

RiverView



Government of Western Australia
Summer 2008 | No. 45



Premier awards Trust's program for healthy rivers

The Trust's Healthy Rivers Program took out top honours in the Lifestyle and Environment category of the Premier's Awards 2007.

The awards, which recognise excellence in public sector management, attracted more than 70 submissions across the five categories.

The Healthy Rivers Program aims to protect the environmental health and community benefit of the Swan and Canning rivers by improving water quality.

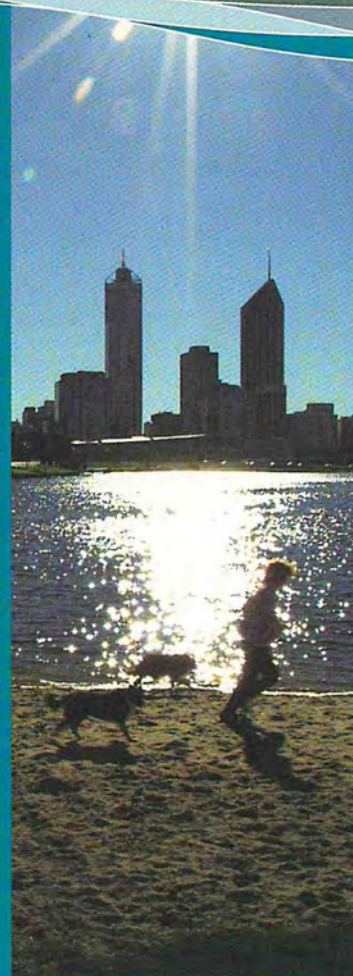
The program was chosen as the winner from a competitive field of finalists including the Department of Fisheries' Sea Lion Exclusion Devices, and Department of Education and Training's Partnerships and Sustainability A Key Context for Learning: Resource Rich, Meaningful and Critical.

The awards were presented by Premier Alan Carpenter during an evening event held at the Conference Centre in November last year.

Trust general manager Rod Hughes said the award recognised the dedication and commitment of Trust Board and staff, a wide range of project partners, stakeholders and volunteer groups.



(L-R) Premier and Trust managers Fiona Bell, Wendy Yorke, Premier Alan Carpenter, Rod Hughes, Anthony Sutton, Kirilee King and Kelly Richmond



Happy New Year

Trust members and staff look forward to working again with you in 2008 and wish everyone a very happy, healthy and successful new year.

Keep our rivers great in 2008!

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Caring for the Swan and Canning rivers

Funding for Riverbank projects

Fourteen local projects are set to benefit from nearly \$1 million in Riverbank funding for 2007-08.

The Trust's Riverbank program aims to improve the health of the Swan and Canning rivers through jointly funding local and State Government river restoration works with land managers.

Funding is provided for a wide range of foreshore restoration and protection works that enhance and manage native vegetation, improve degraded areas, mitigate erosion, and address public amenity values and safety.

Trust program manager Kerry Trayler said it was great to be working in partnership with other organisations to achieve these outcomes.

Since 2002, the Trust has provided more than \$4.25 million to 110 Riverbank projects.

Riverbank projects for 2007-08

- ♣ City of Bayswater Tranby foreshore restoration - phase two - \$58,000
- ♣ City of Gosnells - control of Taro on the Canning River and tributaries - phase three - \$3,850
- ♣ City of Canning - eco education demonstration site - \$23,375
- ♣ City of Swan - Swan Riverside Regional Park in Viveash foreshore rehabilitation - \$149,571
- ♣ Town of Bassendean - Ashfield Parade foreshore restoration - \$97,168
- ♣ City of South Perth - Cloister foreshore erosion control and restoration - \$84,636
- ♣ City of Gosnells - Canning River foreshore weed removal and native plants restored - \$23,900
- ♣ City of Armadale - Canning River sub-projects - \$15,175
- ♣ City of South Perth - Sir James Mitchell Park beach - \$510,000
- ♣ Department of Environment and Conservation - Masons Landing in the Canning River Regional Park foreshore rehabilitation - \$14,360

Top right: Ashfield Parade foreshore in Ashfield before works begin

Bottom right: Tranby foreshore in Maylands in need of repair



Have your say on river protection

Public comment is sought on three Swan River Trust draft planning policies which play an important role in protecting the Swan and Canning rivers.

