



Catchment Groups congratulated!



"The on-ground work now under way will help conserve and protect our catchments, wetlands and waterways for future generations,"

Dr Kim Hames said.

The many volunteers who take part in catchment group activities throughout Perth were recognised during the inaugural Catchment Management Week in November. Fourteen catchment groups are working in the Swan-Canning catchment to improve the local environment. Activities include weed removal, revegetation and regeneration of degraded areas.

A special presentation was made to recognise the outstanding achievements of the Shire of Mundaring, winners of the Telstra Local Government Award for Excellence in the 1999 State Landcare Awards, and the Hovea-Parkerville Community Conservation Group who won the Water and Rivers Commission Living Streams Award.

Catchment Management Week has been initiated by the Swan Catchment Council to raise public awareness of environmental problems in the Swan catchment and to recognise the enormous amount of work done by volunteers in community and catchment groups to care for the environment. In launching the week, Water Resources Minister Dr Kim Hames said all West Australians lived in a catchment but many people were unaware that their actions impacted on their local waterways. He urged everyone to play a part in caring for their local catchment.

To help spread the message, catchment groups held displays at libraries and shopping centres throughout the week, and the Woorooloo Brook LCDC and Blackadder-Woodbridge Catchment Group held catchment tours for members, their local Councils and the public to see issues in the catchments and restoration sites. The Environmental Weeds Action Network held a workshop on introduced and native grasses to inform groups about weed control and species suitable for planting. A community Open Day at the Swan Catchment Centre was an opportunity for groups to network, and to meet the staff and find out about services at the Centre.

Anyone who would like to get involved in catchment group activities can visit the Swan Catchment Centre at 108 Adelaide Terrace, East Perth, or telephone (08) 9220 5300.



Mr Richard O'Connell, Senior Corporate Affairs Officer of Telstra presenting the Telstra Local Government Award for Excellence. Janet Atkins accepted this award on behalf of the Shire of Mundaring.

Industries and Councils tackle river pollution

Recommendations to help local government and businesses to reduce contamination of groundwater and the Swan and Canning rivers have been released by the Swan River Trust. Strategies include promotion and development of Best Management Practices, better co-ordination between local and state government agencies and industries, and prevention of pollution on-site. An important aspect will be training and support for industry and local government personnel to prevent pollution from light industry entering stormwater drains and the river system. Funding for training and information is being provided through the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program and the Commonwealth Government Coast and Clean Seas Program.

The draft report has been prepared following onsite inspection and survey of about 550 light industrial premises as part of the Swan-Canning Light Industry Survey. A strategy to improve light industry practices to reduce the risk of contamination was prepared by a project team representing eight local Councils, the Department of Environmental Protection, Swan River Trust and Water and Rivers Commission. The survey was undertaken with industry co-operation and was promoted by industry organisations.

The draft will be open for stakeholder comment for three months. For more information contact the Swan River Trust on 9278 0400.

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- Swan River Trust Cruise -



Swan River Trust Board members, Geoff Totterdell, Ray Stokes and Noel Robins.

Representatives from local government, government agencies, recreation and sporting groups, parliamentarians and business proprietors from restaurants and cafes that border the river recently joined Swan River Trust Board members and staff on a river cruise on the Swan and Canning rivers. The day dawned bright and clear and dolphins were seen frolicking in the calm waters near Mt Henry Bridge. The guests received detailed briefings on issues relating to development around the river including the comprehensive review of Trust policies, development of the Swan-Canning Precinct Policy Plan, and a progress report on the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program.

WA company may run commercial houseboats on the Swan River

West Australian company Hydrocats has been invited to lodge an application to the Swan River Trust to conduct a five-year trial of commercial houseboats on the Swan River upstream of the Causeway.

Swan River Trust manager Robert Atkins said that the selected proponent had successfully operated a commercial houseboat business in WA's south coast region and had vessels ready for use in the trial.

"The application process will include a detailed assessment and referrals to related agencies such as the Department of Transport, Department of Environmental Protection and local governments," Mr Atkins said.

"There will be a number of conditions that will need to be addressed and complied with to ensure houseboat operations do not degrade the Swan River environment and do not adversely affect residents living along the river.

"Mooring will only be allowed at designated areas and waste disposal will be strictly controlled."

