
The steering committee was:

- Eddie McEachan CEO JSC
- Will Higgins Engineer JSC
- Matthew Hyde Environ Officer JSC
- Terry Hampson Councillor JSC (after March 2,000)
- Joanne Stitt Councillor JSC
- Penny Phillips Leader Ulysses Team
- Mary Ritchie Ulysses Team
- Ken Gray Ulysses Team
- John Waldren Ulysses Team

The *Ulysses Link* Team was:

- Penny Phillips Team Leader
- Karen Schmidt
- Truus Biddlecombe
- Rhonda Murdoch
- Mary Ritchie
- Ken Gray
- Liz Goodhew
- Don Marsh
- John Waldren

The plan was to build a walking trail that could be used by cyclists as well, but sections such as the *Kennedy Walking Track* and *Cutten Walking Track* were unsuitable for cycling due to the steps.



Logo by Karen Schmidt.

As usual, some members of the steering group were more active than others. Rhonda Murdoch helped deliver on many aspects, including the funding application. Karen Schmidt was also deeply involved, especially in designing and drawing concept plans and logos. Legal advice was provided by Liz Goodhew, a solicitor. Note from author, Ken Gray: *I was a drone, attending meetings, but not doing much other than cheering the team along.*

In the publicity documents, the description of the vision was shortened to *Mission to Mill*, which was depicted as a path from the old South Mission Beach 'mission' site to the Cutten-Garner timber mill in Bingil Bay.

Penny was excited when she saw the opportunities presented by the Centenary of Federation Community Funds/Queensland Heritage Trails Network. Some of this funding would be allocated to the Kennedy Electorate, why not Mission Beach!

Her first moves were to test the reactions to the concept with government and other organisations. She knocked on doors and met with Councils, the Beach Protection Authority, the Wet Tropics Management Authority, the FNQ Regional Organising Committee, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Environment and Heritage, Coast Care, JCU Co-Operative research Centre and Green Corps to gauge their responses. These organisations received Penny and her concepts favourably and encouraged her to press ahead. Their suggestions included how to approach the funding application.

Then, after appointing a steering committee and consulting with them to fine tune and document the proposal, Penny communicated with residents and community organisations to refine it. As the project was developed and revised, she re-visited the Council and others. When the plans were close to completion, there was a public meeting to gain agreement on the route.

As always, there was a rumour mill developing with some misinformation to be corrected – some thought it was a C4 initiative, others said it was to be a concrete path, some said that foreshore property owners were not consulted, and some wondered if it would degrade the foreshore environment. Penny and the team addressed these issues and satisfied most concerns expressed.

The initial plan was to construct a 3 km track between Koda Street in Wongaling and the Mission Beach Visitor Information Centre in Porter Promenade, Mission Beach. The steering group drew up a plan for that to show the community:

1999: Mission Beach has four linear coastal communities that have a resident population of 2,400 and an annual tourist visitation of 150,000. The area is split into two shires. The communities are currently linked by a road system which does not follow the coastline, has almost no footpaths, is too narrow to cater for bicycles and which has speed limits of 100 kph, 80 kph and 60 kph. Access along the 14 km of beach is restricted at high tide at the mouth of Porters Creek and is not an option for the aged, wheelchair bound, or bicycle bound and is dangerous at night for all people, but particularly for tourists who are not aware of the depth of the creek.

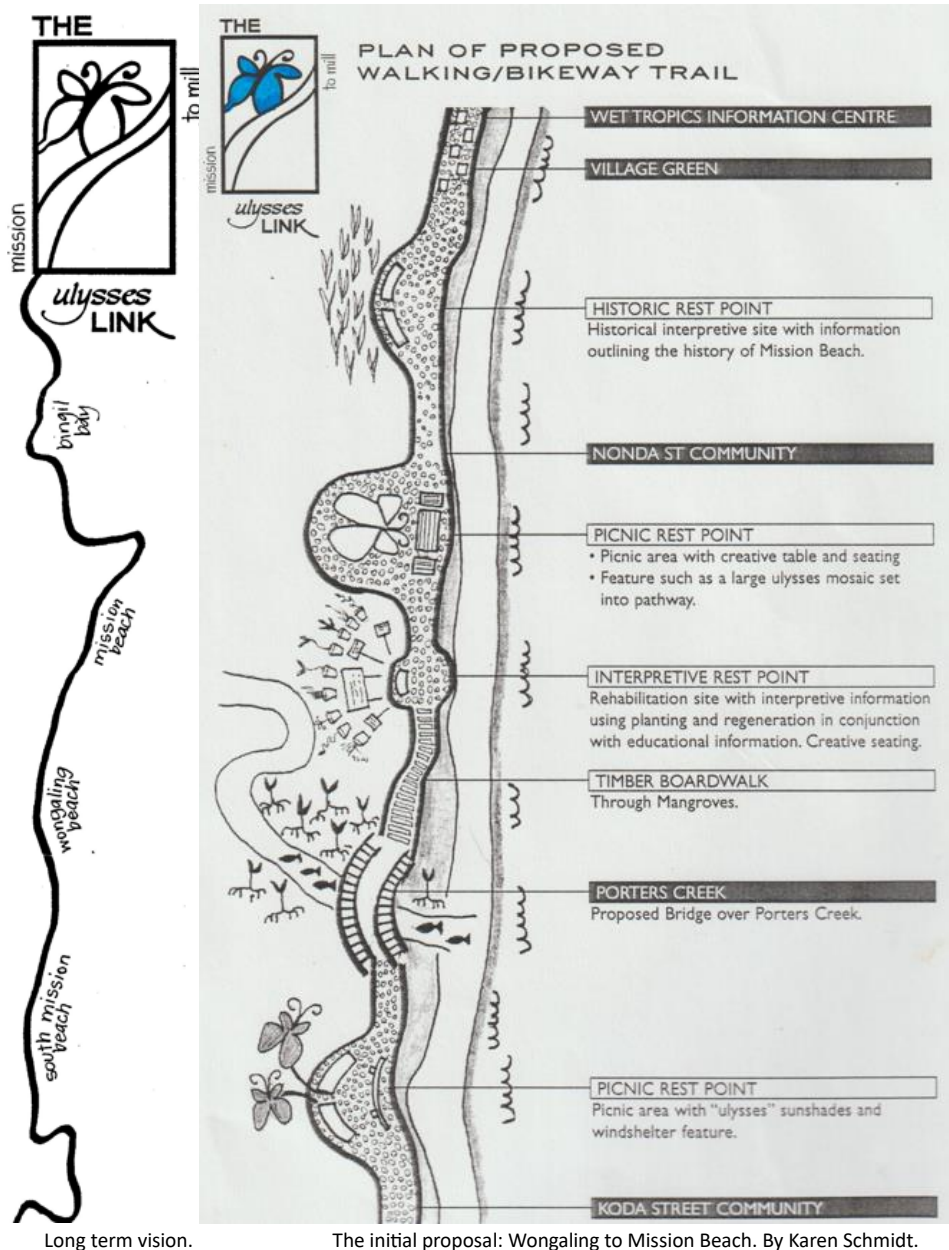
The main activities will be:

- Creating a trail along the foreshore linking Wongaling Beach and Mission Beach which is sympathetic to the environment, but firm and wide enough to cater for pedestrians, bicycle riders, stroller pushers, and so on.
- Constructing a bridge at Porters Creek that is high enough to cope with tide levels and small watercraft.
- Constructing 'interest points' on the trail, interpretive signage, picnic spots, and art shelters.
- Developing loop trails to explore habitat and lighting for night use.
- The privacy of foreshore land owners can be protected by providing vegetation barriers and signage.

