



Red-capped-Plover and chick by Geoff Gates

ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Safe Beaches for All



Beach photographs supplied by Jeff Groves

Issue Brief

The South Australian Government must act to make beaches safer for wildlife and for beachgoers.

Poorly regulated beach driving is destroying nature, killing coastal birds, and endangering the safety and impacting the enjoyment of beachgoers.

Across the State's vast coastline, vehicles, particularly in sensitive areas are damaging important habitat for coastal birds and other wildlife and are crushing precious nests, chicks and even adult birds.

Migratory shorebirds are forced to flee when approached by vehicles, burning precious energy that they need to survive their epic migrations.

Meanwhile, driving on beaches causes accidents, damages sacred and culturally significant Indigenous sites and hinders other people from enjoying the beach.

There has already been a comprehensive 2019 SA Parliamentary Inquiry into this problem, and it made a set of sensible recommendations which have support from a range of stakeholder groups - but which have not been implemented by the SA Government.

The Malinauskas Government committed to reviewing the issue at the 2022 election. We are calling on them to stand up for safe beaches for all!

For more information, visit <https://www.actforbirds.org/safebeachesforall> or scan the QR:



Meeting your elected representative checklist

Pre-meeting preparation checklist:

- Find your elected representative's [contact details here](#). If you do not know your electorate or are unsure you can find it using this [interactive map](#).
- Send a request for a meeting or to take your representative to a site visit ([click here for request template](#))
- Follow up with your representative's office (if needed)
- If you are planning to meet your representative as a group assign everyone a role:
 - **Leader** – determine ahead of time who will lead the discussion, including introductions and steering the conversation back to your key ask.
 - **Note Taker** – to capture minutes/actions/commitments. They do not have to be comprehensive but be sure to capture:
 - your elected representative's response to your ask and any concerns they share
 - questions on notice that you will follow up on
 - points your elected representative found interesting or were really engaged with
 - any recommendations your elected representative offers about your ask
 - **Other attendees:** Be sure to allow everyone present the opportunity to be a part of the discussion. This can be facilitated by assigning each person a specific topic or talking point to discuss.
- Research your elected representative. Check their social media, websites and speech history.

In-meeting Checklist:

- Acknowledge country on which the meeting is taking place.
- Discuss the key messages and make the ask! ([click here for the meeting script](#))
- Show them photos or media clippings of the problem ([click here for suggested photos and media clippings](#))
- Ask your representative if it is ok to take a photo with them to share with the media/social media.
- Verbally confirm any actions or commitments your representative makes.
- Thank them for their time and offer to meet in the future.

Post-meeting Checklist:

- Debrief with your group and consolidate notes.
- Contact your local paper ([see local media section](#))
- Post your photos on social media, tag your elected representative, and thank them for their time.
- Follow up with your elected representative on any actions and commitments.
- Maintain and grow the relationship.

Template email to your elected representative

Dear **Mr/Ms [surname]**

As one of your local constituents, I am writing to ask that you support legislation to better regulate beach driving in South Australia.

Our beautiful South Australian beaches are under accelerating and unsustainable pressure from uncontrolled beach driving. Problems include:

- Pristine beaches turned into rutted race tracks
- A dangerous legal 100 km/ph speed limit on most beaches
- Hoon driving which destabilises dunes
- Waste and rubbish - including human waste
- Beach nesting birds having their eggs crushed and their chicks killed
- Roosting shorebirds being run over
- Critical feeding grounds destroyed
- Sacred and culturally significant indigenous sites damaged
- Enjoyment of the beach by the broader community is compromised

State Government action and leadership, including legislation, is urgently needed to better regulate beach driving, including access and oversight of off-road driving to ensure beaches are safer for beachgoers and for wildlife.

In line with the recommendations of the 2019 Natural Resources Committee Parliamentary Inquiry, I am asking that:

1. Those beaches with high environmental and cultural value are properly protected and vehicles prohibited
2. Driving on all other beaches is properly regulated including a much lower speed limit, and with appropriate protection of dunes and other important habitat

I am not asking for a complete ban on beach driving in South Australia.

As one of your constituents I would like to find a time to meet with you at your electorate office to discuss my passion for South Australian birds and the need for urgent State Government action to protect them **[or to take you to my local beach to see the birds that I care so deeply about protecting]**.

