

Trust launches into new era



The year 2007 is a milestone year for the Swan River Trust and marks a new era for the Swan and Canning rivers.

The Trust took a great leap forward on 25 September, when Environment Minister David Templeman announced the proclamation of the *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* and the new Swan River Trust board (photos on this page and featured on page 2).

The legislation acknowledges the rivers' iconic status and the Trust's role to manage, protect and enhance Western Australia's most precious natural asset.

The Trust will continue to increase opportunities for public involvement in planning and decision-making, particularly during the development of a River Protection Strategy, required under the new legislation.

The River Protection Strategy can be thought of as a vision for the Swan and Canning rivers, with the Trust developing new Riverpark targets for river use and environmental health to support the strategy.

To develop the legislation, the Trust consulted the community on future values and aspirations for the rivers. On Proclamation Day the Minister launched the Community Survey for Future Values and Aspirations for the Swan and Canning Rivers (see page 2).

The Trust is constantly working to improve the way the rivers are managed. The legislation signifies the next stage of the Trust's evolution, with relevant changes outlined below.



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Community have their say

The Trust's comprehensive Community Survey for Future Values and Aspirations for the Swan and Canning Rivers, was launched by the Environment Minister with the new legislation on Proclamation Day, 25 September.

The survey will inform the Trust's work to develop a new River Protection Strategy, taking into consideration Perth peoples' values and attitudes about the Swan and Canning rivers.

General Manager, Rod Hughes said the survey findings indicate that the Perth community strongly value the rivers as a key feature of the city's recreation, social and cultural landscape.

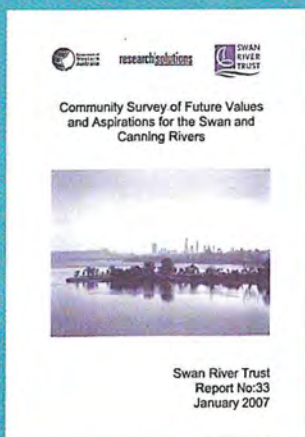
"People surveyed felt the most important focus area for the Trust should be water quality, as water recreation was valued highly," he said.

"Respondents thought the Trust should focus on improvements to flora and fauna, as natural environments are considered important for the future, rather than improving built areas, such as cafes and kiosks."

Other findings included:

- more than 83 per cent of people believe that we should be able to swim in the rivers;
- close to 77 per cent think it is important that we have walking and cycling access all the way around the rivers; and
- nearly 86 per cent thought we should be able to catch fish, prawns and crabs from the rivers, healthy enough to eat.

The report can be viewed on the Trust website at www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au



Trust tag team

The new legislation required the Trust board to pass the torch to another dedicated group of members to keep our rivers healthy. On Proclamation Day the Environment Minister commended the former members for accomplishing effective and innovative outcomes during their term. Significant achievements include providing a balanced approach to planning and development, the establishment of the *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006*, drafting the Healthy Rivers Action Plan, and increasing the implementation of practical onground solutions.

With the introduction of a new board the Trust farewells:

- Pat Hart, nominee for the West Australian Local Government Association, longest standing member;
- Rod Willox, deputy chairman and nominee for the Waters and Rivers Commission Board;
- Neil Foley, nominee for the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure (planning);
- Steve Jenkins, nominee for the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure (marine) and member of the Ministerial Fishing Industry Advisory Committee; and
- Barbara Cook, advisor to the Government and community representative.



Standing left to right: Former Swan River Trust members - Neil Foley; Pat Hart; Steve Jenkins; Barbara Cook; Jane Chambers. Seated left to right: Charlie Welker (chairman); Rod Willox (deputy chairman); and absent Jim Freemantle

The new Trust will have a broader and more community-based scope of expertise to strategically manage the rivers. These skills include: planning; tourism; recreation; natural resource management; conservation; and matters of interest to rural and Nyungah communities.

The Trust extends a warm welcome back to chairman Charlie Welker, Dr Jane Chambers lecturer in aquatic ecology, Environmental Science at Murdoch University, and James Freemantle in his new role of deputy chair.

Ready to herald the new era of protection for the Swan and Canning rivers, new members appointed by the Minister include:

- Carolyn Jakobsen, community and consumer activist in Perth, completing her PhD studies at Murdoch;
- Noel Nannup, an experienced ranger in North West National Parks, instrumental in developing TAFE Land Management Courses for Indigenous people, with a Cultural Heritage background;
- Councillor Dudley Maier, nominee for the West Australian Local Government Association, with a science background and an active committee member and community representative on numerous West Australian conservation groups;
- Dorte Ekelund, nominee for the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, with more than 25 years experience in urban and regional planning, and an active member of the Planning Institute of Australia; and
- Barbara Morrell, former Avon Catchment Council chair, a policy officer at the State Natural Resource Management Office, community representative on the State NRM Council, and member of other environmental committees.



