



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023/24





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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the places in which we live, work and play. We recognise and respect the enduring relationship they have with their lands and waters, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.



# CHAIR AND CEO REPORT

We are pleased to present the South Coast NRM 2023 – 2024 Annual Report. In the past 12 months, South Coast NRM and its partners have made great strides toward our vision of sustainable, thriving communities where nature is cherished and protected. Working closely with Catchment and Landcare groups, Aboriginal Corporations, industry, and government partners, we have achieved meaningful progress in managing the natural resources of the region more sustainably.

In line with our strategy, we have secured our role as a Regional Delivery Partner with the Australian government, empowering us to lead on natural resource management and sustainable agriculture. As we look to the future, we are pleased to be growing our capacity in natural capital accounting, with pilot projects being planned in close collaboration with local industry and First Nations groups. This work is a foundation for sustainable investment in nature and a resilient South Coast community and will help fulfil our vision of ‘thriving and diverse communities where nature is valued, protected and restored’

We want to acknowledge our project partners who have contributed to the development and delivery natural resource management projects in the region. Catchment and Landcare groups, Aboriginal Corporations, industry grower groups, local, State, and Federal governments are critical contributors to building our understanding and caring for our land and seascapes. Together we have achieved excellent outcomes in: revegetation and restoration, threatened species management, subsurface

drainage, riparian habitats, integrated feral animal control, and projects led by the Noongar community based upon their cultural priorities.

South Coast NRM has also spent considerable time with existing and new partners over the past 12 months to respond to Australian Government requests for project development. Strengthening regional alliances and better understanding how we can more effectively work together has been a priority.

South Coast NRM has successfully delivered on ‘Horizon One’ of our current business strategy, which focused on organisational restructuring and securing contracts to nurture and ensure our core business. Our core business has been and continues to be underpinned by funding from the Australian government. In 2023, the five-year Federally funded regional land partnership program ended, and the region commenced working on the new regional delivery partner panel process.

The board would like to acknowledge the CEO and his leadership team for securing South Coast NRMs as one of the 52 regional delivery partners (RDPPs) with the Australian government. The panel of regional delivery partners (RDPs) will deliver regional capacity services under a 5-year deed of standing offer. This includes:

- Natural resource management planning.
- Community and First Nations engagement.
- Project design.
- Monitoring.

These services will focus on environmental protection, sustainable agriculture, and sustainable natural resource management. The South Coast region was one of the best-performing in the nation and, at this stage, has secured over sixteen million dollars of new public investment. Australian Government agencies are expected to use the panel to procure regional delivery partners to co-design and deliver projects.

Earlier this year, our CEO also received a prestigious scholarship from the Philanthropic Ferris Family, to attend Harvard Business School in the United States. During his attendance at the Strategic Leadership for non-profit Management in Boston, Luke was able to share insights from Australia's conservation, agriculture, and regional communities, and learn from other senior practitioners across the non-profit sector.

Collaborating with the Harvard Business School Social Enterprise Initiative, Luke represented the South Coast region and engaged globally with top CEOs across the non-profit sector. Luke presented the challenge of revolutionising planning and implementation of strategies for nature conservation and climate change. This included the development of a model of investment that is a blend of government and private capital. This course has assisted South Coast NRM in better positioning itself to develop and implement new business methods that more effectively support sustainable industries and community empowerment in the region

As we look to the future, South Coast NRM will continue to work on our ‘Horizon Two’ strategy to scale up our markets-based focus. This will be underpinned by the development of natural capital accounts and will help us to position the region to take advantage of the changes in national environment policy and the shift in community sentiment for improving our natural assets,

We will also continue to strengthen our core business and work hard to bring together industry and the community in the region to provide solutions to Government (local, State, and national) on how to better manage and protect the environment, whilst aligning with the aspirations of local Aboriginal land councils and corporations.

We sincerely thank all board and subcommittee members for their ongoing leadership and guidance throughout the past 12 months.



