



RIVERVIEW

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Review of the Swan River Trust

As a result of recommendations of the Machinery of Government Taskforce, the Minister for the Environment and Heritage appointed CSIRO Director of the Australian Research Centre for Water In Society, Dr Geoff Syme, to review the functions and structural arrangements of the Trust. The review sought public submissions and included consultation with a range of stakeholders in the community as well as local and state government. The Government has considered the report of the review and announced changes to the Swan River Trust — See inside.

Riverbank update

The Riverbank program aims to restore and protect the Swan, Canning, Southern and Lower Helena river foreshores by engaging stakeholder commitment and involvement in sustainable foreshore management.

The Swan River Trust is currently working with local government to develop a number of projects within the Trust's management area.



In its first year, Riverbank has funded nine projects totalling \$89 000. They range from revegetation and foreshore erosion control works and woody weed removal to riverwall reconstruction works, removal of collapsed wall and beach renourishment.

The program aims to improve the environmental and recreational amenity of the river. Community consultation and a good understanding of site issues are important in designing restoration projects.

Projects seek to trial different restoration techniques as alternatives to hard engineering approaches. For example the feasibility of removing rock walling in some areas and encouraging beach development is being considered. Projects like these, however, rely on a good understanding of the physical processes affecting shorelines and assessment of the material behind the walls, as this is often fill of an uncertain quality.



For more information on the Riverbank program please contact the Swan River Trust on 9278 0400.



Above left: Walling at Sir James Mitchell Park in South Perth had broken away and left rubble on the shoreline and in the water. Centre: As part of Riverbank the collapsed walling was removed. Below: The area is now a beach that is more accessible to the community.

Precinct Planning Project receives an award

The Swan River Trust and the Western Australian Planning Commission were awarded a Special Commendation in the category of Environmental Planning or Conservation at the 2002 Australian Planning Institute Awards for the Swan and Canning Rivers Precinct Planning Project. These awards are presented annually by the Australian Planning Institute and judged by members of the planning profession.

The Swan and Canning Rivers Precinct Planning Project builds on the work completed by the Swan River Trust and published in 1997 as the Landscape Description of the rivers. It aims to better integrate planning controls for land use development around the Swan and Canning rivers, by encouraging stronger collaboration between State and local governments, and local communities.

Since the Project's launch in May 2002 implementation briefings and advice have been provided to a number of local governments.

For more information on this exciting project check out the Trust's website at www.wrc.wa.gov.au/srt or contact Ross Montgomery at the Swan River Trust on 9278 0400.

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State government launches new policy manual for local government



Representing the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Mr Fran Logan (right) presents the first copy of the manual to WA Local Government Association President, Mr Clive Robartson.

The Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Dr Judy Edwards, launched a Natural Resource Management Policy Manual in November 2002 to help local governments play their part in protecting the Swan and Canning rivers.

Dr Edwards said that the State Government was committed to protecting the Swan and Canning rivers and the long-term success of the Trust's Swan-Canning Cleanup Program depended on effective collaboration between state and local government, business and the community.

"Managing development, land use and activities to minimise pollution and nutrients entering wetlands and the rivers is an essential part of the Cleanup Program in which local government plays a crucial role," Dr Edwards said.

Cleaner production businesses receive WA Environment Awards

Cleaner production is about businesses making more efficient use of the materials and energy and reducing the risk of pollution.

Cleaner production generally decreases the cost of running a business by recycling and reusing materials and accordingly reducing the cost of materials and production and the cost of waste disposal.

This has been proven by Atlas Dry Cleaners and R Moore and Sons who completed their Cleaner Production training in 2000.

Winners at the recently held WA Environment Awards, Atlas Dry Cleaners picked up the Small Business Responsibility and Leadership Award. This is presented to a small business that demonstrates environmental commitment through the adoption and implementation of environmentally sound business management policies and strategies.

Owner Wally Bullo says that the improvements he has made saves the business more than \$8 000 per year.

R Moore & Sons picked up the Water Conservation and Management Award. This is presented to a group, organisation or individual that has made a significant contribution to efficient water use and management. After taking part in cleaner production training Managing Director Neil Moore installed a pilot wastewater treatment plant. With an initial capital investment of \$5 000, the treatment system has delivered a payback within two years. It has also reduced water consumption by 36 per cent and resulted in a saving of more than 1330kL of scheme water per year.

If you would like more information on Cleaner Production contact Lucy Sands at the Water and Rivers Commission on 6250 8000.