The policies will guide the assessments of development in and adjacent to, the Trust Development Control Area.

Two policies have been revised – *SRT/D3 Development Setback Requirements* and *SRT/D10 Restaurants, Cafes, Kiosks and Tearooms*. The third policy includes a new amendment – *Jetty Structures in the Swan River Trust Development Control Area (SRT/D21)*.

Draft Policy SRT/D3 Development Setback Requirements ensures developments are at sufficient distance from the river to protect and enhance the riverside environment as a visual, conservation, ecological and recreational resource.

Draft Policy SRT/D10 Restaurants, Cafes, Kiosks and Tearooms ensures that relevant developments contribute to the community use of the river and foreshore without causing detriment to the river, restricting public access, or limiting enjoyment of the rivers.

An amendment to the *Jetty Structures in the Swan River Trust Development Control Area (SRT/D21)* guides the assessment of floating boat lift structures. It ensures that amenity and landscape values, community use and enjoyment of the rivers, effect on navigation of the waterway, and environmental impacts and benefits, will be considered in the Trust's assessment of relevant development proposals.

To view the draft policies or amendment visit www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au

The public comment period is open until close of business Monday, 3 March 2008.

All comments will be considered by the Trust before final policies are adopted.

For further information contact Trust environmental officer Jennifer Stritzke on 9278 0947.

Boating for the future

The community is encouraged to have their say about boating on the Swan and Canning rivers.

The Swan River Trust is seeking public comment on its draft Boating Management Strategy, which will guide the future management direction of boating on the rivers.

It was identified by the community that a sustainable and more coordinated approach was needed to develop a way forward for river boating management.

An increase in boats and a growing West Australian population, has resulted in a large increase in recreational activity on the Swan and Canning rivers.

It is vital that the impacts of these activities are managed, ensuring the rivers are protected for future generations.

The aim of the strategy is to promote the use of the rivers for water craft activities without harming the environment or causing disruption to other river users.

The strategy seeks to provide a coordinated and collaborative approach between local and State governments, the boating industry, community and other river care groups.

The Trust is driving the strategy in consultation with the boating community and regulators. Input already received from these organisations and individuals has led to recommendations in the draft strategy.

The strategy addresses the following issues:

- moorings;
- foreshore dinghy storage;
- boat maintenance practices;
- boat wash and noise;
- fuel and oil discharge;
- boat launching facilities;
- sewage disposal;
- jetties; and
- anchor and boat damage to the riverbed.

Comments received will inform the development of the final Boating Management Strategy. Information is available on the Swan River Trust website, www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au or by calling the Trust on 9278 0900. Closing date for submissions is Friday, 4 April 2008.



Above and below: Floatwells in Liege Street Wetland

Creative flare at Liege Street Wetland

Visitors to Liege Street Wetland will notice it is now brighter and much more colourful.

The usually dull-grey floatwells situated in the wetland, have received a creative overhaul and are now sporting artistic designs from local school students.

Winners in the Trust's Floatwell Design Competition have had their designs selected for painting on the floatwells.

Students from Years 1 to 12 in the Canning area were encouraged to design a piece of art which could be painted on a cylindrical structure.