Could you please contact me to arrange a suitable time for a meeting? You can contact me at **[email]** or on **[telephone]**. Thank you in advance for your time.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Name/organisation/group]

[date]

Meeting script

Outline of how a meeting might go:

1. **Thank** your elected representative or staffer for meeting with us.
2. **TimeCheck:** “How much time do you have for this meeting?”
3. **Introduce yourselves** (keep the time in mind). The group leader can introduce your group in general and provide a brief overview of your work in the electorate and how many members you represent. The leader can then ask the other group members to briefly introduce themselves including their name, town/suburb, and if appropriate why this issue concerns them.
4. Ask any **staffer/advisers** to introduce themselves.
5. **Show appreciation** for a position your elected representative has taken or a recent accomplishment.
6. **State our purpose:** “Our purpose for requesting this meeting is to discuss with you the impacts poorly regulated beach driving is having on our beaches, local environment and wildlife, and public safety.”
7. **State our ask:** “Our ask is that you provide your support to ensure that our beaches are safe for everyone. We have more to say on that later, but first we want to open a dialogue with you.”
8. **Transition into the discussion** ([click here for key messages](#)).
9. From your research, **anticipate** what you think your elected representative’s responses might be so that you are prepared to ask questions to draw out more information. Listen for the underlying value statements in their responses, acknowledge that value, and connect on common ground ([click here for some suggested responses to tricky topics](#)). If you don’t know the answer to one of their questions, that is perfectly ok, let them know you will take the question on notice and follow up with more information after the meeting.
10. **Repeat our ask**, see below, and hand them the leave behind brief ([see our leave behind template](#))

“We are counting on your support to reform and strengthen the regulations covering beach driving and access to our most environmentally sensitive beaches.

We ask that you raise your concerns about this issue with your Party’s Leader and provide your support for reforming beach driving regulation, including access to and oversight of off-road driving, to ensure beaches are safer for beachgoers and for wildlife.

Is that something you are willing to commit to now?”

11. **Confirm next steps:** “Would you like a hard copy or electronic version of additional materials? How and when should I follow up?”
12. **Thank** them for their time.

Key messages

Elected representatives are busy people. You might only have a few minutes of their time and it's important that you get across the key messages and asks of the campaign.

Key asks

1. Will you raise the issue with your Party's Leader and let them know you support genuine reform?
2. Will you publicly commit to support reforming and improving beach driving regulation and access in South Australia?
3. Will you post on your social media raising your concerns about beach driving on the environment and public safety?

Key messages

- Poorly regulated driving on beaches and increased access to environmentally sensitive areas continues to kill birds and damage critical habitat across South Australia.
- Poorly regulated driving on beaches compacts the sand which reduces the number of small creatures that are food for shorebirds.
- Across the state's coastline, vehicles are damaging important habitat for wildlife as well as crushing nests, chicks and adult birds.
- Migratory shorebirds are easily disturbed by vehicles, which interrupts their feeding and causes them to use up energy escaping. This puts them at risk on their arduous migration back to their breeding grounds in the Northern Hemisphere, which can be more than a 10,000 km journey.
- The large number of vehicles on beaches is now also causing erosion and destroying delicate sand dune habitats.
- Poorly regulated driving on beaches causes accidents and stops other people from enjoying the beach.
- This is a State Government responsibility. Local Councils don't have enough resources to properly manage traffic especially during peak summer months when thousands of vehicles can congregate in popular areas.
- We have already had a comprehensive 2019 SA Parliamentary Inquiry into this issue. This made several sensible recommendations including what we are pressing for today. This problem has accelerated since 2019. It's much worse and needs urgent action and Government leadership.



Pied Oystercatchers by Rebecca Harrison

Frequently asked questions

You also might get some pushback on particular points or your elected representative might not fully understand the issue and is seeking some more background information.. We have developed suggested responses that you can have ready if your elected representative asks these specific tricky questions.

Q: Isn't this just a hooning problem?

A: Hooning can be an issue that can cause bird deaths and habitat damage. It should be addressed with better regulations and enforcement. However, the root cause of the problem is that beach drivers have access to some of the most environmentally sensitive areas. There is little indication for most drivers of the impacts they could have on the threatened wildlife that depend on these beaches for survival. We need urgent action to ensure that these most sensitive areas are protected and vehicles are prohibited from accessing them.

Q: Isn't this just a local government issue?

A; While some councils have been proactive in signposting and even seasonally or permanently limiting vehicle access to the most vulnerable wildlife sites, there is a lack of uniformity across all local government areas. Local councils don't have enough resources to properly manage traffic especially during peak summer months when thousands of vehicles can congregate in popular areas. This is a state-wide problem and needs a state-wide solution.

Q: Won't this be seen as a "war on the weekend?"