"The manual is a positive way to enable local government to implement natural resource management principles and provide strong leadership to the communities they serve."

The manual is a joint initiative of the Swan River Trust and the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council and has been developed to help local government establish best management practices in the key areas of landuse planning and design, land management, source controls and stormwater quality management.

Copies of the Local Government Natural Resource Management Policy Manual can be obtained from the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council by contacting Greg Ryan on 9479 4808.

What's on – volunteers needed

- Swan-Canning Cleanup Program Australia Day Water Regatta, Perth Waters, January 26, 2003 (Drain Game volunteers needed)
- City of South Perth Fiesta 2003, Sir James Mitchell Park, South Perth, February 2, 2003 (Drain Game volunteers needed)
- Toxic Cup - Leighton Open International Yachting Race, February 15, 2003
- Clean up Australia Day, March 2, 2003, Point Walter Reserve, Bicton, as part of the City of Melville's Festival 2003 (Clean Up Australia Day and Drain Game volunteers needed)
- Autumn River Festival, from Maylands to Caversham, March 30, 2003 (Drain Game volunteers needed)

If you would like more information on the above events, to volunteer to supervise the Drain Game, or be a part of Clean Up Australia Day at Point Walter Reserve, please contact Silvana Affolter at the Trust on 9278 0400.



Centre Manager appointed

Liz Western has been appointed Program Manager of the Swan Catchment Centre on a permanent basis. For the past two years Liz has worked as the Community Support Officer at the Swan Catchment Centre. This experience, coupled with a background in catchment group coordination, has provided Liz with an invaluable background in Natural Resource Management (NRM).

"The decision to appoint a permanent officer is a very positive step for the Centre. It gives Centre staff a sense of stability and will help to ensure Integrated Catchment Management in the region continues to be a priority" said Ross Sheridan, Manager Regional Operations at the Water and Rives Commission.

The Swan Catchment Centre has a six year history of providing advice, support and training to those involved in NRM in the Swan Region.

Liz spoke of the key tasks before her and outlined her vision for the Centre.

"The main challenge ahead is to embrace the changes in Natural Heritage Trust funding and define a new role for the Centre in partnership with its key stakeholders. I am really excited by the challenge that lies ahead for the Centre's dedicated team," said Liz.



Drain Game available



The Swan-Canning Cleanup Program has developed an innovative activity – the Drain Game – designed as a fun, educational and hands-on resource for community use. Promoting the message "don't let your river go down the drain", the activity presents an interactive approach to community environmental education.

Aimed at children as well as their parents and carers, the colourful, fun activity entertains while demonstrating how everybody in the community can 'help keep our rivers healthy' by keeping rubbish, chemicals and garden waste out of the stormwater drains.

A children's activity sheet and sticker reinforcing the messages is also available for children who play the game.

Making sure that only rain goes down the drain is an important aspect of the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program.

If you would like to use the Drain Game for upcoming events contact Silvana Affolter on 9278 0400.

The public keeps the Trust on its toes

Did you know that, hypothetically, if you set a small boat at the beginning of the Swan River it would take approximately five days for it float to the Indian Ocean?

That one was the answer to just one, of about 500 weekly, weird and wonderful questions the Trust receives from the public. That little snippet of information was for a production company producing a documentary on the Swan.

Then there was the response for the guy trying to get a job in a diving store chasing information about the sunken barge at Blackwall Reach. Purposely sunk in 1967, it was too heavy to remove and Fremantle Port Authority believed it would disrupt navigation through the channel to get it out that way. So, the Swan River Conservation Board gave permission for it to be sunk at Blackwall Reach, which, at about 20 metres, is the deepest point in the Swan River and a popular scuba diving spot.

Frequently asked questions by school kids include simple stuff like, How long is the Swan River? or, How long is the Canning River?

The answer to those are, the Swan River starts at Walyunga Park at the mouth of the Wooroloo Brook and Avon River. If you draw a line at the centre of the Swan River and follow it through to Fremantle it is about 67 kilometres in length.

The Canning River starts at about 10km NE of North Bannister in State Forest 22 and joins up with the Swan River near the South of Perth Yacht Club. If you draw a line at the centre of the Canning River and follow it through it is about 100 kilometres in length.

Then there are the tricky ones like, How much water is in the Swan estuary?, and the answer is about 55 gegalitres. Then they come from left field - Do you know of a fisherman who has caught any Yellow Mullet in the Swan River lately? Where can you purchase Black Swans from? How many people are visually exposed to the Swan River each day? There is a fox running along the foreshore what are you going to do about it?

