

## River Cleanup Progress & New Plan for the Canning

More than 100 participants at this year's Swan-Canning Cleanup Program Community Forum were given a traditional Aboriginal welcome by Beryl Harp, local senior Aboriginal community member. Aboriginal group Dindima performed a Creative dance depicting native animals and a Warraduri style Power dance.

This year's Community Forum – held on 18 August 2001 to report progress to the community on the second year of implementing the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program's Action Plan – was co-hosted by the City of Gosnells.

Environment and Heritage Minister Dr Judy Edwards opened the Forum and reported on a successful second year for the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program. She also launched the Caring for the Canning: A plan to revitalise the Canning, Southern and Wungong rivers.

Dr Edwards commended everyone involved in implementing the Cleanup Program's Action Plan before encouraging agencies and community members to review the draft Caring for the Canning.

"The Canning River system is a valuable source of drinking water for Perth, provides an ecological corridor for a large range of aquatic life and is an

important recreational asset for the southern suburbs," Dr Edwards said.

"In recent years the health of the Canning has been affected by toxic algal blooms, loss of river pools, clearing of fringing vegetation and reduced water flows.

"I encourage anyone interested in the future of this important river system to review the draft plan and have their say on the way forward to improve its health."

The draft Caring for the Canning Management Plan is a joint community, state and local government Cleanup Program initiative to revitalise the Canning, Southern and Wungong rivers by addressing the issues that impact upon the rivers' health.

Copies of the plan are available from the Water and Rivers Commission on telephone 6250 8000 or can be viewed on the Swan River Trust website at [www.wrc.wa.gov.au/srt](http://www.wrc.wa.gov.au/srt).

Public submissions should be sent to the Regional Manager, Water and Rivers Commission, Swan Goldfields Agricultural Region, 7 Ellam Street, Victoria Park, 6100 by 18 November 2001.

Dr Edwards said a lot of work had already been done to improve the health of the Swan and Canning rivers and many valuable projects would continue to progress thanks to combined government and community efforts.

"Integrated catchment management is a cornerstone of the Cleanup Program's Action Plan, aligning on-ground community work with local, state and federal government initiatives," Dr Edwards said.



*Dindima performs the Power dance watched on by Minister for Environment and Heritage, Dr Judy Edwards*

"More than \$400,000 has been distributed to catchment groups this year, with much of it being used to fund education and co-ordination officer positions."

Major Cleanup Program achievements in year two include:

- Cleaner Production Action Plans for light industry — training courses to help companies reduce pollution risks to local waterways and groundwater by finding substitutes for harmful chemicals, recycling their wastewater, and educating staff about proper disposal of liquid wastes.
- Education on reducing the flow of nutrients from rural and semi-rural land while increasing the natural value of these properties — 515 field days, workshops and seminars for landholders to help them develop property plans and adopt best management practices.
- Use of two leading edge techniques to cut the impact of nutrients already in the river — oxygenation of two kilometres of the Canning River followed by spraying of Phoslock™ modified clay to 400 metres of the oxygenated area to bind phosphorus in the sediment and prevent it from fuelling algal blooms.

For more information on the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program please call the Swan River Trust on 9278 0400.

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Locals getting in among the revegetation work

The first successful Corporate Care Work Day took place early last month with more than 95 volunteers planting in excess of 10,500 trees in the Upper Helena River Catchment, thanks to the organisers, Swan Catchment Centre and the Swan River Trust.

Corporate Care work days are part of the dedicated cross media public awareness campaign of the Swan-Canning Cleanup

### Successful Care Day

Program supporting integrated catchment management. The program aims to involve volunteers in corporate care days and foster cooperation between government, community and industry.

Hosted by Western Power and the Wooroloo Brook Land Conservation District Committee, the volunteers revegetated nearly six hectares of grazing land near Chidlow along the Great Southern Highway.

Days out in the field are a lot of fun, building teamwork skills and participants can choose restoration projects from river and shorelines as well as land based revegetation activities.

They illustrate to participants the link between activities in the upper catchment and the effects downstream, such as soil erosion and waterway contamination.

