

## **Works underway to save Katrine Pool**

**Sunday, 19 December 2010**

Work has begun to remove sediment from the historic Katrine Pool in the Avon River.

The \$114,000 project is funded by the Swan River Trust as part of its [Healthy Rivers Action Plan](#) (HRAP) and was made possible by an additional \$3.3million funding boost from the State Government in May this year.

Trust Healthy Rivers Coordinator Debbie Besch said that infilling of river pools is a significant problem in the Avon river system and leads to poor water quality, algal blooms and loss of habitat for native fish and macroinvertebrates.

“The pools also have a special cultural significance to local Aboriginal communities who are supportive of the work,” she said.

“Restoring Katrine not only helps to protect the Avon River, it protects river pools further downstream in the Swan River like Walyunga from filling up with sediment.”

“Filling of river pools also reduces the opportunity for the community to use the river for recreational activities.

“When the project is finished, later this year we will have removed approximately 6000m<sup>3</sup> of sediment. That’s enough to fill more than two Olympic-sized swimming pools.”

The Katrine Pool work is just one of several HRAP projects underway in the Avon Catchment.

“The Trust is also funding foreshore revegetation using native species and fencing along the Avon to reduce the level of nutrients and sediment making their way into the system,” Ms Besch said.

“Our work complements other great projects being done by the Department of Water and Wheatbelt NRM.”

The State Government allocated an extra \$3.3 million for projects to protect the Swan Canning Riverpark in 2010-2011. Funding was targeted towards projects that are critical to the rivers’ health and securing the waterway for future generations of Western Australians.

The 1960’s River Training Scheme (RTS) is one of the main factors responsible for increased sedimentation of the Avon.

The RTS deepened the river and removed vegetation so floodwaters would flow out of the catchment quickly. However by speeding up the river flow, it also meant a lot more sediment moved quicker and further downstream.

Work on the Avon is critical as it contributes 69 per cent of the total nitrogen and 43 per cent of the total phosphorous annual load into the Swan Canning Riverpark.

## **Ellen Brook community invited to discuss wetland treatment system**

**Sunday, 28 November 2010**

The Swan River Trust is inviting the Ellen Brook community to attend a consultation evening on Wednesday 8 December to discuss a proposed wetland treatment system at the end of the Ellen Brook catchment.

Nutrient runoff is a major cause of stress on the Swan and Canning rivers, and Ellen Brook is the biggest contributor of all the coastal catchments.

The Swan River Trust is working with CSIRO, Ellen Brockman Integrated Catchment Group, City of Swan and other state government agencies on the feasibility for a wetland treatment system at the end of the Ellen Brook catchment.

This is one of many initiatives to curb nutrient flow into the river and the Trust wants to meet with local residents to discuss local issues.

Swan River Trust Environmental Officer Alex Hams said that interested residents are invited to a meeting at Swan Valley Oasis Resort in Henley Brook.

“Project background and three concept designs for a proposed nutrient stripping wetland treatment system in Belhus will be presented for discussion to gather feedback to help guide the planning process,” Mr Hams said.

“It’s an important project for the community to get involved in and we encourage as many as possible to attend.

Nutrients flowing into the river can cause algal blooms and fish deaths in rivers. The Trust wants to work with the community to minimise the amount of nutrients entering the rivers,” he said.

For more information, or to RSVP please call Alex Hams on 9278 0964 or [email Alex Hams](#).

Ellen Brook Wetland Treatment System Consultation  
Wednesday 8 December  
6.30pm (for a 7.00pm start) until 9.00pm  
Swan Valley Oasis Resort, Henley Brook

## **Jellyfish alert for Freshwater Bay to Fremantle Harbour**

**Thursday, 25 November 2010**

The Swan River Trust has alerted people using the Swan River for recreational activities that a swarm of jellyfish, commonly known as stingers, has been seen in the river around Freshwater Bay, and may extend downstream as far as Fremantle Harbour.

People are advised that swimming or other activities that involve direct contact with the water in this area of the river carry the risk of coming in contact with these jellyfish and receiving a nasty sting.

Swan River Trust Principal Scientist Dr Jeff Cosgrove said the jellyfish have previously been identified as the species *Carybdea xaymacana*.

“While this species is a common ‘stinger’ in waters off Perth and between Geraldton and Busselton, it is unusual to find a swarm of this size in the Swan River,” Dr Cosgrove said.

The Department of Health recommends that stings should be treated immediately by flushing with salt water and applying cold packs. Do not rub the sting. Stings cause moderate pain for up to two hours, and some swelling and redness. Medical assistance should be sought if shortness of breath is experienced or symptoms persist or worsen. If in doubt seek medical advice.

The Trust encourages the community to report any river issues to the Trust on (08) 9278 0900 during office hours or 0419 192 845 after hours.

## **Deputy Chair farewelled after six years**

**Tuesday, 23 November 2010**

The Trust has farewelled Deputy Chair Dr Jane Chambers after more than six years on the Trust board.

Dr Chambers, a senior lecturer in aquatic ecology at Murdoch University, attended her last board meeting with the Trust on November 8.

With 25 years of research into algae, aquatic plants, nutrients dynamics and eutrophication of freshwater and estuarine systems behind her, Trust Chairman Jim Freemantle said Dr Chambers' expertise in aquatic ecology would be missed.

"Jane has been the best kind of board member: challenging, supportive and demonstrably committed to the shared vision that drives the Trust," Mr Freemantle said.

"Jane's work on the Healthy Rivers Action Plan and Swan Canning Water Quality Improvement Plan are just two examples of how we have benefited from her technical knowledge and willingness to take on a heavy workload beyond Board meetings.

"We wish Jane well in her future work. I am sure the Trust will collaborate with Jane through other avenues."

## **New plan to manage small boats and dinghies on river shorelines**

**Monday, 22 November 2010**

Local councils and the Swan River Trust have developed a plan to manage private dinghies stored on the shoreline of the Swan Canning Riverpark.

The new policy will give foreshore land managers the flexibility to use an approach suitable to the local area.

Trust Riverpark Manager Chris Mather said rising dinghy numbers were affecting the health and amenity of some parts of the river, so it was time to put a management plan in place.

“The Dinghy Management along the Swan Canning Riverpark Shoreline policy applies to the entire Riverpark and essentially requires storage of dinghies on the foreshore to be managed in a way that is not detrimental to the environment and public use of the foreshore,” Mr Mather said.

“The Trust is working with relevant local government authorities to implement the plan and this may result in no dinghy storage in some locations, and managed storage systems in others.

“We’ll help local councils with this decision making, and support any decision that is consistent with the policy.”

The new policy stems from recommendations of the Boating Management Strategy for the Swan Canning Riverpark (Feb 2009) and was finalised following an extensive period of stakeholder consultation and a three month public comment period.

City of Melville Manager Parks and Environment Ian Davis said that while the storage of dinghies on the foreshore has been an accepted historical practice, in most situations it has never been formally endorsed or approved.

“The increase in boat ownership and moorings has also led to a proliferation of dinghies being left on the foreshore and it’s now time to address the environmental and public amenity problems arising from the unmanaged dinghy storage,” Mr Davis said.

“The City of Melville is considering if dinghy storage will be supported and if so where and how will this be managed.”

## **River cleanup costs paid by offender**

**Sunday, 14 November 2010**

A careless act of river pollution has resulted in a \$450 fine and more than \$5,000 cleanup costs for a local business owner.

The big bill came after the Swan River Trust investigated and issued infringements under the Environmental Protection Act Regulations 2004 and Swan and Canning Rivers Management Regulations for washing several litres of paint into the Canning River.

In August this year, a yellow plume in the river at Salter Point was quickly reported by several members of the public.

The Swan River Trust was able to contain the paint and use a liquid waste disposal truck to extract the contaminated water.

Trust Riverpark Manager Chris Mather said the incident should serve as a reminder for the whole community that the Riverpark is not a dumping ground.

"In this case it was a lapse in judgement by an employee, but that's just not good enough when it comes to the health of the rivers," Mr Mather said.

"People need to take care and consider the impact of their actions on the rivers."

"If people do harm the river environment, whether deliberately or inadvertently, we will investigate and prosecute those found responsible."

Mr Mather said the successful outcome of this case could not have been possible without the quick reporting by members of the public.

"The community has an important role as extra 'eyes on the river' and we encourage anyone who sees anything suspicious in the Riverpark to contact the Trust on 9278 0900 or after hours on 0419 192 845.

## **Dolphins make guest appearance for Hollywood**

**Thursday, 11 November 2010**

A pair of Swan River dolphins made a surprise guest appearance during a Hollywood Primary School trip to Matilda Bay Reserve in Crawley this week.

The Year Seven students participated in a joint Ribbons of Blue and Dolphin Watch excursion to the reserve and took part in a Macroinvertebrate Snapshot to identify water-dwelling macroinvertebrates.

River Guardians program manager Marnie Giroud said the students spotted the dolphins during a riverside walk to learn about the European and Aboriginal heritage of the Swan Canning Riverpark.

“The appearance of the dolphins, which were herding fish, led to a discussion with the students about dolphin watching and identification,” Ms Giroud said.

Ribbons of Blue coordinator Jo Murray said the Macroinvertebrate Snapshot helped students understand the ecology of the Swan Canning Riverpark and their local wetlands, and consider how to take better care of them.

Macroinvertebrates are small animals without backbones which live all or part of their life cycle in a waterbody and are big enough to see with the naked eye.

“Macroinvertebrates are good indicators of river health,” Ms Murray said.

“The snapshot allows students to sample the water quality and learn how the tiny creatures and the environment interact.”

Students studied the interdependence of life in the rivers and the physical environment through activities that included:

- background information on habitats, food chains and classification, and the importance of 'macros' to the ecosystem;
- the importance of minimising harm on the river by doing things like removing rubbish, sticking to speed limits and picking up dog waste; and
- pre and post-excursion activities showing students how they can make a difference to river and wetland health.

“Students will also get involved with the Trust’s partner Keep Australia Beautiful, to Adopt-A-Spot and clean the area of river they visited,” Ms Murray said.

To find out more, contact the Trust on (08) 9278 0900 or visit the [Ribbons of Blue website](#).

## **WA's Chief Scientist to launch blitz on marine litter**

**Thursday, 4 November 2010**

The spotlight is on WA's fishers and boaters with the launch of a new marine debris education and awareness program that aims to clean up the State's waterways and protect wildlife.

Clean Marine, a joint initiative between Keep Australia Beautiful WA, Department of Fisheries, the Swan River Trust, Department of Transport and the Department of Environment and Conservation, will provide information and resources to recreational fishers and boaters.

Prof Lyn Beazley will launch the Clean Marine campaign at at the Fremantle Kite Festival, South Beach, Fremantle on Saturday, November 6.

There will be displays highlighting the impact of marine litter on wildlife.

For more information visit [Keep Australia Beautiful](#).



## **Works start on second Swan River oxygenation site**

**Thursday, 4 November 2010**

Environment Minister Donna Faragher today announced the start of works for Perth's second Swan River oxygenation plant.

"The construction of the oxygenation plant in Caversham is part of a four-year, \$4.5million plan to improve oxygen levels in the Swan and Canning rivers," Mrs Faragher said.

The Turbolox oxygenation technology is already operating at Guildford and the second will be installed at the new site in Caversham Avenue.

Mrs Faragher said its use at Guildford was the first time, anywhere in the world, the technology had been used in an estuary.

"The Caversham oxygenation site will complement the existing plant and contribute to keeping healthy oxygen levels upstream in the Swan River," she said.

"An international review of oxygenation technologies was undertaken to determine the most appropriate technology for the unique situation that the Swan River presents.

"Under normal operation, the Turbolox system is capable of putting almost a tonne of oxygen into the river daily and this will help maintain a healthy river, providing a better habitat for fish and other aquatic life."

