

Getting the balance right in “Dullsville”

‘Perth is Dull!’ announce the newspapers. The West Australian newspaper recently published a front page article stating that Perth had been branded dull by a leading global travel website. “The city centre was painted as boring and functional with a river foreshore visited only by joggers and seagulls,” reported the West. This assault has led to a volley of defensive letters to the Editor of the West Australian, many extolling the virtues of Perth and the Swan River as an unspoilt, natural haven.

The Swan River is the natural focus for Perth, both the city and much of the metropolitan region. The river has been significant to the community for centuries and remains one of the uniting natural resources for districts of Perth.

The river and its setting is used for recreation, for habitat and as a means of displaying our city in an aesthetically pleasing image. There is only one Swan River and as the metropolitan region expands there will be increased demands placed on the river as a resource and idyllic setting for prominent community activities.

The Swan River Trust has always attempted to balance the desire to preserve the habitat of the river with increasingly sophisticated calls for the river to play a role in making Perth an entertainment destination for tourists. Trust Manager, Robert Atkins said the Trust recognises our river is a finite resource and gives its support to activities which need to locate on the river.

“One yardstick for the Trust is whether there exists a compelling reason why that proposed activity is best located on or adjacent to the river,” said Robert.

Examples of development proposals received by the Trust include houseboats, golf driving ranges, urban villages, floating restaurants, amphibious tourist craft and sea or floatplanes.

“Floatplanes are one example of the type of development application received by the Swan River Trust, where there have been several unsuccessful applications for operation on Perth Water and Melville Water,” states Robert. “Helicopter joy flights already operate from a helipad near the Point Fraser foreshore and cater for people who wish to see the city from the air. In each case there needed to be an assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on the existing river activities and those surrounding land uses,” said Robert.



Perth Water is the site of civic activity such as fireworks displays and other spectator events. It is on the door-step of the city and is one of the most sought-after pieces of the river for those activities which require a high profile. River and ocean-going ferries ply the river from the Barrack Street Jetty system and the redevelopment of the Barrack Square precinct with the Belltower and the Old Perth Port now combine to make this a focus for linking the city with the river. Perth Water will continue to be the focus for much of the river-oriented tourist development and spectator events.

Melville Water is the largest open water area of the river and the site for much of the organised competitive yachting. Regattas require areas where the fleet of competing craft are not disrupted by other craft. Yachting is an activity which is readily identified with the river landscape in these parts and this activity is what gives Perth its reputation as a centre for yachting excellence.

Robert Atkins said that the floatplane applications were assessed by the Trust in the light of public submissions and it was evident that the community holds concerns for the protection of the river and its serene setting. “Noise of the aircraft was an issue which registered the most objection and the Trust organised for this activity to be measured by the Department of Environmental Protection”. “Public safety and the potential for the taxi and take-off space meant that the floatplane was likely to encroach on other river users. The Trust decided that on balance the operation of a floatplane on the river was not a suitable use of the river and out of line with public expectations for the protection of the river resource,” stated Robert.

We seek to leave our children an environment with clean air, rivers and vital habitats. Future generations will review our performance and judgements. In the year 3000, the Swan River will hopefully remain as the focus for community pride in the City of Perth; an asset of national significance.

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Swan River 'transfusion' continues



Around 200 kg of dissolved oxygen will be pumped into sections of the Swan River's middle reaches every day this summer as part of an innovative experiment to test the use of oxygen as a means of improving water quality in this environment.

Oxygen is delivered by a purpose-built barge which was tested for several weeks earlier in 2000. The trial showed promise in two areas of the river that regularly experience poor water quality – near Ron Courtney Island and the Guildford Road Bridge – and this summer the barge will be operating in these two areas.

The barge will be anchored while it pumps water from the river, mixes it with oxygen and injects it back into the river. This is the same method which has shown promise on the Canning River, and is now being used on that river for the fourth year.

The Commonwealth's Coast and Clean Seas Initiative and the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program, with support and technical expertise from BOC Gases, fund the oxygenation barge project.

This is the second year of a two-year trial, after which the results will be carefully assessed.

Science behind the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program

As part of the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program, officers of the Swan River Trust and the Water and Rivers Commission have been conducting high level scientific investigations into the Swan and Canning rivers.

