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# ANNUAL REPORT

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As an organisation, we recognise and respect that we live and work on the traditional lands of Noongar/ Nyungar and Ngadju peoples. We acknowledge and honour Noongar/ Nyungar and Ngadju peoples as the spiritual and cultural custodians of this land, and we recognise the ongoing importance of their values, languages, beliefs, and knowledge.

We are committed to working in partnership with First Nations peoples to support and promote respectful cultural and ecological practices, and to ensure that their land, culture, and knowledge is respected and protected. We acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging, and extend this respect to all First Nations peoples.



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# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The political landscape of natural resource management in Australia and internationally has been shifting over recent years in recognition of the on-going decline in environmental condition and increased acceptance of our reliance on nature as a society. International agencies and the Federal Government have recognised that funding for the environment has been insufficient to arrest the present trends. It has also been recognised that the successful implementation of policies that are being developed, and the ability to leverage private investment, will depend critically on developing an improved and comparable approach to monitoring environmental and natural capital condition.

Since Luke Bayley was appointed as our new CEO, South Coast NRM has developed a 2030 strategy in response to these changes. This includes narrowing our focus to ensure funding acquired is consistent with strategic direction and our capacity to manage the projects, building on our efforts to maintain good relationships with our partners and opening dialogue with other environmental organisations with a similar purpose. The medium-term goal is to acquire funding to develop a standardised accounting system for our natural capital. This approach will help improve the integrity of market-based mechanisms to improve our environment and provide confidence to private funders that environmental outcomes are achieved.

Luke and his team have also led our successful effort to secure the Federal Government tender for South Coast NRM to be the preferred regional supplier for the Australian Government for services related to environmental protection, sustainable agriculture, and natural resource management. The contract is for a five-year period. Unfortunately, deferred project expenditure from the previous round of Regional Land Partnership projects and lengthy delays in Federal Government processes in the development of new projects have led to a negative cash flow in the short term. Despite this, the Board is confident in the direction of South Coast NRM and in financial resilience over the coming 12 months.

Given the delays in funding, it is regrettable that contracts for a significant proportion of project staff will not be renewed. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of departing people, some of whom have been with the organisation for many years, and the contribution they have made to enhancing the South Coast environment.

I also acknowledge the work of the South Coast NRM Directors and committees. We have a very capable Board and committee members, with diverse backgrounds and experience and they all bring a considered and constructive approach to the oversight of the organisation.

Andrew Bathgate  
Chair  
South Coast NRM





# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Over the past 12 months, I have had the privilege of seeing people in action across the South Coast region; at wetland sites and beaches, in the tingle forest, small halls, community resource centres and sporting clubs, at on Country gatherings, paddock field days and workshops. Activities where local people meet to discuss, to support each other, to take action, and to care for their place. This community spirit across the South Coast reminds me how important the role of South Coast NRM is and whom we serve. People from across our region are drawn together by their commitment of what they do and what they wish to leave behind, their culture, their community, their business, their family and a prosperous society and healthy planet. We live, work, and have responsibility for a very special part of the world.

Throughout the past year and in recognition of our regional community, the global economic system and this uniquely special part of the world, the Board and Staff of South Coast NRM developed our 2030 Strategy. This strategy outlines our vision, purpose, values and what we expect to achieve over the next 7 years. This plan positions our business in a way that better recognises and supports local groups and industry whilst developing our regional and national leadership in the global natural resource management and nature positive agenda.

The past year has seen South Coast NRM continue to work strongly with our regional community, and the State and Federal Governments, to develop and deliver landscape-scale projects that support sustainable agriculture and work to value, protect, and restore nature across the region. The success of South Coast NRM's operations is made possible through our dedicated staff and well-established relationships across community and industry. As CEO, I take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to our staff, reference groups, technical advisory groups, project steering committees, project working groups, Aboriginal corporations, Noongar community members and organisations, and our catchment and delivery partners across the South Coast region.

We also take this opportunity to recognise and thank our funders. The list of supporters and contributors to our collective effort is significant and critical to ensuring delivery of Southern Prospects, the South Coast Regional Strategy for Natural Resource Management, is achieved. Highlights of our flag ship projects delivered in 2022/ 2023 can be read in the proceeding pages of the annual report. Whilst our fiscal position has been challenging during this past year, the team has worked hard to restructure, reduce costs, and build revenue opportunities. Our business is now well placed, with new financial systems and controls, project management, and a renewed focus on excellence in our business and governance. As we head into 2023/ 2024, South Coast NRM will continue to collaborate and provide leadership in developing and sourcing capital for long term inclusive programs that value, protect, and restore nature.

In 2023, South Coast NRM is working towards an economy where nature is valued and accounted for. This focus will ensure regional business can further flourish whilst ensuring land, water and culture are better protected and restored. Our economy is on the edge of a bold transformation and the South Coast region of Western Australia is at the forefront. To achieve this, South Coast NRM has committed to global initiatives in our strategic plan, that will provide the leadership required, working collaboratively with regional partners, Aboriginal corporations, Agribusiness, and State and local government to transition our region to a nature positive economy. South Coast NRM is taking a regional and national leadership role in the development of a natural capital approach.

I would like to acknowledge my Senior Leadership Team, Johanna Tomlinson and Cary Green for their hard work and commitment over what has been a challenging period for the business. Suzie Myer and Stacey Palmer have also worked tirelessly over the past 12 months and assisted me greatly as I settled into my role as CEO. The Senior Leadership Team, along with our corporate services staff Suzie, Stacey and Renée Tan bring together a critical array of skills and perspectives and with their counsel, commitment, and expertise by my side I am confident in a positive future for South Coast NRM.

Luke Bayley  
Chief Executive Officer



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2022/ 2023

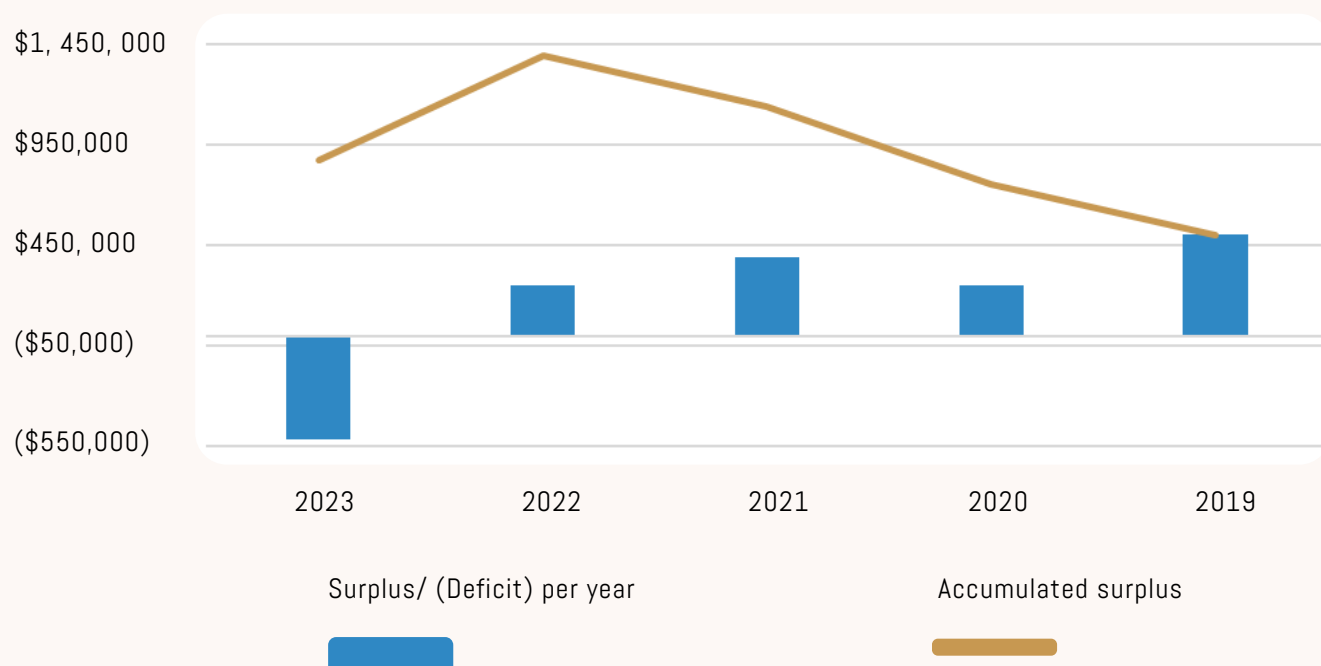
South Coast NRM is required to prepare Annual Financial Reports in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act (WA) 2015 and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissions Act 2012. The 2023 Special Purpose Financial Report has been completed and a copy of the full Financial Statements and notes is presented on the South Coast NRM website.