**Andrew Bathgate**  
Chair



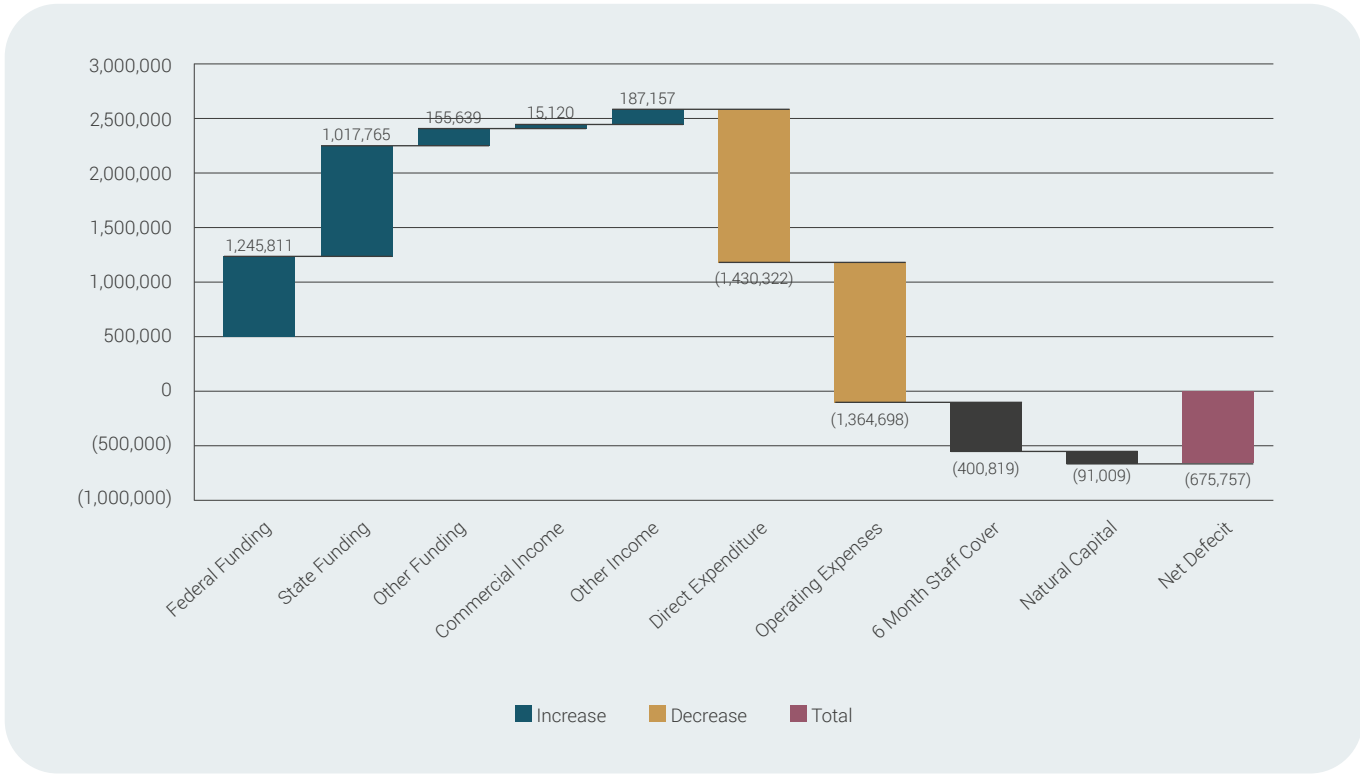
**Luke Bayley**  
Chief Executive Officer

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2023/24

South Coast NRM is required to prepare Annual Financial Reports in accordance with the Associations Incorporations Act (WA) 2025 and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissions Act 2012. The 2024 Special Purpose Financial Report has been completed and a copy is available 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 the 2023/2024 year was a deficit of \$675,756 as summarised below.

## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE



## PROFIT OR LOSS

	2024	2023
Revenue and Other Income	2,621,492	4,721,205
Expenses		
Direct Expenses	1,932,550	4,061,981
Operating Expenses	1,364,698	1,174,666
Total Expenses	3,297,248	5,236,647
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	(675,756)	(515,442)

The following is an explanation of the 2024 Financial Year deficit:

### 1. 5 Year Project Completion Phase

Federal funding RLP projects concluded in the 2022/23 financial year, and due to Federal delays in establishment of the RDPP program, SCNRM did not receive project work orders until late in the 2023/24 year. This resulted in a reduction in revenue for the year of \$2million.

### 2. 6 Month Project Staff Extensions

In anticipation of quicker commencement of RDPP projects, SCNRM decided to maintain project delivery staff expertise for the first 6 months of the 2023/24 year. This resulted in increased unrecoverable expenditure of \$401k.

### 3. Natural Capital Business Development

SCNRM is leading the industry in development of a Natural Capital Program for the region. SCNRM made an initial investment of \$91k in the 2023/24 year in development of the program's business case.

## BALANCE SHEET

	2024	2023
Assets		
Current Assets	2,653,401	4,241,680
Non-Current Assets	235,055	424,562
Total Assets	2,888,456	4,666,242
Expenses		
Current Liabilities	954,734	1,910,492
Non-Current Liabilities	89,360	235,632
Total Liabilities	1,044,094	2,146,124
Net Assets	1,844,362	2,520,118



## 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 2024, the statement of profit and loss and other comprehensive income, 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:

- i) 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 2024, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended; and
- ii) 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 is 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made.
- 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.
- 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 7th day of November 2024

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# VALUING, PROTECTING AND RESTORING NATURE.

# INSPIRING AND EMPOWERING PEOPLE.





# AN OPERATIONAL YEAR IN REVIEW — 2023/24

In 2023-2024, South Coast NRM focused on strengthening and securing its core operations, ensuring the necessary resources were available for impactful, landscape-scale initiatives. By year's end, substantial progress was achieved toward these goals, along with the successful completion of the significant Restoring Noongar Boodja program of works, and the environmental volunteer focused South Coast Enviro-Experiences project.



# REGIONAL DELIVERY PARTNER PANEL — AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS INTO THE SOUTH COAST REGION

In November 2023, South Coast NRM achieved a significant milestone by becoming a member of the Australian Government's Panel of Regional Delivery Partners for Environmental Protection, Sustainable Agriculture, and Natural Resource Management Services. This success highlights South Coast NRM's strong reputation and capability in delivering high-quality programs and projects. We are grateful for the ongoing support of our region and stakeholders throughout the tender and investment concept development processes. This achievement strengthens our capacity to deliver impactful, community-led environmental programs and fosters continued collaboration across the South Coast region to address pressing ecological and sustainability challenges.

Following its appointment, the Australian Government engaged South Coast NRM to co-design and deliver several projects aligned with government priorities, including those related to threatened species, Priority Places, Ramsar sites, and the Sustainable Agriculture program. Working closely with regional stakeholders, South Coast NRM successfully integrated these national initiatives with local priorities, ensuring that high-level government goals are effectively tailored to address the needs of the South Coast region's species, places, and industries. This collaborative approach has enabled meaningful local action while contributing to broader environmental and sustainability objectives.

Three key projects of note secured in June 2024 were Protecting and restoring the Fitz-Stirling Priority Place for nature and people, Targeted action for highly threatened species in the South Coast Region and Improved knowledge and on-ground action to restore Lake Gore and surrounds.



## PROTECTING AND RESTORING THE FITZ-STIRLING PRIORITY PLACE FOR NATURE AND PEOPLE

Through a process of regional consultation, the Fitz-Stirling, often seen as the region's "jewel in the crown" was identified as a regional priority. To support this and through a co-design process, in early 2023 South Coast NRM led the development of a comprehensive two-year project which is being supported by the Australian Governments Saving Native Species program.