The Minister said the Caversham site was chosen because it was an area prone to prolonged periods of low oxygen, sediments had high organic loads and there were deep sections of the river near the plant.

"Oxygenation of our rivers is one measure in a whole range of actions being undertaken through the Swan River Trust's Healthy Rivers Program to improve the health of the Swan and Canning rivers," she said.

The new site is the fourth oxygenation plant on the Swan and Canning rivers.

"We continue to look at long-term solutions to improve the health of the Swan and Canning rivers but immediate action is needed to minimise algal blooms and make the rivers a viable environment for water creatures," Mrs Faragher said.

## **Get trained in Dolphin Watching**

**Wednesday, 27 October 2010**

The Swan River Trust's River Guardians program is encouraging dolphin enthusiasts to attend its Dolphin Watch training session on 9 November at Perth Zoo. Participants will learn how to monitor dolphin behaviour and contribute to the latest science research.

Dolphin Watch training shows volunteers how to record the time, date, location of dolphin sightings, number of dolphins sighted, presence of a calf, direction of dolphin travelling, and any noticeable behaviour.

River Guardians Manager Marnie Giroud said the dolphin training events were popular with the public and allowed them to learn basic observation techniques.

"An important part of the training is about observing but not disturbing the dolphins in their natural environment," Ms Giroud said.

"Shore-based observations are ideal as volunteers can observe animals closely without the dolphins knowing they are present and thus, not altering their behaviour.

"Dolphins are potential indicators of river health and the research aims to provide better understanding of dolphin ecology and their interactions with human activities."

The Swan River Trust, together with Murdoch and Curtin universities developed Dolphin Watch as a collaborative social science research and education project last year.

The event will give participants the opportunity to meet Murdoch University Dolphin Watch scientist and learn more about the dolphins that live in the Swan and Canning rivers.

### **Event details**

Tuesday, 9 November, 5.30pm - 8.00pm

Perth Zoo

Rothschild's Function Room

Labouchere Road, South Perth, WA 6151

A light supper and training materials will be provided.

RSVP is essential for catering purposes. Please [reply to the River Guardians team](#) or call or 9278 0900 by Wednesday 3 November.

Dolphin Watch volunteers make a valuable contribution to scientific research, while gaining skills and networking with others involved in caring for the rivers.

"Dolphin Watch is a great program to get involved with and monitoring can be done in your own time, anytime," Ms Giroud said.

Dolphin Watch volunteers must be a River Guardian to join the program and are able to sign up at the event.

For more information about River Guardians, [log on to the website](#) or contact the Swan River Trust on 9278 0900.

## **International scientists visit our iconic rivers**

**Tuesday, 12 October 2010**

The Swan River Trust hosted a river restoration study tour this week as part of the International Riversymposium held in Perth from 11 – 14 October.

60 interstate and international delegates attended the study tour which demonstrated local riverine issues, foreshore restoration sites, community engagement activities, water quality improvement and intervention approaches to river management.

The study tour was part of the 13th International Riversymposium – held in Perth for the first time this year and attended by approximately 500 delegates.

Trust Communications Manager Wendy Yorke said the field trip gave delegates a deeper understanding of the Swan Canning Riverpark and an insight into the issues faced by our urban waterways.

“In addition to showcasing the vast amount of environmental and social science behind managing the 72.1 square kilometres Swan Canning Riverpark, the tour highlighted the Trust’s Dolphin Watch project,” Wendy Yorke said.

“This project contributes to the science of Perth’s resident bottlenose community and involves public volunteers to collect the data.”

“The study tour also focussed on the Trust’s catchment to coast approach involving significant project partnerships maintained with local government and environmental groups surrounding the Riverpark.”

The study tour showed delegates the Trust’s work in implementing new legislation through developing the River Protection Strategy, establishing the Swan Canning Riverpark and changing the face of community involvement, environmental education and community behaviour.

Visit "[The River System](#)" section of our website for more information on the program and research projects.

## **Inaugural River Youth Forum delegates to present at Riversymposium**

**Tuesday, 12 October 2010**

Two student ambassadors from WA's first River Youth Forum presented their views on how to protect Perth's rivers to International Riversymposium delegates during the plenary session on Wednesday 13 October.

The inaugural Swan Canning Riverpark Youth Forum was developed by the Swan River Trust with project partners St Hilda's School for Girls and Millennium Kids. The forum complements the State Government's decision to pilot the River Rangers program recently announced by the Minister for Environment Donna Faragher.

The event, held during the 2010 Riversymposium, saw approximately 69 students from Years 5-10 in the Swan Canning Catchment gather to discuss and workshop critical challenges faced by the rivers and explore ideas for new solutions.

Swan River Trust Program Coordinator Angela Petrow said the event increased students' understanding of river science and focused their attention on river values.

"This event recognises the vital role the next generation play in protecting our iconic Perth rivers and sets a good example to other young people around the world," Mrs Petrow said.

"To present their findings at the International Riversymposium allows these students to be the voice of young people and share their views with international experts, a rare and exciting opportunity."

The Youth Forum included river science presentations provided by local experts with a focus on community river values and how students could help protect the rivers for the future, networking with like-minded individuals and schools.

On Monday students went on a boat tour of the river and discussed topics including Aboriginal and European culture, foreshore development, recreation, dolphin protection and river values.

Four feature schools presented at the River Youth Forum on Tuesday providing inspiration and ideas to other schools including St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls Junior School, Penrhos College, Riverlands School and John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School.

A formal report will be produced after the River Youth Forum for consideration by the Swan River Trust and reported to Western Australia's Environment Minister Donna Faragher.

## **New Riverpark map launched**

**Thursday, 16 September 2010**

To celebrate World Parks Day on 18 September 2010 the Swan River Trust has launched an interactive Swan Canning Riverpark map.

The map, available on the Trust website, shows parks, activities and amenities around the Riverpark giving the Perth community an easy way to locate activities of interest.

Trust Riverpark Manager Chris Mather said the interactive map captured some of the values that made the rivers such an icon for Western Australians and it was fitting to launch the map on World Parks Day.

“World Parks Day encourages people to enjoy their local park and appreciate the importance of green space,” Mr Mather said.

“The day is a reminder of the Swan Canning Riverpark’s value to the community and what we can all do to help protect it,” he said.

“It is also a reminder that we can work together to ensure we don’t trample foreshore vegetation, which provides habitat and food for fish and other fauna and filters out nutrients that would otherwise contribute to algal blooms.”

The map shows car parking, dog exercise areas, boat ramps, jetties, Trust courtesy boat moorings, fishing spots, public toilets, yacht clubs and marinas, sport and recreation, water ski and personal water craft areas, boat speed limits and dolphin watch zones.

“The Swan Canning Riverpark is a wonderful natural resource and we should get out and enjoy it more, and in particular on World Parks Day,” he said.

The interactive map also shows places of cultural and heritage interest and lists Aboriginal sites with some personal reflections.

“The personal reflections on the Riverpark map show the spiritual significance of our rivers to Noongar people,” Mr Mather said.

“These stories give us a different perspective of our rivers, as not only a place to recreate, but also where stories are made and shared.”

## **New River Rangers program launched**

**Friday, 17 September 2010**

Primary school students across the Swan Canning Catchment will become guardians of the Swan Canning Riverpark with today's launch of the River Rangers program at Mundaring Christian College.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher said the program would give primary schools a chance to be involved in fun activities that reinforced the importance of protecting the Swan Canning Riverpark.

"River Rangers is modelled on the existing Bush Rangers program and is a great way for students in the Swan Canning Catchment to learn about our complex river system and how they can help protect it," Mrs Faragher said.

The Minister announced funding of \$300,000 across two years for the River Rangers program in May this year.

The River Rangers pilot will run through the existing Cadets WA program co-ordinated by the Department for Communities Office of Youth, with the Swan River Trust as the host agency.

"River Rangers will increase primary school students' understanding of river science," Mrs Faragher said.

"This is a pilot program and, if successful, may be rolled out to more schools in the future."

Five schools are confirmed to deliver River Rangers for the two-year pilot program, starting in February 2011, including Mundaring Christian College, Ellenbrook Christian College, Dale Christian School, John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School and Ardross Primary School.

As well as protection of the rivers, the program will establish students' recognition of the Riverpark and increase knowledge of the importance of conserving European and Noongar cultural history.

## **Low rainfall, first time weir boards stay in**

**Wednesday, 15 September 2010**

For the first time on record, the Kent Street Weir boards will remain in place throughout 2010 due to record low stream flows in the Canning River.

Below average rainfalls means current stream flows would not prevent salt water entering the river upstream of the Kent St Weir.

Swan River Trust Senior Environmental Officer Dr Shaun Meredith said that poor water quality would result if salt water was trapped behind the Kent St Weir during summer.

“The Kent Street Weir was built in 1927 and has been upgraded over time to stop the flow of salt water upstream in the summer months,” Dr Meredith said.

“Typically, the weir boards are removed in May or June each year to help flush the weir pool and to allow freshwater to flow easily into the estuary.”

“Extremely low rainfall in 2010 has meant the Canning River is not flowing strongly enough to stop the salt water moving upstream of the Kent St Weir.”

Dr Meredith said the Trust could not be sure that there would be enough rain in spring to flush any salt water from the weir pool before the boards need to go back after the winter and spring rains, typically in October/November.

“This means the best decision is to leave the boards in throughout the 2010 winter and spring seasons,” he said.

Salt water remaining in the weir pool across summer would reduce the effectiveness of the Trust’s oxygenation of the river upstream of the Weir.

“This would likely increase nutrient levels in the weir pool, and also increase the likelihood and severity of algal blooms,” Dr Meredith said.

The Trust, along with other agencies, is working to determine the risks of leaving the weir boards in, and developing strategies to manage this unprecedented event now, and into the future.

“Not removing the weir boards may affect some activities, particularly canoeing. This is regrettable but is the best option to ensure the health of the waterway upstream of the Weir,” Dr Meredith said.

“We hope to resume to normal weir board removal and replacement practices next year, pending average rainfalls.”

## **Students place river critters under microscope**

**Thursday, 9 September 2010**

Year Four and Five students at Swan View Primary School and Swan Christian College took part in the 2010 national Macroinvertebrate Snapshot to identify water-dwelling macroinvertebrates this week.

Macroinvertebrates are small animals without backbones which live all or part of their life cycle in a waterbody and are big enough to see with the naked eye.

Ribbons of Blue coordinator Angela Petrow said the Macroinvertebrate Snapshot helped students understand the ecology of the Swan Canning Riverpark and their local wetlands, and consider how to take better care of them.

“The snapshot is held every year as macroinvertebrates are good indicators of river health,” Mrs Petrow said.”

“The snapshot allows students to sample the water quality and learn how the animals and the environment interact.”

Students studied the interdependence of life in the rivers and the physical environment through activities that included:

- background information on habitats, food chains and classification, and the importance of 'macros' to the ecosystem;
- physical water testing for pH, temperature, electrical conductivity, and turbidity, visual site assessments and macroinvertebrate sampling; and
- pre and post-excursion activities showing students how they can make a difference to river and wetland health.

“The science behind protecting our river system is critical to ensure our river systems’ longevity.”

“By improving students’ scientific knowledge through the Macroinvertebrate Snapshot, students learn to make a positive contribution to their local environment.”

The snapshot is run annually in schools across Australia from 31 August to 22 September 2010 and as part of the Swan River Trust’s Ribbons of Blue program in the Swan Canning Catchment.

To find out more, contact the Trust on (08) 9278 0900 or visit the [Ribbons of Blue website](#).



## **Trust seeks nominations for Technical Advisory Panel**

**Monday, 30 August 2010**

The Swan River Trust is seeking nominations from qualified and experienced individuals to become members of the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP).