Benefits:

- Development of an eco-tourism template for the Mission Beach community.
- An educational experience that highlights the district's biodiversity and biogeography.
- The unique environments can be enjoyed by everyone in a controlled way.
- The separation of pedestrians and cyclists from fast-moving vehicles.
- By adding an additional attraction to our destination, Mission Beach can alleviate some traffic pressure in the Daintree Rainforest and Kuranda areas.
- An art and aesthetic experience that highlights our local artists.
- Opportunity to extend the trail to the full distance in the future.

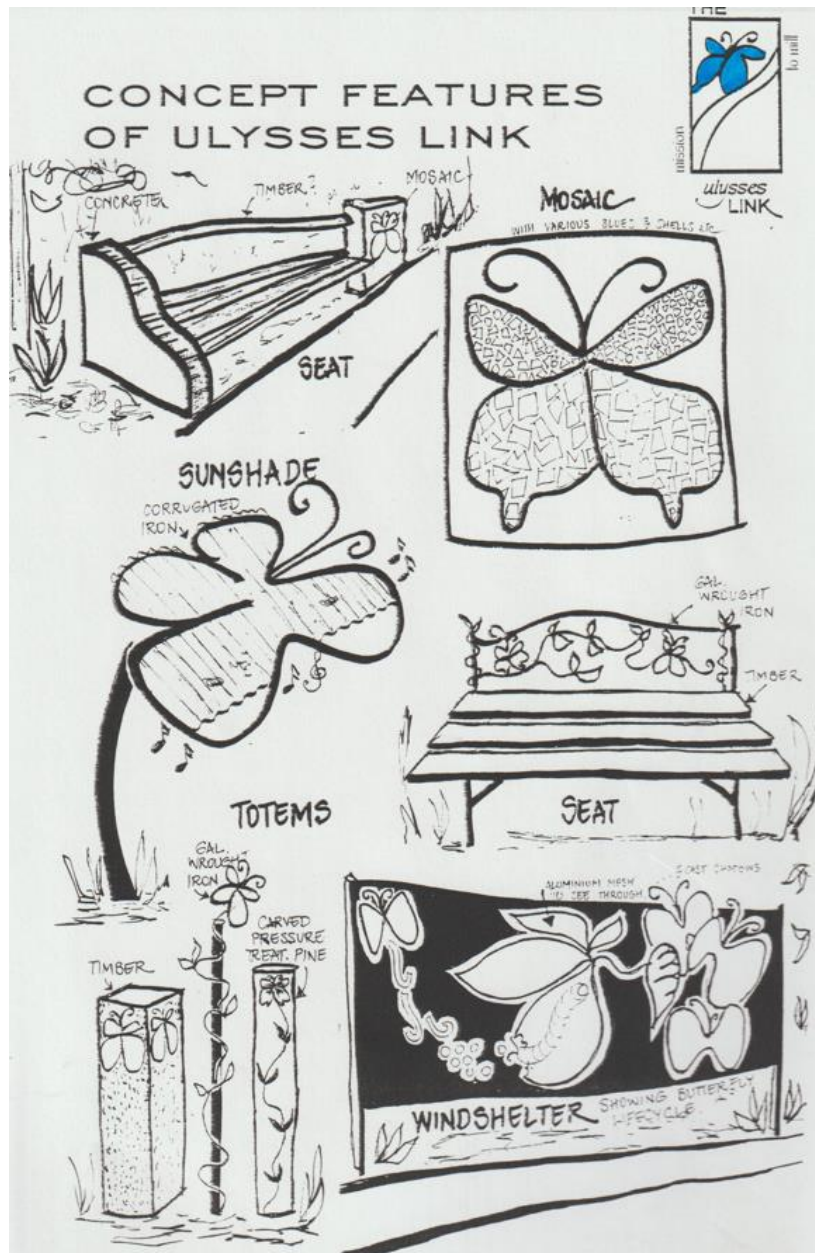
Budget: \$351,000. Revised budget later was for a shorter section of track: \$78,000.



Long term vision.

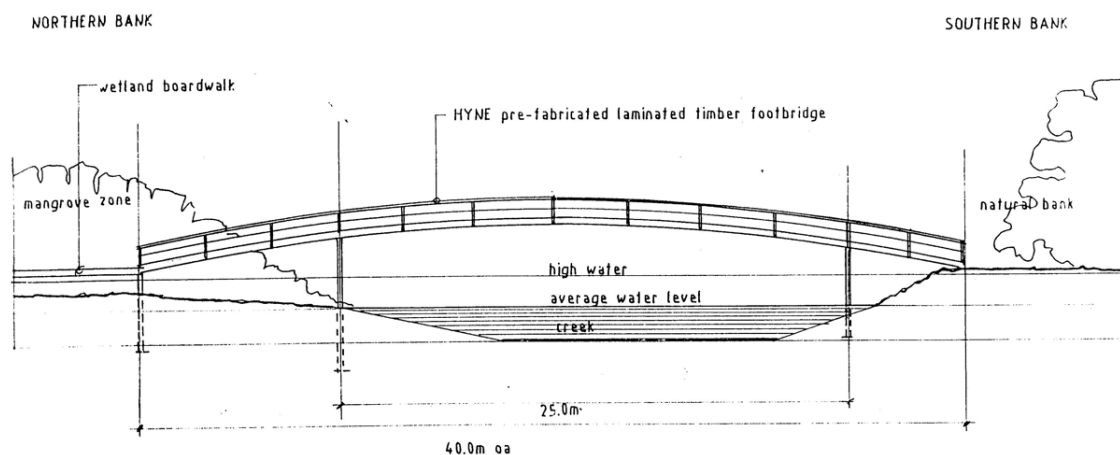
The initial proposal: Wongaling to Mission Beach. By Karen Schmidt.

The drawings for this concept plan were drafted by Karen Schmidt.



Karen Schmidt's concept features.

A 40-metre long, Hyne prefabricated bridge was proposed for the Wongaling Creek crossing.



Concept Plan: Hyne prefabricated bridge for crossing Wongaling Creek.