The project will conserve and restore the Fitz-Stirling Priority Place by implementing key management actions for its fauna, flora, ecological communities and people. Actions will include managing disease, securing threatened flora through seed collection and translocations, access control, integrated pest control, habitat augmentation, fire management, revegetation and supporting First Nations cultural practices. Through these actions, and in combination with communications and events, the project will also strengthen connection to country by facilitating the recording, sharing, and raising awareness of eco-cultural knowledge.

The project will gather critical knowledge through monitoring to assess the place's condition, informing the development of a Fitz-Stirling Priority Place Management Plan for future conservation decisions. Through coordinated collaboration with partner organisations, the project will use a cross-tenure, landscape approach and build on concurrent NHT investments.

## TARGETED ACTION FOR HIGHLY THREATENED SPECIES IN THE SOUTH COAST REGION

Targeted action for highly threatened species in the South Coast Region is a critical project to assist in urgent recovery actions to support some of the world's most endangered species. This critical project will deliver priority recovery actions through to June 2028 and is supported by the Australian Government through the Natural Heritage Trust program. Through the implementation of landscape-scale predator control, strategic translocation initiatives, and rigorous species and threat monitoring, this project will sustain and expand previous management efforts to protect and conserve the few remaining populations of the Gilbert's potoroo, western ground parrot, and noisy scrub-bird. Through integration of cultural knowledge and perspectives into recovery and burn planning, and strategic and coordinated communications and engagement events, the project also aims to increase cultural and ecological awareness of these species and their need for recovery. By undertaking these recovery activities, integrating cultural and ecological perspectives and fostering community engagement, this project will ensure the sustained protection and cultural significance of the species and their habitats.

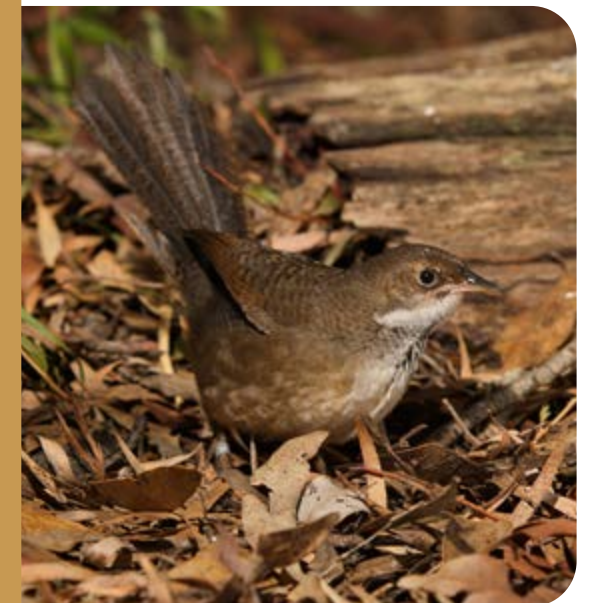


Photo taken by Alan Danks

## IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE AND ON-GROUND ACTION TO RESTORE LAKE GORE AND SURROUNDS

The Improved knowledge and on-ground action to restore Lake Gore and surrounds project was secured through support through the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust program and will run until June 2028. This project will bring focused attention to Lake Gore and its catchments – one of the region's Ramsar wetlands. The project will support recovery actions to improve the condition of the Lake Gore Ramsar Wetland and surrounding landscape. The project will address key knowledge gaps identified in Lake Gore's ecological character description by improving understanding of the system. Through riparian revegetation, targeted weed control, access control and predator management, the project mitigates key threats to improve water quality, habitat suitability for biodiversity (including waterbirds), wetland ecosystem resilience and the condition of Proteaceae Dominated Kwongan Shrubland Threatened Ecological Community.



Photo taken by Tilo Massenbauer



# SOUTH COAST ENVIRO-EXPERIENCES: A LAUNCH PAD ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEERING

A key achievement was the introduction of the “My Impact” online volunteer platform, which connected volunteers to tailored activities, logging over 1,361 hours of environmental action in its trial phase. The initiative also supported volunteer training, resources, and governance improvements, addressing critical gaps in volunteer management for under-resourced community groups. Grounded in Noongar cultural values and modern ecological practices, this project amplified awareness, strengthened partnerships, and diversified volunteer demographics, leaving a lasting impact on the region’s environment and its communities – and enhancing environmental volunteering.