The results of this work are important for all West Australians, yet the rigorous nature of the science often results in large, detailed reports. The River Science series of publications has been developed to bring this information to the community in an interesting and digestible way.

The cutting edge science presented in River Science will enable all community and catchment groups to develop their work around the latest information and will also be of great use to students at both tertiary and high school levels. It is envisaged that River Science publications will become available through the Swan River Trust website at www.wrc.wa.gov.au/srt. Contact Silvana Affolter on 9278 0400 for more information.



New directory lists Community Conservation Groups

Like to know more about which community groups are doing what, and where to manage Perth's waterways, wetlands and bushland?

Then check out the new online Community Conservation Group Directory!

This online directory has been developed by the Swan Catchment Centre and the Swan River Trust to promote activities and highlight the work done by community conservation groups in the Swan Catchment. Ninety-one groups are now on show to Perth, WA and the world via this directory.

The directory contains contact details for and information on group type, which catchment and sub-catchment the group operates within, local government boundaries, group description and/or objectives, projects, project funding, resources available for loan to other community conservation groups (eg tools, specialist equipment, publications or herbariums), group membership, group meeting dates, details of affiliated organisations and schools, website addresses and information pertaining to the skills and expertise the group has and is willing to share with others.

You can use this live community environmental directory to become aware of other environmental groups operating in your local area; contact other groups operating in different parts of the Perth area and beyond for advice and support; and to volunteer to join a community conservation group.

To view the directory visit <http://www.wrc.wa.gov.au/swanavon/>

NOTE: Where groups do not have access to the Internet, the Swan Catchment Centre will be able to provide a printed copy of relevant sections of the directory on request at no charge. Free access to the Internet is available at the Swan Catchment Centre.

For more information about the directory or if your group is interested in being listed in the directory please contact Bronwyn Ryan, Network Coordinator, Swan Catchment Centre on 9220 5300.

Swan Catchment Centre training calendar

Next quarter's training (April to June 2001) includes the following local courses, talks and workshops:

- Social Biological Fertility Workshop
- 2001 Water Odyssey – 19th Convention, a Water Odyssey. Canberra, ACT
- Seven Days on Tree Crops
- Regional Conference & Workshop: 'Water Sensitive Urban Development'

For further information or to advertise your training or educational events, please contact Bronwyn Ryan at the Swan Catchment Centre on (08) 9220 5300

River Festival proves a success



The Inaugural Canning River Festival was held on Saturday, 18 November 2000. Darryl Miller, River Manager for the Swan River Trust, and City of Canning Mayor, Dr Michael Lekias opened the festival on a glorious spring day on the banks of the Canning River at Kent Street Weir Park.

Rides, foodstalls, interactive displays, entertainment, competitions and prizes combined to make this free festival a fun day within the natural river environment. Next year promises to be even more spectacular.

The festival was organised by the Swan River Trust, the Water and Rivers Commission and the City of Canning, with support from Coates Hire, to raise awareness of the recreational and environmental attributes of the Canning River.

Commission regional manager Rob Hammond said the day "was also an opportunity to learn what work was being done to improve and protect the Canning River, and for local residents to find out about a draft management plan for the Canning, Southern and Wungong rivers which will soon be released for public comment".

Titled 'Caring for the Canning: a plan to revitalise the Canning, Southern and Wungong rivers,' the draft management plan is a major project of the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program.

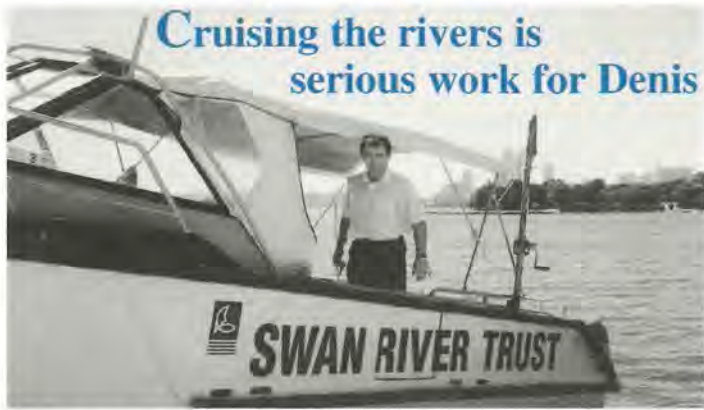
The aim of the plan is to improve the ecological health and reduce the frequency of algal blooms in the Canning River system.