The five-year trial will be limited to one operator with a maximum of five vessels. The operator would be required to submit annual compliance reports to the Swan River Trust and meet all environmental requirements for the trial to continue.

Following the trial, the Swan River Trust will review its commercial houseboats policy before the possibility of permanent commercial houseboat operations on the Swan River is considered.

Did you know?

The area known as Burswood Island was first settled in 1829 by Henry Camfield and his family. He called it Burrswood after his home *Burrswood Estate* in Kent, England.

Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary in Bayswater was set aside in 1976 as a haven for waterbirds and up to 74 species have been recorded.



Mill Point from Kings Park c1932. Photo courtesy Battye Library.

Where can I find these and other interesting facts on the Swan River?

Look no further than the Swan River Trust website at:

www.wrc.wa.gov.au/srt/publication/landscape

These and other interesting facts on the physical, environmental, social and cultural characteristics of areas surrounding the Swan River can be found by clicking on the Landscape Atlas.

The Swan River region has been divided into 23 areas, with descriptions of the landscape features in each area. Sites of past and present cultural significance are mapped and each area has a number of photos which show the historic landscape as well as present day views. The document is a foundation for forming a landscape planning policy, and is the first stage of the Swan River System Landscape Program.

Swan River Trust chairman Geoff Totterdell said the Swan River estuary and its tributaries are integral to Perth's cultural and environmental identity so the natural beauty of this river system must be preserved and managed carefully for all to enjoy.

"The Swan River System Landscape Description is another step towards retaining a healthy and attractive Swan River," he said.

The landscape document is used by local and state government as a resource on which sound landscape management techniques and policies can be developed.

It is also a valuable tool for school projects and for anyone living by the river wanting to know a little bit about the history and features of their area.

SCCP funding helps catchment groups

SCCP is providing funding to community groups in the Swan and Canning catchments to support catchment restoration activities and to help them function effectively.

The Swan River Trust is distributing \$195 000 directly to groups in the Action Plan priority catchments. A further \$100 000 is being distributed through the Swan-Canning Urban Landcare Program (SCULP) for on-ground restoration projects including fencing, revegetation and weed control. Further funding is being used to assist local governments to prepare environmental policies, to construct artificial wetlands, develop farm plans and support the Swan Catchment Centre.

In providing funding directly to community groups, the Trust has recognised that many groups have found it difficult to obtain funds from other sources to meet their continuing administrative and operational needs. The concern has been that community groups suffer burnout or cannot operate effectively to undertake on-ground activities as a result. The direct funding will help employ catchment coordinators and trainees and contribute to the costs of office equipment, utilities and office supplies.



Sue Lawson of the Belmont/Victoria Park Catchment Group completing their monthly sampling of drains in the catchment.

Your catchment questions ...

Can water quality monitoring answer them?

Monitoring has been identified as a priority for the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program. SCCP's monitoring has been designed to answer questions related to reducing algal blooms in the river, for example, which sub-catchments should be a management priority in terms of nitrogen and phosphorus input to the Swan-Canning system?

This is not usually the most important question that plays on the minds of catchment groups, so their monitoring programs are designed to answer different questions. For example the Belmont/Victoria Park Catchment Group's monitoring program has three key objectives: to identify problem areas in their catchment, to understand what the catchment is contributing to the Swan River, and to raise awareness in their local community. Their program, including site selection, water quality parameters, sampling frequency and equipment, was designed with this in mind. The group has also implemented a quality control program so that they can be confident in their sampling results.

SCCP funding has been used to add a new position to the Ribbons of Blue staff. Natarsha Woods is now available to help community groups with their monitoring programs. Assistance is available for design, training, quality control and ongoing support.

You are welcome to call Natarsha on 9278 0365 (or e-mail natarsha.woods@wrc.wa.gov.au) if your group is involved in monitoring or is thinking about starting their own program.



Action Plan on the Web

You can view the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program ACTION PLAN on the Swan River Trust website at:

www.wrc.wa.gov.au/srt/sccp/

As well as presenting the four-point action plan to reduce algal blooms, the plan includes descriptions of the river environment and causes of algal blooms, and the issues of managing nutrient inputs from rural and urban catchments.