The South Coast Enviro-Experiences project, supported by Lotterywest and completed in May 2024, significantly enhanced community connections and environmental stewardship across the South Coast region through targeted and innovative volunteering opportunities. By engaging 2,706 participants in 92 activities, the project united diverse stakeholders—including Noongar families, local environmental groups, and citizen scientists—to protect and restore coastal, woodland, marine, and river ecosystems.



# ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS AND CITIZEN SCIENTISTS IN OUR WORK WITH THREATENED SPECIES

Building on the success of the South Coast Enviro-Experiences project, which fostered community connections and environmental stewardship through innovative volunteering, South Coast NRM continues to engage volunteers in its pivotal role in protecting threatened species across the region. In 2023-2024, the team was proud to launch two collaborative projects dedicated to tracking and conserving iconic local species: the Western Ringtail Possum and the Southern Right Whale. Leveraging a proven model for engaging diverse stakeholders—including Indigenous communities, citizen scientists, and environmental groups—these initiatives combine technology, volunteer participation, and cultural knowledge to monitor species and their habitats. By providing training, resources, and hands-on opportunities, these projects aim to deepen community engagement and further enhance the conservation outcomes for the South Coast's unique biodiversity.

## CLIMATE-RESILIENT CONSERVATION OF URBAN WESTERN RINGTAIL POSSUM POPULATIONS

This project, aimed at the critically endangered Western Ringtail Possum, is a collaboration with key partners including the Oyster Harbour Catchment Group, Torbay Catchment Group, Southern Aboriginal Corporation, The University of Western Australia, and the City of Albany. The species is confined to three strongholds in southwest Australia, where it is found in high densities in urban areas.

As the region becomes drier, the possum's range may shrink due to its reliance on leaf moisture, suggesting that urban areas with watered gardens could act as climate refuges. To improve the trajectory of the species within one of its stronghold regions, the project will undertake recovery, monitoring, and awareness-raising activities in urban and peri-urban areas of Albany. Key actions include connecting habitats through urban greening, managing predators through responsible pet ownership, enhancing nesting opportunities, providing drought-relieving water, and establishing a citizen science monitoring program.

## RIGHT WHALE TRACKER — A SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALE CITIZEN SCIENCE PROGRAM

The Right Whale Tracker project is a three-year collaborative initiative between South Coast Cetaceans, South Coast NRM, and Oceans Blueprint, supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program. This project addresses the lack of knowledge and data necessary for the effective management of the endangered southern right whales along the south coast of Western Australia, a species still vulnerable to human-induced threats.

Right Whale Tracker enhances the capacity of communities, including citizen scientists and Indigenous Australians, to measure and monitor the population demographics and recovery of southern right whales in Australia. By filling critical knowledge gaps, the project aims to improve the conservation outcomes for the species while empowering local communities to engage directly in conservation-based management actions.

Photo taken by Right Whale Tracker Volunteer Javier Delgado Esteban



# WRAPPING UP RESTORING NOONGAR BOODJA: IMPACTING COUNTRY, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY

The Restoring Noongar Boodja initiative, funded by Lotterywest, comprised three strategically developed projects, each carried out in partnership with key organisations. The “Songlines and Sustainability” project was implemented in collaboration with the Wirlomin Language and Stories Project, while “Walking Together” was delivered with The University of Western Australia, South Coast NRM, and several Noongar families and Aboriginal corporations. The third project, “Restoring Lake Pleasant View,” partnered with the Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation. Designed in close consultation with the Noongar community and these vital partners, the initiative aimed to integrate Noongar traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) into modern land management practices. The projects collectively focused on restoring culturally significant sites, building capacity for Noongar-led natural resource management (NRM), and facilitating knowledge exchange among Noongar Elders, community members, scientists, and NRM practitioners. This program laid a strong foundation for empowering the Noongar community to lead current and future environmental stewardship efforts.

