

YOUR GUIDE TO PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT ON YOUR PROPERTY IN THE MARGARET RIVER REGION





How to protect and improve environmental values in the Margaret River region



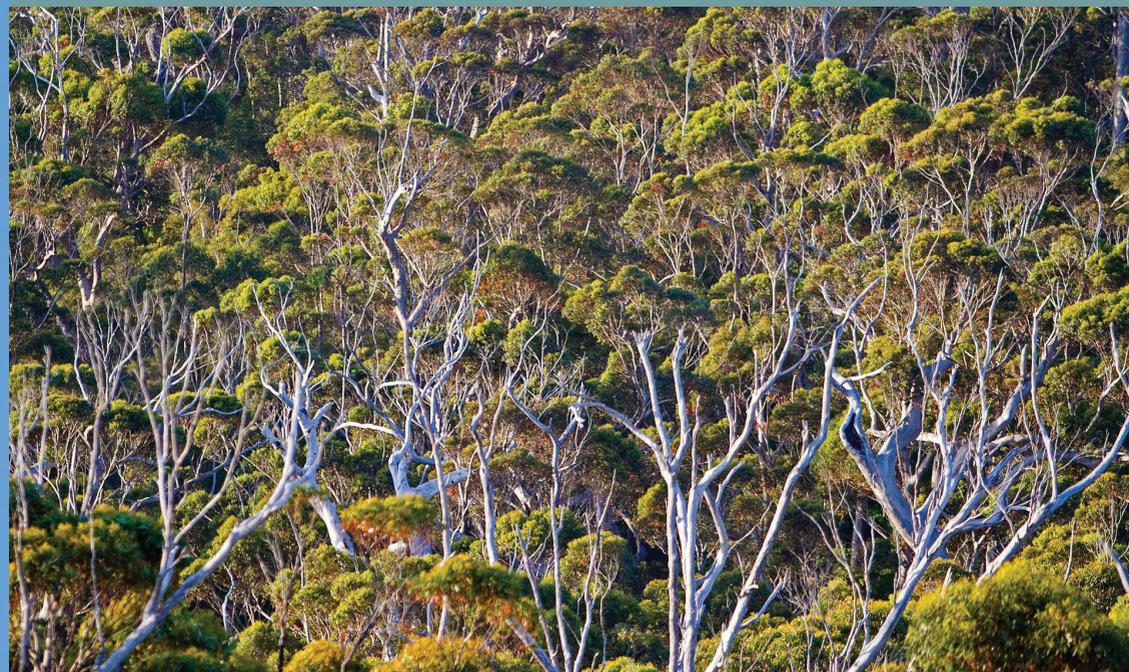
We are very lucky to live in the Margaret River region, whether as a full time or part time resident. It is a beautiful and diverse landscape with very high natural values that are enjoyed by all residents and visitors. The area is very popular and there has been much change and development in the last couple of decades. This change unavoidably impacts on our natural environment, on native vegetation, flora and fauna, our coastline and beaches, and on the broader landscape.

All landholders can make a contribution by protecting the environment on their own property. Please join with us and thousands of others to ensure that the natural values of the region are protected now and for the future.

Ngala kaaditj Wadan moort keyen kaadak nitja boodja.

We acknowledge the Wadandi people as the traditional custodians of the land we live, and meet on.

And acknowledge their rich cultural and spiritual connection to country and waterways



We understand that new landowners are full of enthusiasm, ideas and plans. We recommend that you learn as much as you can before making changes to your property. That way you will learn from the mistakes that so many of us have already made.

Management advice is outlined below followed by ideas on where you can get help and more detailed information.