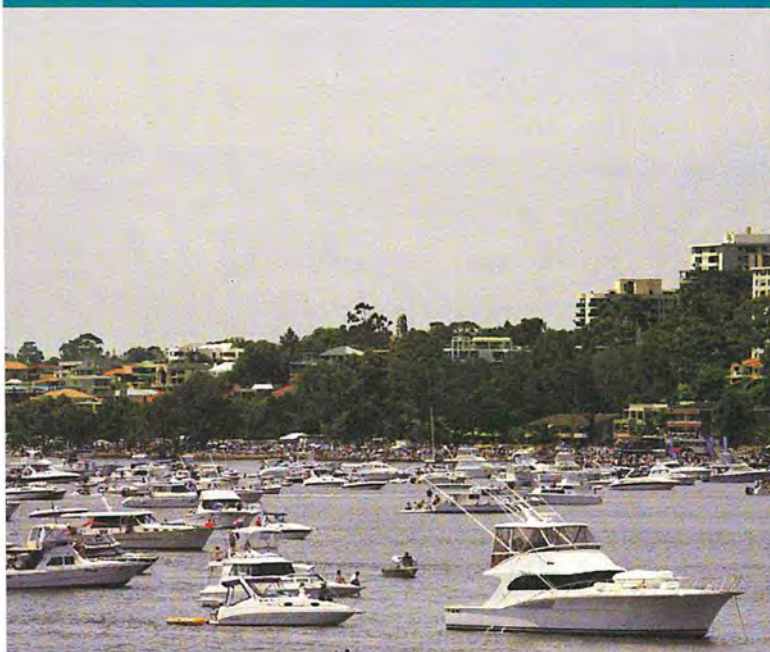
Three entries were chosen from many designs which represented a range of themes including caring for the rivers, Indigenous and European heritage, and flora and fauna.

The winners were Year 12 St Norberts College students Amy Poniatowski and Amy Stevens, and Wilson Primary School Year 5 students Dennis Zhao and Johnny Choi.

The floatwells are essential to the wetland because they house hydrographic equipment which records information on the water quality and level.

Trust program manager Peter Adkins said by adding these bright paintings to the otherwise dull concrete structures, the visual amenity of the area was improved and it gave the students an increased interest in the wetland.

Two floatwells have been painted and the third will be completed early 2008.



Trust works with yacht clubs and marinas to help river health

The Trust met with Swan River yacht clubs and marinas in December to discuss the next step in addressing the presence of tributyltin (TBT) near their riverside facilities.

A study commissioned by the Trust last year confirmed high levels of TBT in sediments and mussels at facilities which operated slipways along the Swan River.

The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss how clubs and marinas could work with the Trust, and departments of Environment and Conservation (DEC), and Health to develop solutions.

The Trust clarified that it is the clubs' and marinas' responsibility to ensure no discharge of contaminants from their operations enters the river and they comply with environmental regulations.

Trust principal scientist Luke Twomey said there was no easy solution to removing TBT from the river.

"We have been encouraging and providing guidance to the clubs on developing environmental management systems, which several facilities have already implemented," he said.

The Trust will continue to manage the issue in consultation with the clubs, marinas, DEC and Department of Health as well as oversee further investigations and audits to ensure appropriate actions are being taken.

TBT may take decades to be completely eradicated from the Swan River, due to the slow breakdown of the substance.



Trust invests in children's future

Year 6 students from Weld Square Primary School attended the 2007 International River Health Conference thanks to support from the Swan River Trust.

Five students and three teachers were the only West Australian primary school representatives who attended the Canberra conference in October.

The conference, based on the successful Kids-Teaching-Kids model, highlighted to the students that looking after their environment will have far-reaching outcomes.

The students' presentation *'The Swanless River: Where Have All the Swans Gone?'* traced pre-white settlement history of the Swan River to present day. It addressed significant environmental changes and the impacts on the health of the rivers through a performance of an original song and activity involving the audience.

Staff and students found the conference empowering and inspiring, which fostered optimism about the future, and promoted a sense of social and environmental responsibility.

Students from Weld Square Primary School presenting at the International River Health Conference



Autumn River Festival

The annual Autumn River Festival is coming up Sunday, 6 April 2008.