The proposals were received enthusiastically by organisations consulted including Lions, C4, Rotary, Wongaling Beach and South Mission Beach Progress Association, Mission Beach P & C Association, Tully High School P & C, Probus, RMRAC, Cassowary Coast Development Bureau, Inner Wheel, and Johnstone Shire Cultural Association.

As with the *Kennedy Walking Track* which was built a few years earlier, there was an early stumbling block due to strong resistance from a few beachfront property owners. Penny could have proceeded without the approval of property owners because the land being used is owned by the State and managed by the Council. Some property owners had illegally built infrastructure and gardens on the State-owned Esplanade land and did not want that disturbed and/or want the public traversing the public land near to their homes.

Penny decided to be pragmatic to reduce such conflicts with property owners, so she revised the plans to relocate it and make the project less ambitious. At least she would make a start, and people could see that the path was sustainable and well-loved and not invasive, and then it could be extended later.

The new plan called for a 1.3 km track from the market's precinct, just south of the Council camping ground, to connect with the *Cutten Walking Track* at Clump Point.

The objectives of the project were:

- To engage with the community and create a facility that suited most locals.
- To provide an added tourist attraction that was free to users and accessible to all.
- To create employment during its construction and enhance tourist visitation and duration of stay.
- To create employment and training opportunities for some Indigenous people.
- To involve local artists and create a conduit for the display of local artists works and highlight cultural aspects of the district through the associated artworks.
- To provide added activities for locals.
- To mark the Centenary of Federation with a permanent public asset.
- To deliver the project on budget and on time to be ready for the Centenary celebrations in September 2001.

OUTCOMES

After much planning, the next step was to win funding. The team worked hard to develop a compelling case and were rushing at the last minute to meet the deadlines for applications.

From the beginning of the project, Johnstone Shire Council Division 3 Councillor, Steve Russell, was heavily involved. Steve advocated long and hard in Council for the project in the face of quite fierce resistance in the beginning. He approached Cardwell Shire Council for their support as well without success but battled on. Some Innisfail Councillors feared that if Mission Beach won Centenary funding for the Link, that would disadvantage Innisfail in its pleas for the same funding. Steve experienced some robust and unpleasant resistance as well from some beachfront owners.

When it came to the funding application, Steve used his considerable experience in that to guide Penny on the best ways to make the case. In the end, Steve won the battle in Johnstone Shire Council and when the project was completed they quickly saw the benefits to the community and Council.

In October 1999, Penny needed the Johnstone Shire General Manager, Eddie McEachan, to sign the funding application. She made a frantic dash to catch Eddie while he was attending the opening of the Jorissen Bridge on Garners Beach Road. With no time to spare, Penny interrupted proceedings and thrust a pen into Eddie's hand and asked him to sign. Fortunately, Eddie knew the project well and supported it wholeheartedly, so he did not hesitate.



Frieda Jorissen in chair at her bridge opening.

In the Cairns Post, on April 27, 2001, there was an update on the progress of the project. The track was near to completion at the time and was expected to be ready for the opening in July and the Centenary of Federation celebrations in September.

David Devine was appointed to oversee the construction of the path and bridge and was ably assisted by a team of six Aboriginal youths. They did an excellent job and finished on time and on budget. Penny found David to be an amazing project manager who worked well with the team. He procured the telegraph poles that were used for the bridge piles and said that involved a few cartons of ale and was an excellent deal.

Apparently, most passers-by were very interested and supportive of the project, yet as often occurs, some were unimpressed.

CONSTRUCTION



Bridge over a small watercourse at the north end being built - David Devine (centre) with a team of Aboriginal youths who built the structure.

After Penny asked him to project-manage the job, David Devine walked the proposed length with council officers and was informed of the requirements to satisfy the rules such as wheel-chair access and the suggested purchase of a pre-fab bridge to span the creek. That cost approximately \$25,000.

The work team was made up of five local indigenous young guys and one female. They were completing a construction course with Cairns Regional Training and this project was part of the practical components of the qualification. David was asked by council to list the required tools and was surprised when he collected the tools because they were brand new and were paid out of the grant money and not never expected them to be returned!

David:

On the first day, the crew members were upset, to say the least, as they were a 'construction crew' and I had asked them to pull out 'mother-in-law tongue' by hand. At the end of the week, I shouted beers and everything was back on track.



Near the north end of the track where we found a challenge with an infestation of mother-in-law tongue weed

The track started at the Eco Village. A bob-cat was used to take out a 100mm deep trench and replace it with decomposed granite which was compacted by a council roller driven by one of the track crew.

We gained access to a mature palm plantation for palms including the Bingil Bay Palm to plant along the track to prevent cars parking in certain areas, and for cosmetic purposes.



Tree planting and starting the bridge construction.

I contacted a colleague (2IC of Ergon Energy, Cairns) and described the project and asked if he could assist with the supply of telephone poles for the bridge construction. The poles were in Tully, and not only did Ergon supply the poles, but also the drill truck and drilled the holes, and positioned the poles in place – again payment was a carton of beer! Bob West was a local builder and donated his time to help in the construction. The materials costs for the bridge was \$1,500.



Bridge construction.

A change had to be made to our bridge design plans when being required to help out the owners of the house across the road. They approached us to change the design as they used to watch their children play on the beach and the bridge was obstruction the view. So, we spread the side timber slates on the bridge allowing a better view of the beach, and everyone was happy.



Stones used for culvert on Porter Promenade. The original track did not cross the creek at the beach as it does today. End of a big day.

The river stones which were laid over the concrete over the storm water pipe came from a creek near Silkwood and as we loaded the stones from the creek onto the trailer, I thought it was a safe bet that no-one would complain.

We hand-made the tiles around the totem poles and when we drilled the holes, we accidentally severed the phone cable, but luckily, we had 'phoned before we dug' and Telstra repaired the damage at no cost.

As we approached the southern end, the nearby occupants were informed that we would be spraying to eliminate the noxious weeds. They advised that they would form a group and clean up the weeds, but after weeks of non-action, we loaded up our spray tanks with water and sprayed the weeds. Well, the local news-letter was full of the reaction including the smell, the children becoming sick etc., and when we informed them it was only water, they quickly shut up, and the following week we went ahead and sprayed the council-approved chemical to kill the weeds.



Nearing completion.

At the Shrubbery end of the track [near David Street], the construction of a townhouse next door to the Shrubbery had used the front of their land (council land) and had jet-ski, cars and rubbish, so we brought in a few truck-loads of loam and formed it into a mound and then rolled turf and placed a large driftwood log to complete the landscaping job.

The manager of the Information Centre took me to task as she was applying for government funds to eliminate invasive weeds and I was 'introducing weeds' onto the foreshore by rolling in the turf.

The project was then complete.



Completion at the south end – appropriately at David Street.

