



# Avon Catchment Council Bi-monthly Newsletter

www.avonnrm.org.au

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## Newdegate farmers working together to protect Wheatbelt

*More than two thousand hectares of globally-important remnant bushland around Newdegate will receive long-term conservation protection.*

A new conservation covenant has just been registered to title by Newdegate farmers Ashley and Fanny McDonald. The Wheatbelt farming couple have become conservation champions and not only are they protecting their bush, but they have also enlisted a number of their friends, neighbours and relatives to do the same.

The McDonalds' involvement with Healthy Ecosystems began in 2006, after a chance meeting with WWF project officer Mike Griffiths which led to WWF and the Western Australia Herbarium conducting a flora survey on their property.

The survey uncovered a treasure-trove of native plants and animals, including numerous orchids, a rare species of eucalypt and bush-stone curlews, an increasingly rare bird species dependent on bushland areas like those found on Ashley and Fanny's farm.

After learning about the wealth of biodiversity on their property, the McDonalds were inspired to preserve it. Through WWF and the Avon Catchment Council they successfully applied for funding to erect over seven kilometres of fencing to protect 276 hectares of bushland from grazing and began the process of developing a voluntary conservation covenant. Delighted with the conservation results on their property, the McDonalds were keen to spread the word.

"Knowing that many of our friends, neighbours and relatives have amazing patches of bush like ours we started telling them about the Healthy Ecosystems project," Mr McDonald said.

It didn't take long for the word to get out and WWF project officers were soon busy conducting flora surveys at six more properties around Newdegate and helping more farmers erect another 42 kilometres of fencing.



**L to R: David, Jesse, Ashley, Suzy and Holly McDonald**

One of the landholders particularly keen to be involved was Mr McDonald's brother-in-law, Rob Newman. With the help of Healthy Ecosystems Mr Newman erected 25 kilometres of fencing and placed over 300 hectares of native bushland under voluntary management agreements. He is currently in negotiation to place a further 687 hectares under a conservation covenant.

Mr Newman is enjoying watching the fenced bush on his property come back to life. "It's amazing how the mallee trees have reshot since the wet summer we had. That never would have happened if the sheep had been able to get in there, they would have nibbled it all off".

WWF project officer Helena Mills has been working with these landholders over the last two years and is thrilled to see so many farming families show strong commitment to protecting precious biodiversity.

"With less than seven per cent of the original bush left in the Wheatbelt, it is really encouraging to see Wheatbelt farmers protecting the precious native bush we have left through fencing, voluntary management agreements and covenants," Ms Mills said.

The Avon Catchment Council's Healthy Ecosystems program is delivered by WWF-Australia with funding from Australian Government.

## From the Chair

*Hello Everyone,*

*It's the season to get planting and more than 700,000 trees are now on the road and headed to a farm near you.*

Avon Catchment Council has been able to supply the seedlings but it couldn't happen without the hard work of landholders who will be the ones out on tree planters, getting them all in the ground. Committed individuals or groups like the Bodallin Catchment crew who will shortly be planting their one millionth since 2000. This is a great achievement.

We know landholders are keener than ever to revegetate their properties because our incentive program had more applicants than we could provide seedlings for. This is an important role of the ACC, to attract more investment to help fight salinity, water logging, wind erosion and improve biodiversity. Given all that – we've had some great rain, and this will hopefully ensure tree planting programs look just as good as some of the crops now getting away

Since our last newsletter we've had the long awaited announcement of the Australian government's Caring for Our Country funding. In the Avon we had our business plan approved and our proposed projects accepted by the Australian government, which means this year's \$3.926 million of funding can begin to flow. Other cross regional bids were not funded so we'll have to work even harder and smarter.

On a brighter note, congratulations to the Local Government Organisations of Council. The WEROC/NEWROC team of NRMOs (Natural Resource Management Officers) were recently successful in a \$786 000 application under Landcare funding. A great result for the Yilgarn sub-region and our environment.