Management Advice

Minimise clearing of native vegetation

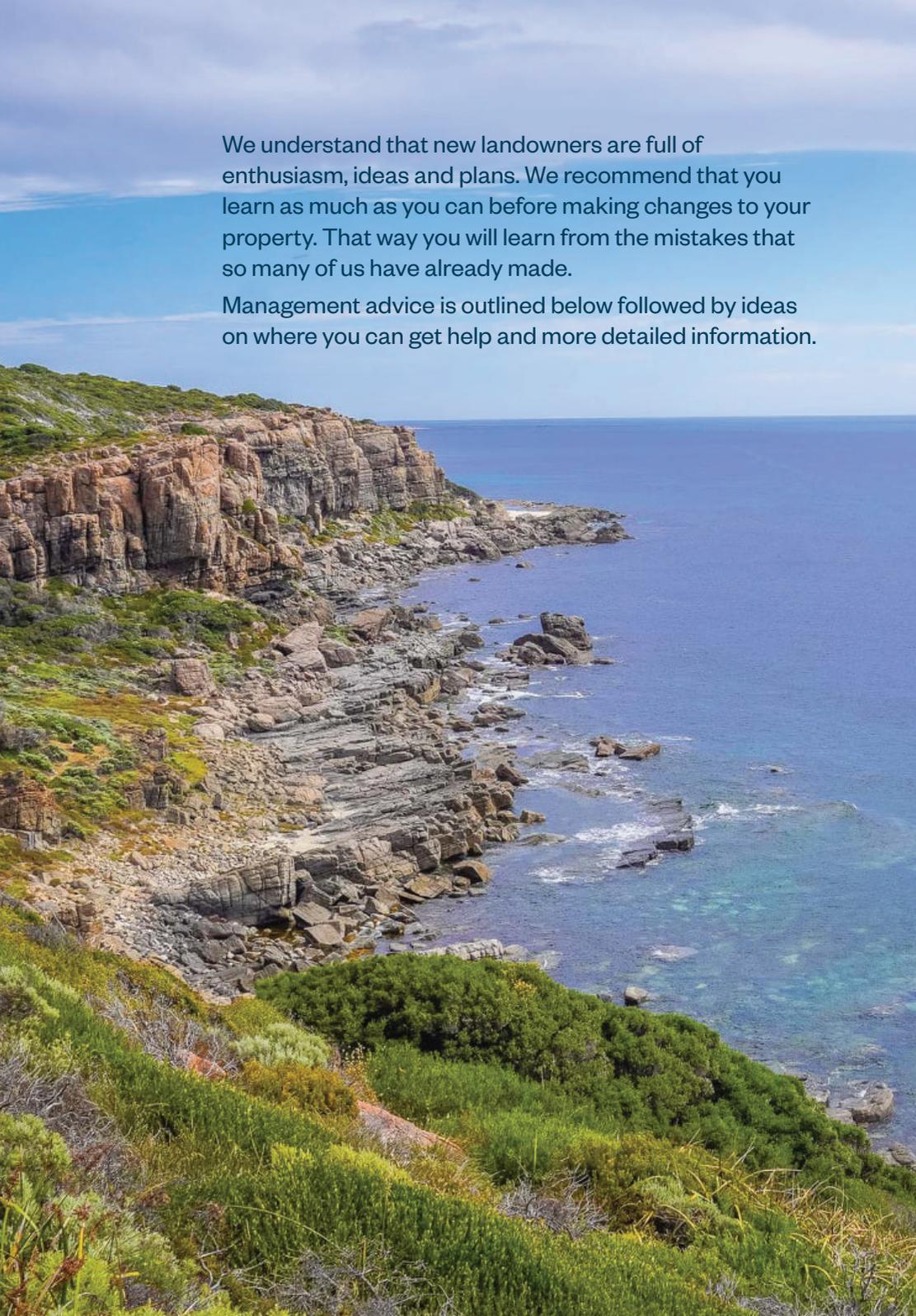


All bushland in the Margaret River region is valuable. In a largely cleared landscape, remnant native vegetation (vegetation that is uncleared and remained over time) provides an important refuge for plants and wildlife, protects against soil erosion and salinity, provides natural pest control, assists in maintaining water quality and modifying climate, and provides resources such as firewood. It provides diversity and beauty in a largely cleared landscape. Remnant vegetation cannot be replaced and revegetation is hard work, expensive and a lengthy process, so minimising clearing and protecting what you've already got is an excellent investment.