The Trust supported event is held at various sites along the Swan River in Bayswater and Belmont.

The fun-filled family day offers many free activities, displays, demonstrations, stalls and a range of tasty foods. Bring the family and stay all day!

The Trust will be hosting two interactive community displays at Riverside Gardens in Bayswater and Garvey Park in Belmont, providing information to help the community understand how their actions impact on the health of the Swan and Canning rivers.

A highlight of the festival will be the popular Great Gardens presenters who will demonstrate how to create beautiful, cost-efficient and river-friendly gardens. There will also be a Trust 'super-scientist' on hand in Bayswater to answer your river science questions.

For more information about the festival visit www.belmont.wa.gov.au

Our changing rivers

A comprehensive study was undertaken by the Trust's Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) addressing the impacts of climate change on the Swan and Canning rivers.

The study identified potential changes to the river system and provided strategies to best manage the adverse affects.

It is the most comprehensive climate change study undertaken on a water body in Australia.

The report was launched in December by the Environment Minister David Templeman at a riverside event hosted by the Trust.

The Minister said with more than 1.5 million people living in the wider Swan Canning Catchment, it was possible the impacts would affect the majority of West Australians.

The changes will impact on the ecology, community social values and economy, and the way people interact with the rivers as a whole.

TAP is a group of 15 experts with a diverse range of expertise in many areas, including climate change, the environment, social science, land use planning and hydrology.

Based on predicative modelling, expert opinions and scientific information, the TAP identified the following five major potential changes to the Swan Canning river system:

- an increase in water and atmospheric temperatures;
- a decrease in winter rainfall and streamflow;

- an acceleration of water level rise;
- a decrease in groundwater levels and consequent flows to drains and streams; and
- an increase in frequency of warm spells and heat waves.

The TAP developed adaptation strategies to address potential impacts and maintain the valuable ecosystem integrity of the river system.

The strategies will continue to evolve as further knowledge and experience in climate change is gained.

Key strategies are:

- Assessing the foreshores for vulnerability to climate change, giving consideration to revegetation, erosion control and set-back control issues.
- Improving water quality through oxygenation, trapping of nutrients and ensuring adequate river flow.
- Utilising water quality monitoring and river computer modelling to predict future changes.
- Managing changes in biodiversity by improving our understanding of changing ecosystems and developing predictive models.
- Protecting infrastructure from increase in water levels by considering design, maintenance and replacement.

These strategies will be implemented through the Healthy Rivers Program.



Diving for a cleaner river

Sunday, 2 March is Clean Up Australia Day and you're invited to dive in and keep our rivers healthy.

The Trust is organising a scuba diving site in the Swan River to clean up the river bed.

For two hours, between 10am and 12 noon, people can don their wetsuits and dive gear, and do their part to clean up the river.

There will be dive masters from the Australian Diving Academy

(ADA) on hand to ensure the safety of all participants.

The site will also include a foreshore spot for people who wish to pick up rubbish on land.

Diving equipment for the event can be hired from ADA at half price.

For more information call Trust communications officer Rachel Wilson on 9278 0914.

Success for property management plan

Works undertaken on a Chittering farm by the Ellen Brookman Integrated Catchment Group and Department of Agriculture in 2002, have proved successful by helping to reduce the amount of nutrients and sediments entering the Ellen Brook this year.

The horse property was suffering from severe waterlogging, wind and water erosion, and salt scalds, and was contributing a significant amount of nutrients and sediment to the brook.

Together with the catchment group and Department of Agriculture, the property owners developed a property management plan to address these issues.

The plan includes revegetation and fencing along the Ellen Brook, funded by the Natural Heritage Trust and Swan Canning Urban Landcare Program. It also included revegetation of a salt scald, establishment of perennial pastures, wildlife corridors, surface water control, bank stabilisation, off-site stock watering, weed control and rotational grazing.

