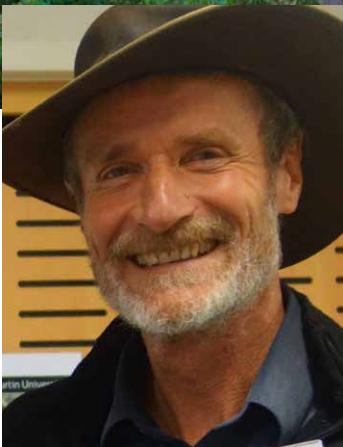




2016-17 ANNUAL REPORT



CHAIR'S MESSAGE

May I express my heartfelt thanks for the hard work of all involved in a successful transition from Cape to Cape Catchments Group to Nature Conservation Margaret River Region. The intent is to refocus and expand our objectives from those of a community group delivering on-ground landcare projects to becoming a regional environmental champion. To achieve this will require inspiring and partnering all sectors of our community to promote a conservation culture.

Our new name clearly describes what we do and where we do it as a basis for inviting others to join us in valuing, caring for and celebrating this very special region, renowned throughout the world for wine, surf, fine food, walking and bike trails – the list goes on but we recognise that all depends on good stewardship; fostering lifestyles, enterprises and development that are not at odds with the natural values that attract us here, residents, businesses and visitors alike.

During 2016-17 the 'Change' process has involved reinvigorating our Board of Management and overhauling our constitution. In addition to the unwavering support of our staff and Board, I would like to acknowledge the professional assistance provided by Deborah Shorter and Peter Dickson in the tricky task of developing a new name and imagery for a group.

The intent of our new direction is to build on the foundations laid by CCG, recognizing that the increasing pressures our region faces from growth and the impacts of climate change demand a commensurate response. Government funding will remain an underpinning basis for our programs and maintaining and extending that funding. In this regard, I wish to acknowledge the increased funding from the Augusta Margaret River Shire Council we received this year, National Landcare Program funding through SWCC and funding from the State NRM Program that enabled us to undertake a variety of excellent community partnership programs. In particular, may I applaud the State Government for recognising the dire need of community landcare and conservation groups for funding enabling planning and administrative support through its delivery of the State NRM Capability Grants Program.

The launch of Nature Conservation in late May provided a fitting celebration of our year long planning and commencement of a new era. My thanks to Voyager Estate for their generous support in hosting a memorable launch evening. Even before launching as Nature Conservation, we embarked on our new direction by forging stronger partnerships with three of the community sectors critical to our success, including the Augusta Margaret River Shire Council, the Margaret River Busselton Tourism Association and the Margaret River Chamber of Commerce. For a second year, Cape Mentelle dedicated a night in their film season to our cause and Cullen Wines stepped forward as a corporate supporter for the 'Our Patch' Environmental Education Program.

We have been careful not to neglect our traditional relationships with the South West Catchments Council and fellow members groups, particularly the neighboring Lower Blackwood Land Conservation District Council and GeoCatch. State Government agencies and Universities also continue as vital allies, with project partners this year including the Fisheries Department, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Department of Water and Murdoch University's Freshwater Fish Group.

As Nature Conservation we are positioning to be the champion our environment deserves but in doing this, we can only hope to act as a coordinator, a catalyst, an enabler, a facilitator. Our success in achieving a conservation culture will be through our members and partners participating in and supporting all aspects of our enterprise.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Boyd Wykes".

DR BOYD WYKES
CHAIR, BOARD OF MANAGEMENT



Nature Conservation is very proud of this year's achievements and would like to thank its partners and supporters for their continuing assistance during 2016-17.

2016-17 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Welcome to our 2016-17 Annual Report.

Nature Conservation is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation established in 2002 that works to protect the natural environment of the Margaret River region. It combines the grassroots power of the regional community with sound conservation science and pragmatic policy initiatives to achieve effective and sustainable environmental outcomes.

Formerly called the Cape to Cape Catchments Group, the organisation changed its name and made other major strategic changes during 2016-17.