While Cardwell Shire Council had been averse to building the Kennedy Walking Track in 1988, they quickly realised that these foreshore trails were incredibly popular once locals saw them and used them. Furthermore, they were well appreciated and widely used by tourists and were soon featured widely on tourism websites adding to the attractiveness of the region as a destination.

When Penny approached Johnstone Shire Council about the *Ulysses Link* proposals, there was no hesitation at all. The project became a successful community and Council joint venture.

The Queensland Arts Minister, Matt Foley, described it as a significant environmental, cultural, and educational attraction for the Far North. The track begins at the market's precinct and travels 1.3 km to Clump Point. The Minister said that the aim of the project was to reinstate degraded areas of the frontal dune, while developing recreational facilities, enabling visitors to interpret historical, cultural, and environmental values of the district.



Penny Phillips, QLD Arts Minister Matt Foley, and JSC Mayor Barry Moyle inspect the new track. Cairns Post, 27 April 2001.

This section of the trail was only 1.3 km stretching from the market's piazza south of the CCRC camping ground to the Cutten Walking Track at Clump Point. There was no plan to build a bridge over the creek passing beside the camping ground, so the walk detoured for a short distance and followed the street (Porter Promenade) a short distance before returning to the foreshore route.



Penny Phillips with one of the 50 Federation Centenary umbrellas she obtained for the *Ulysses Link* celebrations.

ART & HISTORY FEATURES

A large team of artists were involved in the project and their efforts were focused on the piazza area where the markets are held. A concrete base was laid so that tiles could be laid, and mosaic art installed. A few totem or message poles were erected as well near to the entrance at Porter Promenade.

Many artists were involved and students from the Mission Beach State School made ceramic tiles for the *Ulysses Piazza* paths. Artist-sculptor, Sebastian Di Mauro of Griffith University led the layout work using flour to mark out the location of the paths to be paved.



Sebastian Di Mauro, design leader.



Using flour to design path shapes.

The team of artists who created the sculptural entrance history pole panels for example were:

1. Volcanic era
2. Vegetation-environment
3. Prehistoric animals
4. Indigenous culture
5. Early navigators
6. Explorers (massacre ref)
7. Pioneers
8. Agriculture
9. Immigration
10. Cyclones
11. Wrecks
12. War
13. Alt lifestyle artists
14. Underwater
15. Cassowary
16. Tourism
17. Conservation
18. Contemporary politics refer Holt
19. Community arts
20. Future

Julienne Storrar
Peter Collinson
Julienne and Peter
Leonard Andy and Wesley
Meryl Harding
Leonard Andy and Wesley
Kiki Katahanas and Julia Tedesco
Steve Price
Britta Jackle and Sebastian Di Mauro
Dave James and Kerry Scott
Steve Price
Kerry Scott
Deanna Conti
Meryl Harding
Janelle Edwards
Meryl Harding
Karen Schmidt, Deanna Conti, Robyn Edwards
Karen Schmidt, Robyn Edwards
Janelle Edwards
Penny and Jo Phillips.

Art images and comments courtesy of Meryl Harding, the Facebook page administrator of *The Friends of Ulysses Park*:



An image of the artists' group.



Three of the message poles in *Ulysses Park* markets precinct on Porter Promenade, south of the CCRC Camping Ground.



Deanna Conti's ceramic message pole.



Ceramic art at Ulysses Park, by Deanna Conti.



At the top of the History Pole is an image of a volcano erupting in the sea millions of years ago. The round rocks were created when the volcano erupted under water and the lava rolled down the sides of the volcano cooling as they rolled into balls and are then washed up in heavy seas.



Next came the evolution of dinosaurs 250–65 million years ago, and about 15 million years ago, the cassowary appeared in our history.



Designed by Leonard Andy, Djiru Traditional Owner. Meryl asked Leonard and he said the bird is a drongo and it stole fire from a serpent and lost two feathers from its tail giving the bird a distinctive tail shape. Humans arrived many years ago, maybe up to 40,000 years ago. First, the little bushmen crossed the land bridge, then the taller people from the islands.

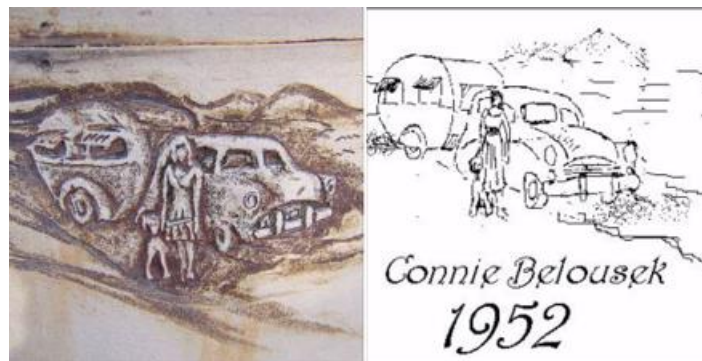


Britta Jackle is believed to have designed and carved these two sections of the history pole. It's about the rich diversity of our environment, the beginning of market gardens, and the glorious variety of tropical fruits that are grown in the Mission Beach area.



Left image: this work incorporates the symbols of the various cultural events held in Mission Beach, worked by Nelly Edwards. I can recognise the icon for the popular Luna Festival.

The brightly coloured fused glass pieces have geometric shapes, but unfortunately, they are now mostly missing. They were made by Deanna Conto. The artists' colony is the subject of this section. Folks who chose an alternative lifestyle moved to Mission Beach and the nearby islands, inspired by the environment, where they created art and crafts and tried to live sustainable lives.



This little old caravan and car were carved by Meryl Harding. Subjects for the project included the history of Mission Beach tourism, and this depicts a typical holiday maker in the 1950s.



Left image: Ship wrecks. I think Steve Price made these. There were many ships lost at Mission Beach, including the *Maria*, in 1872 on Bramble Reef.

In the right image, we can see names on the pole and an outline of Clump Point and its first jetty. This section recognises some who fought for the environment and protection of the Great Barrier Reef. Mission Beach has a history of conservation, and Harold Holt and John Busst were pioneers in that field.



This section of the pole shows war images and includes mines washed up on Mission Beach, airplanes, and gas warfare experiments.



Kerry Scott designed the mosaic on the Piazza in *Ulysses Park*. It combines elements of native indigenous plants, exotic plants, and the swirling motion of the ocean and air.

The piazza area or market precinct where the art is located on *Ulysses Link* is home to the Cassowary Festival and many other regular events. These mosaic artworks were designed by Kerry Scott.



Left image: *Ulysses Link* paver tile. This carving of a shell was a wonderful challenge for me (Meryl Harding). Sebastian Di Mauro guided the artists through the process of transforming a photograph image into a relief sculpture. The fantastic installation on the river front in Innisfail was done by Sam. In this tile, I slowly carved the spiral around the spiral of the shell, creating an optical illusion of depth within a very thin level of relief.