Minimise disturbance in your bushland and areas of remnant vegetation



Choose the most disturbed area of your property for the construction of homes and other buildings. Group your development area including house, shed, vegetable gardens etc to minimize impact. Don't use your bushland to store equipment or supplies, or dispose of rubbish, car bodies, garden refuse or dead livestock. Wherever possible don't extract gravel or sand from bushland and avoid creating tracks. These disturbances result in significant degradation via the loss of vegetation, introduction and spread of weeds, dieback and other diseases, soil compaction, and in many situations increase your bushfire risk.





Control invasive introduced plants.



Environmental weeds are plants that have been introduced to our area from other parts of the world, including other areas of Australia, and are spreading and displacing native species. Environmental weeds reduce environmental values as they outcompete our precious native plants, increase the fire risk of bushland and reduce habitat for wildlife. Examples of environmental weeds in the region include arum lily, blackberry, broom, asparagus fern, butterfly bush, watsonia, dolichos pea and trees including olives, figs, sweet pittosporum, non-indigenous wattles, and Victorian teatree.

The most widespread weed in the region is arum lily. This weed is easily controlled but as it seeds prolifically with the seeds spread by birds, successful control needs all landowners to take part. Please join with us all in controlling arum lily by joining the Arum Lily Blitz and playing your part along with many hundreds of other landholders in the region.

Don't mistakenly introduce environmental weeds.



It is very common to introduce plants into gardens, windbreaks and landscaping that will spread and become weed problems on your own property and in the surrounding area. Plants that have already become damaging weeds across the region and are still being planted by many including olives, figs, Sydney golden wattle and other non-indigenous wattles. Think carefully about what you plant and seek advice on whether plants are likely to become weeds. Planting species that would have occurred naturally on your property or local area is a good idea. These plants will not become weeds, they are beautiful, suited to our local conditions and they provide habitat and food resources for local wildlife.

Restrict stock access to bushland, creeks and dams.



Stock eat and trample native vegetation, ringbark trees, spread weeds, add nutrients and cause soil compaction. All the effects of grazing pressure occur under light stocking rates as well as under heavy stocking; the effects are largely a matter of degree and are slower to appear. The negative impacts of grazing are gradual and degradation may not be obvious in the short term. Grazed bushland will eventually be dominated by aging shrubs and trees and with no regenerating seedlings surviving, it will die out.

Fencing should be used to exclude stock from bushland creeks and dams.

Avoid introducing and spreading Phytophthora dieback.



Phytophthora dieback is a deadly plant disease caused by the introduced pathogen *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. This pathogen lives in soil and plant tissue and is spread in water and soil. It attacks the roots of plants causing them to rot and resulting in plant death. At least 40 percent of the plant species in our region are susceptible to *Phytophthora dieback*. The first principle of *Phytophthora dieback* management is to minimise the introduction and spread. Any activity that introduces or moves soil, gravel or sand should be avoided if possible. Considerations include: minimising tracks and roads through bushland; keeping footwear, vehicles, bicycles, tools and equipment entering bushland free of all mud and soil; not bringing soil, gravel or sand into bushland; and keeping out horses and stock. If *Phytophthora dieback* is already present in your remnant vegetation planning and management can minimise its impact.



Use local native plants in revegetation.



If you are planting to beautify your property, create visual barriers or windbreaks, use plants that are native to your area. These plants are valuable to local wildlife, are adapted to local conditions and will not become a weed problem in the future. When planting trees think carefully about the long term impact - will they shade your house or cause a fire risk once they reach their full size? See Nature Conservation's 'revegetation with local natives' fact sheet for more information.

Home gardens provide a fantastic opportunity to recreate habitats for our local wildlife. **Local native plants** are the crucial building block. They provide food and shelter, plus they also attract insects – a food source for many animals. Create **sunny and shady patches** in your garden. Many birds and reptiles love to 'sun themselves' from time to time. The more **variety** in a garden, the greater the diversity of wildlife it will attract and support. Add logs, rocks, slopes, flat areas, bare ground, leaf litter, a variety of trees, shrubs, ground covers and herbs. Provide multiple **sources of water** that can be utilized by different birds, reptiles and insects.

Retain and create habitat for wildlife.



Retain old and dead standing trees as many of these contain hollows used by birds and small mammals. They also provide perching sites for birds of prey. Fallen timber provides habitat for reptiles, invertebrates and other animals.

