

MARGARET RIVER COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT GROUP

As many organisations and individuals have management responsibilities for the river system, the protection of water quality and biodiversity in the Margaret River catchment will be most effectively achieved through a shared vision, clear plan of action and coordinated management.

In 2017 the Margaret River Collaborative Management Group was formed with the aim of bringing together all stakeholders to share information, improve communications and coordinate management to protect and enhance the ecological and community values of the Margaret River. Members of the group include:

- Traditional Indigenous Custodians
- Nature Conservation Margaret River Region
- Shire of Augusta Margaret River
- Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
- Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage
- Margaret River Regional Environment Centre

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Riverine health

- Completion of the 2019 Southwest Index of River Condition Assessment providing an understanding of the ecological integrity of the river and communication of the findings to the community. Go to: www.rivers.dwer.wa.gov.au
- Periodic reviews of the ecological water requirements of the Margaret River, water allocation planning and licensing of surface and groundwater allocations.
- Review of existing water quality data and the development of a water quality monitoring plan to keep watch on the health of the river.
- Adoption of an Erosion and Sediment Local Law to reduce sediment inflow to the river from development and construction activities and an associated education campaign.

Biodiversity protection

- Strategic recovery planning for threatened species including the Margaret River hairy marron, Margaret River burrowing crayfish, pouched lamprey, Balston's pygmy perch, Western mud minnow, Carter's freshwater mussel, Baudin's black cockatoo, red-tailed black cockatoo, Carnaby's black cockatoo, Australasian bittern, chuditch, Western ringtail possum and rakali.
- Coordinated, on-going control of invasive environmental weeds including arum lily, blackberry and woody weeds along the foreshore to protect local biodiversity.
- Enhancement of key habitats for the critically endangered Western ringtail possum in foreshore areas.

Community engagement and education

- Ongoing consultation with indigenous custodians to ensure cultural values of the river are protected.
- Raising community awareness of river values and threats through events, workshops, presentations and online information.
- Delivery of an environmental education program at all local primary schools fostering environmental stewardship for the river and its environment.

Land use planning

- Review of the Shire of Augusta Margaret River Local Planning Strategy and Planning Scheme to ensure appropriate controls are in place for development within the Shire.
- Completion of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Sub-Regional Planning Strategy Review guiding the future planning and development of all the land within the region.
- Review of the Rights of Nature legislation and it's potential to provide protection for the river.
- Planning for the Margaret River precinct in consultation with a community reference group.

Foreshore management

- Preparation of the Lower Margaret River Foreshore Action Plan guiding environmental management of the river foreshores from town to coast.
- Development of a restoration plan and conservation action to protect indigenous cultural values at the Wallcliffe Caves.
- Support for Friends of Reserves activities and community volunteer events including strategic weed control and revegetation in foreshore areas.

UNLIKE THE OTHER RIVERS IN THE REGION THAT WERE CREATED BY THE WAGYL, WOODITJUP BILYA WAS CREATED BY MAGIC...



It was at a gathering of the tribes, a corroboree, that Wooditj, a Wadandi salt water man first met and fell in love with Milyean, a young Pibilmun woman from the people of plenty. To Wooditj's dismay, Milyean was promised to his older brother, so he decided to intercept her on her journey and convince her to become his mate.

Milyean was travelling with her father, Ngarut when Wooditj found them at Nilup (the sleeping place).

He struck his stick into the ground and sung Milyean's father into a deep slumber before urging Milyean to run away with him.

As they reached Jalbarragup they realised that Ngarut had awoken and followed their tracks. He warned them that Milyean was already promised and that he intended to deliver her. Wooditj insisted that he loved Milyean and would take her as his own mate.

This angered Ngarut but as he approached, Wooditj took up his stick and struck it against a rock causing the spring to gush from the ground creating a river between them. They travelled downstream separated by the river as it crossed the land towards the ocean.

The old man started to dance the boya (rocks) up out of the ground to create a bridge across to his daughter but Wooditj sung the water to flow stronger, flooding the rocks and preventing him from crossing. This created the falls on the river.

As they travelled further, the old man came across a stand of tall trees and pushed them over to create a crossing. Wooditj saw the old man coming across the fallen trees and used his stick to hit the trunk causing Ngarut to fall. Milyean was worried about her father drowning but Wooditj swirled his stick in the water and sung a fish song, filling the river with fish and turning the old man into a blue groper.

As they got close to the ocean the water began to pool. It was teaming with fish but they were trapped so Wooditj took his stick and drew a line in the sand to connect the river to the ocean.

The fish started pouring out into the ocean with the river water turning the ocean black with all their bodies. As Wooditj and Milyean started spearing fish to eat they saw a rock rising out of the ocean containing the spirit of the old man but as Milyean looked back at Wooditj she saw that he had speared a blue groper and she cried fearing that he had killed her father.

Wooditj promised that if this was her father he would turn him back into a man. He plunged his stick into the ground and sung his spirit back into a man. Ngarut gave the couple his blessing but asked that they leave to new country. His body is buried at the cliffs near the rivermouth and his spirit still watches over the river.

Iszaak Webb

Wadandi Cultural Custodian

WOODITJUP BILYA PROTECTION STRATEGY

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT THE MARGARET RIVER

COMMUNITY UPDATE
NOVEMBER 2019



natural resource
management program



WOODITJUP BILYA PROTECTION STRATEGY?

The Wooditjup Bilya Protection Strategy has been prepared by Nature Conservation Margaret River Region in partnership with the Shire of Augusta Margaret River and the broader Margaret River Collaborative Management Group.

It has been developed to support coordinated and collaborative management of the Margaret River, its tributaries and associated remnant native vegetation with the aim of protecting water quality, streamflow and biodiversity, and managing human impacts.

The strategy outlines the values and threats to the river and identifies the management responsibilities of the various government agencies and community organisations. The Collaborative Management Group developed a shared vision to guide the development of the Protection Strategy and the management of the river. The vision is supported by objectives under three broad outcomes.

To view the Protection Strategy visit:
www.natureconservation.org.au/resources/publications

RIVER ECOSYSTEM VALUES

- Cultural sites and values
- Community use and recreation
- High visual landscape amenity
- Healthy river system with near pristine sections
- Good water quality with minimal nutrient enrichment and salination
- Groundwater dependant permanent pools
- Healthy estuary
- Diversity of plants, animals and ecosystems
- Threatened and endemic species
- Threatened ecosystems
- Significant ecological linkages



THREATS TO RIVER HEALTH

- Climate change
- Rainfall and streamflow decline
- Declining groundwater levels
- Summer pumping from river pools
- Environmental weeds
- Population and development pressures
- Increasing access and tourism
- Pollution
- Erosion and sedimentation
- Clearing
- Dieback
- Feral animals
- Stock access



VISION

A healthy, natural and resilient Margaret River safeguarded for present and future generations

VISION

RECOGNITION OF
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE
AND COMMUNITY VALUES

BEST PRACTICE
COORDINATION
AND MANAGEMENT

A HEALTHY ECOSYSTEM

OBJECTIVES

- Protect Aboriginal heritage
- Recognise and consider community values
- Provide sustainable access to the river environment
- Improve community connection to and knowledge of the Margaret River

- Improve management arrangements to protect and enhance ecological and community values of the Margaret River

- Ensure management decisions are based on appropriate knowledge
- Protect water quality and flows
- Protect, manage and enhance biodiversity

OBJECTIVES