If you are interested in getting your company or group involved in a Corporate Care Day contact Wendy Yorke at the Swan River Trust on 9278 0592.



### Diary Note

The second Canning River Festival being held on Sunday 11 November 2001 will offer a day of family fun activities hosted by local community groups.

Sponsored by the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program, the Festival will be held at various public locations along the river and will focus on caring for the Canning River and its unique environmental aspects.

### Mindless destruction

This winter has seen the destruction of shoreline vegetation on the Shelley-Rossmoyne foreshore most probably by black bream anglers. The Canning River Residents Environmental Protection Association (CREPA) have been tirelessly working on revegetation projects over the past eight years but one popular season for black bream fishing has seen much of their work destroyed.

A working group has been formed to find solutions to this problem and although the focus is on the Shelley-Rossmoyne shoreline it is suspected that the problem is more far spread.

Black bream prefer the shadows of the shoreline vegetation as it provides fish breeding habitat. Therefore damaging the vegetation is in fact self defeating.

The destruction of shoreline vegetation is prohibited under the *Swan River Trust Act* and attracts a \$100 on the spot fine. The majority of fishing activities occur in the evenings and on weekends which presents difficulties for the Trust's limited enforcement officers.

If you see this destruction occurring please contact the Swan River Trust on 0419 192 845. We will respond as soon as we can. If you can record as much identifying information as possible (eg. vehicle registration numbers) it will really help, allowing us to speak directly with those people responsible and helping us to better understand the problem.

### Results point to a positive future

This year the Swan-Canning Industry Project was transferred from the Swan River Trust to the Water and Rivers Commission's Swan Region with continued funding provided by the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program.

The project's aim is to reduce contaminants released by light industry in the Swan-Canning area.

Stephen Wong is one of the Commission's project officers dedicating themselves to the task and achieving results that please industry and ease pressure on local ecosystems.

R. Moore & Sons Diesel Engineers was one of the 550 small industries surveyed as part of the Swan-Canning Industry project.

The company's managing director Neil Moore said: "As a business we accept best practice as part of our corporate philosophy."

"In terms of our environmental practices we believed we had reasonable procedures in place.

"After many discussions with Stephen Wong we decided to join up and complete the cleaner production course developed as part of the Swan-Canning Industry project.

"As part of the cleaner production course we developed a practical 'Cleaner production' action plan.

"The action plan enables specific improvements in onsite environmental management practices, including the management of wastewater and stormwater, handling and storage of chemicals, and the capacity to respond to emergencies.

"After reviewing our environmental procedures, we could reduce the outputs to the environment and save money at the same time".



Stephen Wong (left) and Neil Moore

By working together, the most outstanding achievements to date are:

- Replacing the use of several harmful chemicals. This achieved both an environmental and occupational safety and health improvement.
- The cleaning department uses an average of 1 000 litres of water a day. Research has proved that a wastewater recycling system could recycle 75% of the initial volume of water for cleaning, with the remaining 25% allocated for their gardens. This is expected to save an estimated 250 000 litres a year. The recycling plant is now being installed.
- Information signs have been installed throughout the workshop to help staff with the correct disposal of liquids, ensuring liquid wastes remain in areas where they can be controlled.

"And to top it all off on 22 June 2001 our company won the Clean Water Award at the South Eastern Metropolitan Local Chambers of Commerce: Industry Awards 2001", Neil said.

"The advice and expertise Stephen passed on to our company were priceless. I'd recommend to anyone out there to consider your company's practices and environmental effects. Get in contact with Stephen Wong at the Water and Rivers Commission".

## Congratulations Swan Catchment Centre –Winner Outstanding Program Award

The community training program Skills for Nature Conservation has been awarded the Outstanding Program Award at the West Australian Adult Learners Week Awards held 3 September 2001 and was also selected as a finalist in the State Landcare Awards 2001.

The program is run by the Swan Catchment Centre, the Department of Environmental Protection's Ecoplan and Greening Australia (WA) Bushcare Support and the program is funded by the Water and Rivers Commission, Swan-Canning Cleanup Program, Department of Environmental Protection and the Natural Heritage Trust.