Officers from the catchment group revisited the farm in October last year to monitor its changes and impacts. During the five-year period, a habitat for birds and wildlife has been established, water quality entering the Ellen Brook has improved, and an improvement in the health of stock and aesthetics of the farm were also recorded.

For more information contact the Chittering Landcare Centre on 9571 0400 or chitteringlandcare@inet.net.au

*Above left: Before works began - A degraded creekline entering the Ellen Brook
Left: Five years after revegetation works began*



Trust takes action on vandals

The Trust was forced to take drastic action in an attempt to stop environmental vandalism along the foreshores of the Swan and Canning rivers.

After continuous reports of damage to foreshore trees and the surrounding environment, the Trust erected a large, ugly sign to show the community this behaviour is not acceptable.

In conjunction with the City of Melville a three by 1.8 metre sign was put up along Burke Drive in Attadale where extensive damage was caused to native bushland.

Residents were informed the sign would stay there until vegetation had regrown or been replaced.

The sign received a positive response from the community and many local councils are supportive of the Trust's actions and looking into adopting similar strategies.

Trust chairman Charlie Welker said a new strategy was needed as people weren't listening to our requests to stop harming the natural environment.

"We are not pretending that the new signs are attractive or residents will be pleased," Mr Welker said.

"The Trust is seeking community support in protecting native vegetation to avoid big ugly signs having to be used along the Swan and Canning foreshores."

Right: Tree damage sign on Burke Drive in Attadale



Tree damage in Maylands

Further environmental vandalism

Further damage has been caused to trees along the foreshores of the Swan and Canning rivers during the past month.

Together with local councils, Trust officers have started investigations and are conducting interviews with nearby residents.

- It appears three trees which border a housing development site in Maylands were poisoned. Holes were drilled near the base of a Bangalay (*Eucalypt botryoides*) tree and two bottlebrush trees, and it appears poison was poured in.
- At two sites along Riverton Drive in Shelley, more than 30 casuarina samplings, some up to three metres in height have been cut off at the base.
- A mature eucalypt, along Burke Drive in Attadale was cut down, close to where the Trust's tree damaged sign was erected in November last year.

The Trust encourages the community to report any acts of environmental vandalism to the Trust on 9278 0900 or after hours 0419 192 845.

Racing for a healthier river

River yachties from around Perth took to the ocean in January to race each other in the ninth River Clubs Leighton Offshore Invitation Race, traditionally known as the Swan River Trust Toxic Cup.

Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club (RFBYC) took out top honours for the day by accumulating the most wins across the four divisions to be awarded the Cup.

Divisional winners were:

- Division 1 – Time Bandit skippered by Rob Mennie from RFBYC
- R30 – Nirimba skippered by Peter Edmonds from Royal Perth Yacht Club
- Division 2 – Moondance skippered by Gregory Maddox from RFBYC
- Division 3 – Utter Chaos skippered by Mike MCombe from EFYC

Thirty boats took part in this year's event, which was hosted again by East Fremantle Yacht Club (EFYC).

Conditions were excellent for racing on the ocean, providing just enough of a challenge for the crews.

The cup commemorates the 2000 algal bloom which stopped recreational activities on the Swan River for 12 days. Because the rivers were out of bounds, the sailing clubs quickly found another place to race – off Leighton Beach.

The success of the ocean-based race led to the decision to hold an event every year off the coast.

EFYC has volunteered to host the event again next year.

Yachts racing in the Toxic Cup off Leighton Beach



Ellen Brook

New initiative to improve water quality

The Trust and Shire of Chittering have joined forces to improve water quality in the Swan River.

A nutrient filter is set to be built in the Ellen Brook near Muchea, which will filter water in the brook.

The Ellen Brook Catchment is a high priority area, due to the elevated levels of nutrients entering the Swan River from this region.

The brook contributes up to 37 per cent of the phosphorus and 10 per cent of the nitrogen for the river's total load each year.