The State's NRM regional review has now been released with the Government's response to the recommendations. These can be seen at [www.nrm.wa.gov.au](http://www.nrm.wa.gov.au). One of the highlights is the multiplier effect investment in regional groups can provide. Here in WA we can boast a return of over \$6 for every \$1 invested. This is what can happen when you develop good partnerships and collaborations between landholders, communities, local government and government agencies.



**Glenice Batchelor, ACC Chairperson**

In conjunction with the review, we've been working very hard looking at the ACCs structure and function and how we expect to go forward. The Director's have now completed a review of the constitution to allow membership and consideration is being given to a new name to reflect a new way of doing business and working with our community to manage our region's natural resources better. The focus will be on collaborations and partnerships to achieve our objectives.

Under the Sustainable Agriculture banner of Caring for Country funding from the Australian government, our number one target will now be tackling wind erosion. This will allow us to build further on work we've already done with our communities support. Other programs and projects will have to wait for now, until further funding can be attracted but we haven't given up.

We are still waiting to see how the \$30 million promised to NRM from the WA State Government will be allocated and how much will be available to regions and on-ground activities in communities.

More next newsletter. Happy planting!

**Glenice Batchelor**  
**ACC Chairperson**

## Around the Regions

WEROC NRM Group in partnership with the NEWROC NRM Group Project 08/09



Photo courtesy Sally Rayner: Members of the NEWROC and WEROC NRM Groups being shown project seedlings by Dustin and Lisa McCreery from Chatfields Nursery. L to R: Samantha Pickering (Trayning and Nungarin), Tracey Hobbs (Mukinbudin), Rosie Bogle (Koorda and Wyalkatchem), Lisa McCreery (Chatfields), Kara Hatch (Westonia and Yilgarn), Brad Thompson (Kellerberrin) and Dustin McCreery (Chatfields). Absent- Sally Rayner (Bruce Rock), Tobias Vudzijena (Merredin).

***The Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils (WEROC) NRM in partnership with the North Eastern Wheatbelt Regional Organisation of Councils (NEWROC) NRM undertook adoptive Innovative Practices to Improve the Resilience of Farming Systems in the Northern and Eastern Wheatbelt of Western Australia.***

With funding from the Australian Government through the 2008-2009 Caring for our Country funding program, the project will plant in excess of 700,000 seedlings of five economic perennial plant options (Brushwood, Sandalwood hosts, Casuarina obesa, Saltbush and Oil Mallees) across their landscape and assist in the establishment of over 400 ha of lucerne. Chatfields Tree Nursery, Parnells Tree Nursery and Koorda Farm Trees are growing the 700,000 plus seedlings required for the project.

In order to manage the large scale logistics of the project, a huge amount of effort has been involved contributed by NRM Officers within the NEWROC and WEROC Regions, particularly Sally Rayner, the Project Co-coordinator. Projects such as these are essential and extremely rewarding as they provide landholders with the means to restore their land. Developing sustainable farming practices improves the resilience of the land to various threats such as wind and water erosion, along with climate change. Furthermore, with a growing demand from landholders for trees and perennial

species, bodies such as the WEROC and NEWROC NRM groups are essential in their ability to successfully deliver such projects through their networks with landholders, shires and key industry organisations.

Planting economically viable perennial within already existing farming systems is one approach which is endorsed by the WEROC and NEWROC NRM groups as an option for developing resilient farming systems; a necessity if the Wheatbelt is to maintain its productivity for future generations.

With 55 landholders across nine local government authorities, this project is bound to make its mark in natural resource management. It is hoped that many more projects such as this will be developed in the future, allowing landholders across the WEROC and NEWROC regions to jointly continue to develop resilient and sustainable farming systems, ensuring that their land will be productive for generations to come.