Mounts Bay Road including an early Swan Brewery

Trust acts up for 18th birthday

The *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* is the latest stage of the Trust's strategic development, commemorating 18 years of the Swan River Trust in its current form. For the last 64 years the State Government has demonstrated its commitment to improving the health of the rivers by establishing a series of management arrangements, in response to emerging river issues, changing river values and increased scientific knowledge.

This historic evolution details the shifts of river management priorities since 1943, from an early focus on managing point source pollution, to a greater need to influence planning developments, and now with a more clearly defined focus on diffuse source pollution.

In 1943 industrial pollution in the Swan River was excessive, the river was used primarily as a transport artery and waste disposal site for industry. The general public and the media voiced concern about the deterioration of the river, demonstrating the need for centralised control.

As a result, the Swan Reference Committee was established as a voluntary advisory body to the Government, to coordinate river works. The committee's main role was to define pollution and suggest methods of control, but they had limited resources to commit to the dredging and reclamation of the river.



Rigby 1957 "...and so it is with regret that we say farewell to the beautiful Swan - rich in rare perfumes and rubbish dumps
West Australian Newspapers Ltd

A special thanks to Marlene Rigby, for permitting the reproduction of this image



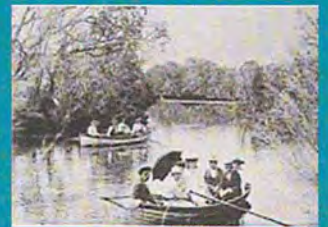
Perth waters 2002

In 1958 the committee helped to draft new legislation which resulted in the formation of the Swan River Conservation Board, taking the first step towards developing a cohesive and sophisticated river management body. The Board became the first statutory authority for managing the conservation and pollution of the Swan River, enacting legislation that was the first of its kind in Australia.

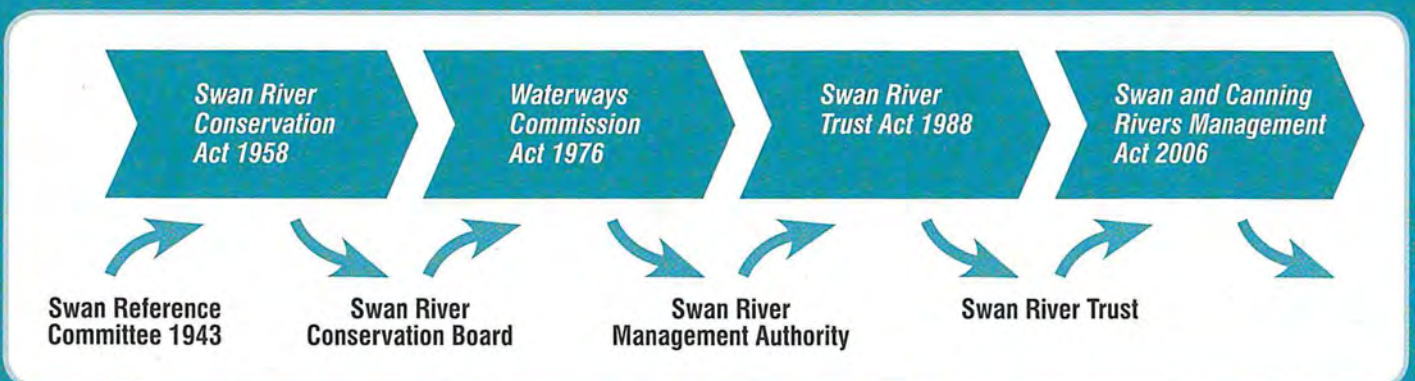
The Swan River Management Authority replaced the Board in 1976, having greater capacity to protect the river with new controls on developments that were potentially harmful.

From its establishment in 1989, the Swan River Trust has continued to adapt river management to reflect community river values, extending its influence throughout the Swan Canning Catchment.

Today the Trust is addressing diffuse source pollution, developing scientifically-based environmental management programs, and creating and maintaining significant partnership agreements, to protect and enhance the Swan and Canning rivers and their catchments.



Early Swan River boating



Riverpark recognises our rivers' value

The Swan and Canning rivers form a cornerstone of Perth's identity. The curves of these rivers sculpt much more than the landscape from which our city has grown.

The rivers have played an important role in West Australian's culture, history, development, industrialisation, recreation and tourism.

