



NATURE CONSERVATION MARGARET RIVER REGION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AGENDA

Monday 10 December 2017 4.00 – 4.45 pm
Fair Harvest Permaculture
426 Carters Road (Corner Burnside Rd)
Margaret River

*Nature Conservation welcomes you to join after the meeting for a
 Celebration of 2017-18 achievements including light refreshments.*

Time	Item	Purpose	Lead
4.00 pm	1.0 INTRODUCTION		
	1.1 Welcome & Apologies	Opening of meeting and record of apologies	Dr Boyd Wykes (Chair)
	1.2 Previous Minutes	Endorse Minutes of 2017 AGM 11 Dec 2017. Business arising and actions.	Dr Boyd Wykes (Chair)
4.05 pm	2.0 2017-18 REPORTS		
	2.1 Chair's Report	Presentation of the 2017-18 Chair's Report and 2017-18 Annual Report.	Dr Boyd Wykes (Chair)
	2.2 Financial Report	Presentation and endorsement of the Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Financial Report for the Year ending 30 June 2018.	Margaret Moir (Treasurer)
4.25 pm	3.0 ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS		
	3.1 Board Membership	Endorsement of nominations received to fill current vacancies on the Nature Conservation Board Note Office Bearers will be appointed at the 1 st Board meeting following the AGM.	Stuart Hicks (Deputy Chair)
	3.2 Membership Fees	Endorse annual subscription for all classes of membership of Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc.	Margaret Moir (Treasurer)
4.40 pm	4.0 CLOSING		
	4.1 Other Business	Members are welcome to raise any further matters of business.	
4.45 pm	MEETING CLOSE		



NATURE CONSERVATION MARGARET RIVER REGION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MEETING PAPERS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Nature Conservation's Chair, Dr Boyd Wykes will welcome members, colleagues and interested community members to the 2017-18 Annual General Meeting.

1.2 PREVIOUS MINUTES

A copy of the Draft Minutes of the Nature Conservation Margaret River Region 2017 Annual General Meeting held on 11 December 2017 are provided as Attachment 1 following these meeting papers.

RECOMMENDATION:

Members endorse the Draft Minutes of the Nature Conservation Margaret River Region 2017 Annual General Meeting held on 11 December 2017 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

2.0 2017-18 REPORTS

The 2017-18 Annual Report will be tabled for information.

2.1 CHAIR'S REPORT

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the country in which we are meeting, the Wadandi people, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

During 2017-18 the Nature Conservation Board and staff have once again worked hard to achieve success towards our vision of maintaining a healthy and biodiverse natural environment in the Margaret River region- a special environment on which the livelihoods and lifestyles of our community depend. It is my intent here to reflect briefly on some of our achievements and provide a hint of what we have planned for the year ahead.

A key focus this year has been to develop effective collaboration with key community sectors and groups. This report identifies the wide range of groups with which we now engage, and the many forms of engagement that are creating strong, enduring partnerships. An outstanding initiative is the formation of Giant Light Steps, an alliance of groups representing major community sectors that have committed to lighten their own specific impacts on our regional 'landscape' and work collaboratively to address 'landscape-wide' issues.

Caroline Hughes and our committed team of highly experienced project officers have extended our core conservation programs, as detailed throughout this report. We are achieving an exciting level of community engagement through community events, citizen science participation, landowner partnerships and collaboration with State government agencies, universities and community groups. Our

primary school programs led by Tracey Muir continue to model how diverse resourcing at the local community level can sustain our programs.

Although of lesser interest to readers, maintaining the 'machine' of management and administration is what enables Nature Conservation's 'on ground' achievements. I have the privilege of chairing an extraordinarily capable voluntary Board that is providing the sound governance and strong strategic leadership needed to achieve our ambitious objectives.

Making operational ends meet is a thankless task for every not-for-profit group. We receive no base support from the State or Commonwealth governments. In transitioning from a traditional catchment group to Nature Conservation our organisation has recognised that we must break out of dependency on government grants, which traps community groups into delivering stop-start projects funded at the ever-changing whim of government priorities. The limitations of grant-funded achievement were more apparent than ever in the past year at all levels of government. The alternative is to develop strong support and robust partnerships within the wider community while still taking every opportunity to win grants.

I wish to acknowledge here the Augusta-Margaret River Shire for its ongoing commitment to supporting Nature Conservation's capacity through an annual contribution to our administration overheads. A significant, increasing number of individuals and businesses are supporting our work through donations and fund-raising opportunities.