The Trust is developing a 'frequently asked questions' page for its website at: www.wrc.wa.gov.au/srt

Review of the Swan River Trust

The Swan River Trust will remain as a separate statutory authority with its current range of functions Environment and Heritage Minister Dr Edwards announced in December 2002.

The Minister said the decision arises out of the key findings of an independent review, conducted by Dr GJ Syme Director of the CSIRO Land and Water, Australian Research Centre for Water in Society.

"The Syme Report found that the Trust has substantial support within the community and concluded that through its focus on coordinating and cooperating with the community and local and state government agencies, the Trust delivers a high level of service," she said.

Other key issues for the Trust highlighted by the review included that it take a more substantial role in setting clear strategic directions for the protection of the Swan and Canning rivers, streamline consideration of applications for development approvals, increase its transparency and accountability to the community at large and strengthen its enforcement capability.

Dr Edwards said the outcomes of the review were consistent with the objectives of the Machinery of Government Review to enhance efficiency, flexibility and responsiveness and to improve accountability and transparency.

"The clear message of the review was that the Swan and Canning rivers are important to the community and an independent Swan River Trust is regarded as necessary to secure their future protection and management," she said.

"The changes that are being made will increase the Trust's capacity to meet community expectations of how this should happen."

Dr Edwards said the Trust would remain as a Board at its current size of eight permanent members, but would be restructured to facilitate it undertaking a more strategic role.



Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Dr Judy Edwards, plays the ever popular Drain Game with Ian Kiernan, Chairman, Clean Up Australia Day. The Game, which was developed as part of the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program, has reached approximately 165 000 children and their carers since October 2001.

"In addition to its Western Australian Planning Commission and local government members the new Board will have six community members appointed by me, one of which will be appointed as Chair of the Trust," she said.

"Members will be selected to ensure that the Trust will have available to it the experience and expertise in urban and landscape planning, recreation and tourism, local government, matters of interest to the Nyungah community, conservation and natural resource management and development necessary for it to take a more strategic role.

"This will include continuation of the development of Landscape Policy Plans in collaboration with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure and local governments."

The current arrangement that gives representation to the local government whose interests are affected by a proposed development being considered by the Trust will be retained.

The new Trust Board will also continue to give advice and provide development control policy to the Minister on major and controversial developments.

It will also continue to provide the overall direction for the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program and the Riverbank Program as part of its responsibility for environmental management of the rivers.

The Minister said that some improvements would also be made to the administration of the Swan River Trust to enable the Board to focus on its strategic role and to make the activities of the Trust more efficient, transparent and accountable.

Decisions on some of the development applications that currently require Ministerial approval will be delegated to the Board," she said.

"Trust staff will also take a greater responsibility for operational matters and minor proposals for development within the policies and strategic framework set by the Board. There will also be increased opportunity for community participation and review of these decisions.

"This has long term benefits for those affected by the decisions as well as for the broader community concerned about the protection of the Swan and Canning rivers."

Changes to the *Swan River Trust Act* will be required to implement some of the changes.

These will be included in the Bill proposed to implement legislative changes recommended under the review that was conducted as a part of the Machinery of Government review.

If you would like further information about changes to the Trust please call 9278 0400.

Services of the Swan River Trust

The Swan River Trust was established in 1989 to coordinate the work necessary to balance the use and protection of the waterways and shorelines, and to restore degraded environments. The Trust is constituted under the *Swan River Trust Act 1988* and is responsible to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage.

The Swan-Canning river system is the lifeblood of Perth. Its waterways and shorelines are part of our heritage and the central focus of our urban landscape. The rivers provide a range of recreational opportunities, maintain a functional living environment in the heart of an urban area, supports businesses and tourist enterprises and contributes to surrounding property values.

Specifically, the functions of the Swan River Trust are to:

- Manage and protect the river system and work with local government and other bodies to provide facilities around the rivers
- Advise the Minister for the Environment and Heritage on development proposals within the Trust's Management Area
- Control and prevent pollution of the rivers and keep them clear of rubbish
- Advise on and control erosion of river banks
- Provide advice to local governments and the Western Australian Planning Commission on town planning issues affecting the rivers
- Promote community awareness of issues affecting the health of the river system and increase community involvement in river protection and restoration.

