**Bitou Busters shocked by damage to bushland. March 2015**

Bitou Busters who gathered at Winda Woppa for their first day’s work of the season were met with a shocking sight.

They found the area they had been working on for several years had been damaged by heavy machinery.

Now they have written to Great Lakes Council seeking an explanation and asking that this never be repeated.

Twelve volunteers met at Yamba Street, Hawks Nest, opposite Hugo’s Newsagency on Saturday 28th March, and drove to Winda Woppa Reserve, where they had been taking care of part of the bush from the picnic area down to the mangrove edge for many years.

The site is an important buffer zone for the endangered salt marsh, protecting it from the mown grass of the picnic area.

The area had been almost cleared of noxious weeds, while native plants and trees had been encouraged to grow, with regular checks and watering of ailing plants.

When they entered the area on Saturday, they were shocked to see a large part of it destroyed by heavy machinery. The ground had been scraped back, a large banksia tree had its surface roots scraped and other trees had been removed and ground out.

Bitou Busters Coordinator Jill Madden has written to GLC General Manager Glenn Hanford asking for an explanation and that steps be taken to prevent a recurrence.

As a group the BBs decided to carry-on working the morning by removing a number of large Bitou bushes on the mangrove edge of Winda Woppa.

It has not been decided yet where the BBs will be working next month.