Looking to the year ahead, three areas of special focus will be to:

- Make good on long-held aspirations to integrate indigenous values, knowledge and participation in all aspects of what we are and what we do;
- Consolidate and grow Giant Light Steps to realise the potential of this game-changing initiative;
- Foster a community-embraced understanding of what it is that makes this region special, as a basis for rallying the commitment of the energy and resourcing needed if we are to indeed pass on to future generations an enhanced rather than an impoverished natural legacy.



DR BOYD WYKES CHAIR, BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

RECOMMENDATION:

Members note the Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. 2017-18 Annual Report and thank Board and staff members for the achievements during the year.

2.2 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Financial Statements for the year ending 30 June 2018 prepared by independent auditors Auditors Harvey and Partners will be tabled by the Treasurer for acceptance.

RECOMMENDATION:

Members endorse that the Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. Financial Statement:

- ***Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. as at 30 June 2018 and its performance for the year ending on that date.***
- ***At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.***

3.0 ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

3.1 BOARD MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. Rules of Association allows for a Volunteer Management Board to manage the day to day activities of Nature Conservation.

In accordance with the Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. Rules of Association the Board consists of four office holders (Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary) and at least one ordinary member. The Board must determine the maximum number of members who may be ordinary Board members. Office holders are appointed at the 1st Board meeting following the endorsement of Board members for the following year at the Annual General Meeting

The current status of Board Membership is provided below:

Board Member	Expiry Date
Dr Boyd Wykes	Annual General Meeting 2018
Margaret Moir	Annual General Meeting 2018
John McKinney	Annual General Meeting 2018
Steve Castan	Annual General Meeting 2018
Stuart Hicks AO	Annual General Meeting 2020
Prof. Carmen Lawrence	Annual General Meeting 2020
Steve Harrison	Annual General Meeting 2020

A call for nominations was sent out to members and stakeholders on 25 October 2018 to fill the four positions expiring at the 2018 Annual General Meeting.

Nominations have been received from the following persons:

Dr Boyd Wykes
Steve Castan
Margaret Moir
Jarrad Clark
Dr John Cresswell

All nominations received meet Board eligibility requirements and selection criteria.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members thank all Nature Conservation Board Members for their contribution during 2017-18.

Members endorse a special thank you to John McKinney who will not be continuing on the Board for his many years of service as Secretary for both the Cape to Cape Catchments Group and Nature Conservation.

Members endorse the reappointment of Board Members Dr Boyd Wykes, Margaret Moir and Steve Castan for four-year terms and the appointment of new Board members Jarrad Clark and Dr John Cresswell for two-year terms.

Members endorse the membership of the Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Board from this date until the 2019 Annual General Meeting to comprise of

**Dr Boyd Wykes
Stuart Hicks AO
Steve Harrison
Steve Castan**

**Margaret Moir
Prof. Carmen Lawrence
Jarrad Clark
Dr John Cresswell**

3.2 MEMBERSHIP FEES

The Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. Rules of Association outlines arrangements for annual membership fees including that the Board shall from time to time determine the entrance fee(if any) and the annual membership fee (if any) to be paid for membership of the Association.

The Nature Conservation Board wishes to advise members that it has set the membership fees as outlined below. At this stage the Board does not envisage any changes to these fees.

Class of membership	Entrance Fee	Annual Membership Fee
Individual or Personal Membership	\$0	\$24.00
Family Membership	\$0	\$24.00
Corporate or Business Membership	\$0	\$34.00
Honorary Membership	\$0	\$0.00
Life Membership	\$0	\$0.00

RECOMMENDATION:

Members note the current annual membership fees set by the Nature Conservation Board for all classes of members of Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc.

4.0 CLOSING

4.1 OTHER BUSINESS

Members are welcome to raise any further matters of business.

MEETING CLOSE

Attachment 1



**Nature Conservation Margaret River Region
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MINUTES
Monday 11 December 2017
NCMRR Offices, Margaret River Community Resource
Centre**

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Welcome and apologies

Present

Boyd Wykes	Chair
Stuart Hicks	Deputy Chair
Marg Moir	Treasurer
John McKinney	Secretary
Carmen Lawrence	Member
Cr Pam Townsend	Shire of Augusta Margaret River
Cr Pualine McLeod	Shire of Augusta Margaret River
Cr Julia Meldrum	Shire of Augusta Margaret River
Caroline Hughes	Coordinator
Tim Crimp	Lower Blackwood Landcare
Bruce Hamilton	Lower Blackwood Landcare
Anne Marsh	Member
Karen Majer	Transition Margaret River
Joanne Armstrong	Member
Andrew Helmsey	Member

Apologies

Genevieve Hanran-Smith	Staff Representative
Steve Harrison	Board
Steve Castan	Board
Drew McKenzie	Staff
Fran Dohring	Staff
Tracey Muir	Staff
Lyndsey Cox	Staff
John Holley	DPIRD/State NRM
Nerilee Boshammer	SWCC
Adele Farina MLC	
David Nicholson	Shire of Augusta Margaret River

1.2. Previous Minutes

Outcome:

Members endorse the Draft Minutes of the Cape to Cape Catchments Group 2016 Annual General Meeting as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Margaret Moir moved, Bruce Hamilton seconded. All endorsed.