Oxygen turned on in the Canning

On 26 October the oxygenation plant in the Canning River at Bacon Street (upstream of the Kent Street weir) was turned on, following successful trials last summer. The plant injects oxygen into the river water to reduce the release of nutrients from the sediments. It is nutrients released from the rich ooze on the bottom of the river that have helped to fuel toxic blue green blooms in this section of the river. In December the capacity of the oxygenation plant will be increased to extend the length of river treated from 1km to 2.2km. The Water and Rivers Commission will monitor oxygen, nutrient and phytoplankton levels in the water over the summer months.

The oxygenation plant will run for three years and will then be evaluated to decide on its future value as one of the in-river techniques to reduce algal blooms.

Hot off the press

**Swan-Canning Cleanup Program
Communication Plan,
Swan River Trust 1999**

New book



Author Dr Luke Pen (centre) with Water Resources Minister Dr Kim Hames (left) and Water and Rivers Commission chief executive Roger Payne at the book launch.

A new book on 'Managing our Rivers – A guide to the nature and management of the streams of south-west Western Australia' was launched by the Minister for Water Resources, Dr Kim Hames, in October. The author Dr Luke Pen said the book is intended to be a good read and reference for people interested or involved in stream research and management. It is particularly aimed at river managers, community-based catchment management officers and volunteers, local and state government officers, concerned landowners, students at high school or university level, and anyone who simply enjoys the rivers of the south west and wants to know more about them. Luke works on waterways restoration and management for the Water and Rivers Commission. The book is the culmination of five years of research and writing, and was produced with a Natural Heritage Trust grant.

Copies of the book are available for \$19.95 (plus \$6 postage in Australia if required) and can be ordered from the Water and Rivers Commission (phone 9278 0300, www.wrc.wa.gov.au)



a copy of 'Managing Our Rivers'

Imagine you had a chance to tell everyone in Perth about protecting the Swan and Canning rivers. What would be your message to the community about caring for our precious river system and ways they can help?

As part of the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program, the Swan River Trust is planning a community awareness campaign to encourage everyone to play a part in caring for the river, from actions in their own home and garden to joining in catchment management and volunteer community projects.

We'd like to know what you think is important. Let us know what your message(s) would be, and you could win a copy of Dr Luke Pen's book, *Managing Our Rivers*, as well as helping to design a campaign that gets the right messages out to the community.

Send your ideas to Karen Majer at the Swan River Trust (mail address opposite), fax to 9278 0587, or e-mail to karen.majer@wrc.wa.gov.au by 7 January 2000. Don't forget to include your name, organisation (if relevant) and contact phone number. We'll be giving away two books to the best entries and will value all your ideas.

Ascot Waters win Water Industry Award

The Ascot Waters housing development on the Swan River was a major winner of this year's Western Australian Water Industry Awards. Ascot Waters won both the innovative irrigation-drainage project category and the overall Minister's award for excellence for turning a disused and degraded riverside site into a creative development that retained its natural environmental features. The development is based on water sensitive design principles. The stormwater drainage has been designed to protect the Swan River from urban pollution by collecting the stormwater drainage from each property in a "leaky" underground storage pipe system. This allows the water to slowly filter to the groundwater rather than discharging to the river, supporting the SCCP goals of ensuring that new urban developments have strategies to reduce contaminant levels reaching the river.

River rubbish reduced

Summary of material removed from waterways and foreshores

MATERIAL COLLECTED	1997/98	1998/99
Domestic rubbish	87.5 tonnes	85 tonnes
Logs and timber	109 tonnes	150 tonnes
Seagrass and macroalgae	612 tonnes	350 tonnes
Tyres	106	70
Drums (assorted)	56	23
Display signs	9	8
Sunken boats salvaged	6	1
Shopping trolleys	62	92
Dead fish	11 tonnes	10 tonnes
Dead birds	176	120
Syringes left on beaches and public places	242	118
Dead animals (cattle & sheep)	8	6
Whitegoods (washing machines, fridges)	4	7
Vehicles	2	4

The 1998-99 statistics show a substantial decrease in the numbers of tyres, drums and discarded syringes collected. The Trust is working with supermarkets to improve shopping trolley security arrangements and collection procedures. You can help by taking care with your litter especially plastic and fishing tackle.



SWAN RIVER TRUST

Protecting the Swan-Canning River system for the future

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