WEROC is an organisation consisting of five Local Government Authorities: Shire of Bruce Rock, Shire of Kellerberrin, Shire of Merredin, Shire of Tammin and Shire of Westonia. NEWROC is an organisation consisting of six Local Government Authorities; Shire of Koorda, Shire of Nungarin, Shire of Mt Marshall, Shire of Mukinbudin, Shire of Trayning, and Shire of Wyalkatchem. Both WEROC and NEWROC NRM are working together for the coordinated delivery of NRM in the region.



## Initiatives, collaborations and partnerships

### Burlong Pool update



**Burlong Pool team**  
L to R: Nathan Heal, Angus McGuire, Julie Moody, Bernie Kelly, Veronica McGuire, Lourie Glass, Greg Waburton, Peter Weatherly, Natarsha Woods, Anthony Mazzarol, Raymond Porters, Jeffery Muir, Jesse Fernihough, Jess Jolley, David Glead.

*The Avon Catchment Council has partnered with the Department of Water, Avon Valley Environmental Society the Shire of Northam and other funding bodies to undertake environmental works to restore what was once a large and very deep expanse of water at Burlong Pool.*

The Department of Water in collaboration with Mission Australia is coordinating an eight person Green Corps team, led by Greg Warburton. At Burlong Pool the team have been working closely with the Avon Valley Environmental Society, in particular, working hard to develop an extension of the 'Dortnj Koorlinny' (Nyungar for walking together) trail from the town of Northam. The team have also produced a foot bridge

and undertaken a community tree planting event, re-vegetating the site with 1500 native species.

Other activities at Burlong Pool include the design and installation of 120 concrete bollards, general site cleanup, erosion control and weed suppression through the spreading of tonnes of mulch supplied by the Shire of Northam.

Partners are also working towards the development of interpretive signage funded by Avon Catchment Council (ACC) and the Foundations for Regional and Rural Recovery (FRRR). These will be installed highlighting the cultural significance of Burlong Pool to the Nyungar People.

## Featured story

### Recording Traditional Knowledge with Avon Youth Services

*An exciting new project in the Avon Valley will help the Aboriginal youth of Northam learn from elders about the cultural significance of heritage sites and record this knowledge for future generations.*

The Avon Catchment Council, as part of the Network Support and Development Incentive Scheme, has provided funding for the Avon Youth Community and Family Services to produce a documentary DVD through the Recording of Traditional Knowledge project.



**L to R: Sue Carter, Yvonne Kickett, Nancy Jones, Veronica McGuire, Debrah Moody, Maryanne Slater, Ruth Hayden, Cilla Kuiper, Janet Kickett and Julie Moody .**

...Continued Page 5

## Recording Traditional Knowledge with Avon Youth Services



*Nyungar Elder Ruth Hayden with local children at the woman's birthing site. Photo: Cilla Wilson*

*...Continued from Page 4*

Under the guidance of Sue Carter, an experienced Youth Support Worker from Avon Youth Community and Family Services, the Aboriginal youth of the Avon Valley have taken part in the filming of traditional Elders talking about heritage sites in the Northam area, including the Womens Birthing Place, Mens Meeting Place, Old Reserve, New Reserve, and Burlong Pool.

Sue has been the driving force behind the projects development and she holds firm the belief that the project will inform and educate indigenous youth of the Elders connection to the land both historically and spiritually.

'This project is important in bringing community together.' said Ms Carter.

'The Aboriginal community don't get many opportunities in this town, so this project provides young people with an activity to participate in'.

It is hoped that this sharing of cultural knowledge will encourage Aboriginal youth to appreciate and contribute to natural resource management, with

the possibility of developing heritage management plans for the future conservation of the sites.

'This project allows young people to identify culturally significant sites and learn about career choices concerning caring of these sites' said Ms Carter.

'It also allows Elders to re-connect with young people, and document their cultural heritage providing them with a timeless tangible DVD for future generations'.