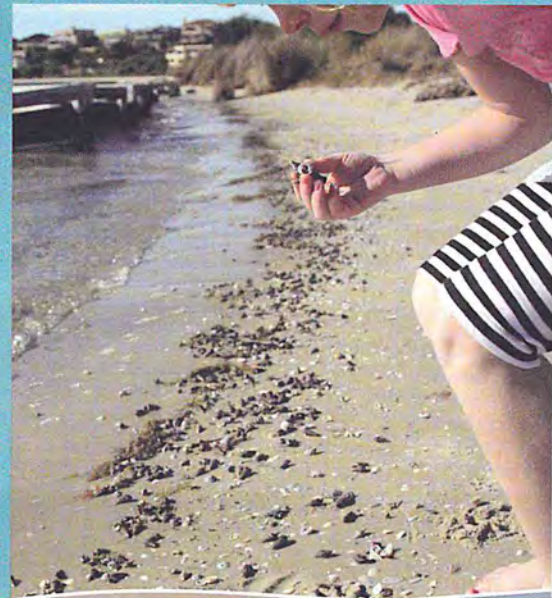
These integral ties are reflected in ongoing references to the 'Swan River Colony' that Western Australia has retained since the early 1800s.

The new legislation, through the creation of the Swan Canning Riverpark recognises the significant sense of place West Australian's feel toward the rivers.

Riverpark will see a new era of protection for the rivers, acknowledging and managing their iconic status in a style similar to Kings Park.

Facilitating better services, to protect, enhance and promote access to activities we value such as cycling, fishing, picnics or cruising on the water, Riverpark establishes joint management arrangements for shorelines.

No private land is included in Riverpark, which includes most waterways and adjacent public land of the Swan, Canning, Helena and Southern rivers.



Streamlined development application process

The new legislation has resulted in opportunities for the Trust to regulate commercial activities in the Riverpark.

Permits have been introduced under the *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* to authorise commercial acts and activities not involving any building, construction, excavation or other works.

Under Part 5 of the *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006*, certain acts and activities will no longer be considered as development or be required to undergo the Ministerial approval process.

For example, before the new legislation a formal development approval process was required to erect a sign, now an application for a permit is all that is required in some cases.

This enables a more streamlined process and faster determination.

For more information about changes to development applications please contact a statutory planning officer at the Trust on 9278 0900.



Leading the way

Trust communications manager Wendy Yorke was awarded the Seamus Mulholland Leadership Scholarship, as part of the Department of Environment and Conservation's Continuous Learning Program.

Ms Yorke attended the Graduation and Awards Presentation Ceremony at the Western Australian Maritime Museum in Fremantle.

The Leadership Scholarship provides continuing education opportunities in leadership and management disciplines.

Ms Yorke is using the scholarship to complete a post-graduate Public Sector Management Certificate Program, Learning for Leadership, at Curtin University.

Healthy Rivers



Community and stakeholder comments received on the draft Healthy Rivers Action Plan have been incorporated into the final plan by the Trust. To be released by the Environment Minister later this year, the plan has been developed with a high level of community involvement capturing a better understanding of community aspirations for the future of the Swan and Canning rivers and their catchments.

Taking action

Trust principal scientist Luke Twomey gave a presentation in August about potential impacts of climate change on the Swan and Canning rivers at a conference in Mandurah, on Climate Change and the Coast.

Dr Twomey was appointed earlier this year as the Trust's first principal scientist in the River System Management section, and is developing a paper on climate change research in the Swan and Canning rivers to be released later this year.

Working closely with the Technical Advisory Panel, a group of 15 scientists established by the Trust in December 2006, Dr Twomey is developing a research and innovation program for the Swan and Canning rivers for release before 2008.

