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Acknowledgment of Country

As an organisation, South Coast NRM recognises and respects that we live and work on the traditional lands of First Nations people. We acknowledge and honour First Nations people 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.

CEO update

Working locally, connecting globally

It's been a full and rewarding quarter, and one that has reinforced for me how closely our local work and the bigger global picture are tied together.

Something is shifting in the way we talk about nature. For a long time, it has been framed as something to protect from economic activity. Increasingly, the people I speak with, farmers, foresters, fishers, tourism operators, port, and shipping leaders, are describing it the other way around. Healthy soils, resilient catchments, clean water, intact coastlines, and a working harbour aren't separate from the regional economy. They *are* the regional economy. Nature is infrastructure, just like roads and ports, and looking after it is how we keep our productive sectors viable for the long haul.

Our Urban Rivers / Yakamia Creek restoration project is a good example of that thinking in action. The four-year transformation is well underway, in partnership with the City of Albany, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, and the Australian Government's Urban Rivers and Catchments Program, with works progressing at the Whidby Street living wetland and Barnesby Drive living stream. Yakamia Creek runs through the heart of Albany, past schools, sports grounds, farms, and homes. For too long, it has been treated as a stormwater drain. The truth is it matters for the community who live alongside it, for the Menang Noongar people whose cultural connection to this place runs deep, for our threatened species, and for the health of Oyster Harbour, which underpins fishing, aquaculture, tourism, and shipping in our region.

We also recently wrapped up our Urban Western Ringtail Possum project, delivered in partnership with Oyster Harbour and Torbay Catchment Groups, Southern Aboriginal Corporation, UWA, and the City of Albany, with funding from the Australian Government. Albany is one of just three remaining strongholds for the critically endangered *ngwayir*, and the real highlight has been how deeply residents engaged, proof that backyards and suburban streets offer opportunities to conserve wildlife too, and that conservation thrives when communities lead it. This work has felt especially meaningful alongside the Albany 2026 Bicentenary. *Lighting the Sound* and *First Lights Kinjarling* gave us all something quietly profound — Menang stories told on Country, on a global stage, reminding us that this place has been cared for, sung, and storied for tens of thousands of years. Nature recovery and cultural recovery walk hand in hand, and we are privileged to do this work in such company.

None of it happens without our delivery partners across the region — the farmers, catchment and community groups, contractors, Aboriginal Corporations, local governments, and volunteers who turn plans into outcomes on the ground. Thank you. You are the engine of this work.

In May and June, I'll be travelling to the UK and Europe to build the international alliances and partnerships needed to scale this approach back home, including progressing the Southern WA Nature Fund. I'll be meeting with institutional investors, philanthropic foundations, government agencies, conservation finance leaders, and academic and policy partners. The conversations happening internationally only strengthen the case for what we already know on the ground, that the South Coast is exactly the kind of place the world needs more of, and that the work we do here, together, has reach far beyond our region.

I'll share more on my return. Until then, thank you for being part of it.

Warmest Regards,

Luke

May 2026 from Right Whale Tracker Project Transforming Everyday Volunteers into Citizen Scientists

As we move from Djeran into Makaru, the change in season brings cooler temperatures, building storms, and the long-anticipated return of southern right whales. Migrating from Antarctic waters, these remarkable animals make their way to our southern shores in search of calm, sheltered bays to give birth to the next generation.

We had a fantastic turn out at the recent Regional Forum for the Right Whale Tracker project where we presented the data from last season. If you missed the Forum and would like to see the data, you can access this from the latest Annual Report which can be found on the South Coast NRM website.

In preparation for the season ahead, we're rolling out our Right Whale Tracker training -equipping everyday volunteers with the skills to become citizen scientists. Together, we can gather valuable data and deepen our understanding of this threatened species.

We're currently seeking volunteers to help monitor the extensive coastline between Denmark and Esperance. It's a vast stretch, but with a strong network of participants, it becomes achievable. There are also opportunities to take part in surveys aboard Albany's whale-watching vessels.

This year, we're excited to be using the newly updated Marine Fauna Sighting App v2, developed by DPIRD, making it easier than ever to record and submit whale sightings along our coastline.

To learn how to use the app, capture high-quality photos, and connect with our marine scientists, be sure to register for our Citizen Scientist training session on Friday 19 June, 10am–1pm in Albany. If you're unable to attend, an online option will be available, and alternative sessions can be arranged.