South Coast NRM's financial performance for the year is detailed in the Audited Financial Report. The net result for 2022/ 2023 was a deficit of (\$515,442). The financial position included the following:

## PROFIT AND LOSS

	2023	2022
Revenue and other Income	\$4,721,205	\$4,531,890
Expenses		
Direct Expenses	\$4,061,981	\$3,230,002
Operating Expenses	\$1,174,666	\$1,052,962
Total Expenses	\$5,236,647	\$4,282,965
Net Surplus (Deficit)	(\$515,442)	\$248,926

## SURPLUS/ DEFICIT ANALYSIS FOR THE PAST 5 YEARS



The following is an explanation of the 2023 Financial Year deficit:

1. 5 Year Project Completion Phase:

2022/23 was the final year for the RLP projects which resulted in deficits on several projects, however these projects attracted surpluses in previous years, which were sufficient to offset the 2023 deficit.

2. Extension of Ongoing Projects:

Several restricted projects had their end date extended into the 2024 financial year, which resulted in the overhead recoveries attached to this funding (approx. \$122k) not being recognized in the 2023 year.

3. Operating Expenses Exceeded Budget:

Due to inflationary pressures, operating expenses exceeded budget, particularly in employee expenses and recruitment, insurances, travel expenses, accounting and book keeping, and property expenses.

BALANCE SHEET		
	2023	2022
Assets		
Current Assets	\$4,241,680	\$ 5,606,650
Non-Current Assets	\$424,562	\$253,178
Total Assets	\$4,666,242	\$5,859,828
Expenses		
Current Liabilities	\$1,910,492	\$2,802,904
Non-Current Liabilities	\$235,632	\$21,364

Despite the 2022/ 23 financial year deficit, South Coast NRM's net asset position has increased over the past 5 years. This is due to RLP projects obtaining surpluses in previous years that offset deficits incurred this year. South Coast NRM is in a solvent position with Assets exceeding liabilities by a ratio of 2.17.

## **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SOUTH COAST NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT INC.**

### **Opinion**

We have audited the financial report of South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023, the statement of profit and loss, statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the declaration by those charged with governance.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report has been prepared in accordance with the *Associations Incorporation Act (WA) 2015* and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissions Act 2012*, including:

1. giving a true and fair view, in all material aspects, of the financial position of South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. as at 30 June 2023, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended; and
2. complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1, the *Associations Incorporation Act (WA) 2015* and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022*.

### **Basis for Opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### **Emphasis of Matter- Basis of Accounting**

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (WA) 2015 and Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissions Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

### **Emphasis of Matter- Economic Dependency**

We draw attention to Note 14 to the financial report, which describes South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc.'s dependency on funding from the Australian Government together with funding received from other sources. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

### **Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report**

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (WA) 2015 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissions Act 2012 and for such internal control as management determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.



In preparing the financial report, management are responsible for assessing South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc.'s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intend to liquidate the South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc.'s financial reporting process.

### **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

1. Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
2. Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal control.
3. Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made.
4. Conclude on the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the registered entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
5. Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

AMD Chartered Accountants



TIM PARTRIDGE FCA  
Director

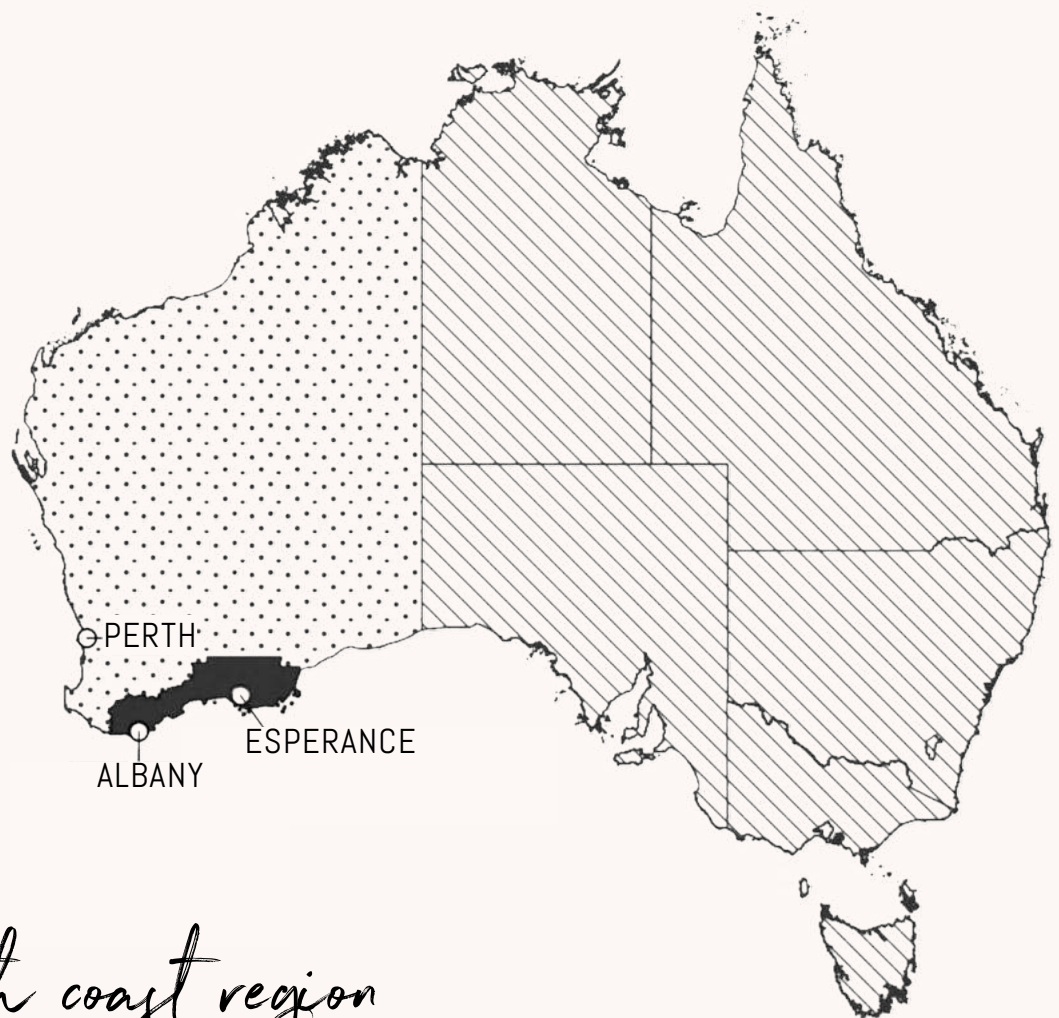
Level 1, 53 Victoria Street, Bunbury, Western Australia