Key organisational achievements during 2016-17 centred around transitioning the traditional grants-based Cape to Cape Catchments Group to the community-based Nature Conservation Margaret River Region and included:

- Completion of 12 months work by a 'Change' Committee comprising volunteer management committee members and staff to map out key foundational initiatives and inspirational projects to encourage new support for the organisation.
- Reinvigoration of the organisation's volunteer management committee to form a new strategic Board to guide the organisation on its new path. New skills were sought from both influential and experienced individuals inspired by the proposed direction of the organisation.
- Development of a new organisational brand including identification of a new name and logo. A facilitated branding workshop involving Board members, staff and key partners was conducted to identify a name that better reflected what the organisation does and where it works. A new logo and brand now reflects the key outcomes of the workshop. Development of a new look website www.natureconservation.org.au also commenced during 2016-17.
- A major review of the organisation's Constitution was undertaken to reflect the strategic planning for the new organisation and approval sought from the Department of Commerce to transition the organisation to Nature Conservation Margaret River region.
- Launch of the organisation's new name and brand to key partners and supporters at a launch event at Voyager Estate on 25 May 2017.

In parallel the organisation worked on the new strategic directions for the new organisation achieving the following outcomes:

- Consolidation of the organisation's work into seven new conservation programs with clear environmental objectives and strong long term strategic direction.
- Establishment of new strategic partnerships with key organisations in the Margaret River region as a first step in building a community conservation culture for the region. Strong alliances were forged with the Augusta Margaret River Shire Council, Margaret River Busselton Tourism Association, Margaret River Wine Association and Margaret River Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Increased support from these organisations and their members has been realised during the year.
- Strengthening existing relationships with other natural resource management organisations including the South West Catchment Council, Geographe Catchments Council and the Lower Blackwood LCDC has also been a focus.



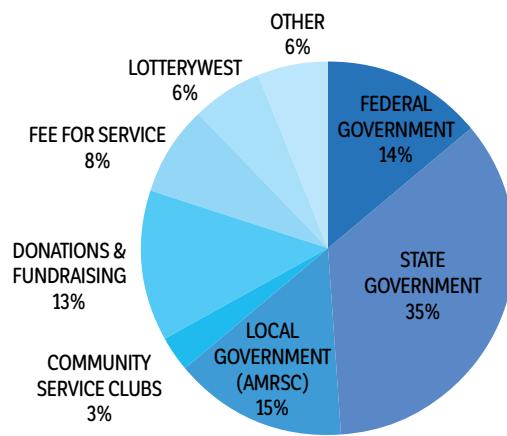
2016-17 FINANCIAL REPORT

Nature Conservation enjoyed a greater level of financial stability during 2016/17 than previous years. Reserve funds remained unchanged and administrative costs were met through an increased level of administrative funding from the Augusta Margaret River Shire Council, assistance from the State Government Nature Resource Management Capability Grant Program and continued support from the community through donations and fundraising.

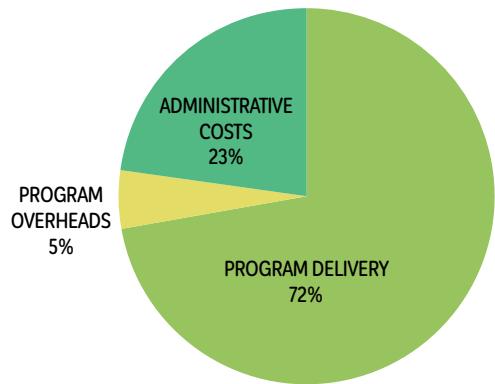
2016-17 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Nature Conservation worked to secure its financial stability during 2016-17 and for the first time in a number of years did not draw on reserve funds to meet its administrative expenses.