Business arising

John McKinney to check actions arising from 2015 and 2016 meetings.

UPDATED ACTION TABLE

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

Action	Responsibility	Status
2015 AGM		
Ensure ABN is on DGR receipts	C. Hughes	Complete
Advertise or seek new board members	C. Hughes	Complete
2016 AGM		
Check completion of actions from 2015 AGM	J. McKinney	Complete
2017 AGM		
Check completion of actions from 2016 AGM	J. McKinney	Complete

2. 2016-2017 REPORTS

2.1. Annual Report

Discussion:

Annual report tabled and to be circulated electronically following the meeting.

It was noted that there had been a productive and challenging but successful year including a shift from Cape to Cape Catchments Group to Nature Conservation Margaret River Region.

2.2. Chairs Report

May I express my heartfelt thanks for the hard work of all involved in a successful transition from Cape to Cape Catchments Group to Nature Conservation Margaret River Region. The intent is to refocus and expand our objectives from those of a community group delivering on-ground landcare projects to becoming a regional environmental champion. To achieve this will require inspiring and partnering all sectors of our community to promote a conservation culture.

Our new name clearly describes what we do and where we do it as a basis for inviting others to join us in valuing, caring for and celebrating this very special region, renowned throughout the world for wine, surf, fine food, walking and bike trails – the list goes on but we recognise that all depends on good stewardship; fostering lifestyles, enterprises and development that are not at odds with the natural values that attract us here, residents, businesses and visitors alike.

During 2016-17 the 'Change' process has involved reinvigorating our Board of Management and overhauling our constitution. In addition to the unwavering support of our staff and Board, I would like to acknowledge the professional assistance provided by Deborah Shorter and Peter Dickson in the tricky task of developing a new name and imagery for a group.

The intent of our new direction is to build on the foundations laid by CCG, recognizing that the increasing pressures our region faces from growth and the impacts of climate change demand a commensurate response. Government funding will remain an underpinning basis for our programs and maintaining and extending that funding. In this regard, I wish to acknowledge the increased funding from the Augusta Margaret River Shire Council we received this year, National Landcare Program funding through SWCC and funding from the State NRM Program that enabled us to undertake a variety of excellent community partnership programs. In particular, may I applaud the State Government for recognising the dire need of community landcare and conservation groups for funding enabling planning and administrative support through its delivery of the State NRM Capability Grants Program.

The launch of Nature Conservation in late May provided a fitting celebration of our year long planning and commencement of a new era. My thanks to Voyager Estate for their generous support in hosting a memorable launch evening. Even before launching as Nature Conservation, we embarked on our new direction by forging stronger partnerships with three of the community sectors critical to our success, including the Augusta Margaret River Shire Council, the Margaret River Busselton Tourism Association and the Margaret River Chamber of Commerce. For a second year, Cape Mentelle dedicated a night in their film season to our cause and Cullen Wines stepped forward as a corporate supporter for the 'Our Patch' Environmental Education Program.

We have been careful not to neglect our traditional relationships with the South West Catchments Council and fellow members groups, particularly the neighboring Lower Blackwood Land Conservation District Council and GeoCatch. State Government agencies and Universities also continue as vital allies, with project partners this year including the Fisheries Department, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Department of Water and Murdoch University's Freshwater Fish Group.

As Nature Conservation we are positioning to be the champion our environment deserves but in doing this, we can only hope to act as a coordinator, a catalyst, an enabler, a facilitator. Our success in achieving a conservation culture will be through our members and partners participating in and supporting all aspects of our enterprise.



DR BOYD WYKES CHAIR, BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Outcome:

Members note the Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. 2016-17 Annual Report and thank Board and staff members for the achievements during the year.

All endorsed.

Actions:

Nil

2.3. Financial Report

Discussion:

The Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Financial Statements for the year ending 30 June 2017 prepared by independent auditors Harvey and Partners Pty Ltd were tabled by the Treasurer for acceptance.

Auditors provided clean bill of health, although noted that cash income should be double receipted.