With the help of experienced camera operator Nancy Jones, the filming took place in the week of 22nd-26th June, with plans for the documentary to be edited and finalised by the end of July. The documentary will be launched through a special premiere in August.

The funding for this project has been made available through the Australian Government Caring For Our Country Project.

## Featured Project

### WA Wheatbelt rich in wetlands

*A project aimed at identifying wetlands in the WA wheatbelt has revealed more than 20,000 scattered throughout the Avon River Basin.*

Scientists have spent the past three years mapping salt lakes, granite outcrops, fresh water lakes and claypans in the region. The research has been funded by the Avon Catchment Council to help identify, classify and evaluate the wetlands, often rich in plant and animal life

The ACC's Rebecca Palumbo said the work is important because so much biodiversity in the region is unaccounted for.

"This is the first time salt and fresh water lakes, granite outcrops and claypans have been mapped and audited for their conservation value in the wheatbelt," Rebecca Palumbo said.

"Salt lakes are often not considered by the community as having a value when it comes to flora and fauna, but this isn't the case," she said.

"Salt lakes in good condition can support more than 20 species of aquatic invertebrate fauna including brine shrimp and insect larvae, which in turn support waterbirds such as the Banded Stilt.

"Vegetation that is in good condition and fringing the wetlands also provides refuge for populations of threatened flora and fauna that are often found nowhere else."

Satellite imagery was used to pin point the wetlands and an evaluation system developed based on criteria such as the amount of vegetation in and around the wetland, known occurrences of threatened flora and fauna and the risk of salinity.

About 11,500 wetland basins and 5800 granite outcrops, all greater than one hectare in size, have now been mapped, classified and evaluated in the region.



*Lake Bryde south east of Lake Grace .  
Photo: Liz Kington*

The Department of Environment and Conservation was contracted by the Avon Catchment Council to develop the classification and evaluation system. Scientists from DEC also mapped and surveyed a cross section of the wetlands for ground truthing.

The ACC's Rebecca Palumbo said the project had also produced an environmental assessment tool for future use.

"We now have a digital data base that shows the location and assigns a conservation value to these wetlands," Rebecca Palumbo said.

"This tool can also be used when any potential development is being considered in the wheatbelt that could impact on a wetland.

"It means wetlands of high conservation significance can be protected and improved."

The project has been funded through the Avon Catchment Council with the support of the Australian and State Governments and is due for completion in September 2009.

Information about the project can now be viewed online at: <http://www.avonnaturaldiversity.org>

*...Continued Page 7*

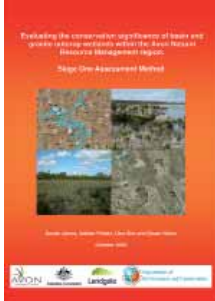


# WA wheatbelt rich in wetlands

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The following wetlands publications can be download at:

[http://www.avonnrm.org.au/reports\\_publications/Biodiversity](http://www.avonnrm.org.au/reports_publications/Biodiversity)



Evaluating the conservation significance of basin and granite outcrop wetlands within the Avon Natural Resource Management region:  
Stage One Assessment Method



Evaluating the conservation significance of basin wetlands within the Avon Natural Resource Management region:  
Stage Three Assessment Method

## Spotlight on

### NRM Nyungar Dictionary published

*Nitcha boodjar koonyarn nitcha koorl buranginy boodjar karluk maya koonyarn wah.*

*Demam demam and maam wiern kia moort koonyarn.*

*Demam and maam noonookurt, boodjar koonyarn karla koorliny.*

*Koorlongka boorda ngeenunyiny.*

Those words say that this is my country where I belong. This is demam and maam, my grandmother and grandfather's land, this is their land where their spirits move now. Boorda or later on, this is going to be the responsibility of my children and my children's children, their home and this place will always be linked to their spirit

(Reverend S. Garlett 2002).