Dated this 1 day of November 2023

# SOUTH COAST NRM REGION

The South Coast region extends more than 8.6 million hectares across the southern coastline of Western Australia, together with 8000 hectares of islands and 1 million hectares of State waters out to sea. From Walpole in the west to Cape Arid in the east, the region includes the catchment areas for all the southerly flowing rivers and some areas north of Albany and Esperance which drain internally. It is a natural geographic region which began to form over 100 million years ago when Antarctica broke away from Australia.

The South Coast region is of rich environmental, cultural, and economic value, located within a global biodiversity hotspot containing the highest concentration of rare and endangered species in Australia. With its unique mountain ranges more than 570 million years old, magnificent red tingle and karri forest, RAMSAR wetland sites, the UNESCO Fitzgerald Biosphere, and an ancient sandplain formed 40 million years ago, the South Coast region is a highly valued natural environment surrounded by prosperous and productive agricultural land.



*map of south coast region*

# landscape scale actions

## DELIVERING ON SOUTHERN PROSPECTS

### 2018 - 2023

For the past five years, South Coast NRM, together with several delivery partners and land managers across the South Coast region, has worked to deliver nine landscape scale projects. Supported by the Australian Government through the National Landcare Programme and Future Drought Fund, these projects have contributed significantly to the aspirations of Southern Prospects, the South Coast Regional Strategy for Natural Resource Management.

The program of works has provided significant investment in the region for threatened species and ecological community conservation, regional capacity, cultural heritage and sustainable agriculture works, contributing \$15.3 million of funding. This equates to a full investment, recognising co-contributions and in-kind, well beyond \$30 million through the five-year program. South Coast NRM acknowledges and extends thanks to the Australian Government, the delivery partners and the community for their role in the successful achievement of this important program of works. Successful achievement of this complex program highlights South Coast NRM's, and the regions, capacity and capability to implement landscape scale action to care for nature.

#### CULTURAL HERITAGE

All natural resource management actions in the South Coast region recognise and respect natural cultural heritage values. Aboriginal practices, spiritual and cultural values are considered across all themes, to support conservation and protection of our natural environment

#### REGIONAL CAPACITY

Healthy, resilient and sustainable communities sharing a strong 'sense of place' and accepting a shared responsibility to provide a legacy of a healthy, natural environment for future generations

#### WATER

South Coast rivers, estuaries, wetlands and water resources are precious and will be restored, maintained and protected so that their social, cultural, economic and ecological values can be recognised and embraced

#### BIODIVERSITY

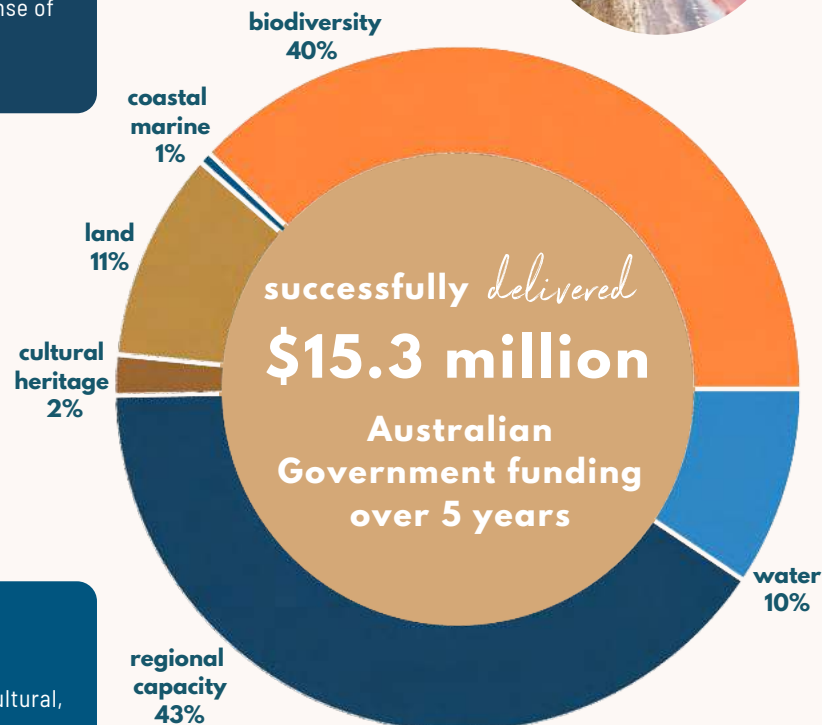
Healthy natural ecosystems, habitats and landscapes support viable and strongly resilient populations of native species and communities

#### COASTAL & MARINE

Our coastal and marine environments are improved by reducing key threats through a community-led approach that embraces social, cultural, economic and ecological values

#### LAND

Our region is recognised for its best-practice sustainable land-use, with farming closely aligned to the land's capability and supported by improved and protected base resources (soil, air, biodiversity, water)





# a focus ON REGIONAL LAND PARTNERSHIPS

The cornerstone of the past five years of landscape scale actions has been four key Regional Land Partnerships (RLP) supported projects as outlined below:

Protecting coastal corridors and improving Proteaceae dominated Kwongan Shrubland and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh TEC for South Coast Region of WA;  
Improving the status of 20/20 priority listed threatened species and protection of threatened species in the South Coast Region;  
Climate action: supporting the region to adapt, innovate and meet food market demands for sustainable food production; and  
Protecting Ramsar values through rehabilitation, restoration & reducing threats to the ecological character of Lake Warden & Lake Gore Ramsar wetlands.

The information presented focuses on the Regional Land Partnership programme achievements mapped to Southern Prospects outcomes. It is important to note that Cultural Heritage outcomes delivered through South Coast NRM have been supported in the main through complementary projects not reported herewith.



## Regional Capacity \$6,203,957

Outcome R1. \$28,000 Improved understanding through state of the environment reporting

A clear and transparent reporting process was developed that enables reporting to stakeholders and community on progress against Southern Prospects outcomes and changes in resource condition change.

Outcome R3. \$4,125,691 Improved resilience and increased capability

Provided continued support for sub-regional and community NRM Groups to ensure a network of highly capable organisations across the South Coast.

Outcome R4. \$393,457 Address key challenges through facilitated change management

Assisted South Coast community to identify, plan and implement changes to address key challenges.

Outcome R5. \$237,763 Improved awareness, recognition, education and training

Supported opportunities to ensure that there is access to locally relevant information and knowledge to inspire and energise existing education programs.

Outcome R6. \$1,419,046 Improved community engagement and leadership

Demonstrated and supported leadership, increased awareness and involvement of key audiences including youth, seniors, rural, urban and peri urban landholders, business owners and Aboriginal community.