Right: Meryl Harding carving from an old photo on loan from Mr Belousek of the Clump Point Engineering Station. Shell collection is forbidden now, but in the 1960s, it was a tourist activity and hobby for many. Only three names Rosa Perry, Miss Mackness and Conny Belousek could be identified on the photo.



Left image: A masterful local potter named Dave James, built a tile press to make the clay times for *Ulysses Link*. They had to match the sizes determined prior to shrinkage, firing, and glazing, so it was tricky work. This is one of my tiles (Meryl Harding) from a stinger net installation holiday activity.

Right image: paver tiles designed by Leonard Andy. There are some that have Djiru names, and they depict plants and creatures from Djiru Country.



Julienne Storra's tiles are shown on the left. Right: Meryl Harding's ceramic was screen printed. The image's origin was an x-ray of a turtle. In this case, one that had swallowed plastic.

IMAGES 2023

Council picnic furniture

Since the initial path was constructed, the Cassowary Regional Council (CCRC) has provided modern, durable outdoor furniture alongside the *Ulysses Link*. The Council Parks Crews maintain the lawns well and have recently improved the quality of mowing in the Norm Byrnes Arboretum (part of the trail). Between Clump Point and C4 there are nine sets of tables with stools for picnickers, some are covered, some are not and in the Norm Byrnes Arboretum there are four park benches.



Picnic tables, uncovered.



Covered tables - in arboretum

At north end near Council services block.

The Bridge



Watercourse bridge.



Signs



Spur tracks to the beach

Many spur tracks and boardwalks have been upgraded and maintained by the Cassowary Coast Regional Council to allow access from the trail to the beach. These are fantastic enhancements to *Ulysses Link*.



Spur tracks invite walkers to the beach vistas.



The Track





Tracks in the Norm Byrnes Arboretum – attractive and well maintained by Bob Jones and his fabulous C4 Team.

EARLY FORESHORE WALKING TRACKS

Cutten Walking Track

Some suggest that this path was originally a route used by the Djiru people before European settlement. While that is highly likely, it is unknown. A rough path was constructed to connect with the Cuttens' Bicton settlement in Bingil Bay when farmers settled at Mission Beach in the early 1900s. The path route fell into disuse in the 1930s, but it was reopened in 1946 when a telephone line was built on it, which was hanging from the trees.

A Rotary team started planning the path's reopening in 1987 and in 1999-2000 they worked with Johnstone Shire Council to re-construct it with funding from the Commonwealth Bicentennial fund, Council, Coastal Care, and Rotary. The path was upgraded by Rotary and the Cassowary Coast Regional Council at a cost of \$30,000. It was destroyed by Cyclone Yasi in 2011. Bendigo and Adelaide Bank donated \$10,000 to the project, while Rotary and Council provided the remaining funds.

It is named *The Cutten Brothers Walking Track* on nearby signs but has recently been referred to more appropriately as *The Cutten Walking Track*, reflecting the reality that it was built in memory of the entire Cutten family, not just the four 'Cutten Brothers.' This is essentially a walking path rather than a cycling path because it has some steps.

In mid-2023, CCRC replaced a 90-metre section of boardwalk on the track using long-lasting, slip resistant, plastic recycled plastic decking.



New boardwalk, image from Cairns Local News Team, May 2023.

Further Reading: *Bicton: The Cuttens of Clump Point* by Ken Gray, available on mbhs.com.au

Kennedy Bay Walking Track

After several years of concerted action by conservationists of the Tully Branch of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (WPSQ), to achieve protected reserves for land at Kennedy Bay, it was decided that the best way to ensure the land's conservation was to create a scenic walkway.

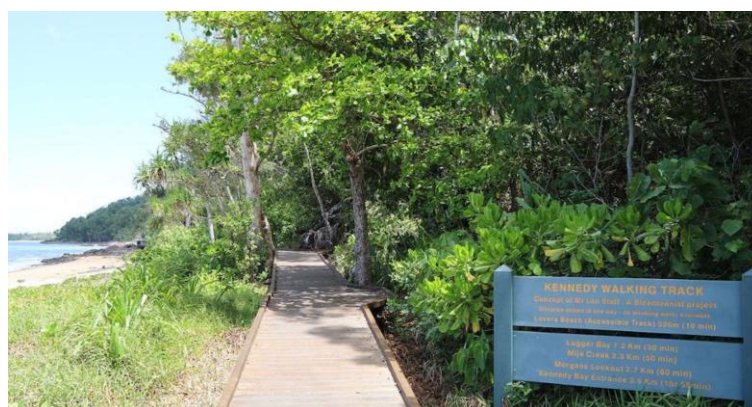
Len Staff of Wongaling initiated the project and with the assistance of WPSQ, won \$40,000 of Bicentennial funds in 1986 for the construction of his Heritage Project. The track was to be named in memory of the landing of Edmund Kennedy and his exploration team in 1848.

Len called a public meeting to garner community support but found that few were interested and only five people, including himself and the Mayor, attended. Cardwell Shire Council was not interested, and many residents were openly hostile to the proposal.

A point on the track was subsequently named Morgans Lookout after South Mission Beach conservationists, Norma and Bill Morgan, who provided strong support. The project was completed in two years, and the 4 km track was opened on time. The team was forced to stick to the State-owned land on the foreshore by the major land owner in the area who was against the track. Barbed wire fences were erected along portions of the track to prevent walkers from using private land. The *Tully Times* editorials were strongly opposed to the project and funding was put in jeopardy due to an unfortunate miscommunication that alleged misuse of funds.

A condition of the funding was that the track must be hand-built and that much of the work must be completed by Aboriginal workers. Volunteers came from near and far for the working bees which continued over the monsoon seasons. The success of the project was greatly impacted by the contribution of Aboriginal boys, from the Camu Aboriginal Community near Kennedy, who were trained by Bill Morgan and Sam Franks.

The Edmund Kennedy Memorial Walking Track was officially opened by Kerry Goodall, Deputy Chair of the Queensland Bicentennial Council on May 29, 1988. There were hundreds of attendees and a re-enactment of the Kennedy Expedition landing took place. The proposal had created much division and angst at the beginning, but once the community saw it, they were quickly appreciative of its value. As soon as a short part of the track was completed people started using it.¹



Boardwalk at the start of the 4km Kennedy Walking Track at South Mission Beach.

The Kennedy Walking Track was rebuilt by Cardwell Shire Council in 2005 after being destroyed by Cyclone Larry.