Coastal Catchments Initiative

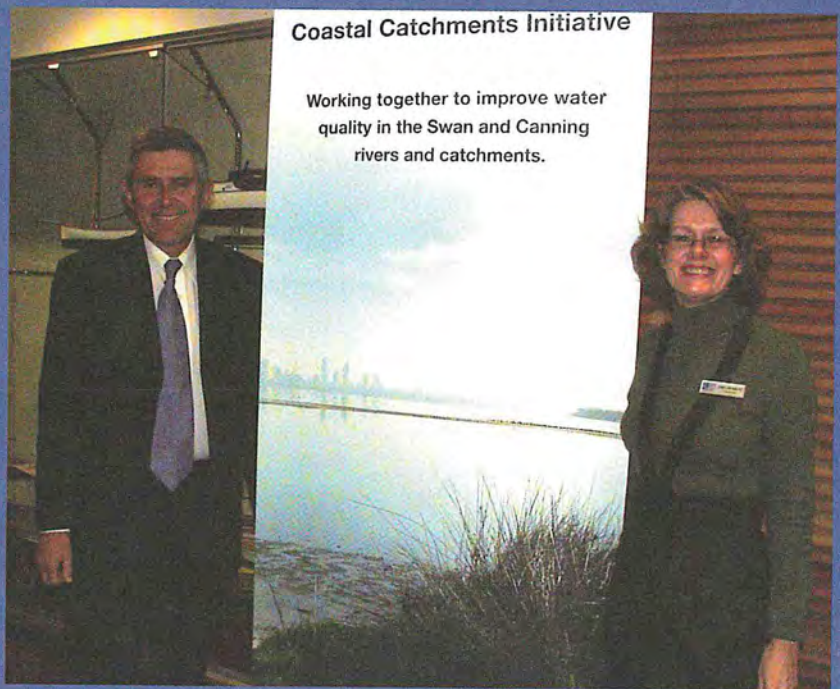
A stakeholder forum was held in June for those involved in the Swan Canning Coastal Catchment Initiative, part of the Commonwealth Government nation-wide program working to improve water quality.

Forty-five participants attended representing Natural Resource Management sub-regional groups, the Western Australian Local Government Association, other Government agencies, and project partners from the departments for Planning and Infrastructure, Water, and Agriculture and Food, together with the Swan River Trust.

The forum provided an update on progress and identified further opportunities for collaboration in the future.

The Trust is preparing a Water Quality Improvement Plan for the Swan Canning river system, which is a roadmap for reducing nutrients.

The Western Australian Coastal Catchment Initiative aims to improve water quality in three key coastal water quality 'hotspots', including Vasse Geographe, Peel Harvey and the Swan Canning Catchment.

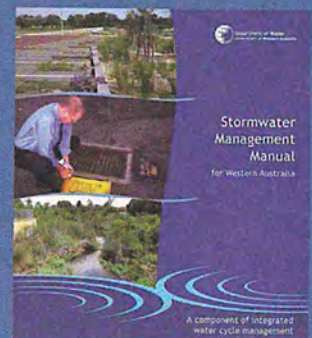


Mr Colin Heinzman (Swan Catchment Council chairman) and Dr Jane Chambers (Trust member and Coastal Catchments Initiatives steering committee)



Stormwater Manual available now

The Trust has supported the Stormwater Management Manual for Western Australia, now available from the Department of Water Drainage and Waterways Branch on (08) 96364 7600.

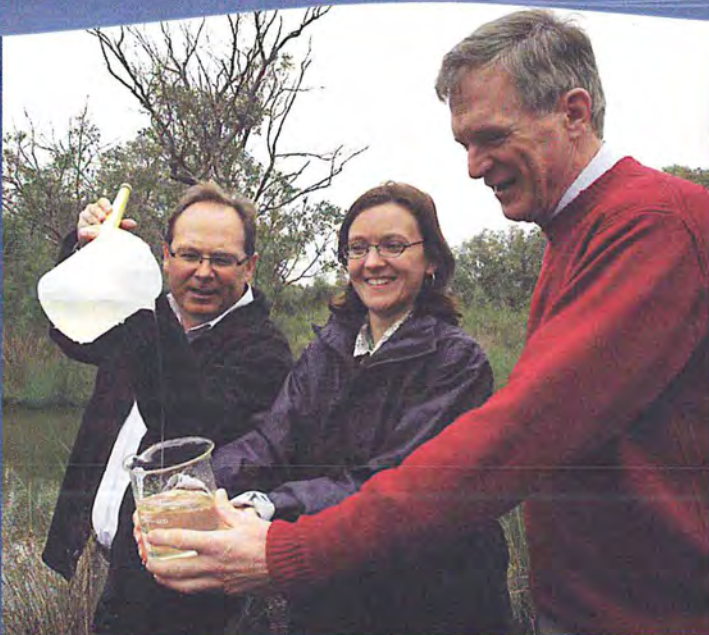




Brainy brunch

As part of National Science Week the Trust held a Brain Break to celebrate their scientific achievements. Staff brought in edible science experiments, showcasing the partnership between creativity and science at work and play. Stimulating saliva glands the scientific snacks included sausage rolls and thixotropic tomato

sauce; static chocolate crackles; the scientific equation for making bubbles in honeycomb ($2\text{NaHCO}_3 \xrightarrow{\text{heat}} \text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3 + \text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{CO}_2$) and more. Brain Breaks were held across Western Australia to raise the profile of science, technology and innovation.



Left to right: Environment Minister David Templeman, Drainage Nutrient Intervention Program manager Rachel Spencer, and Trust chairman Charlie Welker collecting a water sample from the wetland

Wetland working wonders

In August, Environment Minister David Templeman released the 2005-06 performance results for the Liege Street Wetland.



