



media release

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South Coast triumphs in Coastal Awards

Three innovative South Coast groups and projects have taken top honours in the Western Australian Coastal Awards for Excellence in recognition of their achievements in planning, management and protection of our unique coastal and marine environment.

The winners of this year's WA Coastal Awards for Excellence, coordinated by the Coastwest Program on behalf of the WA Planning Commission, were announced at the 5th WA State Coastal Conference in Fremantle last week.

The Fitzgerald Biosphere Group and Friends of the Wellstead Estuary Group received a *Community Group Effort Award* for the Wellstead Estuary Project; South Coast Management Group brought home the *Coastal Planning and Management Award* for the Southern Shores 2009-2030 regional coastal strategy; and the *Coastal / Marine Research or Education Award* went to the Marine Futures Project Team for the Securing WA's Marine Futures project (2006-2008).

Winners were commended by Planning Minister John Day and received a framed certificate and glass trophy made by South West-based artist Rick Cook.

South Coast NRM chief executive Rob Edkins said the awards were indicative of the exceptional talent and achievements of these groups and their projects.

"The awards are fantastic recognition for the remarkable work that these groups carry out across the South Coast region and the state. Their achievements prove that communities can manage large projects and set the benchmark for natural resource management practices in our state," he said.

The Fitzgerald Biosphere Group and Friends of the Wellstead Estuary Group have worked closely with the local community and schools to achieve their goals including biodiversity conservation around the Wellstead Estuary in Bremer Bay.

The South Coast Management Group, comprising representatives from five local government authorities and community, have facilitated the review and development of the regional coastal strategy, Southern Shores 2009-2030. Southern Shores has contributed to the protection of natural assets and lifestyle values along the South Coast by making sure that development is carried out in a sustainable manner.

The Securing WA's Marine Futures project, initiated by South Coast NRM and delivered by the collaborative Marine Futures project team, benchmarked marine habitats and organisms in WA through detailed mapping of 1,500 km² of seafloor between the Abrolhos Islands and the Recherche Archipelago.

The Marine Futures project has significantly increased our knowledge and understanding of the WA marine environment and improved capacity for sound decision-making across government authorities, regional NRM organisations, scientists, key coastal user groups and the broader community.

The project team was a strong cross-regional partnership that comprised UWA, Fugro, Department of Fisheries, WA Museum and South Coast NRM.

Mr Edkins also emphasized the contribution of other individuals, groups and projects that were nominated for their coastal and marine conservation achievements along the South Coast.

Nominees Brad Kneebone and Jean Brenton were recognised for their individual contributions; Lowlands Coastcare Group for outstanding community group effort; The Wellstead Estuary Project for coastal project partnership; and Management of Natural and Cultural Resources in the Recherche Archipelago for research or education.

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For more information or to arrange interviews with group representatives please contact Dylan Gleave, South Coast NRM Water and Coastal Program Leader, on (08) 9071 7685 or 0427 928 400.

See URL below for more details on award winners;

<http://www.planning.wa.gov.au/Plans+and+policies/Statewide+planning/WA+Coastal+Awards/default.aspx>

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The not-for-profit South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. is the leading regional group for natural resource management on the South Coast of Western Australia. Funding is provided by the Australian Government and the Government of Western Australia.