The initiative arose from a recognised need within the community for stronger integration of TEK in land management, spurred by growing interest in cultural practices such as traditional burning. Prior small-scale efforts in partnership with Noongar and non-Noongar stakeholders highlighted the value of a more inclusive approach that respected cultural knowledge and allowed Noongar people to control access to their heritage. These projects responded directly to the community’s aspirations, creating pathways for greater Noongar involvement in land management at a time when ecological challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss underscored the importance of diverse approaches to conservation and landscape restoration.

The outcomes of the program not only fulfilled its intended goals but also sparked widespread external interest, attracting agencies and local governments eager to engage with the Noongar community. Unintended positive outcomes, such as sold-out community events and significant engagement with organisations like Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, underscored the initiative’s broader impact. Success factors, including quality engagement with Elders and flexible project delivery, proved critical in establishing a sustainable model for community partnership. Key lessons emerged, such as the importance of trust, open collaboration, and responsive partnership dynamics, which have laid a strong foundation for future community-led environmental efforts.





# RESTORING LAKE PLEASANT VIEW

The Restoring Lake Pleasant View project exemplifies a deeply collaborative approach to ecological restoration and cultural heritage preservation. By integrating TEK and western science, this project has enhanced the management and protection of the culturally significant Ballogup (Lake Pleasant View) property. Together, South Coast NRM and the Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation (AHRGAC) engaged the Noongar family owners and community of the property in a holistic manner, from the development of environmental and cultural management plans to hands-on activities like flora and fauna surveys, archaeological assessments, and community planting days. Through this partnership, the project has empowered local Noongar families, amplified community involvement, and solidified Ballogup's status as a focal point for cultural education and ecological stewardship.

In addition to environmental successes, the project has yielded significant social and cultural outcomes, creating employment opportunities and reconnecting the Noongar community with Country. Activities such as traditional cultural burning and interpretive signage development have fostered a sense of ownership and pride among Noongar Elders and the wider community. Educational collaborations with local schools and TAFE have further promoted cultural understanding and provided unique, immersive learning experiences. The project's conclusion was marked by a celebration, underscoring the strengthened partnership and the enduring legacy of Noongar empowerment, cultural connection, and ecological health that Restoring Lake Pleasant View has established.



Photo taken by The University of Western Australia.



# SONGLINES AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Songlines and Sustainability project, a collaboration between South Coast NRM and the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project group, has fostered a meaningful reconnection between the Wirlomin community and their ancestral land. Through a series of on-Country camps, the project enabled Wirlomin Elders, families, and youth to engage with culturally significant locations, many for the first time. These gatherings facilitated the exchange of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), enriching the community's historical understanding and creating a lasting cultural legacy. The project's impact was particularly profound in strengthening community ties and preserving songline stories and cultural protocols, laying the groundwork for ongoing cultural education and ecological stewardship.

In addition to fostering cultural reconnection, Songlines and Sustainability facilitated partnerships with regional conservation groups and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation, and Attractions. This expanded network has empowered the Wirlomin to access important conservation sites and advocate for culturally informed land management. The project's capstone, the "Songlines and the Fitz" multimedia event, brought Wirlomin heritage to the public through a powerful display of storytelling, film, and ceremony, resonating deeply with attendees and promoting a shared vision for land stewardship. The successful establishment of intellectual property protocols and a digital archive further supports the preservation of Wirlomin knowledge and serves as a resource for future cross-cultural collaborations.



Photo taken by Gaylene Galardi



# WALKING TOGETHER

The Walking Together project, a key component of the broader Restoring Noongar Boodja initiative, has achieved profound impact in preserving and integrating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into modern land management. In collaboration with Noongar Elders, The University of Western Australia (UWA), and local communities, the project facilitated on-Country experiences that enabled intergenerational knowledge exchange, provided employment opportunities for Noongar Elders and Rangers, and strengthened Noongar community ties to culturally significant lands. These activities reinforced the role of TEK in ecological restoration, bridging traditional practices with Western conservation techniques and benefiting the ecological and cultural heritage of the areas involved.