INCOME \$437,537



EXPENDITURE \$355,034



BREAKDOWN OF 2016-17 INCOME

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Donations & Fundraising | \$56,730 |
| Augusta Margaret River Shire Council | \$64,344 |
| Rotary and Lions Clubs | \$14,000 |
| Lotterywest | \$24,498 |
| State Natural Resource Management Program | \$151,592 |
| National Landcare Program via South West Catchments Council | \$62,817 |
| Water Corporation | \$8,000 |
| Landholder contributions | \$19,133 |
| Miscellaneous income | \$18 |
| Fee For Service Contracts | \$35,065 |
| Interest | \$1,339 |
| TOTAL INCOME | \$437,537 |

BREAKDOWN OF 2016-17 EXPENDITURE

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Administrative costs (salaries and oncosts) | \$77,790 |
| Administrative costs (office expenses) | \$34,001 |
| Administrative costs (vehicle expenses) | \$8,544 |
| Program overheads (program management, accounting) | \$18,226 |
| Program delivery (salaries and oncosts) | \$77,021 |
| Program delivery (expenses) | \$118,213 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | \$355,034 |

Further details of 2016-17 Income and Expenditure are available in 'Nature Conservation Margaret River Region Inc. Financial Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2017' prepared by independent auditors Harvey and Partners Pty Ltd and available for viewing at Nature Conservation's Offices.



NATURE CONSERVATION'S VISION AND MISSION

During 2016/17 Nature Conservation identified a reinvigorated vision for the Margaret River region –

'A healthy and biodiverse natural environment supporting the livelihoods and lifestyles on which our community depends'.

To achieve this vision Nature Conservation's aims to become the PREMIER nature conservation group working with our community to protect the natural environment in the Margaret River region.

Specifically Nature Conservation's goals are to:

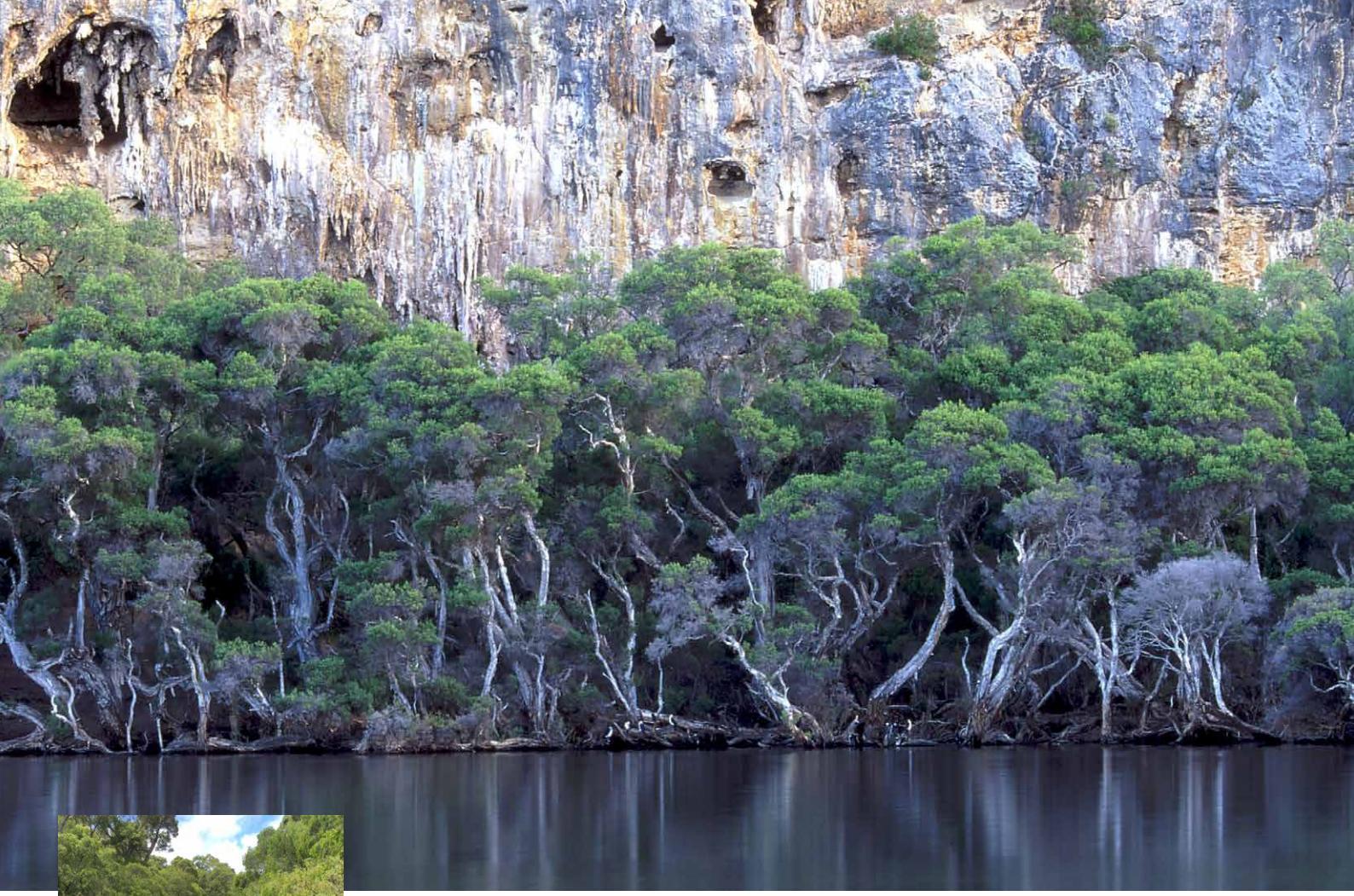
- To maintain a range of natural terrestrial, aquatic and coastal ecosystems that are healthy and resilient.
- To inspire and encourage a strong community conservation culture which values, supports and engages in nature conservation.
- To deliver nature conservation programs in partnership with the community that address the key challenges of the region, have a coordinated and strategic focus and are based on the best available science.