¹ Wet Tropics, *Protecting Kennedy Bay: 25 years on. The History of the Conservation Movement at Mission Beach during the Modern Era from 1982 to 2007*, PP. 13-16, accessed September 2023 at: <https://www.wettropicsplan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Protecting-Kennedy-Bay-25-years-on.pdf>

Further Reading:

James Cook University, *NQ Heritage @ JCU: Edmund Kennedy Memorial Walking Track Archive*, accessed September 2023 at:

https://nqheritage.jcu.edu.au/518/34/518_EdmundKennedy_MemorialWalkingTrack_ArchivalListing.pdf. This page lists all the documents and image catalogues that are held in the James Cook University archives for this Heritage Track.

Wet Tropics, *Protecting Kennedy Bay: 25 years on. The History of the Conservation Movement at Mission Beach during the Modern Era from 1982 to 2007*, PP. 13-16, accessed September 2023 at:

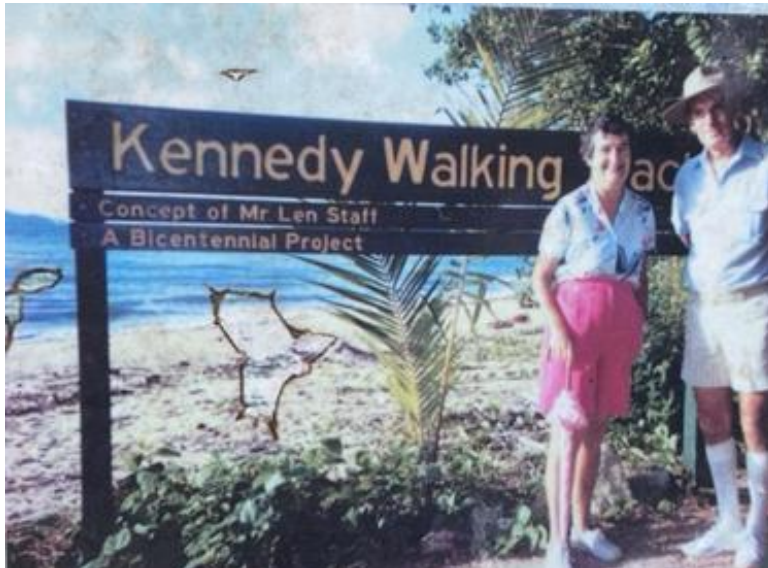
<https://www.wettropicsplan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Protecting-Kennedy-Bay-25-years-on.pdf>



Boardwalk to Lovers Beach.



Steps onto Lugga Bay.



Norma Morgan and Len Staff.



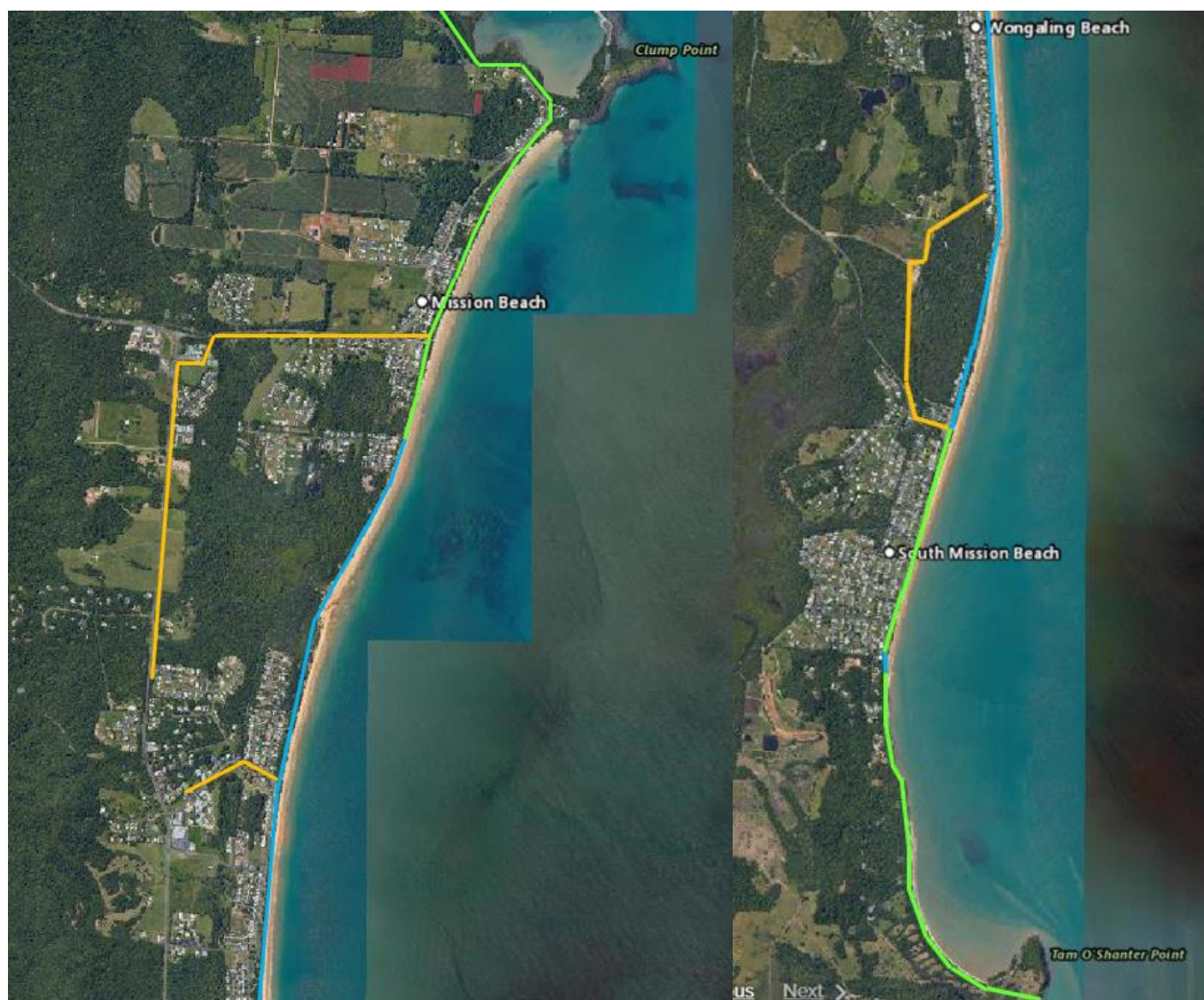
John Muller building the track manually

PROGRESS SINCE 2001

Maps below show what parts of the overall trail are completed and what parts are still to be done in 2023. Green lines depict paths that have been constructed as of 2023 in the maps below that show the approximate location of the paths. Unconstructed sections are represented by the blue lines, and amber lines show where a detour inland has been constructed.



Bingil Bay to Clump Point approximate path location: green paths are built sections and blue paths are largely unbuilt.



Clump Point to Wongaling Beach. Wongaling to Tam O'Shanter Point. Amber paths are detours built away from the foreshore.

The Cutten Walking Track was re-constructed at the same time (see later chapter) as the *Ulysses Link*, so two sections of the foreshore trail were available in 2001. That addition greatly enhanced the functionality of and interest in the *Ulysses Link*. The Kenned Walking Track was also refurbished in 2005.