## Biodiversity \$5,780,960

Outcome B1. \$32,272 Improved knowledge and understanding

Collected and mapped baseline data for identified gaps in knowledge, and collated and improved accessibility and communication of existing data/ information.

Outcome B4. \$2,829,917 Protect threatened and significant species, communities and habitats

Supported the implementation of recovery plans that incorporated potential interactions of climate change to protect threatened and significant species, communities and habitats. This work included 4 successful translocation breeding programs, the collection of 6 baseline datasets, publication of 20 communication resources, development of 52 farm/ project/ site plans, establishment of 55 monitoring regimes, 22 fauna surveys across 58,901 ha of land, 421 ha of access controlled through fencing, 2 flora surveys, 147 ha of weed control, 82 ha of revegetation, 80 ha of site preparation, and identification of 52 potential sites.

Outcome B5. \$782,078 Increase the area of land restored or protected

Through effective on-ground works and improved management practices, implemented the restoration and protection of cleared land in priority areas, including the establishment of 1,600 ha of feral free enclosures and 758 ha of access controlled through fencing.

Outcome B6. \$1,536,176 Reduce invasive species impact

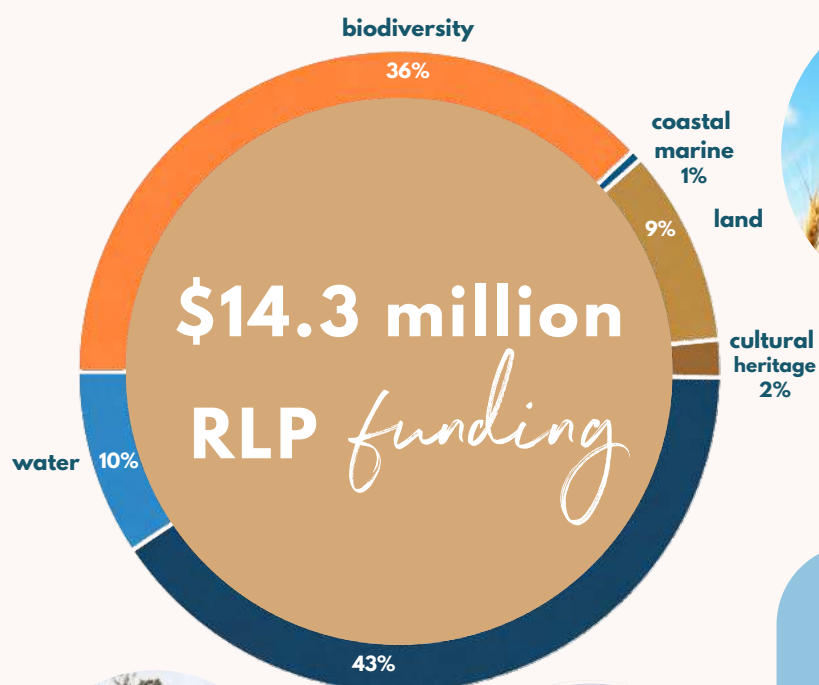
Managed the impacts of priority invasive species and prevented the occurrence and spread of emerging invasive species through training, early identification and on-ground works that included weed control across 123 ha and pest animal control across 64,870 ha of land.

Outcome B7. \$492,500 Improved dieback management

Protected priority areas by implementing identified subprogram projects in the delivery framework of the State Phytophthora Dieback Management and Investment Framework. This included 805 ha of land managed for dieback disease.

Outcome BR5. \$108,017 Improved awareness, recognition, education and training

Increased ownership, knowledge and awareness of the value of, and threats to, biodiversity assets across the region through the implementation of 25 community and stakeholder engagement activities.



**regional capacity**



#### Coastal and Marine \$86,926

Outcome C4. Improved condition of coastal and marine systems

Coastal and marine systems are maintained and improved in a changing climate by implementing coastal protection, rehabilitation and restoration projects. This work included the collection of 1 baseline data set, publication of 4 communication resources, implementation of 5 community and stakeholder engagement activities, pest animal control across 200 ha of land, the development of 8 project/ site plans, establishment of 11 monitoring regimes, 30 ha of access controlled through fencing, 2 flora surveys, 20 ha of weed control, 2 potential site locations identified, 2 ha of site preparation and 2 ha of revegetation.

#### Cultural Heritage \$291,061

Outcome H5. Improved application of traditional ecological knowledge

11 workshops and training activities, 1 monitoring regime for bush foods demonstrations

#### Water \$1,454,818

Outcome W1. \$425,600 Improved knowledge and understanding

Increased understanding of regional water assets and sustainable management through collection of 3 baseline datasets, the publication of 16 communication resources, establishment of 37 monitoring regimes, 3 fauna surveys across 4,800 ha of land and 8 water quality surveys over 3200 ha.

Outcome W5. \$899,218 Protect Ramsar Wetlands

Maintained and improved the value, level of protection and condition of internationally significant Ramsar wetlands Lake Warden and Lake Gore through 4020 ha of pest animal control, the development of 37 farm/ project/ site plans, 99 ha of access controlled through fencing, the identification of 35 potential sites, 66 ha of weed control, 169 ha of revegetation and 295 ha of site preparation.

Outcome WR5. \$130,000 Improved awareness, recognition, education and training

Increased knowledge and appreciation of water asset values and threats through 19 community and stakeholder engagement activities.

#### Land \$1,505,674

Outcome L1. \$325,800 Improved knowledge and understanding

Review and establish the South Coast community's focus for priority land assets and condition measures and increase understanding of land assets management by maintaining, supporting and where appropriate expanding, adaptive management, land asset research and monitoring programs. This work included the collection of 10 baseline data sets, publication of 22 communication resources, and establishment of 36 monitoring regimes.

Outcome L2. \$942,874 Improve climate change adaptation and mitigation responses

Developed and implemented adaptive responses to climate change in priority areas, in partnership with industry and land managers. This work included 1 conference, 7 field days, 4 on-ground trials, 21 community and stakeholder engagement activities, 80 ha of access controlled through fencing, identification of 25 potential sites, 110 hectares of site preparation, and 99 ha of revegetation.

Outcome L5. \$191,000 Integrate land use planning with NRM

Facilitated the integration of NRM principles into land planning processes through development of 30 farm/ project/ site plans.

Outcome L6. \$46,000 Develop sustainable industries

Reviewed, prioritised and facilitated future sustainable food, fibre and energy production industries through 4 on-ground trials.



Published **110** communication resources

Conducted **184** community/ stakeholder engagement events, including training/ workshops, technical advice, field days, conferences/ seminars, and on-ground trials/ demonstrations

Collected or synthesised **29** baseline datasets

Established and maintained **211** monitoring regimes



Identified the location of **179** potential project sites

Delivered **233** project plans for project services and monitoring

Negotiated with **332** different community, landholder, farmer, Traditional Owner and agriculture industry groups

Established and maintained agreements over **458** days

Across all of the Australian Government supported projects, and through a collective approach, the South Coast region has delivered an impressive level of action – both on ground and to inspire and empower people. The region has a can-do attitude and a passion to value, protect and restore nature



Established and maintained **2** feral free enclosures across **5,724** hectares of land

Installed **29** structures for habitat augmentation

Undertook weed control measures across an initial **572** hectares followed up by another **332** hectares, totalling **904** hectares.