The award-winning wetland's performance in improving water quality from the local urban catchments before discharge into the lower Canning River was assessed by an independent environmental consultancy.

Results showed the wetland is reducing the total amount of nitrogen entering the Canning River from the Liege Street Main Drain by 27 per cent and phosphorus by 45 per cent in critical low-flow conditions when risk of algal blooms is high.

Environment Minister David Templeman said the wetland was part of the State Government's \$6 million commitment to improve water quality through the Trust's Drainage Nutrient Intervention Program.

Breath of fresh air for the Swan

The first oxygenation trial near Guildford Road Bridge on the upper Swan River finished in June. Initially the trial ran for six months from September 2006 to February 2007. However, more testing of dissolved oxygen levels, salinity, biological oxygen demand and water flow was required, and the trial restarted in May.

The trial will determine the effectiveness of the technology, a Vitox unit, supplied by BOC Gases. The results will be incorporated into a feasibility study to determine if long-term and large-scale oxygenation in the upper Swan is viable.

The oxygenation technology has been used in the United Kingdom and China, with the Trust being the first to trial it in the Swan River. The Trust is seeking approvals to continue using the temporary Guildford oxygenation plant, as part of the Swan Oxygenation Program, funded until 2010.

Right: The oxygen tank - bringing oxygen to the Swan River



Gardening for a greater good

Environmental Assessment Consultancy GHD was employed by the Trust to environmentally assess the Great Gardens project. Results confirmed that when implemented the Great Gardens project leads to significant water savings and nutrient reductions, and is an effective way to reduce nutrient loading to our rivers.

On average for each participant making changes learnt in a Great Gardens Workshop, there is a 30-40 per cent reduction in irrigation and nutrient export from gardens. The results conclude that the Great Gardens project has been successful in changing gardening behaviour amongst Perth people. Market research demonstrated 75 per cent of participants in 2006-07 changed their behaviour as a result of the workshops.

This has resulted in a decrease of about 100 kg of phosphorus and one tonne of nitrogen per year due to Great Gardens Workshop outcomes. If all residents in the Swan Canning Catchment adopted Great Gardens principles it is predicted that 5-10 tonnes of phosphorus and 50-100 tonnes of nitrogen per year could be reduced from entering the Swan Canning river system.



The Great Gardens Sensational Spring Workshop Series is now open. Since 2003 more than 13,400 people in the Swan Canning Catchment have attended workshops about sustainable gardening practices for our uniquely Western Australian soils and climate. This spring introduces the *Great Food Gardens* workshops, teaching participants how to grow their own fruit and vegetables using water-wise and fertilise-wise principles. Register soon for these free workshops by calling 1300 369 833 or online at www.greatgardens.info, as workshops are popular.



News in Brief

- The Trust held a workshop in late August to develop strategies for managing the impacts of boating on the Swan and Canning rivers. More than 40 people from boating, fishing, environmental, State and local government and other recreational groups attended to exchange ideas. Valuable feedback was gained from participants on proposed management options to deal with issues including boat wash, foreshore dinghy storage and moorings. Final discussions are now being planned to address some of the more contentious complex issues before a Draft Strategy is released next month for public comment.
- The Red Bull Air Race will take place on Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 November. Last year about 300,000 people were drawn to the Swan River foreshore. The Trust reminds spectators to take care of our rivers while enjoying the event from the foreshores or on the water. To keep our rivers healthy we encourage you to take your rubbish home, take care launching boats, try to avoid dropping anchors on seagrass and enjoy the aerobatic show without damaging foreshore vegetation.



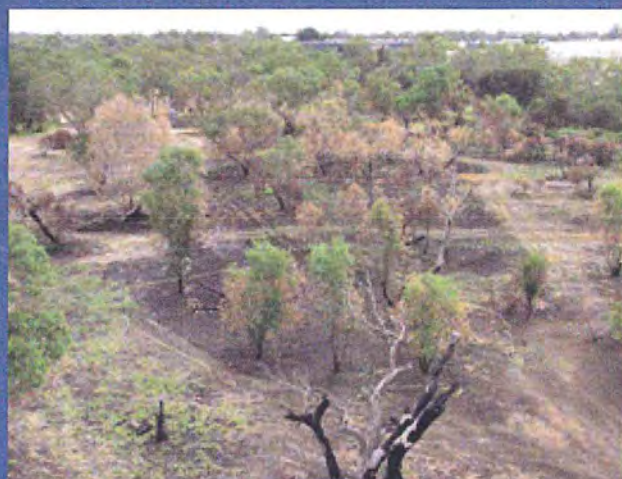
Liege Street generating life

A community summary of the 2005-06 performance results of the Liege Street Wetland is available from the Swan River Trust. The Liege Street Wetland was built in 2004 and was the first major initiative of the Trust's Drainage Nutrient Intervention Program. The primary aim of reducing nutrient delivery to the Canning River has been successful. It has improved water quality as nutrient-enriched water flows through design features of the wetland, resulting in up to a 45 per cent reduction of nutrients entering the Canning River from the Liege Street Main Drain.