The TAP consists of knowledgeable, experienced professionals who provide advice to the Trust on a range of natural resource and park management projects and issues as they arise.

Membership is open to individuals with expertise in relevant academic and management fields, including:

- aquatic ecology
- environmental law, policy and strategic planning
- tourism
- commerce
- environmental engineering
- climate change and adaptation
- catchment management
- land use planning
- sociology/behaviour change/community engagement
- indigenous and non-indigenous heritage and culture contaminants.

The TAP acts as a pool of expertise from which smaller working groups are developed to advise on specific Trust projects.

- In 2010-11, at least one working group will advise the Trust on:
- developing a state of the river reporting framework
- ecological and amenity targets
- social and environmental indicators and monitoring programs.

Additional working groups will be formed as required which align with specific Trust projects.

TAP members will be appointed for one year with the possibility of extension. Members volunteer their time to participate in regular meetings which are expected to be no longer than three hours. Non-government members will be offered an honorarium payment to attend meetings and cover expenses.

Technical work arising from Trust projects discussed through the TAP and working groups will be commissioned through independent, open procurement processes. The Trust will request a quote for such works, indicating scope, estimated hours and deliverables.

### **How to Apply**

If you would like to nominate please submit your curriculum vitae and a brief covering letter outlining your qualifications and experience relevant to membership of the Swan River Trust TAP. The Trust will select people considered to offer the most relevant expertise for priority river management areas to complement Trust work.

**Nominations can be posted to the address below:**

Attn: General Manager  
Swan River Trust  
PO Box 6829  
EAST PERTH 6892  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## **Healthy Rivers Healthy Dolphins poster competition**

**Sunday, 29 August 2010**

733 students from 26 schools displayed their artistic talents and created 657 posters for the 2010 Ribbons of Blue Healthy Rivers Healthy Dolphins competition in August.

The competition raised awareness of the effect of human activities on dolphins in the Swan Canning Riverpark following the death of six dolphins in the Swan River last year.

Students designed and produced posters with the theme Healthy Rivers Healthy Dolphins under three categories: Junior Primary (K-3), Upper Primary (4-7) and Secondary (8-12).

Competition organiser Angela Petrow congratulated all entrants and said the standard of entries was very high.

"The effort put in by the students was remarkable - each entry relayed a strong message about the importance of the Swan Canning Riverpark with flair, colour and individuality," she said.

"The judges had a very tough time selecting just one winner for each category."

The winners and runners-up of the 2010 Ribbons of Blue Healthy Rivers Healthy Dolphins competition are:

### **Junior Primary (K-3)**

Winner:

Asel Jayatilake - Maylands Peninsula Primary School

Runner-Up:

Safia Weber - Maylands Peninsula Primary School

### **Upper Primary (4-7)**

Winners:

James Arcus - West Leeming Primary School

Anna Palma - Roleystone District High School

Runners-Up:

Brittany Bean and Mary Plant - Forrestdale Primary School

Joshua Fonti - Aranmore Catholic Primary School

### **Secondary (8-12)**

Winners:

Aryamaan Malik, Alvin Goh and Daniel Kamarndin - Rossmoyne Senior High School

Runners-Up:

Renae Breuer - Rossmoyne Senior High School

Yui Sato, Amy Ge, Sarah Scrimshaw - Rossmoyne Senior High School

Visit our [Facebook page](#) to view the winning entries.

## **Comment invited on marina works**

**Thursday, 26 August 2010**

Public comment is invited on a draft Swan River Trust report recommending approval of repair and improvement works at Pier 21 Marina in North Fremantle.

The works would include the removal of a condemned jetty, the replacement of aged piles and weathered sections of decking, and the addition of finger jetties between berths.

Swan River Trust Acting Senior Environmental Officer Josie Watson said the works would provide easier and safer access to boat pens and allow berthing of larger vessels.

“Provided the works are carried out with care, the project will not negatively affect the environment. The owners will need to submit a construction management plan to guarantee that the works will be carried out in an environmentally responsible way,” Ms Watson said.

Following the public comment period, the proposal will go to Environment Minister Donna Faragher for final determination.

Public comment closes on 6 September 2010. Visit our [publications library](#) to view the draft report.

## **River pollution contained**

**Wednesday, 25 August 2010**

The Swan River Trust is investigating after several litres of water soluble paint was washed into the Canning River last week.

A member of the public reported a yellow plume in the river at Salter Point early on Friday 20 August 2010.

The Trust used an absorbent boom to contain the plume before bringing in a liquid waste disposal truck to extract the contaminated water.

By Monday afternoon Trust investigators had questioned a suspect in relation to an offence under the Environmental Protection Act 1986.

Trust Riverpark Manager Chris Mather said this was one of the most careless acts of deliberate pollution he had encountered and it served as a strong reminder of the importance of community vigilance around the rivers.

“The quick action of the individual who reported the incident allowed us to respond immediately and minimise the spread of the plume,” Mr Mather said.

“The community has an important role as extra ‘eyes on the river’ and we encourage anyone who sees anything suspicious in the Riverpark to contact us on 9278 0900 or after hours on 0419 192 845.

“There is a very clear message – the Riverpark is not a dumping ground and if you do harm the environment we will investigate and you may face charges.”

Mr Mather said investigations are continuing into the incident.

## **Students study water critters to understand rivers**

**Thursday, 12 August 2010**

Sixty-five students from Maylands Peninsula Primary School will play scientist on Monday, 16 August 2010 identifying macroinvertebrates as part of National Science Week.

Macroinvertebrates are small animals without backbones which live all or part of their life cycle in a waterbody and are big enough to see with the naked eye.

Swan River Trust Ribbons of Blue coordinator Angela Petrow said the students would look at samples of river water to identify the small animals.

“Macroinvertebrates are good indicators of the health of our waterways and this activity will help students understand the ecology of their local river, and consider how to protect it for the future,” Mrs Petrow said.

Maylands Peninsula Primary School’s Science Specialist Teacher Linda Townend said the school strongly encouraged students to understand the importance of biodiversity.

“We try and teach the children the importance of understanding their environment,” Ms Townend said.

“This semester we’re concentrating on the Life and Living topic: we’re getting students out into the community to learn more about the Swan River and their surroundings.”

Maylands Peninsula Primary School students will study the interdependence of life in the river and the environment and learn about habitats, food chains, classification, and the importance of 'macros' to the ecosystem. They will also take part in macroinvertebrate sampling.

National Science Week celebrates Australia’s talents and achievements in science, engineering, technology and innovation, and runs from 14-22 August 2010.

The Trust’s Ribbons of Blue program is run with schools across the Swan Canning Catchment, an area of more than 2120 square kilometres.

To find out more, contact the Trust on (08) 9278 0900 or visit the [Ribbons of Blue website](#).

## **Busy workers lend a hand to restore burnt bush**

**Thursday, 5 August 2010**

More than 45 workers descended on Bennett Brook Reserve last Friday to plant trees in areas affected by fires earlier this year.

Staff from the Swan River Trust and volunteers from Whiteman Park and Friends of Bennett Brook Reserve planted more than 3050 shrubs in four rehabilitation areas covering about two hectares of the reserve.

Ten hectares of the 140 hectare reserve were destroyed by arson in January.

Friends of Bennett Brook Reserve volunteer Melinda McAndrew said the planting of shrubs was to help re-establish native growth and restore habitat to the brook, which acts as an important fauna corridor linking Whiteman Park and the Swan River.

"The fires provided an opportunity to completely eradicate blackberry and revegetate to establish a continuous corridor of native vegetation, restoring habitat and preventing erosion within this burnt section of the reserve," she said.

Ms McAndrew praised the efforts of the Trust, which offered 41 staff and funded the planting day.

"Without this assistance, it would have taken the eight or so volunteers months to plant the 3050 shrubs," she said.

"Because of the Trust's assistance, volunteers can continue to focus their efforts on hand weeding and planting the fire affected wetland areas to keep weeds under control and prevent competition for regenerating native vegetation."

The team also cleared rubbish from 'hotspot areas' in the reserve.

The 140 hectare Bennett Brook Reserve is the largest and most diverse relatively intact lagoonal system in the Swan Canning Riverpark.

It is home to more than 100 bird species, acts as a breeding area for a variety of waterbirds and provides important habitat to the endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot.

## **Expert group to investigate dolphin, estuarine health**

**Monday, 2 August 2010**

An expert group has been formed to investigate the state of dolphin and estuarine health in Western Australia.

The formation of the group was one of the key recommendations in Chief Scientist Lyn Beazley's report into the recent deaths of dolphins in the Swan and Canning Riverpark.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher has undertaken to implement all of the report's recommendations and has secured an initial \$250,000 in the 2010-11 State Budget to begin the implementation process.

Mrs Faragher said the working group would bring together WA's foremost scientific minds in the fields of dolphin behaviour and estuarine ecosystems.

"The experience we gained during the dolphin deaths' investigation highlighted both the depth and quality of evidence-based science in WA across a number of disciplines," she said.

"It also identified the need for appropriate strategies to co-ordinate much of this valuable work, particularly in our response to existing and emerging challenges to dolphin and estuarine health.

"The working group will meet bi-monthly and present a final report to me by the end of the year, which will identify priority areas of research and opportunities for improved sharing of information between expert stakeholders."

The group, which will be chaired by Professor Beazley, will include:

- John Bannister MA, FLS, FZS
- Dr Bernard Bowen AM, BSc, DSc (Hon), FTSE
- Peter Millington BSc (Hons), MEnvSt, MSc, FAICD
- Emeritus Professor Mal Nairn AM, BVSc, MSc, PhD, Hon DSc, DipACVP, FTS, FAIM
- Dr Tom Hatton, director Commonwealth Scientific and Industry Research Organisation (CSIRO) Wealth from Oceans Research Flagship
- Rick Scoones, marine team leader, Impact Assessment and Planning, Environmental Resources Management Australia
- Piers Verstegen, director Conservation Council of Western Australia
- Mark Batty, executive manager environment and waste, Western Australian Local Government Association
- Keiran McNamara, director-general, Department of Environment and Conservation
- Rod Hughes, general manager, Swan River Trust
- Ms Naomi Arrowsmith, strategic projects manager, Department of Water.

Other members may be added to the group at a later stage.

Professor Beazley said she was delighted that such a distinguished group of people with relevant expertise had agreed to be involved in an issue that was important to all West Australians.

## **Fremantle Ports' inner harbour deepening project enters Phase 2**

**Sunday, 1 August 2010**

The Swan River Trust will continue to liaise with Fremantle Ports in an effort to ensure the Swan River's health and ecology is maintained as the inner harbour deepening project enters Phase 2.

The project started on 4 January 2010 and will deepen approach channels to Fremantle Harbour so bigger ships can be loaded. Phase 2 will remove approximately 1 million cubic metres of clean limestone material from the seabed and is expected to be completed in November 2010.

The Trust has liaised with Fremantle Ports throughout the project on the monitoring of water quality. The Office of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has set conditions on the dredging activity for the protection of the environment and the Trust expects those conditions will be closely adhered to.

The Trust and Department of Water have increased surveillance of the lower Swan River in addition to weekly water quality monitoring and will monitor aerial photographs supplied on the Fremantle Ports' website. The Trust and Department of Transport have increased patrols in an effort to ensure water quality is maintained.

The Trust will also monitor the Swan River dolphin community through its Dolphin Watch program.

The Office of EPA has confirmed monitoring undertaken during Phase 1 of the project demonstrated there was no risk to public health and no unacceptable impacts on the marine or Swan River environment. Virtually all contaminated harbour sediments were removed in Phase 1 and contained in the Rous Head reclamation area. A visual sediment plume is expected to be seen in the river during Phase 2, extending to the Mosman Bay area. The plume is not expected to cause adverse affects on the river.

Information on the project, including weekly Water Quality Monitoring Program reports, can be found on the Fremantle Ports' website.