A: Broadly, the community agrees that aspects of beach driving in South Australia are unsustainable and dangerous. A 2021 forum of various user groups, including four-wheel driving clubs, agreed that reasonable and sensible reforms to beach driving are needed. We are not calling for a complete ban, we can share our shoreline. This is about keeping beaches a place that can be enjoyed by all, including our wildlife.

Q: Isn't it really just a problem at Goolwa Beach - and largely just during the big summer holidays?

A: No, this is a huge year-round problem right across the State, including Coffin Bay, Yorke Peninsula and Kangaroo Island (where there have been a number of bird deaths). This is a state-wide problem and needs a state-wide solution.

Q: Isn't it just about reducing the speed limit?

A: No, the dangerous 100kph speed limit on most beaches is just part of it. For instance, beach nesting birds primary protection is camouflage, so no speed limit will protect the birds and nests from being run over.





Birds rest by tire tracks, supplied by Jeff Groves

Leave behind for meetings

Let's make South Australian beaches safe for all!

Our beautiful South Australian beaches are under accelerating and unsustainable pressure from uncontrolled beach driving. Problems include:

- Pristine beaches turned into rutted race tracks
- A dangerous legal 100 kph speed limit on some beaches
- Hoon driving which destabilises dunes
- Waste and rubbish - including human waste
- Beach nesting birds having their eggs crushed and their chicks killed
- Roosting shorebirds being run over
- Critical feeding grounds destroyed
- Sacred and culturally significant indigenous sites damaged.
- Enjoyment of the beach by the broader community is compromised

State Government action and leadership, including legislation, is urgently needed to better regulate beach driving, including access and oversight of off-road driving to ensure beaches are safer for beachgoers and for wildlife.

3 ways you can champion beach driving reform:

1. Raise the issue with your Party's Leader and let them know you support genuine reform.
2. Publicly commit to reforming and improving beach driving regulation and access in South Australia.
3. Post on social media raising your concerns about the impacts of beach driving impact on the environment and public safety.

Local media

Letters to the Editor are a very easy way to get your message into the local paper. It enables you or others to voice an opinion to your local politicians and to educate readers.

- **Be timely.** Capitalise on recent news and events that have been covered in the paper or that have happened locally – write within 24 hours if possible.
- **Make one clear argument.** Your letter or piece should be in favour of, or critical of a particular position taken by the paper, described in an article or opinion piece. Be objective, don't make personal attacks.
- **Think local.** Emphasise the local effects of the problem and/or solution you write about.

Include our key ask/need:

“State Government action and leadership, including legislation, is urgently needed to better regulate beach driving, including access and oversight of off-road driving to ensure beaches are safer for beachgoers and for wildlife.”

Note: You can include a photo from your meeting and any strong quotes from your elected representative, so long as you have their approval to use them.

Social media

Social media connects journalists, opinion makers, politicians and activists. It's a great way to get your message to the right people to show how big the community is that act for birds!

Mainstream media and political staffers often track social media to see which issues are trending and which are boiling over.

Post on your elected representative's social media accounts

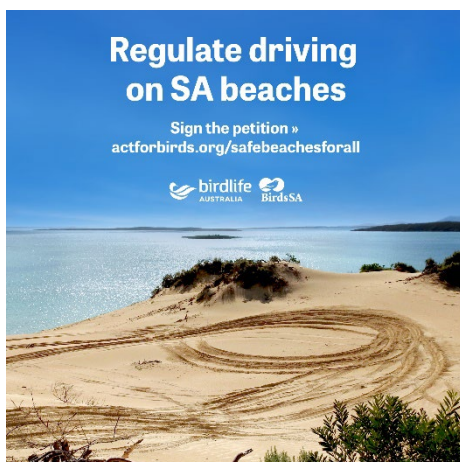
You may not agree with your elected representative's position on the issue you are discussing, but it is important to remember that your relationship with your elected representative is important and gives you power. Putting a comment on their Facebook page thanking them for meeting with you is rarely done and should earn you some brownie points.

Note:

- Tag your elected representative in your post.
- Use the #SafeBeachesForAll to get the issue trending.

Grow the campaign by sharing some pre-made social media tiles and encouraging your contacts to sign the petition.

[Follow this link to download the pre-made social media tiles and post on your channels.](#)





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Hooded Plover by Glenn Ehrlke

Thank you



Made in collaboration with Birds SA

For more, scan the QR:



BirdLife Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Country on which we live and work, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We recognise and are grateful for the immense contribution of Indigenous people to the knowledge and conservation of Australia's birds.