Controlled access to **8,985** hectares of land through fencing



Developed **202** farm/ project/ site management plans

Undertook disease management across **28,899** hectares

Undertook pest control measures across an initial **140,474** hectares followed up by another **531,150** hectares, totalling **671,625** hectares

Conducted **16** water quality surveys across **60,405** hectares



Conducted **297** fauna surveys and **12** flora surveys over **528,067** hectares

Revegetated habitat across **879** hectares

Improved land management practices over **118** hectares

Negotiated with **332** different community, landholder, farmer, Traditional Owner and agriculture industry groups

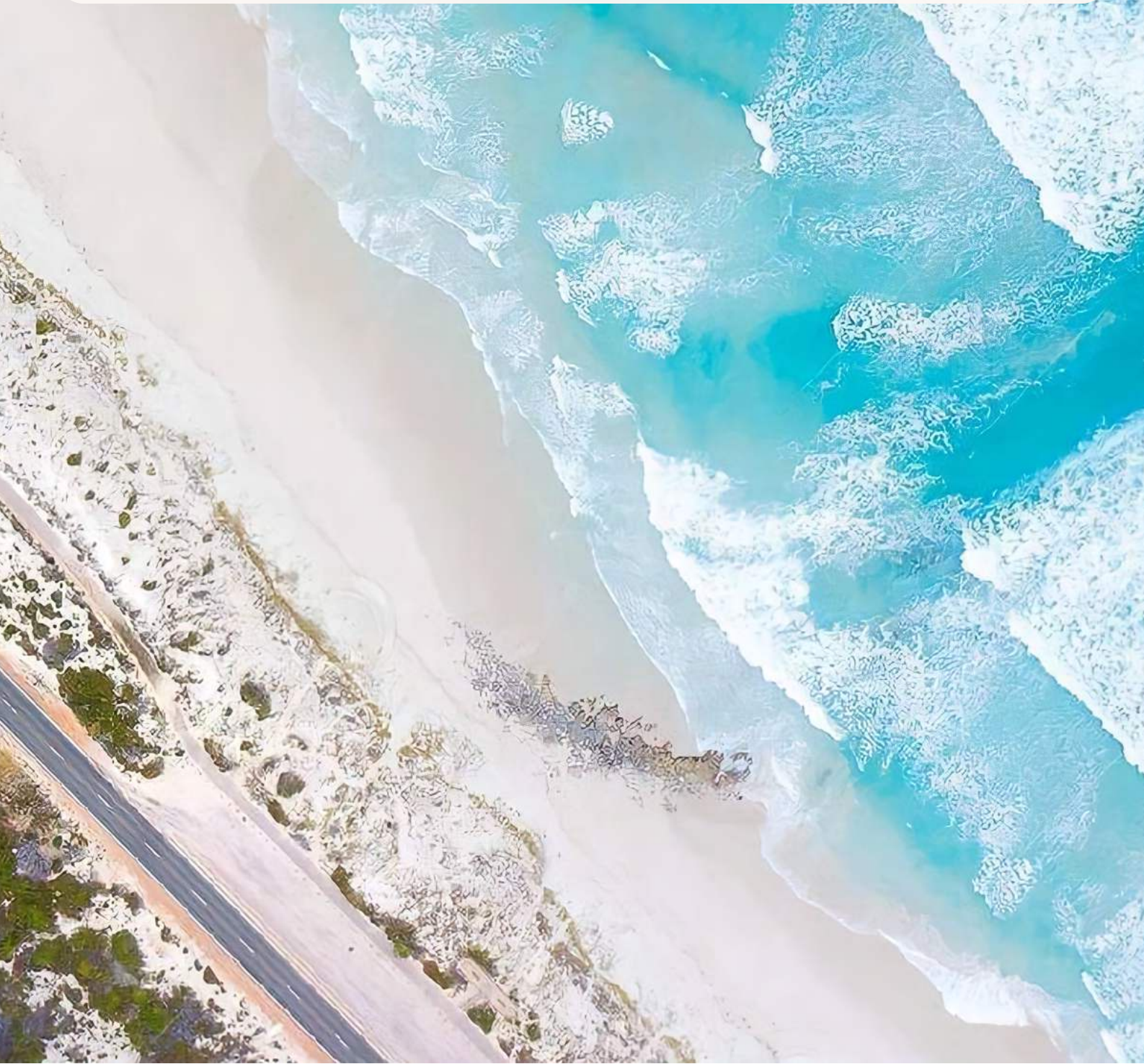
Established and maintained agreements over **458** days



# SOUTH COAST NRM IN ACTION

South Coast NRM, together with our project partners, has had a strong year of delivery in 2022/2023 and we invite you to explore some highlighted projects in the following pages. Our operational programs reflect the themes of Southern Prospects; the biophysical themes of Land, Water, Biodiversity and Coastal and Marine and the bridging, or foundational, themes of Cultural Heritage and Regional Capacity.

At South Coast NRM we want to lead, learn and contribute to global best practice in natural resource management through traditional knowledge, science, collaboration, and open communication. Aside from project delivery in 2022/ 2023, there has been a strong focus on collaborative program and project design, including the Australian Government's Approach to Market. We look forward to reporting our successes in significantly increasing the financial resources from all sources to support the community caring for nature throughout 2023/ 2024.





# SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN FOCUS

## South Coast NRM at a national level driving carbon storage on farm

Agricultural industries globally are driving the sustainability agenda, specifically the road towards carbon neutrality. In support of this, there is a significant body of research and innovation being generated. To ensure research leads to on-ground outcomes, it must be supported by communications and extension aimed at closing the gap between researchers and adopters – this is where South Coast NRM comes in!

South Coast NRM is putting communication and extension into action as part of a collaborative national project team delivering on the Meat and Livestock Australia funded Carbon Storage Partnership and the Australian Wool Innovation BENEFITS program. These projects are delivering research, case studies and extension with the aim of supporting growers to maximise the emerging opportunities of carbon storage.



South Coast NRM is supporting the delivery of communications and extension activities across Australia that will drive the adoption of on farm practices to increase carbon storage. In 2022/ 2023 these activities included displays at agricultural shows and building relationships with the national networks that support growers. Providing capacity building, resources and accessible research results through this network will be one of several pillars to support adoption of practice change in pursuit of carbon neutrality.

Effective extension to farmers and their networks is essential to ensuring that the leading research contributes to practice change and ultimately to reduced carbon emissions from the sector. South Coast NRM also provides monitoring and evaluation support for the partnership with Meat and Livestock Australia and Australian Wool Innovation, collating the reach of 103 communications and extension activities over the 2022/ 2023 financial year.

In 2023, a major literature review on the effects of grazing management and other factors on soil carbon was completed by other members of the Carbon Storage Partnership and submitted for publication. As a highly technical piece of work with nuanced results, South Coast NRM's involvement in translating this work for a wider audience is an example of the kind of contributions South Coast NRM can make in these important industry initiatives to support sustainable agriculture.



## Subsurface drainage and the war on waterlogging

The Subsurface Drainage Return on Investment project is an investment by the Grains Research and Development Corporation being delivered by South Coast NRM in the Esperance Port Zone. This trial has put to great use the extreme rainfall events that the South Coast region has experienced over the past three years and has produced some outstanding results for growers. Growers have experienced yield benefits from the drains, in some cases up to 1.5t/ ha greater when compared to waterlogged crops, along with improved soil health, reduced weed and disease burden, and greater crop vigour.