In addition, Walking Together, supported by UWA's commitment to cultural preservation, created a rich oral history archive that documents the perspectives and stories of Noongar families. This repository, with over 2,000 video recordings and transcripts, preserves a vast legacy for future generations and promotes continued cross-cultural engagement through UWA-led programs. As part of the project's outcomes, South Coast NRM led the development of three management plans that incorporate culturally relevant conservation practices for Cowalellup Reserve, Borden Reserve, and Kardarup.

The project culminated in the Kwodjet Goorliny Symposium, hosted in part by UWA, which highlighted First Nations knowledge, enabled community collaboration, and fostered new educational and research partnerships. Walking Together not only advanced Noongar-led land management but also set a precedent for meaningful, two-way collaboration between First Nations and broader communities, offering a model for respectful integration of Indigenous knowledge in natural resource management.



# DEVELOPING A NATURAL CAPITAL APPROACH THAT BENEFITS OUR REGION

## WHAT IS NATURAL CAPITAL?

Natural capital refers to the rich array of natural resources and ecosystems found along the South Coast region in Western Australia, such as its diverse marine habitats, ancient woodlands, and fertile agricultural landscapes. These natural assets provide essential services for the well-being of local communities and the regional economy. Investing in natural capital projects in this region aids in restoration, conservation, and fosters sustainable growth.



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## Natural Capital Approach



## ENGAGING WITH INDIGENOUS GROUPS, BUILDING REGIONAL CAPACITY

For the past two years, South Coast NRM has been developing its strategic approach to engage with, and benefit from, emerging natural capital accounting and financing mechanisms. This has led the organisation to consider how it approaches project development and partnership development opportunities to best secure aligned economic and biodiversity conservation outcomes at a landscape scale.

South Coast NRM has continued to proactively engage with Indigenous groups across the region including Wagyl Kaip Southern Noongar AC and Esperance Tjaltjraak AC RNTBC. It is seeking to support groups who wish to understand and test how new models can be leveraged and directed to achieve beneficial environmental and cultural outcomes. By working closely with Indigenous groups, South Coast NRM is fostering a shared vision for sustainable environmental and cultural stewardship.



## DRIVING POLICY OUTCOMES

South Coast NRM is now recognised as a national leader in advancing regional natural capital initiatives. In 2024, the organisation successfully lobbied WA Government to prioritise this emerging sector, resulting in Treasury beginning to convene a whole-of-government approach to natural capital opportunities.

This recognition is a significant milestone, underscoring the need for pilot projects that demonstrate how financial and policy tools can deliver real-world value for regional and rural Australians while protecting their natural environment.

It is now recognised that there is an unmet need to pilot and innovate natural capital projects to ensure that policy and financial instruments are not developed in isolation and that they actually add value and achieve good outcomes for regional and rural Australians, as well as their native environment.



## AN ECONOMIC BUSINESS CASE BASED ON NATURAL CAPITAL VALUES

In late 2024, South Coast NRM engaged natural capital advisory group Ricardo to develop an economic and financial business case for the Community Natural Capital Program. The outputs that Ricardo will produce in early 2025 will be used to communicate to key stakeholders how such a program can catalyse diversified economic development opportunities and significant biodiversity outcomes in the South Coast region, along with demonstrable and scalable financial returns.

South Coast NRM is working to retain flexibility and keep an open mind about the pros and cons of this nascent market, while actively trialling and exploring ways to create new revenue streams to support long-term ecological restoration and conservation.

## A CLEAR PLAN OF ACTION

South Coast NRM's recent initiatives have centred on building partnerships to fund the development of:

- a. a regional natural capital account database system in collaboration with the Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute; and
- b. a suite of innovative pilot ecological conservation and restoration projects to inform account development and to demonstrate proof of concept to regional stakeholders in a range of natural resource-dependent sectors.