Treasurer noted that the organisation is a significant contributor to local economy,

Members endorse that the Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. Financial Statement:

- **Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. as at 30 June 2017 and its performance for the year ending on that date.**
- **At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.**

Moved Carmen Lawrence. All carried.

Actions:

Nil

3. ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

3.1. Rules of the Association

Discussion:

In accordance with the *Incorporations Act 2017* any changes to the Rules of Association of an incorporated association must be made through endorsement of a Special Resolution. All members must be given not less than 21 days notice of the meeting at which the Special Resolution will be considered and the Special Resolution requires more than a 75% majority to be successfully carried.

The following Special Resolution is proposed for proposed changes to Nature Conservation's Rules of Association in response to advice from Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (previously the Department of Commerce) dated 5 May 2017.

SPECIAL RESOLUTION

Members endorse by Special Resolution the proposed changes to the Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. Rules of Association as set out in the AGM Meeting Papers and detailed in a tracked changes version of the organisation's Rules of Association provided at [NCMRR-Rules-of-Association-Proposed-changes-for-consideration-at-2017-AGM.pdf](#)

Background

On 2 April 2017 the Cape to Cape Catchments Group submitted a revision of its Rules of Association to the then Department of Commerce for approval. The revision included changes to effect the organisational change from Cape to Cape Catchments Group Inc. to Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. as well as changes required by all Associations in response to the new *Incorporations Act 2017*.

On 5 May approval of the new Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. Rules of Association was received from the then Department of Commerce. At the time of approval the Department alerted Nature Conservation to two small outstanding matters that needed to be addressed within the Rules of Association. These are as follows:

ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION ACT 2015

NATURE CONSERVATION MARGARET RIVER REGION INC. - A1010349G

The rules/constitution of the above-named association were found not to conform with the requirements of Schedule 1 of the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015* in relation to the following matters:

- Schedule 1(6)(g) of the Act requires the rules to include the circumstances (if any) in which payment may be made to a member of the committee out of the funds of the association.

The above matter does not appear to have been provided in the Associations rules. The relevant clause of the Model Rules that deal with this matter is clause 40.

- Schedule 1(15) of the Act requires the rules to include the custody and use of the common seal of the incorporated associations, if it has one.

The above matter does not appear to have been provided in the Associations rules. The relevant clause of the Model Rules that deals with this matter is clause 65.

Proposed Changes to the Rules of Association

Advice from the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (formally the Department of Commerce) has been sought and the following changes are now proposed to address the issues above:

Insert the following Rule as Rule 37

37. Payments to Board members

- (1) In this rule —
Board member includes a member of a committee;
Board meeting includes a meeting of a committee.
- (2) Once deemed appropriate by the Board, a Board member may be paid out of the funds of the Association for any out-of-pocket expenses for travel and accommodation properly incurred —
 - a) in attending a Board or committee meeting or
 - b) in attending a general meeting; or
 - c) otherwise in connection with the Association's business.

Amend Rule 61 (now Rule 62) to read:

62. Executing documents and common seal

- (1) The Association will not use a common seal.
- (2) The Association may execute a document without using a common seal if the document is signed by
 - a) 2 Board members; or
 - b) one Board member and a person authorised by the Board.

Other proposed minor changes

A number of errors have been identified in cross-referencing in the original version of the Rules of Association submitted to the Department of Commerce. These errors will be corrected altering nothing else but the cross-referencing.

Insertion of an additional clause into the Rules of Association will also require additional referencing changes.

Members endorse by Special Resolution the proposed changes to the Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. Rules of Association as set out in the AGM Meeting Papers and detailed in a tracked changes version of the organisation's Rules of Association provided at [NCMRR-Rules-of-Association-Proposed-changes-for-consideration-at-2017-AGM.pdf](#)

Stuart Hicks moved, Marg Moir seconded. All in favour.

Actions:

Nil

3.2. Board Membership update

The Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. Rules of Association allows for a Volunteer Management Board made up of 4 office holders and at least one additional ordinary member (currently 3 ordinary members) to manage the day to day activities of Nature Conservation. The term of the Board membership is 4 years.

There is scope to appoint further Board members, but in the first year of operation it was decided not seek additional members, however this is likely to occur in the coming year.

Recruitment has previously been targeted. BW noted that there is a need for succession planning for Chair position.

Members thank all Nature Conservation Board Members for their contribution during 2016-17.

Members endorse the current membership of the Nature Conservation Board to continue to provide oversight to the operations of the Nature Conservation as follows.

<i>Dr Boyd Wykes</i>	<i>Prof. Carmen Lawrence</i>
<i>Stuart Hicks AO</i>	<i>Steve Castan</i>
<i>John McKinney</i>	<i>Steve Harrison</i>
<i>Margaret Moir</i>	

Caroline Hughes moved, Anne Marsh seconded.