For more information or to get involved, contact Project Coordinator Laura Bird at laurab@southcoastnrm.com.au.



Urban Possum Project

Our dedicated project volunteers spent over 400 hours spotlighting in urban bushlands, where an astounding 724 possum observations were recorded over the 2-year project (noting that many of these observations would be the same individual possums recorded on multiple nights). Overall, the western ringtail possum population in Albany appears to be stable, with some bushland sites seeing a slight increase in abundance. This is great news for this critically endangered marsupial.

The future for this species is however still uncertain, with threats such as habitat fragmentation, vehicle strike, and predation from introduced predators (cats, dogs and foxes) restricting the species ability to recover. You can help by keeping pets inside (particularly at night) and practicing wildlife friendly gardening by planting native plants as well as providing water sources and shelters in your garden (more information about wildlife friendly gardening is available on our website).

Thank you to all volunteers and project partners involved in this project, the project would not have been such a success without your support!

This project was a collaboration between South Coast NRM, Oyster Harbour Catchment Group, Torbay Catchment Group, UWA-Albany, City of Albany, Southern Aboriginal Corporation and Cat Laws and Wildlife Survival Group and is supported by South Coast NRM through funding from the Australian Government Saving Native Species Program

Last month saw the end of the Urban Possums Project. This project supported many conservation initiatives including:

- 3,100 native plants planted in Urban and Peri-Urban Albany,
- 50 nest boxes and 50 water sources installed in Urban and Peri-Urban Albany,
- 30 Catio rebates and 10 possum friendly dog fencing rebates were distributed to properties in Albany,
- 10 care for wildlife signs were installed on high roadkill roads,
- 5 interpretive signs were installed in urban parklands and on the Mounts,
- 1 research report was written investigating the water content of possum friendly leaves,
- 4 spotlighting seasons and 1 Annual Ringtail Tally were conducted and,
- 30 workshops, school incursions and guided spotlighting tours were delivered to the community.

Figure 1. Western Ringtail Possum. photo credit - Brenton Smith



**Urban Rivers
Yakamia**

Collecting point intercept data with densiometer - Project coordinator Justin for Urban Rivers.



ASHEEP & BEEF Autumn Field Day

Last month on Wednesday 25th of March 2026, four South Coast NRM staff attended the Autumn Field Day run by Esperance livestock grower group, ASHEEP & BEEF. Kahree Garnaut (Lake Gore Project Coordinator) and Jayme Burkett (Esperance Sustainable Agriculture Project Coordinator) were joined by Luke Bayley (CEO) and Alex Hams (EMO) to hear from regional producers trialling innovative ways of sustaining production in the face of climatic, environmental and economic challenges.

Following a networking lunch, the attendees reconvened at Esperance Native Nursery where the owner, Rick Graham, has been trialling the cultivation of many endemic local plant species to enhance the species richness of both large-scale revegetation efforts and retail range. Befitting for the backdrop of nursery stock, Kahree was offered the opportunity to discuss the benefits and challenges of using trees and shrubs in livestock systems for shade and fodder. Key benefits of trees and shrubs in grazing systems can range from animal welfare improvements, increased feed conversion efficiency, enhanced visual amenity, and ecological functionality and environmental benefits. The discussion was interactive, with farmers posing questions and providing food for thought about why trees and shrubs are not readily incorporated into grazing systems. Two key barriers are the destructive tendencies of livestock on paddock trees, possibly due to bark stripping in search of nutrients, and the cost of protecting trees with fencing or robust individual tree guards.

The second theme to the discussion was using fodder shrubs as a seasonal forage during the autumn period where feed is scarce, and when livestock require sustenance between grazing stubble in summer and entering pasture paddocks in early winter. Two local farmers have been using Anameka™ saltbush, a variety of the native saltbush developed by CSIRO for its improved palatability to livestock and resilience to challenging conditions. Unlike tagasaste and other perennials that are intolerant of the Esperance sandplain's predisposition to salinity and waterlogging, saltbush and other salt and water-tolerant shrubs, grasses and herbs can be cultivated in marginal salt-affected farmland to offer autumnal feed for livestock. Esperance farmers have significantly reduced supplementary feed costs by incorporating the autumnal saltbush paddock phase into their dual-purpose sheep pasture rotations. In these local systems, the native Australian Marsh Grass and several salt-tolerant medics are grown as an interrow pasture between rows of Anameka™ saltbush, which are regularly 'pruned' by grazing sheep to maintain soft, palatable growth and shrub height.