These initiatives are being designed to help farmers adopt sustainable practices, empower Indigenous communities to manage cultural and natural resources, and to support local businesses in accessing new markets.



# ACKNOWLEDGING STAKEHOLDERS: DRIVING COLLABORATIVE IMPACT

Achieving meaningful and lasting regional impact is a shared effort, made possible by the collective contributions of many stakeholders. This includes our dedicated partners who play a crucial role in project design and delivery, as well as the organisations and individuals who support and assist our work. Together, we are making a difference, fostering a resilient and thriving future for our communities and natural landscapes.

Albany Bird Group	Gilberts Potoroo Action Group	Shire of Esperance
Albany Heritage Reference Group	Gilbert’s Potoroo Recovery Team	Shire of Jerramungup
Aboriginal Corporation	Gnowangerup Aboriginal Corporation	Shire of Ravensthorpe
Albany Regional Volunteer Service	Gondwana Link	South Coast Bushcare Services
Albany Threatened Flora Recovery Team	Great Southern Aboriginal Health Service	South Coast Cetaceans
ATC Worksmart	Great Southern	South Coast Reference Group network:
Australian Facilitation Company	Development Commission	Healthy Environments Reference Group,
Birdlife Australia	Great Southern Science Council	Land and Water Reference Group,
Bush Heritage Australia	Green Skills Inc.	Aboriginal Reference Group and South
Carnaby’s Cockatoo Recovery Team	Greening Australia WA	East Reference Group
Centre for Natural Resource	Hopetoun Community Resource Centre	South Coast Threatened Birds
Management	Keep Australia Beautiful	Recovery Team
City of Albany	Kurrah Mia	South West NRM
Cocanarup Conservation Alliance	Lotterywest	Southern Ecology
Conservation Council WA	Lower Kalgan Community Association	Southern Aboriginal Corporation
CSIRO	Many Peaks Primary School	South Regional TAFE
Curtin University	MLA Carbon Storage	Tambellup Aboriginal
Deep Woods Surveys	Partnership Network	Progress Association
Denmark Bird Group	Murdoch University	Tangaroa Blue Foundation
Department of Biodiversity,	National Malleefowl Recovery Team	TERN Ecosystem Research
Conservation & Attractions	North Stirlings Pallinup Natural	Infrastructure for Australia
Department of Primary Industries	Resources Inc.	The Gillamii Centre Inc.
and Regional Development	Nowanup	The University of Western Australia
Department of Water and	NRM Regions Australia	TiloMass Environmental Services
Environmental Regulation	Oceans Blueprint	Torbay Catchment Group Inc.
Dieback Working Group	Oyster Harbour Catchment Group Inc.	University of Tasmania
Edith Cowan University	Palmerston	Volunteering WA
Esperance Bird Observer Group	Peat Project Consortia	WA Malleefowl Recovery Group
Esperance Senior High School	Private Landholders	Wagyl Kaip
Esperance Volunteer Resource Centre	Ramsar Technical Advisory Group	Walpole-Nornalup National Park
Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title	Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative	Association Inc
Aboriginal Corporation	Network Inc.	Wendy Bradshaw
Esperance Weeds Action Group	Relationships Australia	Western Ringtail Possum
Fitzgerald Biosphere Group Inc.	Sea Shepherd Australia	Recovery Team
Fitzgerald Biosphere	SONT – Saving Our Snake Necked Turtle	Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee Inc.
Community Collective	Shire of Denmark	Wirlomin Noongar Language
Friends of the Western Ground Parrot		and Stories Project
		Yakamia Advisory Group

# INVESTMENT PARTNERS

South Coast NRM is proud to be working with our Investment Partners

Australian Government – Department Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Lotterywest
Australian Government – Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	Meat and Livestock Australia and University of Tasmania
Australian Wool Innovation and University of Tasmania	South Coast Environment Fund
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation	State NRM Program
Grains Research and Development Corporation	Esperance Regional Forum (Legacy Funds)
	South Coast Management Group (Legacy Funds)

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