But the project has become so much more than a yield trial. Growers and industry are observing benefits of subsurface drainage systems that can support the health of natural ecosystems, maximise resource efficiencies, and build climate resilience.



The drains can not only harvest more water, creating additional water supplies for periods of drought, but filter water being discharged off-farm, reducing nutrient and sediment loading into natural waterways. Additionally, unlike surface drains, subsurface drains can be cropped over, enabling growers to maximise the efficiency of their farm operations.

The project aims to establish the return-on-investment period for subsurface drainage systems and will analyse three years' worth of harvest data across four trials in the Esperance and Albany Port Zones, with the Albany trial being managed by Stirlings to Coast Farmers. The final results will be presented in April 2024. This project has built an incredible amount of community buy in, encouraged by the fantastic partnerships the project has established with growers, research advisors, the Grains Research and Development Corporation, local grower groups and industry.



The keen interest to continue work in the surface water management and subsurface drainage fields, beyond the life of the project, demonstrates the value that trials led from the ground up provides to local communities. South Coast NRM look forward to continuing to drive collaborative initiatives that build on the knowledge and learning of the subsurface drainage trial.



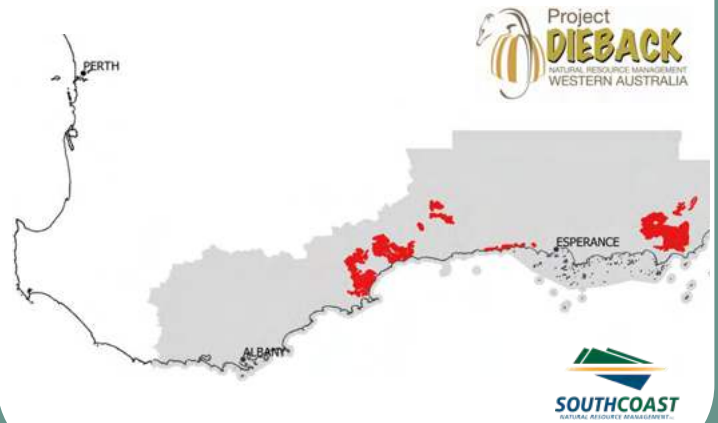
# LET'S TALK DIEBACK

## Collaborative dieback disease mapping

Effective dieback management in Western Australia requires a central repository of disease distribution and management data. This information currently exists within the Dieback Information Delivery and Management System (DIDMS), which South Coast NRM built in 2005 and is committed to supporting. A total of 2,110 additional *Phytophthora* data points were added to DIDMS during the life of the Landscape-scale Dieback Management Through Enhanced Collaborative Dieback Disease Mapping project, supported by the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program and finalised this year.

The project engaged more than 150 stakeholders and community participants in a comprehensive consultation process. The results of this consultation were documented in a report which underscored the importance of DIDMS as a crucial tool for dieback management within the community.

Project Dieback Site Distribution (CSGL18114)



Stakeholder consultation also identified the potential for a partnership with the Dieback Working Group to establish a new platform for DIDMS.

South Coast NRM and the Dieback Working Group have determined to formalise a partnership concerning DIDMS. This partnership will cover the ongoing operation and general maintenance of DIDMS and explore additional synergies and streamlining of mutual activities. In the interim, South Coast NRM will continue the ongoing operation and maintenance of DIDMS with the support of the Dieback Working Group as required. Both organisations will actively seek investment opportunities to ensure the transition of DIDMS to a permanent stable platform.



# Implementing the State Dieback Investment Framework

The Implementing the State Dieback Management and Investment Framework project ran from 2019 to 2023 and was supported by the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program. The project collaborated with land managers, stakeholders, and community to directly address the spread of *Phytophthora* dieback across the south coast of Western Australia.

Implementation of the Investment Framework, including dieback management, occurred within six high priority protection areas (PPAs): Cape Arid National Park, Fitzgerald River National Park West, Fitzgerald River National Park East, Ravensthorpe Ranges, Stokes National Park, and Upper Oldfield Catchment. This work contributed to safeguarding 492,544 hectares of high priority native vegetation untouched by dieback through critical roadworks, enhanced management and 46 hectares of phosphite application.



Key highlights from this significant project include:

- Engaging 835 volunteers and hosting two dieback conferences with 34 presentations and 168 participants;
- Conducting 12 Green Card trainings with two presenters, involving 146 participants from 28 organisations and community members;
- Maintaining Dieback Information Delivery and Management System (DIDMS), with three DIDMS user surveys demonstrating a 92% increase in users and a 76% increase in industry/ private sector users;
- Hosting 26 planning sessions and promotions, including eight TAG meetings, site visits and nine conference presentations;
- Promoting the project through 18 media articles and events across seven platforms;
- Distributing 283 hygiene kits to 16 organisations and community members;
- Demonstrating the Investment Framework's effectiveness in identifying and prioritising natural assets and allocating resources to maintain disease-free areas; and



Creating a resource library and an animated video, enhancing dieback awareness and management beyond the project's original scope.

South Coast NRM will persist in advocating for collaborative, cross-tenure, and landscape scale dieback management in WA. We will continue to cultivate partnerships and explore investment opportunities to sustain the Investment Framework, support DIDMS, raise awareness about dieback, and invest in critical on-ground activities aimed at protecting our natural assets and biodiversity.



# RESTORING NOONGAR BOODJA

## Three important, time critical projects

Restoring Noongar Boodja, supported by Lotterywest, is an ambitious program of projects aimed at respectfully engaging, recording, sharing, and applying Noongar traditional ecological knowledge within the South Coast region, and investigating contemporary applications for natural resource management. The program was built around three important and time-critical projects developed in consultation with the Aboriginal community and partner groups across the South Coast region.

The three projects are:

Songlines and Sustainability: a cultural reconnection project developed with the Wirlomin community;

Walking Together: a collaboration with UWA focused on recording Noongar traditional ecological knowledge and applying to modern natural resource management; and

Restoring Lake Pleasant View: a culturally focused, community-driven restoration project on a unique Aboriginal owned property, represent a suite of innovative projects aiming to elevate Noongar knowledge within contemporary natural resource management practice.

Fitting within a broad and innovative Noongar focused program, these three distinct projects assist a wide spectrum of the Noongar community to pursue Caring for Country (Boodja) aspirations by visiting, applying and sharing traditional ecological knowledge whilst restoring, learning about, and protecting, culturally significant locations. Importantly, this program of projects has significantly grown the capacity and capability of Aboriginal people to be active participants in caring for Country initiatives on the south coast and has placed Noongar Elders and community members alongside scientists and natural resource management practitioners.

Restoring Noongar Boodja, a four-year program of projects, is in the final stages of delivery. Songlines and Sustainability has been fully delivered and acquitted and both Restoring Lake Pleasant View and Walking Together will be finalised in 2023/ 2024.



## Songlines and Sustainability

For many years, Wirlomin have worked to heal the connections between their people, culture, and ancestral Country. Under the guidance of Elders, Wirlomin Noongar Language & Stories (WNL&S) has been activating both historical archives and community memory to consolidate and enhance cultural heritage and its links to significant places in the landscape.

The Songlines and Sustainability project has allowed South Coast NRM to walk alongside WNL&S, collaborating to expand on this earlier work and to share Wirlomin language, stories, and song with 'ever-widening circles' of people.

