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ACCESSIBLE: Griff Foley, left, and Lori Hungerford on the headland yesterday. - Picture by Natalie Grono

## Public park plan for native habitat

By **JACQUI JONES**

IN the past five years Merewether Landcare has transformed a weed-infested beachfront into a native flora habitat.

Within the next five years the volunteer group wants to build a public park celebrating the area's heritage and making it more accessible to visitors.

The idea has been forged as the headland, which commands beautiful coastal views, has been returned to its former glory.

Convenor Griff Foley said

volunteers spent about 8000 hours removing invasive bitou bush from Merewether's dunes and planting 18 native species.

"As we did the work we could see what it could become," he said.

Merewether Landcare hopes to secure government support to build the park.

The project would involve planting more shrubs and building paths, steps, swales, viewing platforms, picnic tables and signs.

The area would provide more open space and link the Bathers Way to Glenrock State

Conservation Area.

"It would bring lots of visitors," Dr Foley said.

Another aim is to educate people about the area's history and ecology.

"The area is rich in both natural history and social history," Dr Foley said.

"The mining railway used to run right along here."

He said community and government partnerships established some of Newcastle's favourite parks such as Glenrock, Blackbutt Reserve and Hunter Wetlands Centre.