Fremantle Ports has a complaints register for the public to call with any concerns (phone 9430 3555).

Queries or concerns can also be directed to the Swan River Trust duty officer on 9278 0981 during office hours or 0419 192 845 after hours.



## **Skippers urged to slow down on Swan River**

**Thursday, 22 July 2010**

Skippers are urged to watch their speed near the Narrows Bridge as reconstruction work continues on a nearby part of the river wall.

The Department of Transport has gazetted a temporary speed restriction of 6 knots and no wash zone on the Swan River east of the Narrows Bridge.

The works are being completed by the Main Roads WA and Swan River Trust.

The speed restriction and no wash zone is clearly marked by yellow buoys and skippers moving through the area are asked to proceed with caution.

Swan River Trust Riverpark Manager Chris Mather said the temporary restrictions would apply until the end of September 2010.

"The reduced speed and no wash zone will help prevent vessel wake washing into a construction dam during the replacement of a section of river wall," Mr Mather said.

"While in the restriction zone skippers should be aware of the amount of wash being generated by their vessel and reduce speed further if necessary."

From late August until the end of December 2010 an additional 6 knot and no wash zone will apply in the Swan River in front of the Old Swan Brewery.

Mr Mather said Department of Transport Marine officers, Swan River Trust officers and Water Police would be monitoring compliance in the area as part of normal river patrols.

People wanting more information about the restriction zone can visit the Department of Transport's website or contact them at 9431 1000.

The Swan River Trust's Riverbank program protects and rehabilitates priority foreshore areas in the Swan Canning Riverpark, with many projects completed in partnership with local government and the community.

## **\$1.15million for river foreshore projects**

**Wednesday, 14 July 2010**

Environment Minister Donna Faragher today announced funding of \$1.15million for 18 priority projects that aimed to protect and rehabilitate the Swan and Canning rivers foreshore.

Mrs Faragher said the projects included erosion control, revegetation, weed control, river wall repair and the preparation of foreshore management plans.

The funding was part of the Swan River Trust's (SRT) Riverbank grants scheme.

"These projects are an example of the State Government working closely with local government, along with environmental and foreshore protection groups, to ensure our rivers and shorelines are preserved for generations to come," the Minister said.

"Foreshore protection and rehabilitation is integral to the trust's work and Riverbank funding will boost the capacity of land managers to significantly improve shoreline condition."

Mrs Faragher announced the new funding at John Tonkin Park, in East Fremantle, where a \$27,000 Riverbank project to improve foreshore access for local residents had recently been completed.

The Minister said the joint SRT and Town of East Fremantle project included the installation of coir logs and fencing to protect the pathway and shoreline from erosion, and the revegetation with native sedges along John Tonkin Park.

"Before work began, the foreshore was being eroded and pathways were in danger of collapse," she said.

"This project has dramatically improved public safety and the appearance of the area, as well as increased habitat through revegetation."

Mrs Faragher said several parking bays which were being undercut by erosion were also removed and the land regraded and revegetated. Sand was also added to the foreshore to slow erosion and protect nearby trees.

Town of East Fremantle chief executive officer Stuart Wearne said the project was an excellent example of the positive benefits which could be achieved by partnering the SRT's technical knowledge in river issues with the town's design and implementation expertise.

The SRT and the Town of East Fremantle will now work to develop a long-term solution of erosion towards the Leeuwin boat ramp. The town secured \$33,250 for this project in this year's grants. Other recipients include:

- City of South Perth - \$195,000: Restoration of a 400m section of river-wall south of Canning Bridge
- City of Swan - \$173,500: Foreshore stabilisation and revegetation, Swan Riverside Regional Park
- Town of Mosman Park - \$150,000: Groyne construction and beach renourishment, Mosman Beach
- City of Bayswater - \$123,062: Construction of a revetment wall to prevent further erosion, Bath Street Jetty.
- City of Nedlands - \$85,580: Stage Three of the Point Resolution restoration project, including bank stabilisation works and revegetation and erosion control works at Waratah Place
- City of Belmont - \$70,306: Implementation of Section 4 of the Garvey Park foreshore restoration project
- Town of Bassendean- \$61,000: Foreshore stabilisation and revegetation of Success Hill, Bassendean
- City of Bayswater - \$42,400: Section Four of the Tranby foreshore restoration project, including creation of fishing nodes and removal of building rubble
- Department of Environment and Conservation - \$40,360: Ecological restoration and installation of roosts, Alfred Cove
- City of Armadale - \$37,920: Revegetation and weed control along the Canning River, Armadale

- City of Gosnells - \$34,940: Revegetation and weed control along the Canning River, Gosnells
- Burswood Park Board - \$28,000: Preparation of the Burswood Park Foreshore Management Plan
- City of South Perth - \$27,000: Shore stabilisation, revegetation, weed control and fencing of Milyu Nature Reserve
- City of Fremantle- \$16,800: Revegetation, weed control, rabbit control and supplementary plant watering, North Fremantle foreshore
- City of South Perth - \$13,371: Preparation of a foreshore erosion control and revegetation plan for Salter Point Lagoon
- City of Canning - \$11,014: Revegetation and foreshore protection, Halophila Bay, Rossmoyne
- City of South Perth - \$10,334: Maintenance of Cloisters Reserve, South Perth.

## **Trails project to map Riverpark heritage**

**Thursday, 8 July 2010**

Noongar culture and its links to the Swan Canning Riverpark has been acknowledged with the installation of the first in a series of new signs.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher said the new signs welcomed visitors to the Riverpark and include a welcome in the Noongar language.

“These signs recognise Noongar connection to the rivers and will help raise awareness of the Swan Canning Riverpark,” Mrs Faragher said.

“Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River) and Dyarlgarro (Canning River) have important cultural significance to the Noongar people and many stories and meanings which the indigenous community wish to have interpreted as part of ongoing reconciliation.

“This project will acknowledge Noongar places and people, as well as enhance public respect for Noongar values and increase community knowledge and understanding of the Noongar culture.”

The Minister launched the first sign at Sandy Beach jetty in Bayswater to coincide with NAIDOC Week celebrations.

She said similar signs would be installed on other jetties around the Riverpark, in conjunction with land managers.

“These signs will form an important part of our river trail project, which aims to create a continuous walk trail around the Swan and Canning river foreshores, linking existing trails and highlighting the river’s rich indigenous, European and natural heritage,” Mrs Faragher said.

“This project is being co-ordinated by the Swan River Trust and will be managed by a steering group with representatives from some of the 40 organisations with management responsibility for shorelines, parks and reserves in the Riverpark.

“Over the next year, the project team will map existing trails, identify gaps where new trails could be created and develop web-based materials, brochures and booklets for the trail system.”

## **Jellyfish alert for Preston Point to Fremantle Harbour**

**Monday, 5 July 2010**

The Swan River Trust has alerted people swimming in the Swan River that a number of unusual jellyfish have been seen in the river from Preston Point to Fremantle Harbour.

The jellyfish are not deadly but can cause a nasty sting and people are advised to avoid swimming or direct water contact in this section of the river.

Swan River Trust principal scientist Dr Kerry Trayler said it was unusual to see this type of jellyfish in the Swan River this time of year.

“The jellyfish are likely to be moving into this area from the marine environment on the tide and may persist until we get significant rains,” Dr Trayler said.

“We are currently identifying the jellyfish which we believe to be of the [Carybdea species](#).”

Dr Revle Bangor-Jones from the Department of Health said anyone stung by these jellyfish should take immediate action and flush the sting with undiluted household vinegar. Do not rub the sting. Stings cause moderate pain for up to 2 hours, and some swelling and redness. Medical assistance should be sought if shortness of breath is encountered or if symptoms persist or worsen. If in doubt seek medical advice.

The Trust encourages the community to report any river issues to the Trust on (08) 278 0900 during office hours or 0419 192 845 after hours.

## **Ducks die in illegal fishing net**

**Monday, 21 June 2010**

The devastation illegal fishing nets can cause in the Swan Canning Riverpark was highlighted with the deaths of two ducks and 10 fish near Salter Point last month.

Swan River Trust and Fisheries officers made the discovery on Friday 7 May after responding to a report of a net from a nearby resident in the Canning River.

The animals died after becoming entangled in the gill net, which was about 30 metres long and clearly visible from the shore.

Trust Riverpark Manager Chris Mather said he was concerned by the incident.

"Illegal fishing threatens fish populations, and as this case demonstrates can lead to the deaths of other wildlife including birds and tortoises," Mr Mather said.

"It is also a reminder of the importance of people telling us if they see anything of concern in the Riverpark."

Recreational net fishing is illegal in the Swan and Canning rivers. To report illegal or suspicious activities in the Swan Canning Riverpark contact the Trust on 9278 0900 or after hours on 0419 192 845.

## **River Guardians celebrate second birthday**

**Monday, 21 June 2010**

Two years running and the Swan River Trust's River Guardians program now boasts 780 members and a host of successful events held including planting days, frog finding workshops and indigenous cultural events.

Perhaps more successful has been the increased profile of the River Guardians' mascot Jon the Swan who features on the Trust Facebook and Twitter sites, and at many events.

Highlights of the past two years include the launch of the popular Dolphin Watch project, which trains members to monitor the Swan Canning Riverpark's dolphin population.

River Guardians Program Manager Marnie Giroud said it had been an exciting two years.

"It has been awesome to see how much Perth people love their rivers and our mascot Jon the Swan," she said.

"River Guardians are our eyes on the rivers and we aim to share the message that everyone can do their bit to help keep our rivers healthy.

"The Dolphin Watch project in particular has blown me away; the interest and passion people have for these iconic creatures is incredible with more than 100 trained Dolphin Watchers feeding into research by Murdoch and Curtin universities."

Actively engaging the Perth community to protect the Swan Canning Riverpark was the philosophy behind the River Guardians program when it launched in June 2008.

Membership stood at 75 Honorary River Guardians and expectations were high, with the program the first of its kind in Western Australia. The River Guardians program gives members access to free, fun river events as well opportunities to network with others and volunteer in river restoration and training activities.

For more information on becoming a River Guardian, email the team or contact the Trust on 9278 0900.

## **Sewage spill being investigated**

**Wednesday, 16 June 2010**

The Swan River Trust is responding to a report of a sewage spill into the Swan River near Stirling Bridge in North Fremantle.

Initial reports suggest a main was ruptured by a construction worker with sewage entering the stormwater system and flowing into the river at Prawn Bay. The Water Corporation has advised the leak has been stopped.

Trust officers are working with the Department of Environment and Conservation Pollution Response Unit to investigate the spill.

Health warning signs will be placed in the area affected.

To report damage to the Swan and Canning rivers and foreshores please contact the Trust on (08) 278 0900 during office hours or 0419 192 845 after hours.



## Release of technical dolphin death report

Wednesday, 9 June 2010

The Swan River Trust has released the Technical Report on the Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops aduncus*) Unusual Mortality Event within the Swan Canning Riverpark today.

The Trust and [Murdoch University](#) briefed the Minister yesterday on the report.

The Murdoch University report, prepared for the Swan River Trust, explores the reasons behind the death of six dolphins in the Riverpark between June and October 2009 and was the technical basis behind Chief Scientist Lyn Beazley's report [on Dolphin Deaths in the Swan Canning Riverpark and Comments on the Bunbury Inner Waters, South-west of Western Australia](#) [ PDF 150 kB ] to the Minister in April 2010.

In her report, Professor Beazley said two dolphins were believed to have died from ulcerative skin lesions, caused by a virus commonly referred to as Tattoo Skin Disease. This was consistent with another dolphin that had died in 2007.

A third dolphin died from a fungal infection of the brain and a fourth dolphin suffered from bronchopneumonia, although this dolphin also had severe fishing line entanglement.