NATURE CONSERVATION'S PROGRAMS

During 2016-17 Nature Conservation identified six key conservation programs to address the key challenges facing the environment in the Margaret River region. Through these programs Nature Conservation will take a long term strategic approach and with coordinated and concerted effort envisages a healthier natural environment for our region. Our additional 'People for Nature' Program cuts across the conservation programs to raise awareness and increase engagement in conservation in all sectors of the community.

OUR PROGRAMS - Addressing the key environmental challenges of the Margaret River region

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| CONSERVE THE MARGARET RIVER | Protecting the unique values of the Margaret River |
| COORDINATED WEED CONTROL | Controlling environmental weeds to protect biodiversity |
| MANAGING BUSHLAND FOR WILDLIFE | Building habitat resilience and linkages for fauna |
| THREATENED SPECIES PROTECTION | Protecting wildlife at risk in the region |
| CARING FOR COAST | Supporting community efforts to protect coastal ecosystems |
| ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION | Developing ecological awareness and connecting young people to nature |
| PEOPLE FOR NATURE | Inspiring community participation in environmental stewardship |



CONSERVE THE MARGARET RIVER

Nature Conservation continued its work to improve the ecological condition of the Margaret River with a particular focus on weed control and revegetation to improve the health of foreshore areas.

On ground action in partnership with landowners and managers has continued with further planting of native seedlings at five foreshore revegetation sites in the central catchment. A further three revegetation sites have also been established in the lower reaches where successful arum lily control has been undertaken. A total of 7150 native seedlings were planted at the seven sites during 2016-17. Significant weed control targeting blackberry, arum lily, woody weeds and African feather grass has been completed along the length of the foreshore reserve.

Work has progressed towards the development of a Catchment Action Plan for the Margaret River due for completion by June 2018. Community consultation towards the plan has included a landowner get together in the upper catchment and five community meetings in the lower reaches of the river. Valuable insights into the community's aspirations for the river environment have been gained from these events.

During 2016-17 Nature Conservation was engaged by the Augusta Margaret River Shire Council to prepare a Margaret River Foreshore Reserve Action Plan for the foreshore environment from the Margaret River town site to the coast. The plan is due for completion during 2017-18. Detailed foreshore condition assessment including weed mapping was undertaken for this area adding to the knowledge base for the river and providing valuable information towards the Catchment Action Plan.

| Funding Contributions 2016-17 | Amount |
|--|----------------------------------|
| SWCC Strategic Groundworks Grant - Building the resilience in the Margaret River | \$175,000 over 3 years 2015-2018 |
| Water Corporation - contribution to foreshore weed control | \$8,000 |
| Augusta Margaret River Shire Council - contribution to foreshore weed control | \$10,000 |



COORDINATED WEED CONTROL

Nature Conservation continued to provide advice and support to the community on environmental weed issues and to coordinate priority weed control action with other organisations and strategic communities of landowners across the region.