Through the Swan-Canning Cleanup Program, the Trust and the organisations working with it have identified the sources of nutrients that support algal blooms and have developed a range of strategies to

Contact us on (08) 9278 0400 for information on:

- *Approvals needed for building or landscaping on a property next to the rivers or a shoreline reserve*
- *Approvals needed to conduct a business or holding a spectator event using the rivers or a shoreline reserve*
- *Removing vegetation or trimming trees near the rivers*
- *Areas affected by algal blooms*
- *The Swan-Canning Cleanup Program*
- *River pollution*

For matters relating to maintenance of shoreline reserves contact the LOCAL GOVERNMENT in which the reserve is situated.

For boating and river transport issues contact the DEPARTMENT FOR PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE Marine Division on 9216 8999.

For wildlife protection matters contact CALM on (08) 9334 0333; For Swan Estuary Marine Park Management matters contact CALM on (08) 9336 0100.

For advice on recreational fishing and prawning contact FISHERIES on (08) 9335 6800.

In the event of a sewage spill contact the WATER CORPORATON on 13 13 75.

To report any other river pollution contact the SWAN RIVER TRUST on (08) 9278 0400 during office hours and on 0419 192 845 at all other times.

For information on bores and drawing water from the rives contact the WATER AND RIVERS COMMISSION on (08) 9278 0580.

For information on catchment management and joining a community catchment or rivercare group contact the SWAN CATCHMENT CENTRE on (08) 9374 3333.

reduce the frequency and extent of algal blooms. A key component is supporting community-coordinated management of the catchments so that the level of nutrients entering the river system is reduced.

The Trust has a very close relationship with the Water and Rivers Commission, sharing similar philosophies and carrying out complementary functions. The Commission provides the Trust with the staff and corporate services necessary for the Trust to carry out its functions. However, the Trust is a separate legal entity with separate accounting and reporting responsibilities.

The Swan River Trust plays a vital role in the protection and management of the Swan-Canning river system – one of the State's most treasured assets.



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

Dob in tree killers

The illegal poisoning and ringbarking of trees along the Swan River foreshore has reached epidemic proportions.

The Swan River Trust is calling for public assistance to investigate the destruction of trees in Maylands, East Fremantle and Mosman Park.

If you have any information on the above investigations or if you see any one acting suspiciously along foreshores contact the Trust on 9278 0400 or after hours on 0419 192 845. All information will be taken in confidence and people that wish to remain anonymous will be able to do so.

It is illegal under Trust Regulations to cut down, poison or in any way damage trees within the Management Area. Penalties of up to \$5 000 per offence can be imposed.

Fringing vegetation serves a number of vital environmental functions:

- It provides habitat to wildlife, especially birds. Removal of older, well established trees will result in an immediate decrease in the number of native birds in the area as they relocate elsewhere. Relocation poses a problem as many bird species are territorial and moving into another birds' territory may result in them being killed or injured by other birds.
- It adds to the aesthetic landscape of the river environment.
- It intercepts and removes nutrients from surface and ground water that would otherwise enter the river and increase the risk of algal blooms.
- It stabilises banks preventing riverbank erosion.
- It shades waterways, providing habitat for fish, especially juveniles.



This tree in Maylands was one of many that had been ringbarked and copper nails inserted.

Are you holding a spectator event on the banks of the Swan or Canning rivers?

Under *Swan River Trust Regulations 1989* any spectator event held wholly or partly in the Trust's management area must be approved by the Trust.

The river is very busy and popular at peak times and without proper coordination certain events may disrupt or be disrupted by other activities. Public impact on the river and foreshores are also issues which need proper consideration. Not getting Swan River Trust approval could mean a penalty of \$5 000.

If you are planning to hold a spectator event on the banks of the Swan or Canning rivers you might not be aware of the conditions that you must abide by. These include:

- Approval required by the local government office
- Approval required by the Swan River Trust; including the provision of the following details:

- date, time and location of event
- type of event
- proof of public liability insurance

- Approval also required by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure if the event is held in or over water
- Approval also required from the Department of Minerals, Petroleum and Resources if a fireworks display is planned
- An emergency response plan in the event of accident.

These regulations exist to protect foreshore vegetation, promote enjoyment of the river by all and ensure that clean up of the site after the event.

For more information contact the Trust on 9278 0400.

Hot off the press

- **Swan-Canning Cleanup Program's Local Government Natural Resource Management Policy Manual**
- **Swan River Trust 2001-2002 Annual Report**

The staff and Board of the Swan River Trust would like to wish all our readers a happy new year.



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Protecting the Swan-Canning river system for the future