## **\$2.5 million to improve water quality in the Swan and Canning rivers**

**Wednesday, 9 June 2010**

Water quality in the Swan and Canning rivers will be improved thanks to a grant from the Australian Government.

Environment Protection Minister, Peter Garrett, and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Tony Burke today announced that the Swan River Trust would receive \$2.5 million over three years under the Caring for our Country initiative.

Mr Garrett said a range of activities would be funded to address the decline in water quality in the Swan and Canning rivers.

"The Swan Canning Water Quality Improvement Plan released in December 2009 identified the need to focus on reducing nutrient levels entering the river from the catchment," Mr Garrett said.

"The plan recommended increasing community understanding the education about factors like fertiliser efficiency, the construction of nutrient-stripping wetlands, the implementation of subcatchment local water quality improvement plans and the inclusion of water sensitive design in new developments.

"In line with these recommendations, this project will engage and educate the community about the threats to water quality in the catchment and focus on long term water quality improvement and monitoring," Mr Garrett said.

Mr Burke said the Swan River Trust will address threats to environmentally important coastal hotspots impacted by poor water quality.

"This funding will support on-ground activities such as trialling treatments for soils with low phosphorus retention and providing an education and workshop program to help landholders use fertiliser most efficiently," Mr Burke said.

This new funding complements West Australian State Government natural resource management funding to implement the Swan Canning Water Quality Improvement Plan.

For more information on Caring for our Country visit [www.nrm.gov.au](http://www.nrm.gov.au).

## **2010 Environment Awards open for nominations**

**Tuesday, 8 June 2010**

The Swan River Trust is encouraging individuals, groups and organisations protecting Western Australia's waterways to nominate in the 2010 Western Australian Environment Awards.

The Trust will this year sponsor the Rivers, Estuaries and Wetlands category. This award acknowledges outstanding achievement in the protection, restoration and sustainable use or enhancement of rivers, estuaries and wetlands.

The Western Australian Environment Awards are open to individuals, community groups, corporate, business and state and local government organisations.

The awards are coordinated by the Department of Environment and Conservation and sponsored by the Swan River Trust, Packaging Stewardship Forum, Edith Cowan University, Waste Authority, Publishers National Environment Bureau, Royalties for Regions, Western Power, Whiteman Park and Sustainable Energy Development Office.

The 2010 awards are now open and close in late July.

## **Cygnets euthanased due to fishing line injuries**

**Thursday, 3 June 2010**

The Swan River Trust is disappointed that people continue to leave fishing line in and around the Riverpark after a young cygnet was euthanased this week due to ingesting fishing line.

Trust officers were alerted to the distressed cygnet by members of the public and found the bird at Barrack Square. The cygnet had a ball of fishing line trailing alongside its body with the remainder of the line down its throat.

Perth Zoo veterinarians undertook surgery on the cygnet but were unable to save the bird as the fishing line was tangled in its gastro-intestinal tract.

The cygnet would not have survived if the fishing line remained and removing the fishing line would have caused significant trauma to the bird leaving euthanasia as the only option.

Swan River Trust Riverpark Manager Chris Mather said it was frustrating that some people still did not get the message to take their rubbish home.

"Fishing line and rubbish is dangerous to Riverpark wildlife and it was only last year we found two dolphins with fishing line entangled in their flukes and one that had swallowed a fish hook," Mr Mather said.

"I can't stress enough that people should take their rubbish home. Enjoy the river, but make sure you also look after it."

"Injuries like these to Riverpark wildlife are all too common and are avoidable if everyone takes the right action."

The Trust thanked members of the public, Golden Sun Cruises and Perth Zoo for their assistance.

The cygnet death comes just a month after Trust officers rescued a darter that had fabric caught in its beak.

[» View the darter rescue pictures on Flickr](#)

The public are encouraged to report any injured, orphaned or sick wildlife to the DEC wildcare helpline on 9474 9055 or the Trust on 9278 0900.

## **Development Control Area Boundary Review - Public Consultation Period**

**Sunday, 16 May 2010**

A review is currently being undertaken of the Swan River Trust Development Control Area (DCA) boundary. This review examines the boundary along the

- entire length of the northern bank of the Swan River (Stage 1)
- southern bank of the Swan River from the confluence of Moondyne Brook downstream to Fremantle Bridge, Fremantle (Stage 2)
- entire length of the Helena River (Stage 1)
- entire length of the Canning River (Stage 2); and
- the entire length of the Southern River (Stage 2)

The proposed DCA boundary changes are now available for public comment for a period of three months.

The closing date for submissions is 27 August 2010.

## **Dolphin watchers celebrate anniversary**

**Thursday, 13 May 2010**

Dolphin watchers from around the Swan and Canning rivers celebrated the inaugural Dolphin Watch Day yesterday.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher said the day marked the one-year anniversary of the State Government's River Guardians Dolphin Watch project.

She said the annual event, to be hosted every May by the Swan River Trust, acknowledged the tremendous contribution of volunteers involved in river dolphin monitoring.

The culmination of the day was the announcement of Madeline Kirkham, of Victoria Park, as the outstanding dolphin watcher of 2010.

Mrs Faragher said new research based on the observations of Dolphin Watch volunteers had found that at least seven Swan River dolphins - including mothers and calves - travelled as far upstream as Caversham in the Swan Valley.

"In such a short time, Dolphin Watch volunteers have made a tremendous contribution to our knowledge of these much-loved animals," the Minister said.

"The information they provide is helping scientists to better understand the behaviour of the dolphins, in areas where little or no scientific information has previously been collected."

Mrs Faragher said the death of six dolphins in the Swan River in 2009 had highlighted the fragility of our resident dolphin community and the extent of community concern for the dolphins and the health of river.

In her report on the dolphin deaths, Chief Scientist Professor Lyn Beazley recommended an expansion of the Dolphin Watch program, which she said 'had a key role to play'.

The Minister said the Liberal-National Government had committed to a \$50,000 expansion of the program in 2010-11 to allow more volunteers to be trained to identify individual dolphins and report their behavior.

Funding would also be provided to create a photographic record of the river dolphins and for further research into the marine mammals.

Since the program began in 2009, 104 volunteers have completed the Dolphin Watch training. To become a River Guardian or Dolphin Watch member visit <http://www.riverguardians.com> or call 9278 0927.

## **New funding to protect the Swan River**

**Saturday, 8 May 2010**

The State Government has committed another \$3.3million on projects that aim to protect and preserve the Swan and Canning rivers.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher said the additional funding was part of the Liberal-National Government's ongoing determination to improve the health of the Swan and Canning river system.

Mrs Faragher said \$1million would be spent on another oxygenation plant for the upper reaches of the Canning River, while \$800,000 would be spent on river restoration and erosion control projects as part of the Swan River Trust's Riverbank program.

A big portion of the funding had gone to local government and community groups.

"This funding has been specifically targeted at projects that we believe can make a significant difference to improving the health of the waterways," the Minister said.

"The Swan River faces many pressures, many of them historic and many of them induced by human activities. I believe the range of initiatives we are putting in place will help the Swan River to withstand these pressures."

The funding includes \$250,000 to begin to implement the recommendations of Chief Scientist Lyn Beazley's report into the deaths of dolphins in the Swan River in 2009.

The other initiatives include:

- \$300,000 to implement local water quality improvement plans, including projects such as living streams, nutrient stripping wetlands, fertiliser efficiency programs and compliance initiatives to control sediment and erosions. This will be targeted in the Ellen Brook, Bennett Brook and Canning Plains catchments
- \$250,000 to undertake 800 audits of small and medium-sized businesses to ensure they are not contributing to the contamination of the river system
- \$150,000 to help fund the removal of thousands of tonnes of sediment from the Avon River channel and to restore the foreshore in key river sections (as far east as Beverley)
- \$100,000 for the Swan Landcare Program, which funds community projects that contribute to improved water quality, including revegetation and restoration work
- \$100,000 to identify sources of non-nutrient contaminants so management responses can be taken
- \$50,000 to undertake a weed eradication and planting program at Yule Brook and a riparian restoration program in the Ellen Brook catchment
- \$300,000 across two years to run a River Rangers program for primary school students interested in preserving and protecting Perth's waterways.

Mrs Faragher said the new oxygenation plant would help maintain oxygen concentrations at a level that promoted and maintained a healthy environment for aquatic plants and animals.

It would supplement two existing plants that oxygenate 2.3km of the Canning River, upstream from Kent Street Weir, by treating the area between Mason's Landing in Cannington and Hester Park in Langford.

The Minister said oxygen levels needed to be above four mg/L, but often dipped to below two mg/L in the Swan and Canning rivers in summer.

"Low oxygen levels in the rivers are caused by a breakdown of organic matter, such as leaves and debris," she said.

"It is often a problem in the Swan and Canning rivers in summer, due to the warmer conditions.

"By increasing oxygen levels, the health and amenity of the river will improve, providing a better habitat for fish and other aquatic life and assisting in safeguarding the rivers against severe storm events."

The Swan River Trust will investigate the most appropriate oxygenation technology for the Canning River before choosing a supplier for the third plant.

Mrs Faragher said River Rangers would be a pilot program run through Cadets WA.

“River Rangers will give primary school students a chance to be involved in fun and constructive activities that reinforce the importance of protecting Perth’s waterways,” she said.

“Staff from Cadets WA will work with the Swan River Trust to administer the program.”

The Minister said State Government funding for the Swan and Canning rivers was making a significant difference to improving the health of the waterways.

Other recently announced initiatives included:

- new limits on the amount of phosphorus contained in ‘home garden’ fertiliser
- \$3million to install an underground barrier to stop contaminated groundwater entering the Helena River at Bellevue
- \$3.19million for the Swan Canning Water Quality Improvement Plan, which aimed to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus input from catchments into the Swan and Canning rivers. This included:
- \$1.15million to rehabilitate the degraded Anvil Way drainage basin in Welshpool and create a new wetland
- \$180,000 to apply a Western Australian-developed nutrient magnet to parts of the Canning River to block damaging algal blooms
- \$600,000 for more than 35 on-the-ground projects to improve the quality of water entering the Swan and Canning rivers.



## **Minister to take action on dolphin deaths**

**Friday, 7 May 2010**

The State Government will implement all recommendations contained in Chief Scientist Lyn Beazley's report into the deaths of six dolphins in the Swan Canning RiverPark in 2009.

The recommendations relate to research, community awareness, protocols and the establishment of a working group to investigate the ongoing health of the Swan River dolphins.

"The implementation of these recommendations is a crucial first step to ensure the well-being of the dolphins, as well as contributing to the health of the river," Environment Minister Donna Faragher said.

"The dolphins hold a special place in the Western Australian community and the Liberal-National Government is committed to their protection."

In her report, Professor Beazley said three dolphins (including a dolphin that died in 2007) were believed to have died from ulcerative skin lesions, caused by a virus commonly referred to as Tattoo Skin Disease.

A fourth dolphin died from a fungal infection of the brain and a fifth dolphin suffered from bronchopneumonia, although this dolphin also had severe fishing line entanglement.

Two dolphins were too decomposed to determine the cause of death.

Professor Beazley said the dolphins appeared to have died after an inflow of fresh water associated with rainfall events in winter and spring.

"The reduced salinity may have caused cellular damage to the epidermis (outer layer of the skin), leading to increased susceptibility to viral attack," she said.

Professor Beazley said exposure to fresh water inflows also appeared to have contributed to the recent death of two dolphins in the Port River in Adelaide.

She said it was not possible to determine if other factors - including exposure to contaminants and stress induced by human activities - had predisposed the dolphins to disease.

Professor Beazley said there were 'striking differences' between the cause of death of the Swan River dolphins and the causes of the death of dolphins in Bunbury between 2006 and 2010.

She said several of the Bunbury dolphins were emaciated, and five showed the presence of a lungworm.