The filter will consist of nutrient absorptive rocks, laterite and zeolite, placed in the channel of the brook, acting as a sponge to absorb nutrients from the water as it flows past.

If not addressed, high nutrient levels can result in algal blooms and fish deaths in the Swan River.

The filter is the first stage of new works being undertaken in the Brand Highway Reserve.

The project will include weed control and revegetation to improve the degraded area.

The Ellen Brockman Integrated Catchment Group will organise community and volunteer activities to revegetate the site including the planting of 4,000 native species.

Lucky duck

A duck was given a second chance at life when Waterways officers rescued it from under the Ellam Street jetty in Victoria Park.

A member of the public reported the bird hanging from the jetty, caught on fishing line with a hook through the beak.

Trust Waterways officers David Dean and Davin Greig helped free the duck, which had been caught for about an hour before its rescue.

It took about 20 minutes to cut the hook from the duck's beak, freeing the distressed bird so it could swim away.

Mr Dean said the quick-thinking community member who called the Trust probably saved this duck's life. Other birds and wildlife are not always this lucky.

It is important that people take home their old fishing tackle and lines or throw them in a rubbish bin.

To report distressed wildlife contact Department of Environment and Conservation's 24-hour Wildcare Helpline on 9474 9055.

Left: The lucky duck before the hook was removed



Getting to know the Trust

Noel Nannup - Trust Member

Joining the Trust Board last year, Noel brought with him a wealth of knowledge and experience in Indigenous land management issues. Noel's friendly and approachable personality saw him work as a ranger at Millstream National Park in the Pilbara from 1978 to 1983 and at Geikie Gorge National Park in the Kimberleys from 1983 to 1989. This work inspired him to go on to study Cultural Heritage in Canberra for two and a half years. Since then, Noel has worked as a community liaison officer and played an instrumental role in developing land management courses for Indigenous people at TAFE colleges.



Above left: Noel Nannup



Above right: Jennifer Stritzke enjoying her holiday in Cambodia

Jennifer Stritzke - Trust staff officer

Although she was German-born and raised in the United States, Jennifer calls Australia home. For the past 10 years, Jen has resided in Perth, studying Environmental Science with a major in Environmental Geoscience and Zoology at University of Western Australia, she worked as an environmental scientist at Perth Airport before joining the Trust in October 2006. The self-confessed teenage rebel and chocolate-addict is committed to caring about the health of our rivers and takes her position as environmental officer in Statutory Planning seriously. She is dedicated to ensuring all development applications that pass her desk maintain or improve the ecological health or community benefit of the rivers. Jen also takes her weekends pretty seriously, enjoying the great outdoors, particularly beaching and camping.

Change of details?

The Trust is updating its Riverview contacts database and would like to hear from you. Please contact Trust communications officer Simone Meakins on 9278 0927 or e-mail Simone.meakins@dec.wa.gov.au if your contact details have changed or you would like to be included/omitted from the database.

Glowing foreshore explained

Trust principal scientist Dr Luke Twomey put a member of the public's mind at ease last year when he explained the source of an eerie light on the sand along a section of the Swan River foreshore.

The community member was walking her dog early morning along the foreshore near the University of Western Australia.

Each time her foot, or the dog's paw hit the sand, a strange blue/green light illuminated from the ground.

She described it as similar to a torch being shone onto her foot.

Because she was unsure as to what was causing the light, she emailed the Trust for advice.

Dr Twomey was quick to reply, explaining that the light was probably due to bioluminescence - light emitted from a living organism. In this case, it was most likely from a type of algae in the beach sand.

He said the harmless algae (dinoflagellates) were common in the rivers at different times of the year, and when stimulated by movement they glowed. The current scientific theory suggests when algae are chased by predators they glow to attract larger predators to eat the smaller algae predators.

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ISSN 1324-0404

Printed on 100% recycled paper



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