With the project concluded in March 2023, a massive success throughout the final six months of the project culminated in two major on Country trips; Songlines and the Fitz and the Kayang Walk.



Both trips were an amazing opportunity for a large contingent of Wirlomin community members to get out on Country, bringing together Elders, emerging leaders, and youth, in the heart of Fitzgerald River National Park.

Songlines and the Fitz included a presentation by the Wirlomin community to a rapt audience of people from all around Australia and beyond, as part of the Ravensthorpe Wildflower Show. The presentation wove together language, maps, film, and song to reveal the previously untold story of the Fitzgerald region through the eyes, the lives and the history of Wirlomin people. The reaction from the audience was overwhelmingly positive and indicated a clear desire to learn from, and work with, Wirlomin people in managing this beautiful landscape into the future.

Building on the success of Songlines and the Fitz, the Kayang Walk brought together more than 30 Wirlomin community members on Country at Point Anne and Twertup Field Station. The three-day camp was an incredible opportunity for cross-generational exchange between Wirlomin Elders and an enthusiastic group of younger people. It also provided a forum to discuss what comes next, and how best to harness the momentum of Songlines and Sustainability for continued exploration of the links between cultural heritage and Caring for Country practices.



Well done to our project partner Wirlomin Noongar Language & Stories for their many years of hard work, and congratulations on the remarkable success of Songlines and Sustainability!



# RESTORING NOONGAR BOODJA

## Walking Together

The Walking Together project was funded by Lotterywest in December 2019. Walking Together is the largest project developed under the Restoring Noongar Boodja program with a major delivery partner the University of Western Australia and multiple activity partners constructed around extensive on-ground activities with Elders and western scientists. Strong partnerships have been built through this project which have supported substantial engagement and employment of Noongar Elders and Rangers and facilitated the gathering of the traditional ecological knowledge base that drives the project's on-Country activities.

To date, Walking Together has designed, developed, and delivered a wide range of project activities, many of which have resulted in significant employment, recording and communication outcomes for the wider Noongar community.



Key objectives of the project are being delivered by UWA under a sub-contract with agreed milestone and milestone payments. To date, the project partners have successfully documented, recorded, and scientifically investigated numerous aspects of Noongar traditional ecological knowledge in various locations within the South Coast region. The 'walking together' modality has included interviews and discussions with prominent Noongar Elders and representatives from Noongar corporations, often on Country, allowing carefully guided conversations at appropriate target sites. Relevant traditional ecological knowledge and its intersection with western scientific knowledge has steadily emerged in such settings. Conversations are recorded and transcriptions taken during site visits.

The incorporation of traditional ecological knowledge into a Landscape Management Plan at Cowalellup Reserve in Gnowangerup (Goreng Country) is almost complete, and a second Management Plan, focusing on the Borden Noongar Reserve and key areas in the surrounding landscape, is well underway. Additional planning sessions in the coming months will be used to refine the key values and threats at Borden Reserve and ensure the Plan adequately represents the vision of the many now dispersed Noongar people who retain a strong connection to this culturally important site.



UWA's Biodiversity on Country field camp for Environmental Science and Conservation Biology Masters students has documented and recorded significant traditional ecological knowledge, while also providing an excellent opportunity for Elder's to increase their formal teaching capabilities as part of a Masters-level course. The traditional ecological knowledge gained as part of this unit, including during site visits with Elders and family, will now be refined for incorporation into a preliminary and forward-looking Management Plan for Mount Melville in the City of Albany.

The progressive outcomes of Walking Together have been regularly shared with the wider community through various methods, including multiple social media platforms, an article about the history of Borden Reserve (published in the Conversation), an Ecology Matters podcast episode (aired by the Ecological Society of Australia), and numerous peer-reviewed articles published in scientific journals (such as Human Ecology and Society of Ethnobiology).

The final phase of Walking Together will include the completion of Management Plans for Cowalellup, Borden, and Mount Melville. Furthermore, transcriptions and editing for the publication of Noongar oral history recordings will be finished, along with a collaborative publication or conference presentation.



Traditional ecological knowledge insights will be prepared for the Southern Prospects 2019/ 2024 review and Aboriginal School-Based traineeships will be successfully concluded, along with the release of two short videos. Additionally, transcriptions and editing will be completed for the publication of L. Knapp's Oral History, and an International Symposium is scheduled for July 2024.





# RESTORING NOONGAR BOODJA

## Lake Pleasant View (Ballogup)

The Restoring Lake Pleasant View (Ballogup) project has been a practical demonstration project showing how traditional ecological knowledge and western science can be integrated and utilised by significantly enhancing the community management of an important Aboriginal owned property. The project has been conceived, developed, and delivered in close partnership with the Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation (AHRGAC), owners of the culturally significant Lake Pleasant View property, east of Albany. Importantly, by working closely with the AHRGAC to deliver the full suite of heritage, infrastructure, property enhancement and ecological outcomes, the project has maximized opportunities for Noongar aspirations to be actioned. This has included significant Elder involvement in all facets of the project that has in turn generated significant Noongar employment and Noongar community engagement opportunities.



In the final stages, the Restoring Lake Pleasant View (Ballogup) project has continued to build momentum towards its conclusion driven by strong partnerships between South Coast NRM, AHRGAC, and partnerships established with other organisations such as TAFE.

During 2023, project partners have been continuing to implement and be guided by the Ballogup Environmental Property Management Plan and the Ballogup Landscape Master Plan (2021) developed at the commencement of the project. It should be noted that the Ballogup Master Plan provides guidance for future development beyond the scope of the current plan and these planned future developments will be an enduring benefit of this project.

As per its plan, the project has completed almost all of its planned objectives, overachieving on several, and will ultimately deliver all expected outcomes. As well as delivering environmental and heritage outcomes, it has surpassed expectation in delivering outstanding social outcomes. For Elders, these have been a most pleasing benefit to the Noongar community, where involvement in decision making, and then delivery of project activities, has created employment, improved community cohesion, and encouraged reconnection to Country. For the wider Noongar community, such benefits, often very difficult to achieve, cannot be understated and will be a major legacy of this project.



AHRGAC has been involved in activities on Country with a commitment and general focus on improving visitor experiences on site. Remedial actions to protect environmental and heritage values of the site have continued throughout 2023. Weed control, seed collection, revegetation and flora, fauna and weed surveys have been delivered with full oversight and often participation of the AHRGAC.

A major achievement of the project has been the development and installation of culturally appropriate signage. In line with a long-held aspiration, interpretive signage was designed by local Noongar artists and writers with AHRGAC families managing the entire content and design process. Further access improvements including track upgrades to tie in the building of a Noongar meeting place and installation of composting toilets will be delivered by the end of the project.

A wonderful traditional burning event was held at Ballogup with local Elder Aiden Eades reflecting on the significance of cultural burning, remarking "it's a historical gathering today, it's the first time that I can remember in my days since living on the Reserve in the 1950's for this type of burning to be taking place".



A cultural education theme, focused on Noongar led activities at Ballogup has flourished due to now well-established partnerships with TAFE, senior high schools and the local Many Peaks primary schools.

In the project's final phase, key activities will include providing opportunities for AHRGAC to engage in practical heritage and conservation activities. The construction of a Noongar "meeting place" as a visitor focal point, along with visitor facility enhancements like compostable toilets, seating, and walk track extensions, will be completed. A cultural heritage survey, involving Elders and Noongar family members through an archaeological dig, will build on previous results. The project will conclude with a Noongar-led 'end of project' celebration event.





