

Favourite beach finds friends on island

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Ask an Islander about their favourite Island beach and many will say, Pennington Bay.

This Southern Ocean-facing beach, near the narrowest part of Kangaroo Island, has stunning scenery and is a popular location for surfing, swimming and fishing.

The beach is such a magnet to locals and visitors alike that its fragile beauty was being loved to death. That is until a group of its most ardent advocates decided to protect it.

And they have done the job so well that they picked up two recent state awards: Australian Government Coastcare Award for South Australia and Premier's Natural Resources Management Award for Community Engagement.

The group, Eco-action, has not only reversed the decline, they have introduced artistic elements that complement the natural beauty and restoration process – and add a

unique Kangaroo Island touch to the project.

They worked with Kangaroo Island Council and the local community and artists to make sure they did justice to the setting.

Thanks to an Envirofund grant from the Australian Government, Eco-action protected the limestone cliffs with fencing, revegetated sand dunes with local native species grown from local seed, raised awareness of biodiversity of marine and coastal habitats, and redesigned access points and rerouted visiting traffic to be less invasive.

The project has built necessary infrastructure such as viewing platforms, display areas, barriers and track that keep wandering visitors off fragile rehabilitation areas. The beautiful winding limestone steps to the beach were created to prevent visitors from trampling the fragile sand dune vegetation and limestone cliff areas.

In making them to suit the conditions, local stonemaker Thomas Appleby has created his own work of art.

Educational material in the form of descriptive signs on the local flora, fauna and rockpools will be erected in January. These were designed and realised by local artists with the help of scientists and local schoolchildren, and should encourage further appreciation and understanding of the reasons for protecting the unstable cliff and dune areas.

The primary cause of the coastal environmental problems at Pennington Bay is that of erosion. The natural weathering had been exacerbated by uncontrolled human impact. The beautiful and thoughtful solutions to the problems have enhanced visitors' experience in the short term and ensured that in the long term, Pennington Bay can continue to be enjoyed.