During 2016-17 Nature Conservation continued to undertake strategic weed management planning and priority control in accordance with the Capes Regional Environmental Weed Strategy developed in 2015. Facilitation of the Capes Regional Environment Weed Management Group (CREWG) on a bimonthly basis is coordinating priority control and community awareness raising activities across organisations and tenures.

Management planning for priority species is well underway with recent completion of four draft management plans for priority emerging weed species. A further 6 plans will be prepared for priority widespread weeds by December 2017.

Priority weed control across the region is being achieved through a shared funding arrangement involving the State NRM Program, Augusta Margaret River Shire, Water Corporation and landowners. The annual blackberry control program was completed in March including control throughout the Margaret River foreshore reserve and 11 private properties. Pittosporum and African Feather Grass control was also undertaken.

In Burnside, Kilcarnup, Margaret River, Redgate and Calgadup Nature Conservation assisted over 250 neighbours to work together across more than 3000 hectares to control arum lily. This landscape scale approach is having considerable success in reducing the impact of this invasive environmental weed on the biodiversity of the region. Expansion of the program to other strategic areas is proposed during 2017-18.

Funding Contributions 2016-17

Amount

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| State NRM Community Action Grant – Addressing priority weeds in the Capes region | \$46,500 over 18 mths 2015-2017 |
| State NRM Capability Grant – Enhancing NRM Outcomes in the Margaret River region | \$49,835 over 3 years 2015-2018 |
| Landowner contributions for weed control | \$19,133 |



Nature Conservation completed a Fire and Biodiversity Landowner Information Kit to assist landowners protect biodiversity values whilst managing bushfire risk.

MANAGING BUSHLAND FOR WILDLIFE

Nature Conservation initiated a program of landowner engagement in high conservation areas promoting best practice bushland management to provide healthy and connected habitat for native fauna in the region.

During 2016-17 Nature Conservation has continued its work using geographic information system (GIS) data to identify key areas within the Margaret River landscape where well connected good quality remnant vegetation has the potential to provide important habitat for native wildlife. A long term initiative will engage landowners in these key areas and work with them to undertake best practice bushland management and wildlife monitoring.

The program commenced in 2016-17 with a workshop for landowners of high conservation value properties in the Juniper/Cullen Road area. Providing the opportunity for landowners to discuss bushland management issues including feral animal control, fire and biodiversity and weed control, the aim of the workshop was to increase the skills and knowledge of landowners and start to engage them in a long term bushland management program. Further work will continue with this community in 2017-18.

During 2016-17 Nature Conservation completed its Fire and Biodiversity Landowner Information Kit. A major output of a three year fire and biodiversity planning project, the guide provides a range of resource information to landowners wishing to protect the biodiversity values on their property whilst managing for bushfire risk. The guide will form part of a range of proposed resources available to 'Managing Bushland for Wildlife' communities.

Funding Contributions 2016-17

Amount

Lotterywest Environment Grant – Fire and Biodiversity Planning

\$36,000 over 3 years 2014-2017





THREATENED SPECIES PROTECTION

Conservation action to protect the critically endangered Margaret River Hairy Marron continued in partnership with the Department of Fisheries and local volunteers. Nature Conservation continued to participate in the Hairy Marron Recovery Team assisting with conservation decisions for the species. During 2016-17 10 volunteer fish out events to remove smooth marron from the critical habitat of the hairy marron in the upper Margaret River were coordinated.