'Caring for the Canning' will soon be released for public comment. If you would like to receive a copy of the draft, please contact:

Lucy Sands, of the Water and Rivers Commission's Swan Goldfields Agricultural Region on 6250 8029 or email: lucy.sands@wrc.wa.gov.au.



Find out how you can do the right thing by the river – phone 1800 062 549 or check the advice on our web site www.wrc.wa.gov.au/srt



Denis Doak cruises the rivers each week in the Trust's patrol vessel the *Jack Mattinson*. A job he enjoys, but one with a serious purpose.

As the Trust's Audit and Enforcement Officer, Denis Doak plays a key role in making sure people are doing the right thing by the river. He is helped by information provided to the Trust by members of the public and the Trust's Field Operations Crew who keep an eye on what's going on around the river as they do their work. Last year, the Trust received over 180 complaints from members of the public. These were followed up by the Trust or referred to other agencies.

Some of the things Denis looks out for are developments on or around the river, damage to vegetation, erosion of riverbanks and damage to the riverbed, the use of houseboats, and boats being launched from unauthorised boat ramps.

Working together with the Water and Rivers Commission, the Department of Environmental Protection and local government, Denis also investigates pollution incidents.

You can help to keep the Swan and Canning rivers healthy by letting the Swan River Trust know if you notice any activity that you consider detrimental to the health of the rivers or any signs of pollution, oil slicks, outbreaks of aquatic weeds or algal blooms in the rivers or in the streams and drains that feed into it.

If accidental spills or other pollution are detected quickly, they can often be cleaned up before the river is polluted.

In a pollution emergency, phone the Swan River Trust on 9278 0400 during office hours. After hours call our emergency mobile service on 0419 192 845.

Coastal Clean-up 2001

Coastal Clean-up 2001 is a new project funded by Coastwest/Coastcare to conduct a statewide beach, estuarine and river clean-up. Coastal Clean-up 2001 aims to make our waterways healthy by keeping them litter-free. To make this project successful I need your help! I'm searching for individual volunteers to become local coordinators throughout the State. If you enjoy healthy beaches, estuaries and rivers and can commit to a couple of days over the next few months with a few intensive days of work around the clean-up date (May 2001), you could be the person I'm searching for. Duties will include mobilising the local community, distribution of material to local volunteers, organising data collation and analysis and arranging for rubbish collection. For more information, or to express your interest, please contact Renelle Thorpe on Phone (08) 9420 7209 Fax (08) 9486 7833 E-mail amcswa@inet.net.au or write to Renelle Thorpe, Project Coordinator, Coastal Clean-up 2001, City West Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street, West Perth, 6005.

Changes to the Swan River Trust Management Area

The Swan River Trust has now implemented the recommendations of the review of its management area.

The changes incorporate minor additions, deletions and alterations of the boundary of the management area to remove anomalies between this boundary and the Metropolitan Regional Scheme's reservations around the river foreshores.

The new plan resulted from consultation with all local governments around the river and the Ministry for Planning. These discussions began in 1997 and the plan has been approved on the basis that it is primarily seeking to correct anomalies.

The management area is significant because the Swan River Trust Act 1988 restricts the Trust's planning control powers to development within this area. Development which is outside the management area but located on land that partly extends into the management area or the waterline, is subject to the joint planning control of the Ministers for Planning and Water Resources.

In the coming weeks, Trust officers will visit local government and the Ministry for Planning to introduce the changes to the management area and the procedures for dealing with development applications. The revised management area will be placed on the Swan River Trust website so that the public can view the plans and see the amended boundaries of the management area.

Hot off the press

- **Swan-Canning Industry Survey Final Report: Pilot survey findings, August 2000**
- **Swan-Canning Cleanup Program and Swan River Trust stickers (contact Silvana on 9278 0506 if you would like a batch for giveaways)**
- **River Science 13: The science behind the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program, Oxygenating the Swan and Canning rivers, October 2000**
- **River Science 14: The science behind the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program, 1998/1999 Canning River Oxygenation Trial, October 2000**
- **Trends in total phosphorus and total nitrogen concentrations of tributaries to the Swan-Canning Estuary (Western Australia) 1987-1998, June 2000**
- **Swan River Trust 1999-2000 Annual Report**

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Protecting the Swan-Canning river system for the future