The Skills for Nature Conservation training program provides a diverse range of no-cost, focused and timely training

opportunities helping landcare community groups tackle threats to Perth's unique environment.

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

- **Safe use and maintenance of brushcutters (Certified):** This course will provide practical training in the safe use and maintenance of brushcutters for the control of environmental weeds.
- **Working Together Better:** This fun interactive workshop will introduce the principles of group dynamics.
- **Developing Your Display Material Workshop:** Getting a display together and developing ideas to take away.

- **End of Year Celebration:** Join local bushland, wetland and waterway carers and staff of the Swan Catchment Centre, Ecoplan and Greening Australia in a fun day of learning and a celebration of achievements during 2001.

- **Opportunities for volunteers in bush regeneration training:** Join Kate Brown from the Environmental Weeds Action Network and members of the Friends of Shenton Bushland for hands-on bush regeneration training.

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

## Launch of new Swan River boat



A new Swan River Trust work boat, the 'Wilma Vincent' was launched on 1 August at the Coode Street boat ramp.

Named after the late Wilma Vincent, a dedicated river carer and Trust board member from 1992 to 1994, the unusual looking craft was launched by her husband, Denis Vincent.

An innovative design will allow the boat to fulfil the unique duties it will carry out on the river.

Although it will not be assigned the most glamorous jobs on the river, it should be effective in the fight to keep the river clean.

It comes complete with an electric crane with a lifting capacity of 150kg, a small draft for work in shallow waters, and a 100 horsepower outboard allowing solid pulling power at low speeds.

So keep your eye on the waters this summer as the "Wilma Vincent" goes by, working to keep the rivers free of debris.

## Material removed during 2000–2001

The community places a high priority on ensuring that the Swan and Canning rivers are well maintained and kept free of rubbish, debris and pollution. Cleaning beaches, removing hazards, reshaping eroded beaches, foreshore protection

works and responding to pollution incidents are all part of the continuous work undertaken by the Trust's field crew to meet those expectations.

Most rubbish, debris and pollution are the result of irresponsible human behaviour.

As well as removing this material, the Trust works to reduce these problems by encouraging people and industries to change the way they deal with rubbish and other material that may cause pollution.

### Summary of material removed by field staff from waterways and foreshores

Material removed	Units	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01
Domestic rubbish collected from beaches	tonne	123	80	87	85	51	65
Logs and timber from fallen trees	tonne	252	152	109	150	123	99
Rotting weed removed from foreshores	tonne	347	460	612	350	172	494
Derelict/abandoned boats salvaged	each	4	5	6	1	3	3
Dead fish left by prawning parties	tonne	12	11	11	10	56	6
Dead birds	each	26	31	176	120	118	179
Syringes on beaches and public places	each	109	146	242	118	230	266
Dead animals (cattle and sheep)	each	5	9	8	6	4	43
Stolen vehicles salvaged from river	each	no stats	no stats	2	4	2	2

## Hot off the press

- **River Science 15, Report on the 1999/2000 Swan barge oxygenation trial, December 2000**
- **River Science 17, Phosphorus in the Canning – 1999/2000 Phoslock™ trials, June 2001**
- **River Science 18, Report on the 1999/2000 Canning River oxygenation trial, December 2000**
- **River Science 19, Aquatic plants in the Canning River, April 2001**
- **Swan-Canning Cleanup Program Year 2 In-Review, August 2001**
- **Caring for the Canning: A plan to revitalise the Canning, Southern and Wungong rivers (draft), August 2001**

## River Science on line

Since May 1994, the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program has maintained a sampling program in the Swan-Canning estuary and associated catchment. Within the estuary, the program includes weekly measurements of water quality along the Swan River axis - ten sites from Blackwall Reach to Bassendean; and seven sites along the Canning River, from Salters Point to Langford.

A new section in the Trust's website has been developed that describes the measurement program and provides physical vertical contour plots which provide graphical views of conditions in the estuary on a weekly basis.



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*Protecting the Swan-Canning river system for the future*