Minimise the impact of fire on biodiversity.



Planned burns are used in remnant vegetation to reduce fire risk and/or encourage regeneration. An understanding of the ecological impacts of fire can enable land managers to plan and implement burns in a way that will minimise negative impacts on the ecosystem and hopefully result in improvements in condition. There are many elements to consider including the reason for burning (hazard reduction or promoting regeneration), vegetation type to be burnt, the frequency and timing of burning, the extent of the area to be burnt, the intensity of the burn (cool burns are best), the impacts on Phytophthora dieback management, and post-fire management needs including weed, feral animal and grazing control.





Pet control to minimise harm to wildlife.



Pet cats and dogs have a significant negative impact on native wildlife. At a minimum, keep your pets (cats and dogs) contained at night to reduce injury and death to native wildlife.

Roaming pet cats collectively kill 390 million animals each year in Australia, and only bring home around 15% of what they hunt. This has a significant impact on the survival of our native species, many of which are already under threat. Almost 30% of cat owners in Australia keep their cats indoors or in cat enclosures. These cat owners know that cats can be safe and happy, with all their needs met, without impacting the local environment.

Go to <https://www.geocatch.asn.au/living-with-possums/pets-away-possums-play/>

for ideas and information.



Landholder's legal responsibilities



The Environmental Protection Act 1986 (EP Act) requires that any person clearing native vegetation must hold a permit, unless the clearing is for an exempt purpose. Exempt purposes include clearing for fire breaks, fence lines, construction of an approved building and vehicular track provided the clearing is not in an Environmentally Sensitive Area and is less than 5 ha/year. Additionally, your local government may require permits if the clearing is within a Landscape Protection Area.

For more information about clearing permits go to:
www.der.wa.gov.au/our-work/clearing-permits

The construction of a dam is considered 'development' under the Planning and Development Act 2005. Planning approval is required through the Shire of Augusta Margaret River and the City of Busselton to construct a new dam or expand an existing dam. Contact the Shire of Augusta Margaret River or the City of Busselton for more information.

If you wish to construct or alter a bore or draw groundwater, use surface water from a watercourse, or disturb the bed and banks of a stream you may be legally require a licence.

For more information go to
www.water.wa.gov.au/licensing/water-licensing/do-i-need-a-licence-or-permit

Where to get further information and assistance



Register with Nature Conservation Margaret River Region's For Nature program at www.natureconservation.org.au

You will then be kept informed about workshops, events, equipment for loan, information available, and help available. More detailed information on many of the topics touched is available via the Nature Conservation website.

Property planning to protect environmental values

Nature Conservation can undertake a biodiversity assessment and develop a plan for your property on a fee-for-service basis. Prices vary according to the size of the property and the amount of work required. Please contact us to find out more.

Information on the Arum Lily Blitz at
www.natureconservation.org.au

Identifying weeds and their control - Herbiguide
www.herbiguide.com.au/Home.aspx

Woody weeds of the Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin Region
www.natureconservation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/woody-weeds-booklet-2013.pdf

Identifying local native plants – Scott, J. & Negus, P. (2013).
Wildflowers of Southwest Australia: Augusta Margaret River Region.
Cape to Cape Publishing.

Florabase www.florabase.dpaw.wa.gov.au

Sourcing local native plants



Unfortunately, not all nurseries around the capes region stock local indigenous native plants. Contact Nature Conservation Margaret River Region for advice on appropriate species to plant. Ask these nurseries for 'local provenance' meaning plants grown from seed or cuttings collected from your local area, catchment or region. These plants are adapted to local conditions so are the best plants to use on your property.

Cowaramup Tube Nursery
Geographe Landcare Nursery
Boyanup Botanicals

www.tubenursery.com.au
www.gcln.org.au
www.boyanupbotanical.com.au



Nature Conservation can support you and help improve your property by:



Undertake property biodiversity assessments



Providing advice on land management tailored to your property



Provide revegetation and weed control services



Support and incentives for conservation work



Increasing the environmental value and in turn your property value

Get in touch today:

(08) 9757 2202

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