After the nursery visit, the South Coast NRM team convoyed to a local beef producer's farm, where perennial sorghum has been beneficial in maintaining autumn feed in a mixed annual-perennial pasture system.

Following on from the Field Day discussions, further information on how to co-exist livestock with paddock trees and shrubs was sought from RegenWA, who advised that digital fencing using electric collars are an option for cattle and sheep, as well as minimising the surface area for protection by grouping paddock trees inside circular fences that allow shade and wind shelter to

still enter the paddock. Jayme and Kahree also visited project staff at the Gillamii Centre in Cranbrook, where success stories on saltbush trials and resources were shared, such as the Saltland Genie WA Soil Knowledge Base web application.



Field day attendees listening to Esperance Native Nursery owner, Rick Graham, introduce his nursery operations and aspirations for providing Esperance with large-scale revegetation services and regionally endemic species for home and public gardens. Photo taken by Kahree Garnaut on the 25th of March 2026.



Community Planting Day at Ediegarrup Reserve

Join like-minded people and help shape tomorrow's landscape - one plant at a time.

Be a part of the team undertaking biodiverse restoration planting work, reconnecting the landscape in the Fitz-Stirling corridor.

You are welcome to camp at the Red Moort Field station (nearby) the night before or after the planting day.

All planting equipment, a light morning tea and lunch will be provided on the day.



Date: Sunday 5th July

Time: 10am-3pm

Location: Ediegarrup Reserve is approx 1.5 hours east of Albany, meet at 1287 Boxwood Ongerup Rd (google maps works!) Come up the driveway to the sheds.

What to bring: Raincoat, water bottle, boots/ covered shoes, and your **vehicle CLEAN** to prevent the spread of dieback.

RSVP

To arrange registration please email
claire.silveira@bushheritage.org.au

 Bush Heritage
Australia

 Greening Australia

Guide to improving and planting farm dams

Over the past year, South Coast NRM has been focusing on farm dams in the high-rainfall zone, and on the ways that dams can be modified to support better livestock health, improved water quality and security, and a greater diversity of native plants and animals.

As part of this, we are pleased to launch a new guide to improving farm dams, which includes a plant list suitable for revegetating in and around dams in the Great Southern.

Download a copy here or pop into our office to pick up a hard copy.

[South-Coast-NRM-Sustainable-Dams-Booklet-WEB.pdf](#)

This booklet is supported by the Australian Government, through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate Smart Agriculture Program. Thank you to Keith Smith (Formosa Flora), Kylie Cook (Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee) and Sustainable Farms for their contributions.

Future Ready South Coast: revegetation and pasture trials

In February, the Sustainable Agriculture team visited three farms in the Bremer Bay region where work is underway as part of the Future Ready South Coast project. Led by Fitzgerald Biosphere Group (FBG), the on-ground work includes revegetation trials, fencing to protect patches of high-quality bush on farm, and trials of perennial pasture varieties to help fill the summer feed gap.

On one farm, Phil Wishart has been propagating native seeds to plant out into areas identified for revegetation on the property, aiming to improve connectivity and restore some of the less productive areas on the farm to bush. As part of this, FBG is supporting Phil to run a trial to test the relative success of planting through direct seeding (sowing seed directly into prepared ground) vs planting seedlings.

Phil is also fencing off areas of remnant bush on the property, which offer minimal grazing value but where fencing will enable the recovery of groundcover and understory species. Many of these smaller plant species are endemic – found nowhere else in the world outside southern WA – so small patches of bush on farmland can be really valuable for their survival.

Caption: South Coast NRM Sustainable Ag team with two Bremer Bay farmers, Tom Campbell and Phil Wishart, and Fitzgerald Biosphere Group's Tamzin Bowe and Damon Cusack.



On another farm, the team visited a 20ha paddock where a new variety of cocksfoot and tillage radish are being trialed to assess whether they can contribute to maintaining groundcover over summer and potentially improving soil health over time. When we visited in mid summer, the perennial species were green amidst otherwise dry pasture.

