

...ng Course National Championships to smash the previous mark of 8:24.62 set by Tracey in 1978.

Wickham said from her home in Brisbane: "It's good to see there is someone good enough to finally break my record."

She predicts confidently that the record will continue to tumble.

"I think that in around 18 months time the record could fall to something like 8 minutes 16 secs. Now that the barrier has been broken I expect the kids to get a lift out of it.

... schedule. Now, we'll have to the goals and make them faster.

Although Wickham has lost one title, she still holds a spot in the record books. She set the 400 metres freestyle world record in 1978 at 4 minutes 6.28 seconds, and that one still stands.

But Wickham wasn't too confident of hanging on to it.

She said: "There's still three days of the championships to go, so they'll probably have a crack at that too."

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A MOTC was seen cha... a horse... a saddle but no rider along Cleveland Street, Redfern, heading away from the Sydney Cricket Ground yesterday afternoon.

WINE-tasting took on a new dimension at Hayes Fine Wines, Circular Quay, on Monday. At a wine appreciation class, one tired and emotional participant was dared to consume the entire contents of a wine spittoon for a prize of a bottle of 1971 Grange Hermitage, value \$95. Two other prize offers quickly followed from the gathered connoisseurs. Without a moment's further thought, our hero drained the half-litre of rejected wine, gathered his prizes, and staggered off into the night and an evening's assignation at a city restaurant. He was still alive yesterday morning.

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# Bond site loses wetlands status

By CHRIS THOMAS

Seventy-two hectares of coastal wetlands owned by the Bond Corporation - which hopes to build a multi-million-dollar resort on it - has been wiped from State Government preservation maps.

NSW North Coast environmentalists accused the State Government yesterday of "helping out its mates" in deleting an area with high conservation value from its coastal wetland planning policy.

But both the Bond Corporation and a spokesman for the NSW Minister for Planning and Environment, Mr Carr, rejected the criticism and claimed the land was not worth protecting.

Under current State laws, proposals to develop land classified under the wetlands policy must undergo tough environmental impact studies.

Freeing the Bond land, known as north Ocean Shores, from the policy helps clear the way for a major development on the site.

The land, owned by Austmark International Ltd, an associate company of the Bond empire, is south of Byron Bay and north of the present Ocean Shores development.

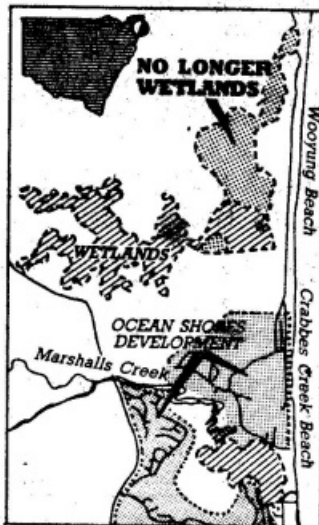
Austmark has submitted plans to Byron Shire Council and the Department of Environment and Planning to build a \$350 million resort and retirement village inside a complete town on 300 hectares.

The wetland area, which includes another 23 hectares not owned by Austmark, was originally protected in the State Environmental Planning Policy No 14 gazetted in December 1985.

But a revision of the 1,300 classified areas last month saw the 95 hectares of coastal wetland dropped from the policy.

A local environmentalist, Ms Elizabeth Smith, claimed yesterday that the decision was politically motivated and the Government was "helping out its mates".

The president of the North Coast Environment Council, Mr



Terry Parkhouse, claimed the area was valuable and should not be excluded from protection.

The State Opposition MP for Clarence, Mr Ian Causley, said local developers often had their proposals knocked back by councils and the Government, yet the Bond Corporation virtually had a clear path ahead of its proposal.

The Bond Corporation's Queensland property manager, Mr Brian Orr, who controls the site, said the area was not actually wetlands.

He told the Herald that independent environmental studies had shown it had a very high degree of salt and was in fact grasslands.

"It never really was wetlands and shouldn't have been included in the policy in the first place," he said.

This statement was backed up by a spokesman for Mr Carr, who said a recent revision had shown that 33 hectares of the land was non-wetland cypress pine and old marsh pastures.

The other 62 hectares contained very recent casuarina (a type of tree) regrowth, sedge (a grasslike plant) and grazing land.

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## WEATHER

**Metropolitan:** Showers continuing with the chance of a thunderstorm. Temps: City 9-17, Liverpool 8-17. Pollution: Low. Yesterday: City 9-16, Liverpool 5-15. Pollution: High.

**NSW:** Showers and thunderstorms contracting to the South East.

**The Sea:** Seas and swell moderate. Tides: Low 4.38am (0.4); High 10.34am (1.3). Low 4.11pm (0.5), High 10.31pm (1.7).

**Sun:** Rises 6.50, sets 5.13.  
**Moon:** Rises 8.45am, sets 8.16pm.

Full details, Pages 28 and 62.

SMH 40 FR 80

\*Recommended and maximum price only. Interstate by air extra.

Handwritten scribbles at the bottom of the page.