Actions

Nil

3.3. Membership fees

The Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. Rules of Association outlines arrangements for annual membership fees as follows:

14. Membership fees

- (1) The Board shall from time to time determine the entrance fee (if any) and the annual membership fee (if any) to be paid for membership of the Association.
- (2) The fees determined under subrule (1) may be different for different classes of membership.
- (3) A member must pay the annual membership fee to the Treasurer, or another person authorised by the Board to accept payments, by the date (the **due date**) determined by the Board.
- (4) If a member has not paid the annual membership fee within the period of 3 months after the due date, the member ceases to be a member on the expiry of that period.
- (5) If a member who has ceased to be a member under subrule (4) offers to pay the annual membership fee after the period referred to in that subrule has expired —
 - (a) the Board may, at its discretion, accept that payment; and
 - (b) if the payment is accepted, the member's membership is reinstated from the date the payment is accepted.

The impetus for setting membership fees was to comply with Rules which require tracking of members. There is a minimum 50 members for DGR status. As of today, 54 members, but approximately 600 people on newsletter list. Reciprocal membership agreements with MRREC, MRBTA, MRCCI.

The Nature Conservation Board wishes to advise members that it has set the membership fees as outlined below. At this stage the Board does not envisage any changes to these fees.

Class of membership	Annual Membership Fee
Individual or Personal Membership	\$24.00
Family Membership	\$24.00
Corporate or Business Membership	\$34.00
Honorary Membership	\$0.00
Life Membership	\$0.00

Outcome:

Members note the current annual membership fees set by the Nature Conservation Board for all classes of members of Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc.

SH moved, Joanne Armstrong seconded.

BW moved thanks to Steve Castan who contributed significantly to review of Rules of Association.

4. CURRENT ACTIVITIES

4.1. Executive Officer's Quarterly Report

Discussion:

Executive Officer report was tabled (attached overleaf)

Outcome:

BW moved thanks to Stuart Hicks for strong assistance throughout the year.

Actions:

Nil

5. CLOSING

5.1. Other Business

SH noted immense amount of work put in by Caroline and Boyd and it is to be commended. On behalf of board, staff and members thanks.

SH noted that Board is pleased to see the 3 Councillors attending the meeting.

MM noted that in past times when there was close relationship with the Shire of Augusta Margaret River it was a time of vibrancy and action.

BW noted thanks to John McKinney for Minute taking and other Secretarial duties.

Bruce Hamilton noted that there has been great progress in the last year and the group has grown well. Also noted that the relationship with LCDC and NCMMR is becoming stronger and more collaborative and this is important. Noted there will be a MoU to be developed with the LCDC in the coming year. LCDC has been developing *Whole of landscape, whole of community* approach.

5.2. Upcoming events

Please be advised that Cape Mentelle Wines is generously supporting Nature Conservation for the 4th year with a Movie Fundraiser on Sunday 11 February 2018. The evening will include screening of the Australian nature documentary 'Blue'.

5.3. Meeting close

5.20 pm

ITEM 4.1 EXECUTIVE OFFICERS REPORT DECEMBER 2017

PROJECT FUNDING @ DECEMBER 2017

Current Funded Projects				
Project title	Funding	Start date	End date	Overall Budget
Conserve the Margaret River				
Building the resilience of the Margaret River	SWCC Strategic Groundworks Grants NLP	July 2015	June 2018	\$175,000
Margaret River Foreshore Action Plan	ARMSC – Fee for Service	Jan 2017	July 2018	\$35,200
Margaret River Action Plan Implementation	Water Corp and Department of Water	Ongoing		Current \$6,740
Coordinated Weed Control				
Priority weed action in the Capes region 2016-2017	State NRM Community Action Grants	April 2016	Dec 2017	\$46,500
Coordinated implementation of priority weed action across the Capes region 2017-2018	State NRM Community Action Grants	July 2017	Dec 2018	\$48,490
Strategic Weed Control	Landowners	Ongoing		Current \$30,365
Threatened Species Protection				
Western Ringtail Possum Conservation	AMRSC – Environmental Management Fund MRBTA Donation	Sept 2016	Oct 2018	\$38,748
Hairy Marron Conservation	SWCC	July 2017	Dec 2017	\$7,960
On ground action protecting the aquatic biodiversity of the Margaret River	State NRM Community Action Grants	April 2016	Dec 2017	\$32,835
Managing Bushland for Wildlife				
Linkages and Refugia in the Capes Region	SWCC	July 2017	June 2018	\$30,000
Caring for Coast				
On ground action to protect the Prevelly/Gnarabup coastal environment	Coastwest	Sept 2017	Sept 2018	\$14,175
Environmental Education				
'Our Patch' Environmental Education	Rotary, AMRSC, Cowaramup Lions, Schools, Cullen Wines and Private Donation	Ongoing		\$47,000
'Adopt a Spot'	State NRM Community Action Grants	Mar 2017	Dec 2018	\$30,655
People for Nature				
Support to Friends Groups in the Augusta Margaret River Shire	AMRSC – Environmental Management Fund	Nov 2017	Oct 2018	\$17,648
Capes Volunteering	Churches/Fundraising	Ongoing		Current \$2,081
Support Programs				
Enhancing NRM outcomes in the Margaret River region – Strategic projects and relationships, research and citizen science development, landowner engagement	State NRM Capability Grants	Aug 2016	Dec 2018	\$200,000
CCG to Nature Conservation Transition	Donation	Jan 2017	Dec 2017	Current \$6,735