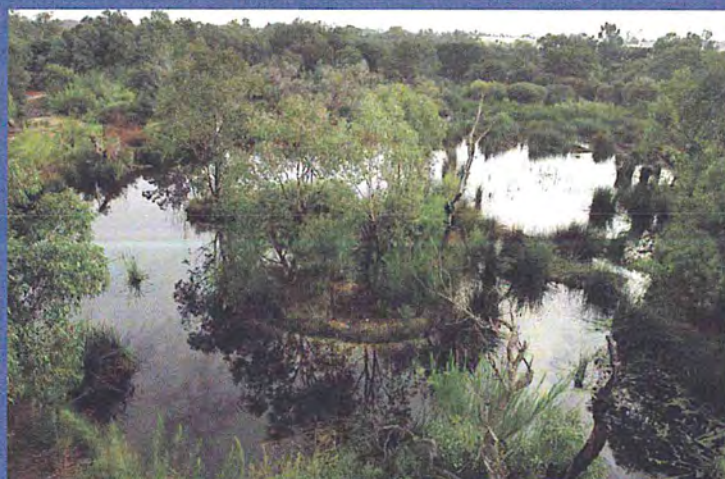
The wetland also contributes to improving habitat by restoring remnant vegetation, attracting wildlife and increasing community enjoyment. More than 70,000 native plants have returned to the site, with an increase in the number of plant species from 20 to 64. The number of birds and breeding pairs at the wetland has also increased, despite last year being the driest winter on record. This is a very positive sign of the wetland's ability to support wildlife. Community enjoyment will be further enhanced with interpretive signs, shelters and boardwalks. A detailed description of the wetland can be found in the community summary report on the Trust website www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au



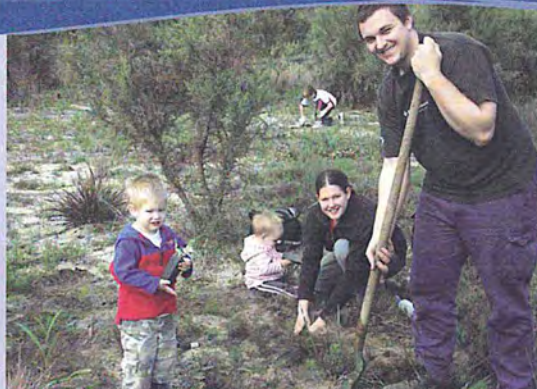
Mountain ducks enjoying attention



Before 2003



After 2006



The Trust supported the North Metro Conservation Group's Planet Ark National Tree Planting Day this winter. Ninety-five volunteers planted more than 4,000 seedlings at Bennett Brook Reserve in Caversham. Planet Ark estimates that more than 290,000 volunteers planted nearly a million seedlings at 3,100 sites across Australia, on the one day.



Testing the water

In celebration of World Environment Day 2007, Environment Minister David Templeman opened the Ribbons of Blue Catchment Activity Day with a Nyungah welcome. The event ran for two days due to an overwhelming response from 450 students from in and around the high-priority Ellen Brook Catchment.

Former Trust Ribbons of Blue coordinator Kelli O'Neill said the Ellen Brook Catchment was identified as a high-priority because more than 30 per cent of nutrients entering the Swan River originated from this region.

"The students rotated through a range of activities such as water testing, macroinvertebrate sampling, games, art activities and catchment model demonstrations" Ms O'Neill said.

"The activities identified how pollutants and nutrients enter the waterways, and helped students understand what they could do to keep the rivers healthy."

"For the future of Western Australia, it is important to educate and involve the students in river protection strategies and teach them how to conserve and enhance our precious river systems".

Other organisations involved were the Department of Environment and Conservation Aboriginal Heritage Unit; North Metro Conservation Group; Chittering Landcare Centre; South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare; Cape to Cape Catchment Groups; and Water Corporation.