Mrs Faragher said the report highlighted the need for ongoing research and a co-ordinated approach to the protection of dolphins in the Swan River precinct.

The Minister said the implementation of the recommendations would supplement the extensive work being undertaken by the Government to protect and preserve the Swan River system.

"I have asked the Swan River Trust and the Department of Environment and Conservation to begin implementing the recommendations as soon as possible," she said.

"We have secured an additional \$250,000 in the 2010-11 State Budget to help us begin to implement the recommendations, which will also be co-funded through existing programs."

Some of the new initiatives will include:

- an immediate assessment of the dolphin community frequenting the river to provide an accurate estimate of the number and population structure
- establishment of a photographic record of the dolphin community and to determine the incidence of tattoo skin disease in the population
- creation of 'report cards' to monitor estuarine health, in conjunction with the departments of Water and Fisheries
- \$60,000 for emergency collection and post-mortem examinations in the unfortunate event of other dolphin deaths, to understand factors contributing to disease and mortality
- promotion of river-friendly fishing practices, including biodegradable bait bags, and to support the recovery of tangled or broken fishing lines

- \$50,000 to expand the Dolphin Watch program, where volunteers are trained to identify individual dolphins and report their behaviour
- establishment of a working group to investigate the ongoing health of the dolphins in the Swan River. It will include representatives of science institutions, government agencies and the community and will report to the Minister by the end of the year.

The report is available at <http://www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au> and <http://www.dec.wa.gov.au>

## **Boat wash tests completed on Swan River**

**Tuesday, 4 May 2010**

The Swan River Trust has completed full scale field trials of boat wash and wind waves on the Swan River to verify results in its groundbreaking 2009 report, [Investigation into the Effect of Wash of Boats and Wind Waves on the Swan River](#).

The field trials confirmed that a reduction in boat speed limits in sections of the Swan River would dramatically reduce the potential for shoreline erosion, damage to wildlife habitats and disruption to other aquatic users.

Trust Riverpark Manager Chris Mather said the results would be used to help inform a major review of aquatic usage on the Swan and Canning rivers in a collaborative arrangement between the Trust and Department of Transport.

“Involving extensive stakeholder and community consultations, the review will begin later this year and include a review of speed limits on the river along with other management strategies,” Mr Mather said.

Boat wash and wind waves were measured at different locations on the Swan River including Ashfield Parade and Quarry Point. Nine different hull forms were tested across a range of boat speeds and distances from the shoreline.

The results from trials at Ashfield Parade showed that the speed of 8 knots (the present speed limit) roughly corresponds to the highest-energy boat wake for most recreational vessels.

Only at speeds less than 6 knots did all the vessels produce less wave energy than the extreme wind waves at Ashfield parade. At 5 knots, all vessels produced minimal wash.

Wind wave measurements were also carried out at these locations in order to validate the empirical method used for wind wave predictions.

Captain Cook Cruises and Rottnest Express provided ferries and Boating Industry of Western Australia (BIAWA) organised a range of aluminium and fibreglass recreational vessels belonging to their members. The Trust vessel Noel Robins was also tested.

Riverpark Manager Chris Mather said the support of ferry operators and BIAWA was a big boost to the research.

“There is little local research available on boat wash and wind waves so we are pleased to be adding to the knowledge available,” Mr Mather said.

“The research is part of a bigger strategy to understand the effects of boating on the Swan and Canning rivers,” he said.

The second stage research was undertaken by Curtin University’s Centre for Marine Science and Technology for the Swan River Trust. The Trust worked in collaboration with the Department of Transport.

## **Swan River climate change assessment tool released**

**Thursday, 29 April 2010**

The Swan River Trust has launched a tool to help local government assess the vulnerability of foreshore areas in the Swan Canning Riverpark to sea level rises.

The Trust with support from the City of Perth developed a case study to look at the potential effects of climate change at Point Fraser in the Swan River to understand how sea level rises will affect the Swan Canning Riverpark.

The Point Fraser case study has contributed to the development of the Climate Change Risk Assessment Project - a methodology enabling local government to assess the vulnerability of foreshore areas to sea level rise.

The sea level rises are based on worst case scenario projections by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The methodology gives local government the ability to plan, prioritise and manage the risks to economic, social and ecological assets in the Riverpark. It can also be used by other foreshore land managers.

Trust Principal Scientist Dr. Kerry Trayler said the methodology was developed to protect the ecological, social and economic value of the Swan Canning Riverpark to ensure the community can enjoy it now and into the future.

"It is much easier to plan for the future and adapt now than to try and combat increased water levels once areas around the rivers are affected," Dr. Trayler said.

"Using this assessment tool local government can identify areas most at risk. From there they can adapt their planning strategies to combat potential damage that rising sea levels could cause."

The methodology includes a checklist of infrastructure and social and environmental assets. It rates the value of those assets based on the consequences of rising sea levels.

Average water level overlays determine the likelihood of the impact to assets.

The project area studied is from the Fremantle traffic bridge to Windan Bridge on the Swan River and Riverton Bridge on the Canning River. Maps provide extreme sea levels for 1990, 2030, 2070, 2100.

"Climate change is one of the greatest challenges for the Swan Canning Riverpark and this methodology is a practical guide to assist local government and other foreshore land managers to plan ahead - to avoid costly engineering changes in the future," Dr. Trayler said.

The Swan River Trust's Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) prepared a technical paper in 2007 on the potential impacts of climate change on the Swan and Canning rivers. That paper identified key strategies to reduce the negative impacts of climate change, which included assessing the vulnerability of the river foreshores to climate change.

## **Pedal power pushes Trust in greener direction**

**Monday, 12 April 2010**

Four bicycles have been added to the Swan River Trust's vehicle fleet pushing the organisation in a greener direction.

The bikes are part of the Trust's commitment to constantly improve its environmental credentials, providing environmental and health benefits along with an alternative way for staff to get around the city.

"Pedal power is one of the greenest modes of transport and a great way for staff to fit some extra activity into their day," said Trust Recreation and Trails Project Officer Steve Dutton.

The bikes will be used for Trust officers to undertake river monitoring along foreshores and for transportation between the Trust office at the Hyatt and its Riverpark operations in Victoria Park.

## Swan and Canning rivers oxygen returning to normal

Wednesday, 31 March 2010

Oxygen levels in the Swan and Canning rivers are returning to normal, more than a week after one of Perth's biggest storm events in 50 years.

In the largest oxygenation response the Swan River Trust has undertaken, the peak of the issue saw 70kg of oxygen per hour (1.6 tonne/day) pumped into the Swan River at Guildford and 40kg per hour (960kg/day) into the Canning River above the Kent Street Weir.

Trust River System Manager Mark Cugley said the large amount of organic matter that entered the rivers would affect the system for sometime to come.

"While oxygen levels are returning to normal, we will see ongoing effects on the river from this event," Mr Cugley said.

"Oxygen levels in both the Swan and Canning Rivers are returning to healthy levels but we expect nutrient levels in the rivers will remain high for some time to come."

High nutrient levels in the rivers can lead to algal blooms and fish deaths.

The Trust is continuing twice weekly water quality monitoring of the Swan and Canning rivers and the Canning River oxygenation plants are still running at full capacity. The Swan River oxygenation plant is back to running at normal capacity.

A total of 155 fish were collected in the Canning River between Castledare and Bannister Creek.

The [Department of Health](#) has advised that Perth waterways are again safe for public use after testing of the ocean and rivers throughout the metropolitan area showed water quality had returned to normal levels.

The Trust encourages the community to report any sightings of slow moving or sluggish fish by calling the office on 9278 0900, or after hours on 0419 192 845.

The Trust reports changing river conditions to the community through the weekly [Algae Activity Report](#) and will continue to keep the public informed.

## **Winner captures beauty of Canning River**

**Monday, 29 March 2010**

Anne Holder of Victoria Park was announced the winner of the Swan River Trust's Perth's iconic rivers photo competition on 28 March 2010 with her photo of an egret on the Canning river.

River Guardians Program Manager Marnie Giroud announced the winner at the Autumn River Festival, Riverside Gardens Bayswater.

"The judges said the winning photograph was beautifully balanced, artistic and captured a moment in nature," Ms Giroud said.

"The Autumn River Festival was a great day with the stunning riverside as a backdrop that brings the community together."

Winning entrant and River Guardian Anne Holder said she loved the rivers and walking in wilderness areas within the city.

Iain Henderson of Maylands was announced runner up and Carol Seidel of Bassendean won the People's Choice category.

The Swan River Trust competition asked photography enthusiasts to get out and take photos of Perth's iconic rivers for entry into the River Guardians' photography competition.

The competition was open to all amateur photographers and a total of 118 entries were received.

Anne Holder will take home a \$350 Camera Electronics voucher and Iain Henderson a \$150 Camera Electronics voucher.

The winning entries and chosen photos appear on the Trust and River Guardians websites.

River Guardians, run through the Swan River Trust, aims to connect people with the Swan and Canning rivers.

The program is free to join at the moment and members enjoy fun events, and receive training and volunteering opportunities.

For more information about River Guardians, log on to [www.riverguardians.com](http://www.riverguardians.com), or contact the Swan River Trust on 9278 0900.

## **Agencies work together to save river life from storm run-off**

**Thursday, 25 March 2010**

Freshwater fish and river experts have joined forces to protect as many fish and crustaceans as possible, in the upper Canning River, from deteriorating water conditions, caused by run-off from Monday's storm event.

The Department of Fisheries is working together with the Swan River Trust to check water quality and, where necessary, transfer fish and crustaceans into research holding tanks so they can be restocked into the river system when it returns to normal.

### **The Perth Storm and its effect on the rivers**

The storm on Monday, 22 March 2010 has washed a large amount of organic material, including overflowing sewage into the Swan and Canning rivers. This is causing a rapid decrease in dissolved oxygen levels.

Fish deaths between the Middle Swan Bridge and Caversham, and also Woodbridge Reserve in Guildford in the Swan River were reported on Wednesday 24 March. Approximately 40 fish died. On Thursday 25 March a second fish death incident was reported on the Canning River between Castledare and Bannister Creek and 30 fish were collected.

Crabs in the Upper Swan have also been seen leaving the water. In the Canning River marron have been seen leaving the water near Yule Brook, Beckenham. The Trust and Department of Fisheries are working together to protect as many fish and crustaceans as possible from deteriorating water conditions. Department of Fisheries are transferring some fish and crustaceans into research holding tanks so they can be restocked into the river when it returns to normal.

The Department of Health has issued a warning for people to avoid contact with water in Perth rivers and at beaches near stormwater outlets.



## Swan and Canning Rivers low oxygen

Tuesday, 23 March 2010

The Swan River Trust is monitoring low oxygen levels in the upper reaches of both the Swan and Canning rivers after this week's storm washed large amounts of organic matter into the rivers

Swan River Trust River Systems Manager Mark Cugley said rapid drops in oxygen in waterways was a natural process that occurred after rainfall events washed large amounts of organic matter into the water, rapidly increasing the activity of micro-organisms.

"The Trust is monitoring the situation closely and we have both the Guildford oxygenation plant in the Swan River and the Camsell Way oxygenation plant in the Canning River running at full capacity, 24 hours a day," Mr Cugley said.

"We are still waiting for power to be restored to the second Canning River oxygenation plant at Bacon Street. This may take a couple of days but we are sourcing generators to supply power in the interim."

The Trust has received reports of fish deaths between the Middle Swan Bridge and Caversham, and also Woodbridge Reserve in Guildford in the Swan River. Crabs in the Upper Swan have also been seen leaving the water.

In the Canning River marron have been seen leaving the water near Yule Brook, Beckenham.

"We are currently investigating the fish deaths and it's likely the marron and crabs are leaving the water due to very low oxygen levels. It is possible the low oxygen levels may contribute to further fish deaths," Mr Cugley said.