The total distance from the Bingil Bay Café to Kennedy Bay is approximately 19.2 km and a table below outlines the distances and status of each section in 2023.

After Cyclone Larry (2006) destroyed the sealing on large parts of Alexander Drive where it hugs the sea alongside Bicton Hill, CCRC reconstructed the road and protected it from future damage using a robust rock levee. They wisely chose to seal a narrow cycle and walking path alongside the road adding a further 1.3 km to the *Ulysses Link* foreshore paths. In the time that Margaret Darveniza was Director of Community Services at Cassowary Coast Regional Council from 2013 to 2016, she advanced the foreshore trails considerably. The Council Officer who managed the extension projects and maintained the paths was Damon Sydes, Technical Officer Environment. Damon is the officer in charge of all the paths and their maintenance today.

Margaret and Damon of CCRC added a \$75,000 bridge and boardwalk at the creek beside the CCRC camping ground to save people having to detour onto Porter Promenade. There was some fuss about this from a few in the conservation lobby, but a poll on the Mission Beach Aquatic Facebook page quickly demonstrated that Council was doing what the overwhelming majority of residents wanted by enhancing *Ulysses Link*. That section was an instant success as soon as it was completed and remains highly popular. It is maintained weekly by C4

volunteers who blow the leaf debris from the bridge and the *Ulysses Link* pathways that meander through the Norm Byrnes Arboretum.



Boardwalk

Bridge

The next section that Damon Sydes at Council constructed was another valuable link from the south end of Narragon Beach (in Boat Bay) to the Perry Harvey Jetty. That was only 300 metres in length but was a difficult challenge for it involved removal of a vast midden of around 30,000 broken bottles left by those staying for many years at the Johnstone Mill Camp in the mill offseason. The broken bottles were a severe environmental hazard and would ultimately have been tossed into the sea and strewn over the beaches by a cyclone. That was a brilliant outcome and extended the Cutten Walking Track through further seaside bushland.

Another extension of *Ulysses Link* occurred soon after when a section from the market's piazza to the end of Conch Street was completed by Damon Sydes in 2016/17. That added a further 1.4 km to the trail.

In 2023, CCRC built another 0.6 km stretch to join Bingil Bay BBQs to the Bingil Bay Café. The Bingil Bay BBQ facility was an excellent addition to the Link, also in the period when Margaret Darveniza was leading the charge to improve the tourist potential of Mission Beach.

By 2023, 60% of the *Ulysses Link* was completed: that is almost 12 km of the near 20 km total length of the envisioned foreshore following *Ulysses Link*. This project has been a credit to the Cassowary Coast Regional Council who, under the quiet supervision of Damon Sydes, have built up an impressive foreshore trails network in the district.

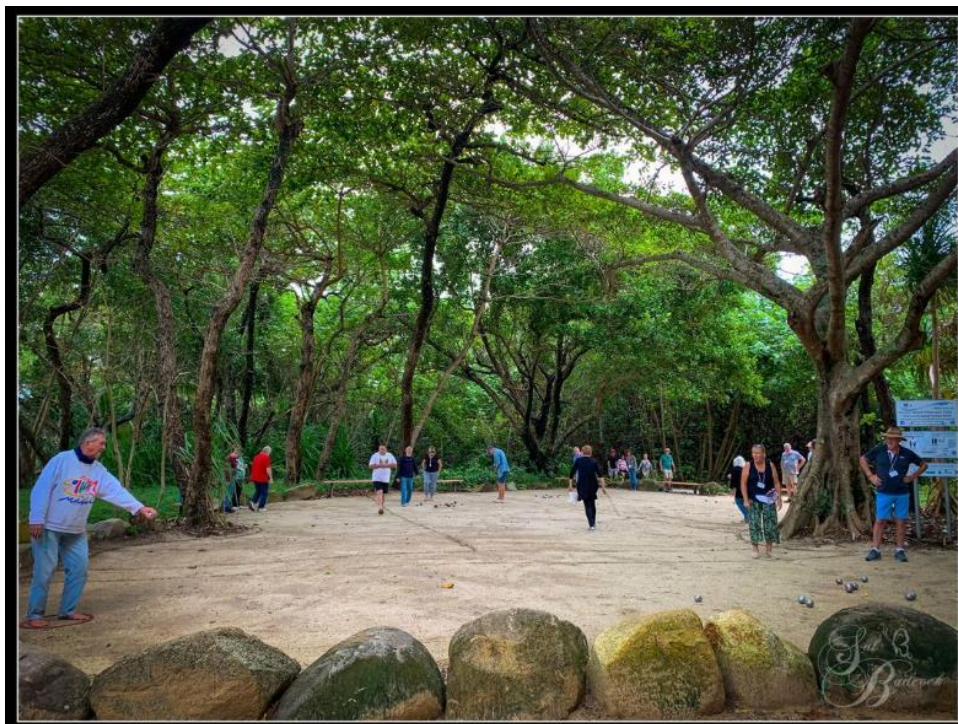
CCRC built a further 6.2 km of associated detour trails where they have yet been unable to follow along the foreshore zone. One was a 4.2 km section from Mission Beach to Wongaling following the main roads and cutting across MARCS Park to provide safe access to the Aquatic Centre. That includes the 0.6 km section along Wongaling Beach Road. In 2019, a bitumen pathway was constructed from the Ergon Station in South Mission Beach to the CCRC rubbish tip in Wheatley Road and a gravel path extended from the tip to Nissen Street. In 2023, CCRC completed that detour section with a concrete footpath going from Kennedy Esplanade to join

onto that Ergon station path. That detour is 2 km long in total, joining South Mission Beach and Wongaling Beach via hinterland trails.

The section of track from Nissen Street to Kennedy Esplanade could be a challenge in future. Wheatley Creek moves quite radically over the years, so is difficult to bridge and there are sections of National Park where Council has no jurisdiction, so that may be a barrier one day. There is a basic walking path through part of that section starting at the end of the Kennedy Esplanade's northern extension.

That brings the *Ulysses Link* up to 12.4 km built if we include the hinterland detour, so the track is over 60% complete in 2023.

In 2013, the Mission Beach Pétanque Club set up its home base in *Ulysses Park* alongside the *Ulysses Link*. The club has regular playing sessions on Wednesdays and Sundays and is a popular activity in the area. This has fitted in neatly with *Ulysses Link* as well.