A partnership with the Augusta Margaret River Shire Council to conserve the critically endangered Western ringtail possum has included in the establishment of a steering group, development of a publicity strategy and roll out of a publicity campaign to raise community awareness and increase reporting of community sightings for the species. Community possum night stalks were conducted as part of the Margaret River Bioblitz 2016 and again in April 2017. Citizen science survey training and a landowner information booklet are due for completion later in 2017.

Nature Conservation in partnership with the Augusta Margaret River Shire Council coordinated community participation in 2017 Great Cocky Count in April. Information gained will contribute to the understanding of distribution and behaviors of the three threatened black forest cockatoo species across the southwest.

Nature Conservation raised awareness and coordinated citizen science programs to protect the Margaret River Hairy Marron, Western Ringtail Possum and black forest cockatoos.

Funding Contributions 2016-17

| | Amount |
|---|---------------------------------|
| State NRM Community Action Grant - Protecting Aquatic Biodiversity of the Margaret River | \$32,835 over 18 mths 2016-2017 |
| State NRM Capability Grant – Enhancing NRM Outcomes in the Margaret River region | \$47,158 over 3 years 2015-2018 |
| Augusta Margaret River Shire Council's Environmental Management Fund – Western Ringtail Possum Conservation | \$15,000 |





CARING FOR COAST

Nature Conservation continued to support coastcare groups operating in the region providing advice and support to enable them to maintain the health of coastal ecosystems.

In partnership with the Margaret River Coastal Residents Association (MRCRA) and Augusta Margaret River Shire Council, Nature Conservation continued to assist with on ground coastal rehabilitation action on the Gnarabup/Prevelly dunes. A Coastal Foreshore Condition Assessment prepared in 2012 following the Margaret River bushfires was updated providing excellent guidance for rehabilitation work. During the life of a State NRM Community Action Grant funding work on the dunes, MRCRA volunteers undertook 376 hours of on ground rehabilitation work, 96 hours of commercial pyp grass control was completed, and 43 m of erosion control fencing at 7 locations and 278 m² of brushing at 5 locations.

Nature Conservation continued to collaborate with local friends groups at Redgate Beach and Gracetown assisting in partnership with the South West Catchments Council for beach cleanups and volunteer planting activities. Participation in Coastswap Regional Forums also kept Nature Conservation connected with coastcare groups and their activities in the region.

Funding Contributions 2016-17

SWCC Community Groundwork's Grant – On ground action in the Gnarabup/Prevelly coastal environment

Amount

\$13,150 over 15 mths 2015-2016





Nature Conservation delivered the 'Our Patch' Environmental Education and 'Adopt a Spot' Programs across 7 local primary schools in the Margaret River region.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

During 2016-17 'Our Patch's' learning modules worked with Year 3 students on wetland ecosystems and native fauna species and Year 6 students on catchment values and threats. The program delivered 58 classroom incursions, 49 field excursions, an Aquatic Fauna Extravaganza and a Schools Bioblitz Day. The 'Our Patch' Program was also promoted at the South West Catchment Council's South West Celebration and through 15 media releases and 17 Facebook posts outlining student learning.

Complementary to 'Our Patch' Nature Conservation commenced delivery of the 'Adopt a Spot' Program for all Year 4 students across the seven 'Our Patch' schools. Separately funded by the State NRM Program 'Adopt a Spot' aims to establish long term links between schools and local bushland, foreshore or coastal areas. Connected with volunteer friends groups, schools will care long term for their 'adopted spot' contributing to restoration and environmental management of these sites. To date the program has delivered 7 field excursions with 2600 native seedlings planted by students assisted by 56 local community volunteers.

Funding Contributions 2016-17

| | Amount |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Rotary Club of Margaret River | \$10,000 |
| Cowaramup Lions Club | \$4 000 |
| Augusta Margaret River Shire Council's Environmental Management Fund | \$10,000 |
| Participating Schools | \$13,000 |
| Cullen Wines | \$5,000 |
| Private Donation | \$5,000 |
| State NRM Community Action Grants – Adopt a Spot Program | \$30,660 over 18 mths 2017-2018 |





PEOPLE FOR NATURE

During 2016-17 Nature Conservation further developed its 'People for Nature' program to cut across all conservation programs connecting the Margaret River community with nature and inspiring a community conservation culture across all sectors of the community.