**The Avon Catchment Council together with the Nyungar people as partners in the NRM Nyungar Dictionary project, represent an investment in the future of our children and future generations.**

Knowledge of their origins through Nyungar stories, song lines and beliefs of the flora and fauna as well as the significant places and sites, will enhance their value inside the Avon Catchment community.

We hope this document will make a positive contribution to the ongoing development of Nyungar/Wedjella relations within the Avon Catchment Region. We encourage the use of the language to promote Nyungar engagement in natural resource management and to demonstrate intimate Nyungar knowledge (Katadjin) of their traditional lands (Budjar) and its biodiversity. We want to promote our words, our names and our places across this region

and we would like to work with all people to better care for our Budjar. This was the sentiment shared by all Elders who contributed to this work.

Oral McGuire

The Dictionary can be downloaded from:

[http://www.avonnrm.org.au/documents/nyungar\\_nrm\\_dictionary](http://www.avonnrm.org.au/documents/nyungar_nrm_dictionary)



# NRM Nyungar Dictionary published

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### NYUNGAR NRM WORDLIST FOR THE AVON CATCHMENT REGION

#### NATURAL ELEMENTS

SKY		WORL
Sun		Ngangk
Sunlight		djidar
Moon		Miyak
Moonlight		Mikang
Cloud		maar
Rain Cloud		Mari warabiny
Wind cloud		maar
Lightning		Babanginy
Thunder		Malkar / mariga
Hot weather		karlawoorliny
Cold weather		Nyittiny / ngirdiny
Dew		djooly
Frost		koorbon
Mist, fog	Dudja / djindi	
Star	djindun / djurnt	
Meteor / falling star	Binar	
Shadow	Karla-wirliny / Malidji / norlok	
Heat of sun	Dudja / dudjadona	
Rainbow	walken	
Shade	Murdak / norlok / nowal	
Land breeze	Nangkart	
Wind blowing dust	Keniny	
Willy-willy	wanbaar	
Wind	Maam-marang	
Dust	dooka	
Dusty (becoming)	Budjar-dooga	
Empty	Wirt / woori	
Full	Moorat / doontj	
Flat country, plain	Barnatj	
River	Bilya	
Swamp country	moyutj	
Rock, stone	Boya	
Ground, earth, land	Budjar / budjara	
Country (of origin/belonging)	Budjar / budjara	
Camping / Dwelling place	Kornt / kaylap / karla-mia	
Hill, mountain	Kaat / kaata	
Fire, firewood, Camp	Karla / karl-boorn	
Cave	Yorakal / Kornt	
Sand	kwongkan	
Sand plain	Kwongkan / budjara	
Muddy, swampy ground	Nharna	
Dirt, sand, clay	Yalya / yaly	
Ochre	Warilgi	
Horizon	Bokadja / mumbakiy	
Parched ground	Kulbar	
Rock hole (water)	Ngama	
Pool water	Kep wari	
Path	Bidi	
<b>SEASONS</b>		
Summer (Dec-Jan)		Birak
Autumn (Feb-Mar)		Bunuru
(April-May)		Djeran
Winter (Jun-Jul)		Makaru
(Oct-Nov)		Kambarang
Spring (Aug-Sept)		Djilba
<b>WATER</b>		
Horizon		KEP/KEPA
Rain		Mumbaki / bokadja
Rain coming		Burong / djart
Water		Kep koorliny
Running water		Kep/kepa
Rain water		kepitj
Waterless / dry / drought		Kep midjal
Heavy rain		Kep boort
Water hole/rock pool		Kep boorunginy
Creek /gully		ngama
Damp		birl
Misty rain (Death cloud)		balyan
Drinking		doodja
Frost		doorakiny
Honey and water drink		koorbon
Lake		djilyaa
		ngarditj

Sun - Ngangk



Moon - Miyak



Fire, firewood, Camp -  
Karla / karl-boorn



Pool water - Kep wari



Cloud - maar

Extract from the Nyungar dictionary with added photos