# SOUTH COAST ENVIRO- EXPERIENCES

Creating community connections through environmental volunteering

We all know that volunteering is a great way to help your local community while learning new skills; connecting with your local community and doing something positive for your mind and body. South Coast NRM is working collaboratively to highlight the opportunities of volunteering to help the environment, as well as providing critical training and tools for organisations to support their volunteer program aspirations. The Enviro-Experiences project, supported by Lotterywest launched in April 2022.

Since the project's inception, we have engaged with over 1,400 participants of which volunteers make up 200. One of the critical tools being trialed to contemporise volunteer engagement and management is a new online volunteer web platform which has been developed and consistently populated with environmental events and activities across the South Coast region.



In 2022/ 2023, the project team have developed and embedded "South Coast Enviro-Experience" branding which incorporated the six Noongar seasons and have delivered a regional roadshow encouraging volunteers to register on the online platform so they can access all types of events in their local area. Communication products, including two short videos have been developed to communicate the opportunities for environmental community groups and volunteers. The types of events include awareness raising, training and on-ground environmental activities taking community members on a journey from being a passive participant at an information event, to an active volunteer carrying out specific roles in the field.

The Project Steering Committee has provided valuable guidance to the project, especially in relation to what volunteer groups need to ensure they can manage their volunteers. This has resulted in volunteer management workshops being held in Albany, Ravensthorpe and Esperance, governance training for volunteer committees, and the production of a volunteer management toolkit which includes a handbook guide for managing volunteers.



During the next nine months, the team will be working together with the local volunteer services to help them incorporate the South Coast Enviro-Experiences online platform into their systems with the aim to increase the number of Enviro-Experience opportunities they offer to volunteers. By continuing to build on, and strengthen, relationships between community groups and volunteers we are enabling community connections through environmental volunteering to increase the capacity of on ground activities into the future.

# OUR PARTNERS

South Coast NRM would like to sincerely thank all partners in 2022/ 2023, including:

Albany Aboriginal Corporation  
Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation  
Albany Senior High School  
ASHEEP  
ATC Worksmart  
Australasian Bittern Recovery Team  
Australian Facilitation Company  
Australian National University  
Australian National Herbarium  
Binalup Aboriginal Rangers  
Birdlife Australia  
Bush Heritage Australia  
Carnaby's Cockatoo Recovery Team  
Centre of Excellence in Natural Resource Management  
Chuditch Recovery Team  
City of Albany  
Cocanarup Conservation Alliance  
Consulting Great Southern  
CSIRO  
Curtin University  
Deep Woods Surveys  
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions  
Department of Education  
Department of Local Government, Sport & Cultural Industries  
Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage  
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development  
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation  
Dieback Working Group  
Edith Cowan University  
Esperance Bird Observer Group  
Esperance Farm Trees  
Esperance Senior High School  
Esperance Volunteer Resource Centre  
Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation  
Esperance Weeds Action Group  
Fitzgerald Biosphere Group Inc.  
Fitzgerald Biosphere Community Collective  
Friends of the Western Ground Parrot  
Gilberts Potoroo Action Group  
Gillamii Centre Inc.  
Gnowangerup Aboriginal Corporation  
Gondwana Link  
Great Southern Bio Logic  
Great Southern Development Commission  
Great Southern Science Council  
Green Skills Inc.  
Greening Australia WA  
Healthy Estuaries WA  
Impact Services

Kadadjiny Aboriginal Corporation  
Katanning Senior High School  
Kurrah Mia  
Malleefowl Preservation Group  
Many Peaks Primary School  
MLA Carbon Storage Partnership Network  
Murdoch University – Centre for Phytophthora Science and Management  
National Malleefowl Recovery Team  
North Albany Senior High School  
North Stirlings Pallinup Natural Resources Inc.  
Nowanup  
NRM Regions Australia  
NRM WA  
Oyster Harbour Catchment Group Inc.  
Palmerston  
Private Landholders  
Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network Inc.  
Relationships Australia  
Seed Design  
Shire of Broomhill-Tambellup  
Shire of Denmark  
Shire of Esperance  
Shire of Gnowangerup  
Shire of Jerramungup  
Shire of Plantagenet  
Shire of Ravensthorpe  
South Coast Bushcare Services  
South Coast Cetaceans  
South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team  
South East Premium Wheat Growers Association  
South West Catchments Council  
Southern Ecology  
Southern Aboriginal Corporation  
Stirlings to Coast Farmers  
South Regional TAFE  
Tambellup Aboriginal Progress Association  
Tambellup Primary School  
TERN Ecosystem Research Infrastructure for Australia  
TiloMass Environmental Services  
Torbay Catchment Group Inc.  
University of Tasmania  
University of Western Australia  
Volunteering WA  
WA Malleefowl Recovery Group  
WA Police  
Walpole-Nornalup National Park Association Inc  
Western Ringtail Possum Recovery Team  
Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee Inc.  
Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project



# OUR INVESTMENT PARTNERS

South Coast NRM is proud to be working with our Investment Partners – investing in Southern Prospects:

Australian Government – Department Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Australian Government – Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Australian Government – Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources

Australian Wool Innovation (through University of Tasmania)

Birdlife

City of Albany

Commonwealth Bank of Australia

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development:

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

Esperance Regional Forum (Legacy Funds)

Grains Research and Development Corporation

Great Southern Development Commission

Healthways WA

Lotterywest

Meat and Livestock Australia (through University of Tasmania)

Minderoo Foundation

South Coast Environment Fund

South Coast Management Group (Legacy Funds)

State NRM Program



# REFERENCE AND STEERING GROUPS

South Coast NRM works to both attract and deliver a range of landscape focused, impactful work in the region. This would not be possible without the dedicated contributions and guidance of the reference groups. The Board and Staff extend their gratitude to the members of the reference groups.

Aboriginal Reference Group;  
Healthy Environments Reference Group;  
Land and Water Reference Group; and  
South East Reference Group

Effective project management and delivery across the South Coast is supported by a number of dedicated project steering committees, working groups and technical advisory groups. These project teams provide great guidance to operational staff, providing the expertise and guidance on projects to ensure success. Thank you to all who are contributing to effective and impactful delivery in the region.

## OUR BOARD

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John Ruprecht – Deputy Chair  
Ricky Burges – Director  
Colin Ingram – Director

Duncan Monro – Director  
Marie Malaxos – Director  
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## OUR TEAM

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Cary Green – Executive Manager Business & Governance

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Karl Hansom – Restoring Lake Pleasant View Project Officer  
Natalie Reeves – Noongar Kaartdijin Project Officer  
Kerry Smith – Strong and Proud Coordinator  
Justin Benson – Project Officer

Steven McCleery – Aboriginal School Based Trainee  
Cleve Humphries – Aboriginal School Based Trainee

### CORPORATE SERVICES

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Catherine Bailey – Corporate Support Officer

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Sophie Willsher – Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator  
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Claudia Magana – Ramsar Project Officer  
Suzannah Macbeth – Adoption Coordinator

### REGIONAL CAPACITY TEAM

Laura Bird – Enviro-Experiences Project Leader  
Catherine Johnston – Enviro-Experiences Project Officer  
Jimena Ramon Montemayor – Enviro-Experiences Project Officer



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