During 2016-17 Nature Conservation continued its work in partnership with the Augusta Margaret River Shire Council to encourage and support the formation of Friends of Reserves Groups for priority reserves in the region. It continued to work closely with the 3 groups caring for Barrett St Reserve, A Class Reserve and Riverslea Foreshore Reserves. It also supported the establishment of a new group dedicated to working on the reserves and coastline around Gracetown and Cowaramup Bay. A total of 20 on ground work days were held across the four groups including 391 volunteer hours contributed by over 100 community members. Activities undertaken by the groups included strategic planning, wildflower walks, dune stabilization, bird walks, revegetation, western ringtail possum monitoring and priority environmental weed control.

Nature Conservation once again delivered the Margaret River Bioblitz in October 2016. In partnership with the Margaret River Busselton Tourism Association the 2016 Bioblitz included both a Schools Bioblitz Day and Community Bioblitz Day centered in bushland surrounding Mammoth Cave. The Schools Bioblitz catered for over 200 Year 6 students providing a range of environmental activities in partnership with local scientists. The Community Bioblitz Day attracted 72 community members for a series of wildflower walks and nocturnal night stalks.

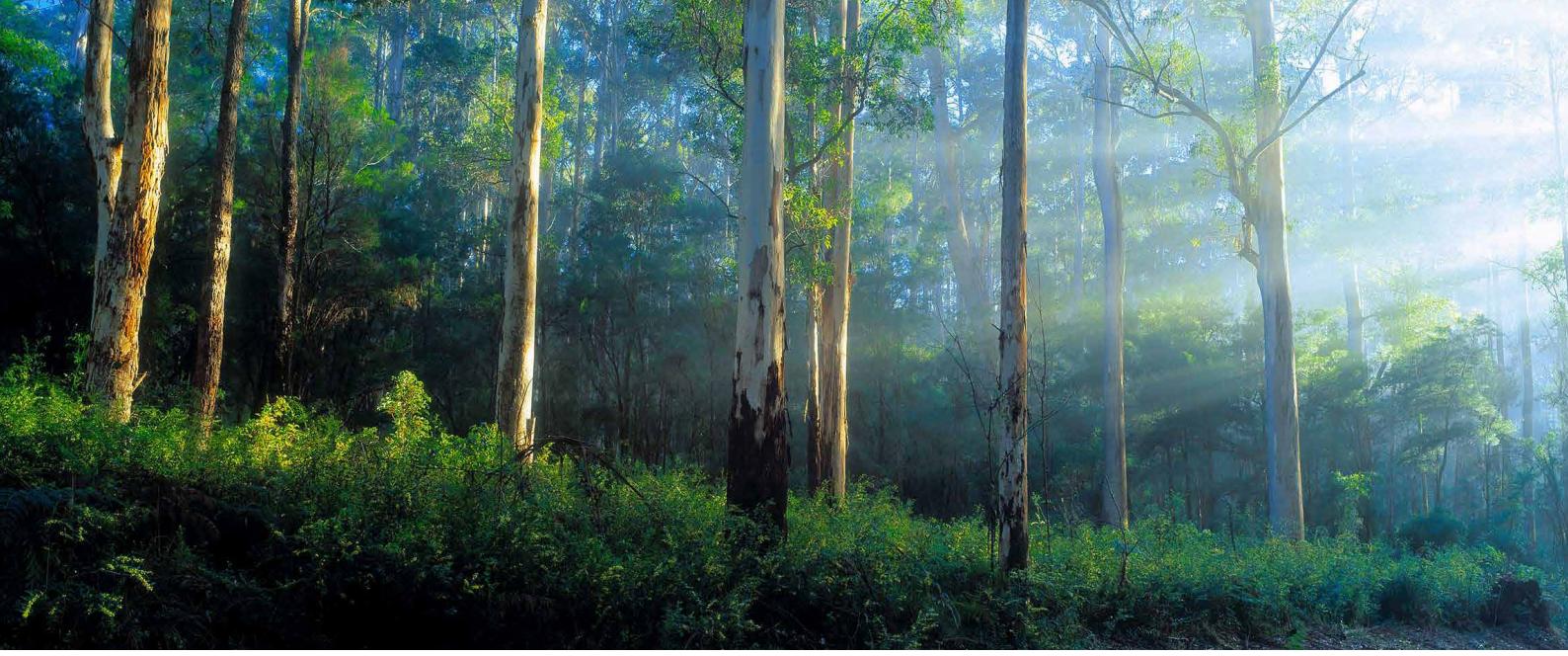
Funding Contributions 2016-17

Augusta Margaret River Shire Council's Environmental Management Fund – Support to Friends of Reserves

Amount

\$13,500





NATURE CONSERVATION SUPPORTERS

Nature Conservation seeks to leverage the strength of the community to protect the environment of the Margaret River region. It does this by developing robust strategic partnerships and nurturing support from all sectors of the community.

Nature Conservation received funding and support from a range of grant programs, organisations, business and individuals during 2016-17. We wish to thank all those who partnered with and supported our organisation and assisted our organisation to achieve environmental outcomes for the Margaret River region.

2016-17 PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Strategic Partners

Augusta Margaret River Shire Council
South West Catchments Council
Margaret River Busselton Tourism Association
Margaret River Chamber of Commerce
Margaret River Wine Association
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
Gondwana Link
Murdoch University Freshwater Fish Group and Fish Health Unit
Edith Cowan University