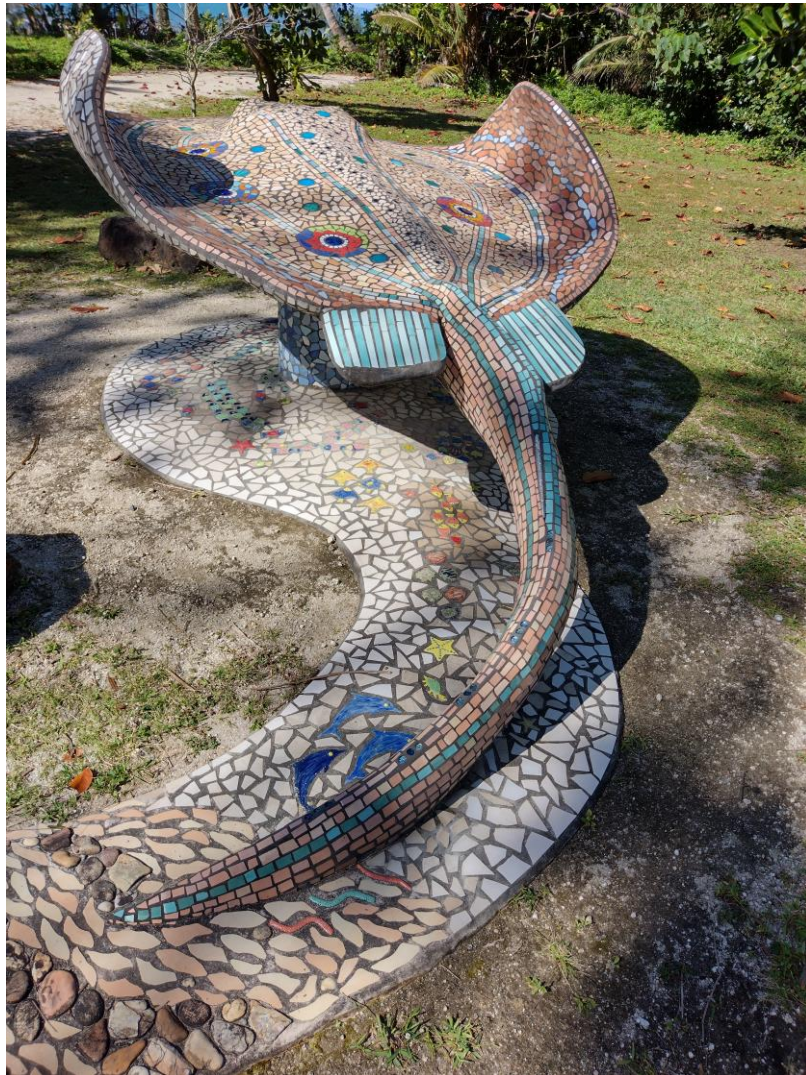
Pétanque Club. Image by Sal Badcock.

Section Description	Approximate Distance Km	Comments
Bingil Bay Café to Bingil Bay BBQs	0.6	Gravel path built by Council in 2023. Roadside.
Bingil Bay BBQs to Bicton Hill	0.6	Not yet constructed. Roadside.
Bicton Hill to Narragon Beach	1.3	Constructed when the Council reconstructed Alexander Drive in 2007/8 after Cyclone Larry. It is a narrow asphalt path beside the road. Council built a rock levee to protect the road and path structures from future sea erosion.
Narragon Beach	0.7	Not yet constructed, but there are small sections of an old path in the bush that could easily be refurbished. Most of the path will have to be alongside the road and there are two creeks to traverse (Mackness Creek and Wylie Creek.)
Perry Harvey Jetty to the south end of Narragon Beach	0.3	Gravel with concrete steps. Built by Council in 2016 after the removal of the 'midden' of broken glass left by the users of the Johnstone Camp at the south end of the beach. This is an extension of Cutten Walk.
Cutten Walk from Narragon Beach to Clump Point	1.3	Soil and gravel surfaces with some concrete steps. This has been reconstructed by Council several times.
Clump Point to C4	0.8	Gravel surface. Includes a small bridge. This was the main section of <i>Ulysses Link</i> built in 2001 by a group led by Penny Phillips.
C4 to CCRC Camping Ground	0.1	Gravel surface with a timber bridge and boardwalk. Built in 2015 by CCRC. This important link joined up older sections of <i>Ulysses Link</i> .
CCRC Camping Ground to Conch Street	1.5	Gravel. Built in 2016/17 by CCRC.
Conch Street to Banfield Parade	2.4	Not yet constructed. This will require construction of a significant bridge over Wongaling Creek and to do that properly will be costly as the course of the creek shifts over time.
Banfield Parade to Rotary Park	0.6	0.6 km section not yet constructed, but a 0.5 km section was built by Council after Cyclone Larry
	0.5	with bollards beside the street.
Rotary Park to Nissen Street	2.1	Not yet constructed.
Nissen Street to Kennedy Esplanade beachside	1.6	Not yet constructed. An informal walking track goes for some distance through the National Park fragment starting at the north end of Kennedy Esplanade. This section also has a challenging bridge section at Wheatley Creek near Nissen Street.
Kennedy Esplanade Casuarina Park to Jackie Jackie Street	1.5	Gravel. Built by CCRC in 2017. Travels streetside with bollards.
Jackie Jackie Street to Kennedy Walk	0.3	Not yet constructed. Used often by cyclists and walkers nonetheless to access Kennedy Walk.
Kennedy Walk	3.7	Boardwalks, steps and mainly soil surface tracks. Constructed first in 1988. Len Staff of Wongaling won \$40,000 from the Bicentennial fund to build it. Reconstructed in 2000 by CCRC and repaired in 2012 after Cyclone Yasi. At that time a 350 metre boardwalk was added.

RAYA'S ARRIVAL

Raya was erected on *Ulysses Link* a few hundred metres north of the Visitor Information Centre in 2016 after many months of planning and creativity. This was a triumph for the Mission Mosaic Team, a group within Mission Beach Community Arts Centre Inc. These volunteers made a significant and lasting contribution to the town's cultural attractions.

Raya is a blue-spotted fantail stingray and has proven to be a much-appreciated feature for *Ulysses Link* and is a perfect fit with Penny Phillips' vision for the path.



Raya – enduring art excellence, image taken 2023.

Raya is a three-metre-long construction made of steel and concrete, covered in beautiful glass and tile pieces. The CCRC-QLD State Regional Arts Development Fund and Mission Beach Community Arts Centre Inc. provided funding for it. The initial workshops on planning, locating, and producing public art works were conducted by Dominic Johns, a Cairns mosaic artist.



The blue-spotted fantail stingray by Mission Arts being installed in early November 2016.



Nearing completion late August 2016. The large volunteer team is proud of their accomplishments.

Ann Zamora and Wendy Strutt were the project leaders. David Bender devised the ferro-cement structure and built it with the assistance of Russel Killop, Les Caine, and others. The glass spots were created by Deanna Conti. Handmade ceramic fish are featured on the base.



Raya detail – attractive public works of art – as it is in 2023.



It's definitely worth a visit.



The details of the tail and base.



Volunteers constructing the core steel mesh for *Raya*.