When the autumn break arrived a few months later, these plants had a head start and were ready to fire up when the rain arrived. You can read more about the trial on FBG's website [here](#), and we will provide further updates as the trial progresses.

These projects are supported by the Australian Government, through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate Smart Agriculture Program.



LIVESTOCK GUARDIAN ANIMALS WORKSHOP

TUESDAY 26 MAY

Join Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (ETNTAC), South Coast Natural Resource Management (SCNRM), and the Dingo Advisory Council for a workshop addressing the use of livestock guardian animals (LGAs) and their potential to benefit landholders in the local region.

A BBQ will follow the workshop. Registration is essential.

PRESENTERS:

Dr Linda Van Bommel
Researcher & LGA expert

Wayne Wayte
Grazier successfully utilising livestock guardian dogs to protect his sheep

WHO SHOULD ATTEND:
Graziers, land managers, government representatives, and community members.



ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:
Free LGA property assessments are available for interested landholders during the week. Contact DG to learn more.

WHAT YOU'LL GAIN:

- Practical insights into predator management using LGAs
- Real-world experience from working graziers
- Understanding of animal welfare, costs, risks, and long-term benefits

WHEN & WHERE: Tuesday 26 May – ETNTAC sheep and biodiversity operation near the township of Salmon Gums.

REGISTER / ENQUIRIES: David Guilfoyle (DG) ✉ ipa@etntac.com.au ☎ 0419 194 016



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

Time is ticking for European Wasps

As we head into the cooler months, time is running out to spot and report any invasive European wasps or their nests whilst they are still active.

This year, there has been an increase in European wasp activity in the Albany and Napier districts. So far 36 nests have been detected and removed in the area by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), with public reports leading to the discovery of nests near the Millbrook Nature Reserve and Mount Clarence.

The wasps are aggressive and a safety risk to outdoor activities and can compete with and predate on native insects, as well as impact agriculture production.

DPIRD Biosecurity officers have now intensified operations in the region to locate and remove any remaining nests before the wasps go into hibernation.

In spring, European wasp queens will emerge and spread to establish new nests, which could grow by summer to be the size of a basketball, housing thousands of wasps.

DPIRD wasp project lead Kris Armstrong said that reporting is critical so that European wasps can be stopped before they become a bigger problem next season.

What to watch for:

- Many wasps flying in and out of a single hole in the ground
- Wasps attracted to meat, fish, dead insects, pet food and sugary drinks
- Wasps with black antennae and flying with raised legs .

🔥 **What to do:**

- Do **not** disturb nests yourself
- Report sightings to DPIRD's Pest and Disease Information Service on 9368 3080 or padis@dpiird.wa.gov.au

Together we can stop the European wasp from establishing in Western Australia. DPIRD's European wasp program has been working with local government, NRMs and the community since 1977 and has removed 1762 nests in that time. For more information visit dpiird.wa.gov.au/europeanwasp



European wasps and nest removed from ground



South Coast events update

There's something for everyone in April and May- from the Wildlife quiz night, Sustainable Ag Events and Joining the citizen scientist tracking the right whale.

May - 12th: 10am Tony Friend - Gilberts potoroo, Museum of the Great Southern, Albany Co-op Building.

May 19-21: -[Carbon Farming Industry Forum, Fremantle](#)

26 May - Livestock Guardian Animals Workshop, Salmon Gums, followed by the opportunity for property assessments for interested landholders in the Esperance, Salmon Gums or Ravensthorpe regions. See flyer below and contact ipa@etntac.com.au for details

May 26th: 9:30am - 12:30pm National Sorry Day - At Retravisation Stadium, Albany

June 11th: 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm - [MLA: Feed365 - Designing a year-round feedbase for WA sheep - webinar](#)

June 16th: 2.30 - 5.30pm - Esperance Weeds Action Group and CSIRO: Biological Control Workshop.

Contact espweeds@gmail.com for more information and to RSVP.

June 18th - [ASHEEP & BEEF AGM and Conference](#) in Esperance. Theme: Farming in 2050 - What the future holds.

June 25-26: [WAFarmers Grains and Livestock Forum 2026 - Albany](#). Theme: Seed Feed Breed - Managing Risk 2026

July 5th: 10am-3pm Community Planting Day - Ediegarnup Reserve

All The Latest News

Looking for more? To stay up to date with all our latest news, head to our website or social media channels.



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