The Trust is working with the Department of Water to oxygenate the water in the upper reaches of the Canning and Swan rivers to remediate the situation as soon as possible.

The Trust encourages the community to report any sightings of slow moving or sluggish fish by calling the office on 9278 0900, or after hours on 0419 192 845.

The Department of Health is warning people to avoid contact with water in Perth rivers and at beaches near stormwater outlets, due to contaminants being washed into these waters after Monday's storm. View the [Department of Health's media release](#).

The Trust reports changing river conditions to the community through the weekly [Algae Activity Report](#) and will continue to keep the public informed.

## **New wetland for Perth's south-eastern suburbs**

**Saturday, 20 March 2010**

A new wetland will be created in Perth's south-eastern suburbs as part of a \$1.15million project to reduce nutrient pollution entering the Canning River.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher said the new wetland would rehabilitate the degraded Anvil Way drainage basin in Welshpool.

"The basin is part of a drain catchment area that has been identified as one of the highest contributors of nutrients to the Canning River," Mrs Faragher said.

"Water that is high in nutrients can lead to algal blooms and fish deaths and the redevelopment of this area will reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and other contaminants entering the river.

"This project will include the planting of 48,000 native plants and will improve the look of the site in a built-up industrial and commercial area of Welshpool."

Work at the 2.2 acre site will include the removal of contaminated sediment; the re-contouring of the existing basin; excavation work to create a low-flow living stream; and the construction of hydraulic control features to slow and treat low flows.

"Importantly, the ecological value of the degraded drainage basin will be restored, encouraging wildlife back to the area and providing a refuge for birds and other wildlife," the Minister said.

The project is part of a collaborative agreement between the Swan River Trust (SRT), the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL) and the City of Canning.

The City of Canning will undertake the construction works, while SERCUL will co-ordinate the revegetation activities.

The construction project and most of the revegetation is expected to be completed by December 2010.

A large part of the State Government's funding for the project has been through the Swan Canning Water Quality Improvement Plan, which was allocated \$3.19million in December 2009.

"Government funding for the Swan and Canning rivers is making a significant difference to improving the health of the waterways," Mrs Faragher said.

"We have also announced the application of a WA-developed nutrient magnet that blocks damaging algal blooms in the Canning River and a \$3million project to install an underground barrier to stop contaminated groundwater entering the Helena River at Bellevue."

City of Canning mayor Delle Donne said: "The City of Canning is pleased to be involved in these environmental projects in partnership with the State Government, through the Swan River Trust, and our local environmental group SERCUL.

"This is the fourth wetlands project we have been involved with and we are already seeing the benefits through the improved health of our precious Canning River."

## **Update on fish deaths in Swan River**

**Thursday, 18 March 2010**

The Swan River Trust continues to monitor the mid to upper reaches of the Swan River between Rivervale and middle Swan Bridge since it detected elevated levels of *Karlodinium veneficum* in early March and removed 160 dead fish on the weekend 12th March 2010.

*Karlodinium veneficum* is a single cell microalgae found in most Western Australian waterways and typically increases in density between mid-summer and autumn. More information on the fish kill can be found on the Trust's earlier media release.

A range of factors may have contributed to the fish deaths, including increasingly high densities of the harmful algae, *Karlodinium*, low oxygen levels, high water temperature and high densities of non-toxic green algae.

The risk of further fish deaths between Rivervale and middle Swan Bridge remains high. *Karlodinium* has previously been associated with fish kills in the river.

The Trust has increased water quality monitoring in the area and is conducting daily surveillance in this section of the river for affected fish.

There is no evidence to suggest that *Karlodinium* is toxic to humans. However, standard Department of Health warnings discouraging people from eating shellfish collected from the Swan and Canning rivers remain in place.

People are asked to report any sluggish or dead fish to the Swan River Trust on 9278 0900 or after hours on 0419 192 845.

## **Fish deaths in Swan River**

**Sunday, 14 March 2010**

Swan River Trust Riverpark officers removed 160 dead fish from the Swan River at Fishmarket Reserve, Guildford during the weekend and today.

The fish were mainly black bream, of various ages.

The Trust has been monitoring elevated levels of *Karlodinium veneficum* in the mid to upper reaches of the Swan River between Rivervale and Middle Swan Bridge since early March.

*Karlodinium veneficum* is a single cell microalgae found in most Western Australian waterways and typically increases in density between mid-summer and autumn.

Trust principal scientist Dr. Kerry Trayler said the Trust was looking at a range of factors that may have contributed to the fish deaths including low oxygen levels and the presence of *Karlodinium veneficum*.

“How *Karlodinium* affects the fish is not fully understood, but it is suspected their gills become damaged causing them difficulty in extracting oxygen from the water,” Dr. Trayler said.

Dr. Trayler said the Trust was undertaking tests to determine the cause of the deaths and would continue daily inspections in the Swan River.

Oxygen levels are variable in the area and as a precaution the Trust will switch on the Guildford Road Bridge oxygenation unit to increase oxygen levels in the river.

The Trust provides a weekly [Algae Activity Report](#) to the community through the media and on the Trust website.

As a long-standing precaution, the Department of Health advises people not to eat wild shellfish from the Swan Canning Riverpark.

The Trust encourages the public to report dead or sluggish fish in the Swan Canning Riverpark, please contact the Trust on 9278 0900 or after hours 0419 192 845.

## **Nedlands river wall repaired**

**Wednesday, 10 March 2010**

Work to repair crumbling parts of the river wall in Nedlands has finished.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher said the \$500,000 project successfully repaired the wall between Nedlands Yacht Club and Broadway, and between Iris Avenue and Perth Flying Squadron Yacht Club.

Mrs Faragher said these parts of the wall, built between the 1930s and 1960s, were badly damaged and crumbling into the river. Erosion behind the wall had created big holes which had become public safety issues.

“Funding for this important project was provided through the State Government’s Riverbank Grant Scheme, with the City of Nedlands providing equivalent funding,” she said.

“The Riverbank Grant Scheme was set up to help protect the existing natural asset throughout the Swan Riverpark in areas that need maintenance.

“Funding is essential to these projects and the Riverpark is a shared responsibility of the State and local governments.”

Nedlands MLA Bill Marmion said the funding provided much-needed repairs to a popular section of the Swan River.

“The Nedlands river wall is a priority area for foreshore restoration and these works contribute to increase public amenity and safety in the area,” Mr Marmion said.

City of Nedlands Mayor, Sheryl Froese, said it was important to ensure the river wall infrastructure was maintained and safe for all users.

The Government had allocated nearly \$1.2million to river wall restoration and rehabilitation works in 2008-09 across 13 land managers as part of the Riverbank Grant Scheme.

The Swan River Trust is inviting local and State Government agencies to apply for the next round of Riverbank Grants. Applications close at 5pm on April 1, 2010.

## Increased alga levels monitored in Swan River

Sunday, 7 March 2010

The Swan River Trust is monitoring elevated levels of *Karlodinium veneficum* in the mid to upper reaches of the Swan River between Rivervale and the Middle Swan Bridge.

*Karlodinium veneficum* is a single cell microalgae found in most Western Australian waterways and typically increases in density between mid-summer and autumn.

Swan River Trust principal scientist Dr. Kerry Trayler said there is no evidence the algae affects humans but it can be toxic to fish.

"How *Karlodinium* affects the fish is not fully understood, but it is suspected their gills become damaged causing them difficulty in extracting oxygen from the water," Dr. Trayler said.

"The current levels we see in the river have been shown to affect fish elsewhere, but we have previously seen higher levels in the river, without incident."

"We are keeping a close watch on this algae at the moment and Trust officers will conduct inspections for affected fish."

The Trust encourages the community to report any sightings of slow moving or sluggish fish by calling the office on 9278 0900, or after hours on 0419 192 845.

As a long-standing precaution, the Department of Health advises people not to eat mussels, cockles, or oysters from the Swan and Canning rivers.

The Trust reports changing river conditions to the community through the weekly [Algae Activity Report](#) and will continue to keep the public informed.

## **\$600,000 funding for river care groups**

**Friday, 26 February 2010**

Environment Minister Donna Faragher today announced \$600,000 funding for more than 35 projects that aim to improve the quality of water entering the Swan and Canning rivers.

“This funding gives community river care groups the ability to undertake environmental projects in their local area,” Mrs Faragher said.

“Community conservation groups make a valuable onground contribution to protecting the Swan and Canning rivers.”

The funding is part of the Swan River Trust and Alcoa Landcare Program, which is administered by Perth Region NRM and jointly funded by the Swan River Trust,

Alcoa of Australia Limited and, for the first time in 2010, Lotterywest.

The Minister said the program had been running successfully for 12 years and had funded foreshore and wetland restoration, conservation and rehabilitation projects in the Perth region.

“The program is an excellent example of Government and industry working together to help improve water quality in our Swan and Canning rivers,” she said.

“We can only achieve sustainable and healthy rivers if we all work together - local and State governments, industry and community groups.”

Projects given funding this year focused on revegetation; weed control; and management and dieback treatment.

Since 1998, more than 830 projects have received funding through the program, with State Government contribution totalling more than \$2.8million.

## **New Trust board members**

**Monday, 22 February 2010**

The Trust welcomed two new members on Monday 8 February as Vanessa Davies and Tony Evans attended their first meeting bringing a wealth of experience and expertise to the Trust.

Ms Davies is an Aboriginal woman and has traditional links to Wongai and Noongar people in Western Australia. She was appointed by Environment Minister Donna Faragher in December 2009 for a three-year term.

Ms Davies has comprehensive executive management experience in government relations, justice, employment and education, health, community and Indigenous relations. She began her career as a qualified secondary teacher, a background which has provided her with excellent communication, presentation and facilitation skills. In 2000, Ms Davies completed a postgraduate Masters Degree in Management and Leadership through Curtin University's Graduate School of Business. She has worked extensively in the public and private sector and is dedicated to inspiring individuals to be creative and innovative.

Mr Evans was appointed to the Trust board in November 2009 as the Department of Planning representative. He is General Manager and Secretary of the Western Australian Planning Commission.

Mr Evans is a qualified accountant with a Bachelor of Business and a Diploma in Education. He is a member of CPA Australia, Chartered Secretaries Australia and the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He has extensive commercial and corporate governance experience in the property, resources, education and not-for-profit sectors. His business career includes executive management appointments with the Perth Diocesan Trustees, Iluka Resources Ltd, Murdoch University, WA Petroleum Pty Ltd and Chevron Corporation. Tony is deputy chair of the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand, a board member of the governing council of Challenger TAFE and is a member of the councils of the Royal Automobile Club of WA and HBF Health Funds Pty Ltd.



## **Update on Fremantle Ports' inner harbour deepening project**

**Sunday, 21 February 2010**

The latest results from the Water Quality Monitoring Program for the inner harbour and channel deepening project were released on the Fremantle Ports' website last week.

Tests analysed heavy metals, hydrocarbons and pesticides in the sediment and water alongside routine water quality monitoring including, but not limited to, turbidity, secchi depth, suspended solids, salinity and pH levels. The results include samples taken in the river (Rocky Bay and Preston Point Beach), in the harbour, near the dredge, and in and around the reclamation area at Rous Head.

These results indicate toxicant levels in water near the dredge are below moderate (90%) environmental protection guidelines applied to the river for the duration of the dredging activities and more conservative (95%) protection guidelines (listed in the Australian and New Zealand Guidelines for Fresh and Marine Water Quality, 2000).

Sediment analysis showed PAHs, PCBs and most metals were also below environmental protection guidelines. TBT was above the environmental protection guidelines in some locations (outside the river). Further testing is being undertaken to determine if there is any risk to the environment.

The Trust is liaising with the Office of the EPA and Fremantle Ports about several Swan River issues including: turbidity; risk to seagrass health; and evidence of sedimentation. Fremantle Ports is now reviewing the information relating to seagrass and exploring approaches to measure sedimentation.