Top left: Environment Minister collects macroinvertebrates from Mussel Pool
Top centre: Chatting with children – the Honourable David Templeman welcomes students

Top right: Testing pH levels (from left to right) Bethra Courtney, Arnica Jekabsons and Cooper Coimanos



From left to right: Naomi O'Neil, Martina Chiaradonna, Samantha Richardson, Ashleigh Freer, David Yaqub, Nick Volk and Emma Woodfield - Year 6 students from Ballajura Primary School attended a Catchment Activity Day earlier this year and wrote a pledge about a positive action they could do to keep the rivers healthy

Keep our rivers healthy

Fertilising our State: less is more

Phasing out highly water-soluble phosphorus fertilisers on the Swan Coastal Plain was the topic of discussion at the Fertiliser Action Plan Symposium this winter. Representatives from industry, farming, State Government departments and the Swan River Trust attended the event, which put forward recommendations on how to phase out fertilisers by 2011.

The Trust has supported the phasing-out of highly water-soluble phosphorus fertilisers in the Swan Canning Catchment for many years, because of its negative impacts on the Swan and Canning rivers. Trust chairman Charlie Welker said that fertiliser use in the catchments led to an increase of nutrient loads in the rivers, causing fish deaths and algal blooms.

"The rivers are already under stress and further action is needed to protect the health of our rivers for now and into the future," Mr Welker said.

"The phase-out strategy is the next step forward in involving the wider community to address the issues."

Mr Welker said the Trust understood the need to fertilise sandy soils in the Swan Canning Catchment. "However, by using low water-soluble products, we can significantly reduce the nutrient load entering our rivers," he said.

The Department of Environment and Conservation has collated all comments for the Environment Minister to consult with the Ministers of Agriculture and Food, and Water, before making a final decision on the plan.



Left to right: Fertiliser Panel - Ben Thunder (Pastoralist and Graziers Association), Ross Hardwick (WA Farmers), Dave Wren (Pastoralists and Graziers Association), Rod Hughes (Swan River Trust), Viv Read (Viv Read & Associates), Barry Oates (chair of the Fertiliser Symposium), Nick Drew (Fertiliser Industry Federation of Australia) and Rob Summers (DAFWA)



Left to right: Keiran McNamara, Ray Wallis, Environment Minister David Templeman and Rod Hughes

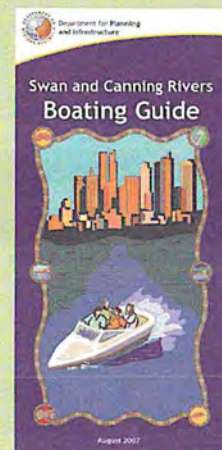


Swan River Trust officers responded when a private boat sunk in Bullcreek Inlet this winter. Leaking fuel was contained to minimise environmental impact on the Canning River.

The Swan River Trust Annual Report 2006-07 is now available on the Trust's website. It contains useful information about the Trust's work in partnership with others to care for the Swan and Canning rivers.

**ACT NOW
FOR THE FUTURE**

The WA State Government has launched a new program – ACT NOW FOR THE FUTURE – a virtual one-stop-shop on sustainable living in Western Australia. The web portal www.actnow.wa.gov.au directs you to initiatives on sustainability and provides a comprehensive hub of information and advice for families and communities about things everyone can do to combat climate change and protect our unique environment. Web links connect you to information about water; energy; recycling; shopping; greener homes; greener transport; and protecting biodiversity. Daily top ten tips are provided, and special did you know information including a range of subjects, with a particular focus on climate change, the greenhouse effect and actions you can take now for the future.



The latest Swan and Canning Rivers Boating Guide was released in August by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure and the Swan River Trust. Please call the Trust on 9278 0900 to receive your free copy.

Saving trees

The first place to start cleaning up the rivers, is on the land. The Swan River Trust goes to great efforts to ensure the vegetation around the Swan and Canning rivers thrives, through many revegetation initiatives, including the Corporate Care Day Program.

Trees play an important role in keeping our rivers healthy by reducing erosion, filtering nutrients and greatly contributing to the community enjoyment of the foreshores.

Chairman Charlie Welker said the Trust does not tolerate intentional damage to trees along the Swan and Canning river foreshores and reminds the Perth community that the Trust can enforce penalties up to \$5,000 if offenders are caught.

Reported cases of environmental vandalism around the rivers have occurred in Applecross, Attadale, Dalkeith, Heirison Island, Melville, Mosman Park, Rossmoyne and South Perth.

Trust officers have been investigating the deliberate damage to trees, with reported cases including removing, ringbarking, poisoning, chopping down, cutting and snapping trees. Approval from the Trust and local government is needed to alter any vegetation in the Trust Development Control Area, including trimming or pruning.