Outstanding Funding applications		
Project	Funding Organization	Application Amount
Turner Brook Action Plan Partnership project with LBLCDC and AMRSC	State NRM Program	\$42,375
Giant Light Steps Alliance – Seed funding	NAB Foundation	\$487,992

FINANCES AND ADMINISTRATION

The 2017/18 Administrative and Projects Budget were endorsed on 10 July by the Nature Conservation Board. All administration and project budgets are currently on track.

The Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Financial Statement for the year ending 30 June 2017 has been prepared by Harvey and Partners Pty Ltd and will be presented at the Annual General Meeting. The required end of year financial and activity reporting for the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC) and the Register of Environmental Organisations (REO) has also been successfully completed.

The 2016-17 Annual Report is now complete and will be presented at the Annual General Meeting.

A Draft Fundraising Policy detailing Nature Conservation's position and procedures for sponsorship and donations has been prepared and will be considered by the Board in early 2018. This is the first step in a review of organisational governance which will be undertaken during 2018.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- **Strategic Partnerships**

Since making the change to Nature Conservation the Board has been working hard to establish new strategic partnerships with key organisations within the Margaret River region. A series of briefings have been undertaken and MoUs with key organisations are being developed. The development of MoUs is a major output of the State NRM Capability Grant currently funding half of the Executive Officer's position.

To date a MoU has been signed with MRBTA and the resulting partnership promoted through the media. A continuing MoU has recently been signed with the Augusta Margaret River Shire Council detailing administrative support and a working partnership. The MoU commits both organisations to reviewing and strengthen the MoU by June 2018. The aim of the new MoU will be to articulate a higher level strategic commitment from the two parties to collaborate to achieve long term strategic outcomes for the natural environment of the Shire of Augusta Margaret River.

A Draft MoU has also be prepared with the Lower Blackwood LCDC and is now with the LCDC for comment. Similar MoUs are also being prepared with the Margaret River Chamber of Commerce and the Margaret River Wine Association and are anticipated to be approved by the Nature Conservation Board in early 2017.

- **Nature Conservation Strategic Plan**

Work has commenced towards the preparation of a Draft Nature Conservation Strategic Plan 2018-2020. The Board will consider content of the draft plan in early 2018 with a view to finalizing the plan by April 2018. The plan will incorporate outcomes of the Board's strategic planning session conducted in May 2017, details of the Giant Light Steps proposal and strategic directions for the organisation's current conservation programs.

NATURE CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

PROGRAM 1: CONSERVE THE MARGARET RIVER

- **Building the resilience of the Margaret River**

The SWCC funded project is now in its 3rd year. Two rounds of planting has been completed at 4 sites in the upper catchment of the Margaret River and one strategic site on a tributary. One round of planting has also been undertaken on 3 sites on the lower Margaret River in areas where successful arum lily control has been undertaken.

The 2017 arum lily control program has been recently been completed along the full length of the Margaret River Foreshore Reserve and in adjacent properties where possible. The 2018 blackberry control program will commence in early 2018 and control for other priority species is ongoing. Weed control along in the Margaret River foreshore reserve is funding through contributions from the Shire of Augusta Margaret River and the Water Corporation and supplemented by State and Federal grants.

A recent collaborative management workshop with all organisations with roles and responsibility for management of the Margaret River was hosted by the Shire of Augusta Margaret River. The outcome of the workshop was a commitment by all organisation to participate in an ongoing collaborative management group to manage the river. In the first instance Nature Conservation will provide support to the group whilst participants provide input to the preparation of a Margaret River Protection Strategy. The Strategy is due for completion by June 2018.