Lower Blackwood Land Conservation District Committee
Geographe Catchments Council
Birdlife WA

Community and Business Supporters

Nature Conservation Members and Donors
Nature Conservation Volunteers
Friends of Reserves
Rotary Club of Margaret River
Cowaramup Lions Club
'Our Patch' Participating Schools
Voyager Estate
Cape Mentelle Wines
Cullen Wines
Hairy Marron Café
Cape to Cape Bird Group

Grant Programs

Shire of Augusta Margaret River's Environmental Management Fund
State Natural Resource Management Program
Federal Government National Landcare Program
Lotterywest Environment Grants

A special thank you also to Christian Fletcher for use of a number of his stunning photographs of the Margaret River region in this document and on www.natureconservation.org.au.

NATURE CONSERVATION BOARD

During 2016-17 we welcomed a number of new faces to our Volunteer Management Board.

Current members include:



Dr Boyd Wykes
CHAIR



Stuart Hicks AO
DEPUTY CHAIR



John McKinney
SECRETARY



Margaret Moir
TREASURER



Carmen Lawrence



Steve Harrison



Steve Castan

NATURE CONSERVATION STAFF

Part time staff during 2016-17 equated to 2.2 full time staff and included:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Caroline Hughes | Executive Officer, Strategic Partnerships and Projects, |
| Genevieve Hanran-Smith | Landowner Engagement and Conservation of the Margaret River |
| Drew McKenzie | Biodiversity Protection and Volunteer Support |
| Lyndsey Cox | Research and Citizen Science and Threatened Species Protection |
| Tracey Muir | Schools Environmental Education |
| Fran Dohring | Administration and Finance |

JOIN WITH NATURE CONSERVATION

We need your help to protect the unique and special natural environment of the Margaret River Region.

Visit our website www.natureconservation.org.au to find out how you can help.

DONATE

Make a 100% tax deductible donation to help protect nature in the Margaret River region.

BECOME A MEMBER

Nature Conservation membership started on 1 July 2017 so join now.
A strong membership base helps us demonstrate our level of community support.

SUBSCRIBE

to our Nature Conservation Newsletter and receive email updates on our work and invitations to events.

VOLUNTEER

Join our Nature Conservation Volunteers and get involved in on ground conservation action or citizen science activities.

FOLLOW US

Like our Facebook page and learn about our activities and events.

CONTACT US

PO Box 1749 33 Tunbridge Street, Margaret River WA 6285

Phone: 08 9757 2202 Email: info@natureconservation.org.au

www.natureconservation.org.au Find us on Facebook