Extensive information on the project can be found at the Fremantle Ports' website.

## **Nutrient magnet to reduce algal blooms in Canning River**

**Thursday, 18 February 2010**

A Western Australian-developed nutrient magnet that blocks damaging algal blooms would be applied to hot spots along the Canning River this month.

The locally designed and trialled clay, known as Phoslock, attracts and binds phosphorus so algae can't use it, stopping the damaging blooms before they occur.

Up to 50 tonnes of the clay would be applied this week over a 2.5km stretch of the Canning River where phosphorus concentrations are high from urban and rural land use.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher and Water Minister Graham Jacobs today announced the start of the \$180,000 project, being jointly managed by the Swan River Trust and the Department of Water.

Mrs Faragher said Phoslock was a proven and environmentally friendly mechanism for reducing algal blooms and was a critical part of the State Government's \$3.19million plan to improve the water quality of the Canning and Swan Rivers.

"This kind of State Government funding for problem areas in the Swan and Canning rivers can make a significant difference to improving the health of the waterways," she said.

"The Phoslock project is just one of many initiatives being undertaken by the Swan River Trust as part of its catchment-to-coast approach to river management.

"The clay was last applied to the Canning River in January 2002, and effectively removed phosphorus to prevent blooms of potentially toxic blue-green algae."

Water Minister Graham Jacobs said Phoslock had been developed by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), in conjunction with the Swan River Trust and the Department of Water.

Dr Jacobs said the product had undergone extensive testing and appeared to be most effective in oxygenated areas of the river.

"This significant work has proven the worth of the product which is now approved for use in natural and drinking waters. It is being used worldwide as a corrective solution for nutrient rich waterways," he said.

"Phoslock is sprayed as slurry, distributed from the back of a boat, removing phosphorus as it falls to the bottom. It settles to form a one-millimetre layer on the river bed, where it continues to strip dissolved phosphorus from the overlying water.

"It may cause the water to turn a milky colour for a couple of days, but it is not harmful to people swimming or fishing in the river."

The sections of the river to be treated are upstream from the Kent Street Weir to about 800m beyond the Nicholson Road Bridge.

## **Festival time to celebrate the rivers**

**Monday, 15 February 2010**

Free family fun and a focus on Perth's precious rivers are all in store at this year's Autumn River Festival.

Held across two riverfront locations in Bayswater and Ascot on Sunday March 28, the Autumn River Festival packs free activities, environmental education, stalls and delicious food into a fun-filled day celebrating the beauty of the Swan River.

In Bayswater's Riverside Gardens, live music and local arts and crafts will feature alongside the Swan River Trust's River Guardians marquee where festival goers can learn how to keep the rivers healthy and become a River Guardian.

The day will also include the Bank Family Games, Dunk the Councillor, Artists on the Walkpath and the Autumn River Ramble bike ride from Bardon Park in Maylands to Riverside Gardens.

Family activities include pony rides, bouncy castles, face painting, radio controlled boat and car racing and a climbing wall.

Garvey Park in Ascot will host entertainment, activities, stalls and the Make a Wish Foundation's Walk for a Wish.

This year for the first time the event will also showcase entries from the Trust's River Guardians photography competition which encourages photographers to capture what they love about Perth's rivers.

The Autumn River Festival attracts about 12,000 people each year and is a major community project organised by the cities of Bayswater and Belmont with the Trust's support.

Visit the Autumn River Festival website for more information and the River Guardians website to find about more about the photography competition.

## **Temporary speed restriction lifted in Swan River**

**Sunday, 7 February 2010**

The temporary speed restriction in the Swan River between the Narrows Bridge and Quarry Point west of the Old Swan Brewery has been lifted.

The 6 knot speed restriction was put in place in September 2009 to reduce vessel wake disturbance during the river wall reconstruction.

Swan River Trust Riverpark Manager Chris Mather said in-river works on the wall were now complete.

“The Trust and City of Perth have replaced a 500 metre section of gabion river walling that was in danger of collapse with a limestone wall,” Mr Mather said.

“The new wall will provide ongoing protection against erosion and also protect the dual use path frequently used by cyclists.

“The speed restriction was expected to be in place until March 2010, so we are happy that the in-river works have been completed ahead of schedule.”

Restoration work on top of the wall and reconstruction of the shared path are still in progress with an anticipated date of completion scheduled for late February 2010.

The project is part of the Trust’s Riverbank program which protects and rehabilitates priority foreshore areas in the Swan Canning Riverpark. Many projects are completed in partnership with local government and the community.

## **Second stage of boat wash study launched**

**Thursday, 21 January 2010**

The Swan River Trust will begin the second stage of research into the effects of boat wash on shoreline erosion on 31 January 2010, building on results from groundbreaking investigations in 2009.

The Trust is working in collaboration with the Department of Transport and the research will be undertaken by Curtin University Centre for Marine Science and Technology to verify the modelling results in the initial report.

The trials will involve measuring vessel wake of both recreational and commercial vessels.

Commercial vessels will be provided by Captain Cook Cruises and Rottnest Express and recreational vessels through the Boating Industry of Western Australia (BIAWA).

BIAWA will provide a range of aluminium and fibreglass recreational vessels and Trust vessels will also be tested.

Riverpark Manager Chris Mather said the support of ferry operators and BIAWA was a big boost to the project.

"We are very pleased to be working with these operators and the peak representative body for the boating industry," he said.

"It also indicates a strong awareness of issues around boat wash for their industry and members, and their commitment to the ongoing health of the river."

The report, Investigation into the Effect of Wash of Boats and Wind Waves on the Swan River, which modelled the vessel wake and wind waves was released in October 2009 and examined wash and wave impact on foreshore erosion in the Swan Canning Riverpark.

The report found that a reduction in boat speed limits in sections of the Swan River should dramatically reduce the potential for shoreline erosion and damage to wildlife habitats.

The vessel wake trials will also verify the results, and measure boat use in the middle and upper stretches of the Swan River.

## **Fremantle Ports' inner harbour deepening project update**

**Thursday, 21 January 2010**

The first series of water quality monitoring results for the inner harbour and channel deepening project were released this week on the Fremantle Ports' website.

Testing analysed heavy metals, hydrocarbons and pesticides alongside normal weekly water quality monitoring including, but not limited to, turbidity, secchi depth, suspended solids, salinity and pH levels. These results include samples taken in the Swan River, harbour, dredging area, and Rous Head reclamation area.

Initial results (19 January 2010) indicated potential exceedances of ecological protection levels, as applied by the Office of the Environment Protection Authority (OEPA), for copper at two locations and lead at one location in the inner harbour. The levels set for the testing are based on marine protection guidelines and further testing was undertaken to determine if the copper and lead were in a soluble form. The results of the additional testing show that soluble copper and lead were below detection limits (21 January 2010) and did not exceed the guidelines. Results are yet to be received for organochlorides and organotins.

The Swan River Trust is liaising with the OEPA to ensure the health and ecology of the Swan River is maintained during and after the inner harbour deepening. The OEPA has set conditions on the dredging project for the protection of the environment and the Trust is liaising with the OEPA and Fremantle Ports to ensure conditions are met.

The Swan River Trust is also a member of the dredging reference group set up to ensure that all stakeholders are informed and information being provided to the community is up to date and timely.

Extensive information on the project can be found at the Fremantle Ports' website.

## **Riverbank Grants Scheme open**

**Wednesday, 20 January 2010**

The Swan River Trust is inviting local and state government agencies to apply for its latest round of Riverbank Grants.

The Trust's [Riverbank Grants Scheme](#) funds shoreline protection and rehabilitation works in the Swan Canning Riverpark through partnership arrangements with local and state government agencies.

Trust General Manager Rod Hughes said the scheme had distributed more than \$6 million across 132 projects since 2002 – combining with partner contributions to result in more than \$12 million of onground works.

"Foreshore protection and rehabilitation is integral to the Trust's work as shoreline vegetation forms an essential part of the ecology of the Swan and Canning rivers," Mr Hughes said.

"Shoreline vegetation provides food and habitat for wildlife, prevents erosion and improves water quality by filtering sediments, nutrients and pollutants before they reach the water."

"Riverbank grants also fund engineered works including riverwall and bank repair."

"These projects are great examples of the Trust working closely with local and state government agencies that also involve local environmental and foreshore protection groups."

Projects are based on a cost-sharing arrangement and must be carried out on publicly owned land in the Swan Canning Riverpark.

## **Protect the Riverpark this Australia Day**

**Wednesday, 13 January 2010**

With the City of Perth Skyworks set to draw the State's attention to the skies this Australia Day, the Swan River Trust is reminding people not to forget about looking after the Swan River and its foreshore.

More than 300,000 people and 600 boats are expected to gather on and around the river for the event.

Trust General Manager Rod Hughes said the day provided a wonderful opportunity for West Australians to celebrate together and enjoy the river.

"Skyworks is a great reminder of the Swan Canning Riverpark's value to the community and what we can all do to help protect it," he said.

"On the day we can work together to ensure we don't trample foreshore vegetation, which provides habitat and food for fish and other fauna and filters out nutrients that would otherwise contribute to algal blooms.

"And importantly we ask people to take rubbish home after the event or dispose of it appropriately, including making use of recycling stations on the foreshore."

- Boat users can also protect the rivers by:
- keeping to speed limits as wash from boats can damage shorelines and other boats and disturb wildlife
- avoiding damaging the riverbanks by launching your boat from designated boat ramps to help prevent erosion
- checking the riverbed if you need to drop anchor – if you see seagrass, try another spot.

The Trust encourages the community to report any activities which may be harmful to the rivers and shorelines by calling 0419 192 845.



## **New oxygenation plant endorsed for Swan River**

**Tuesday, 5 January 2010**

A second oxygenation plant for the upper Swan River has been approved by the Swan River Trust.

The decision comes as the 'Turbolox' oxygenation plant at Guildford Road Bridge was switched on yesterday to provide oxygen-rich water to the Swan River during the traditionally low-oxygen summer period.

The construction of a similar Turbolox oxygenation plant is due to start in 2010 at Caversham Avenue. Under standard operation, the Turbolox system is capable of introducing almost a tonne (960kg) of oxygen into the river daily.

It is the first time this technology has been used anywhere in the world in an estuary, and the Trust and the Department of Water are working to ensure that it is rigorously tested. Results from the Guildford and Caversham Avenue sites will be incorporated into a longer-term plan to keep oxygen levels in the Swan River levels suitable.

Trust environmental officer Suzanne Thompson said the Caversham site was chosen because it has a history of low oxygen, particularly in the bottom waters.

"The new plant site is a continuation of the Trust's efforts to improve river health that build on the learning from the trial that began with the Guildford Road bridge oxygenation plant in 2009," Mrs Thompson said.

"The Guildford oxygenation plant is still being trialled, but results to date indicate that we can increase oxygen levels across more than 3km of the Swan River.

"These positive results give us confidence to construct another Turbolox plant on the upper Swan River at Caversham Avenue."

Summer launches the start of the oxygenation program on the Swan and Canning rivers due to the warmer summer conditions which cause low oxygen levels in the rivers.

Mrs Thompson said low oxygen levels in the river were caused by a breakdown of organic matter, such as leaves and debris, in the sediments. This is exacerbated by salt water, which is heavier than fresh water and acts as a barrier preventing oxygenated water from reaching the sediments.

"Until this week, the Guildford site has been suitably oxygenated but reduced levels are now requiring the trial to start," Suzanne said.

"By increasing oxygen levels, the health and amenity of the river will improve, providing a better habitat for fish and other aquatic life.

"The new plant at Caversham Avenue will dramatically improve conditions in the nearby river and is just one measure in a whole toolkit of actions being taken to improve the health of the river system."