- **Margaret River Foreshore Reserve Action Plan**

Progress on the fee for service contract with the Shire of Augusta Margaret River to complete a Margaret River Foreshore Reserve Action Plan has been on hold whilst the Shire completed indigenous consultation with regard to a number of projects including the winter diversion trail. This is now complete and Nature Conservation has been requested to provide their formal advice to the Shire on the winter diversion trail by the end of 2017.

Once a final decision on the winter diversion trail is gained from Council, the last stage of community consultation for the Foreshore Reserve Action Plan will be undertaken including presentation of draft findings and recommendations to the community. A draft action plan is scheduled for completion in April/May 2018 for presentation to Council.

PROGRAM 2: THREATENED SPECIES PROTECTION

- **Hairy Marron Conservation**

Non Hairy marron fish out activities in the upper pools of the Margaret River have now been completed for 2017. 10 two night fish out events were conducted over the period April – August. Analysis of data has been undertaken by Dr Rodney Duffy, Freshwater Research Scientist at the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

The Hairy Marron Recovery Team considered the results of the 2017 fish outs and the results of the captive breeding program at a meeting on Thursday 7 December. The team has made the reluctant decision to discontinue the fish out activities and to focus attention on establishing an ark site for the species and further developing the captive breeding program. A report from the Recovery Team outlining the justification for the change of approach and an agreed way forward is currently being prepared and funding options for the future investigated.

- **Western ringtail possum conservation**

The Shire of Augusta Margaret River through its Environmental Management Fund has recently supported a second year of partnership with Nature Conservation to conserve the western ringtail possum. Funding will allow for continuation of public awareness raising and increasing understanding of possum distribution within the Shire.

The 2017 Spring Possum Tally was completed in partnership with GeoCatch across the Margaret/Busselton regions. The tally engaged interested community in providing sightings of possums in their garden, on their property or in local bushland. The results of the tally will provide a better understanding of WRP populations in the region. Results of the Tally will be available in early 2018.

A citizen science training course for interested community members to learn WRP survey techniques was conducted in early September. A coordinator has now been appointed to coordinate volunteer teams and surveys within high priority reserves. Surveying at some sites began in early December and will commence through 2018.

Public awareness raising for western ringtail possum conservation has continued primarily through Facebook. A draft booklet for landowners on WRP conservation and a spotlighting leaflet will be printed in early 2018. A community night stalk is planned for April 2018.

- **Black cockatoos**

The Shire of Augusta Margaret River through its Environmental Management Fund has recently supported Nature Conservation to coordinate local participation in the 2018 Great Cocky Count in April 2018. A contractor will be engaged in early 2018 to coordinate two Birdlife WA workshops before and after the count, assist with identifying roost sites and allocation of volunteers to sites. Local participation in Birdlife WA's watering and nesting site surveys will also be promoted.

- **Aquatic biodiversity monitoring**

A two day aquatic biodiversity training course was conducted on 18 and 19 September. Delivered by the Murdoch University Freshwater Fish Group research scientists, the training course provided interested community members who an understanding of monitoring techniques and equipment to enable them to contribute to a citizen science aquatic monitoring team.

The team will be brought back together in early 2018 to further trial monitoring techniques in the field and develop an ongoing biannual monitoring program for strategic sites on the river. The focus of the monitoring program will be the upper pools of the Margaret River where baseline surveys have previously been undertaken.

PROGRAM 3: COORDINATED WEED CONTROL

Nature Conservation has continued to facilitate the Capes Regional Environment Weed Management Group (CREWG) meeting on a bimonthly basis. The group is working well to coordinate priority control and community awareness raising activities across organisations and tenures.

Six draft management plans for priority emerging weed species have now been completed and reviewed by CREWG members. A further four management plans will be prepared for priority widespread weeds by Dec 2017.

Priority weed control has continued to be coordinated across the region funded by the State NRM program on a cost sharing basis with landowners. The arum lily control program has recently been completed with around 250 landowners engaged across approximately 3000 hectares. Control has focused once again in the Redgate, Calgardup, Kilcarnup, Burnside, Cullen Rd/Juniper Rd areas as well as bringing landowners on both the north and south side of lower reaches of the Margaret River on board. A weedy wattle program in partnership with AMRSC has continued. Through the program the community is being encouraged to make contact if they think they have weedy wattles on their property. The annual blackberry control will be coordinated in early 2018 and control of other species such as African feathergrass and pittosporum is ongoing.