Drilled hole in tree – for poisoning



Result of poisoning – tree dying



Tree stumps resulting from vandalism on our foreshores – Rossmoyne

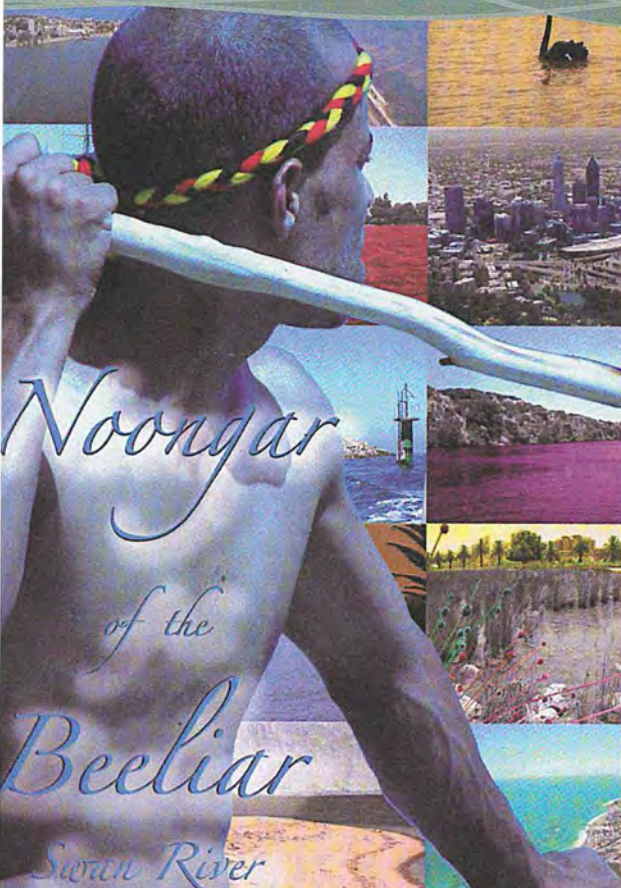


Tree stumps – Swan River

"It is disappointing that local residents may be placing more value on an improved view of the rivers than the native vegetation, which plays a lead role in the beautiful landscape and health of our iconic rivers," Mr Welker said.



Tree ringbarking



"Kura Yeye Mila Boorda"

(From the past to the present and tomorrow)

The Trust is encouraging community learning of indigenous river culture and is promoting a DVD launched in 2004 during the State's 175th celebrations. Narrator Len Collard invites you to sit, look and listen to an indigenous perspective of the Swan River, home of the Whadjuk Noongar. 'Noongar of the Beelias (Swan River)' tells the story of the Rainbow Serpent or Waakal, and its journey down the Avon, twisting and turning across the Swan Coastal Plain creating a place of water, which we now know as the Swan and Canning rivers.

The production was created by Kulbardi Productions, the Australian Indigenous Program at Murdoch University and the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, with support from the State Government. The 22 minute DVD explains how the Rainbow Serpent is fundamental to the creation of Country (Boodjar), Family (Moort) and Knowledge (Kaiijin).

Mr Collard shows us stories and connections about Whadjuk, Belardong and Pinjarreb Noongar peoples' sacred river places, and includes yarns from Noongar Elders Dorothy Winmar, Tom Bennell, Richard Walley and Sealin Garlett.

The Swan river has long been recognised as a Perth icon, evoking a strong sense of place and a special sense of belonging in the heart of most West Australians.

If you would like a copy of 'Noongar of the Beelias (Swan River)' please contact kulbardiproductions@murdoch.edu.au



Dressed in black

Black Swans were spotted relaxing at Langley Park, opposite the Swan River Trust Hyatt office in August. Heavy rains created natural 'ponds' where water failed to drain away from sections of the grass.

Two boys were the first to be seen enjoying themselves in the natural water-park, skimming their boards across the water and sliding around on the slippery surface. Two feathered friends followed suit, deciding to get away from the flock and spend the morning playing in the park.

The scientific name for Western Australia's bird emblem, Cygnus 'atratu's means 'dressed in black'



Skills for Nature Conservation training calendar

October 13

Dune Building – How to Rehabilitate Coastal Vegetation

October 27

Frogs of Perth – Indicators of Urban Ecosystem Health

November 17

Reptilian Wonders of the Swan Coastal Plain

RSVP essential, please contact the Swan Catchment Council on (08) 9423 2924 or (08) 2423 2900

what's on

October

18–19 Solar Car Challenge

22–26 Ribbons of Blue Photographic Competition Display

November

01–28 November **Great Food Gardens** Special Workshops

03–04 Red Bull Air Race

16–25 Fremantle Festival

24 West End Festival

25 The Great Bike Ride

For information on upcoming events, contact the Trust on (08) 9278 0900 or email info@swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au.

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SWAN
RIVER
TRUST

Caring for the Swan and Canning rivers