PROGRAM 4: MANAGING BUSHLAND FOR WILDLIFE

As part of a long term engagement of landowners in best practice land management in high conservation value areas, landowner engagement in feral animal control in the Juniper/Cullen Road

area has begun. This work is funded through a Refugia and Linkages Grant from the National Landcare Program via the South West Catchments Council.

Monitoring using motion cameras will be undertaken before Christmas to build a picture of fox populations in the area. A 1st round of fox baiting will follow in January with a 2nd round anticipated for October 2018. Both baiting rounds will be on a cost sharing basis with landowners.

A community capacity building workshop will also be conducted in January to increase landowner understanding of feral animal issues and monitoring.

PROGRAM 5: CARING FOR COAST

- **Coastal Rehabilitation on the Gnarabup/Prevelly Dunes**

Funding was received from the Coastwest Grants Program in September to continue coastal restoration activities on the Gnarabup/Prevelly dunes. The grant will enable the partnership with AMRSC and the Margaret River Coastal Residents Association to be continued and work in accordance with the updated Coastal Condition Assessment implemented.

The project will see continued pyp grass control, erosion control fencing and brushing undertaken over the next 12 months. Significant volunteer hours will be provided to the project through the Margaret River Coastal Residents Association.

Since commencement of the project partners have met to prepare an implementation plan, commercial pyp grass control has been commenced and weekly volunteer activities have continued.

PROGRAM 6: ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

- **Our Patch**

Another successful year of 'Our Patch' environmental education has recently been completed with 7 schools across the Augusta Margaret River Shire. The second half of 2017 was spent with Year 3's undertaking a number of excursions focusing on macro sampling, western ringtail possum conservation and indigenous connection to the environment. A very successful half day Schools Bioblitz was also conducted at Barrett Street Weir where students participated in a range of hands on biological surveys and interpretive activities.

On Friday 8 December the Year 6 'Our Patch' students also presented their catchment videos to 'Our Patch' supporters, other students and teachers at the Margaret River Cultural Centre. This was the culmination of the 'Our Patch' catchment studies module undertaken in the first half of 2017 and included all students working with a local videographer to document their catchment tours and action.

- **Adopt a Spot**

Complementary to 'Our Patch' Nature Conservation has also just completed a very successful first year of the "Adopt a Spot" Program for all Year 4 students across the 7 schools.

All schools have adopted a spot within their local environment and contributed to its rehabilitation. Two excursions to each site were conducted with each school, firstly in May/June to undertake rehabilitation work such as planting and brushing and secondly in November to assess success and undertake follow weeding and clean up activities.

Before and after surveys have been undertaken with the students to assess their knowledge of the site, its issues and environmental management requirements.

Signage for all adopt a spots is currently being developed and will be installed early in 2018.

PROGRAM 7: PEOPLE FOR NATURE

- **Friends of Reserves Support**

The Friends of Reserves support project has just kicked off for a third year with continued funding from the Shire of Augusta Margaret River's Environmental Management Fund.

Staff are working with 4 established groups caring for the A Class Reserve, Barrett Street Reserve, Riverslea Reserves and Gracetown Foreshore. A 5th group has just commenced caring for the Wadandi Track in Cowaramup.

Working bees are being organised with all groups undertaking a range of activities including brain storming and strategic planning, wildflower walks, bird walks, revegetation, dune stabilisation, Western ringtail possum monitoring, and priority environmental weed control.

- **Community Events**

Margaret River Bioblitz 2017 was a successful conducted in September at the Barrett Street Weir. As usual the Bioblitz will have two components – A Bioblitz Community Day held on Sunday 17 September and a Bioblitz Schools Day held on Wednesday 20 September.

The Community Day Bioblitz attracted more than 150 community members attending the range of activities on offer. Interested individuals and families got up early to participate in early morning bird walks and checked fauna traps set the night before. Activities continued in the afternoon with a wildflower explorer trek, indigenous connections with Wadandi custodians, afternoon bird watching, fish and crustaceans, a sausage sizzle with live snake display and nocturnal spotlighting after dark. On Wednesday 20 September the Bioblitz happened all over again with 200 Year 3s from 7 local schools descending on the Barrett Street Weir to participate in a rotation of environmental activities. Both days were full of interesting activities assisting Nature Conservation to connect people to nature!

On September 20 Nature Conservation partnered with Margaret River Chamber of Commerce for the annual environment sundowner with Chamber members at Limeburners Distillery in Margaret River. To celebrate Biodiversity Month Nature Conservation conducted an interpretive walk through nearby bushland to start the event. Members then gathered at the distillery for sundowner drinks and to hear from a range of local business about their environmental commitments and activities. A member raffle was also conducted raising funds for Nature Conservation's Western Ringtail Possum conservation programs.