



Conservation Council of Western Australia

ccwa

Look forward

ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017



From the South West to the Kimberley and everywhere in between, our mosaic pattern represents the interwoven and interconnected features of the WA environment, and the communities working to preserve them.

As the peak environment body for our state for fifty years, the Conservation Council of WA brings together more than one hundred Member Groups and tens of thousands of individuals engaged in a joint effort to protect our environment for generations to come.

Thanks to the power of this passionate community, the beautiful and delicate mosaic that is the WA environment will continue to be preserved for all to enjoy.

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ABOUT CCWA

The Conservation Council of WA is the state's foremost non-profit, non-government conservation organisation.

CCWA has been an outspoken advocate for conservation and a sustainable Western Australia for fifty years, working directly with the government, media, industry, community groups, and political parties to promote a more sustainable WA and to protect our natural environment.

Through advocacy, community engagement, policy development, science, and on-the-ground projects, we help create a sustainable future that all Western Australians can look forward to.

As WA's peak environmental group we represent more than one hundred Member Groups throughout the state, as well as tens of thousands of individuals. We connect with and amplify the voice of this growing network, which covers diverse aims and interests – from promoting renewable energy to the protection of native bushland and wildlife.

CCWA works to promote a clean economy that provides opportunities without polluting the ecosystems that support us, or destroying the culture and beauty that inspires us. We work to protect our wild places and ensure that unique wildlife can thrive in their natural habitat. CCWA works with communities and individuals to build skills, empower groups, and strengthen voices at a local level. We also combine the strength of our network to tackle critical environmental challenges at a much larger scale.

From the rugged far north of the Kimberley, to the green forested South West, to our amazing coastline and unique marine life, CCWA speaks for the protection and conservation of all nature in WA.

Whether protecting icons such as Ningaloo Reef, creating new National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries, or saving old growth forests, our work leaves an enduring legacy for future generations.



"It continues to amaze me that such impact can be achieved by a small dedicated team of staff and volunteers working from a single room in CCWA's West Perth office, connecting with communities and organisations across the state."

REPORT FROM OUR DIRECTOR

The Conservation Council's 50th year has been a tremendous milestone in the history of the Council, and in the unfolding story of communities standing up for the environment across our broad and beautiful state.

A major feature of this year was leading the WA community conservation sector in a major unifying campaign during the lead up to the March State Election. With the Barnett Government adopting an increasingly hostile stance toward both the natural environment and those who defend it, the election represented an important opportunity to demonstrate community support for a new direction on a range critical environmental issues.

The resultant campaign positioned our sector and communities across WA as powerful drivers in some of the most significant environmental debates in the state's history.

As a foundation for the campaign, CCWA initiated and led the largest coalition of environmental groups and civil society organisations to ever work together on a shared platform for the environment in WA. The environment sector policy priorities and the RenewWA Climate Change Consensus Statement will continue to guide our advocacy and unite our community behind shared ambitions for a sustainable Western Australia.

Before we had a chance to announce CCWA's newly elected President Carmen Lawrence, we received the alarming news that government bulldozers were about to begin tearing into the precious Beeliar Wetlands. Our new President hit the ground running as a powerful voice and key leader in what would become a defining issue for the election.

The struggle to save the Beeliar Wetlands united a community in defense of nature and shared cultural heritage. CCWA played a key leadership role, making the issue symbolic of a reckless approach towards the environment and communities that had become a hallmark of the Barnett administration.

CCWA's Frack Free Future campaign was also working overtime to activate diverse communities and organisations across the state in support of a moratorium on gas fracking. This effort involved hundreds of volunteers engaging directly with targeted communities through an intensive operation involving phone-banking, door-knocking and packed public meetings, backed by CCWA's most ambitious television advertising and online engagement campaign in recent history.

The result was a new government was elected with significantly better environmental policies and a strong mandate for progressive action on environment and climate change. Since the election, concrete action has already been taken or initiated by the McGowan Government on a range of priority environmental issues including Beeliar Wetlands, waste and plastic pollution, fracking, energy, National Parks, public transport, Aboriginal rangers, and other important policy areas that will help deliver a more sustainable Western Australia.

Putting the environment on the agenda in a remote and resource dominated state is a monumental challenge in itself.

Seeing our combined efforts translate into tangible and significant wins that change political history, move us closer to a sustainable future, and leave a permanent positive legacy for the environment is truly incredible.

What our community has achieved this year, and over the last 50 years is a testament to the outstanding dedication of the CCWA team and the extended community of people and organisations we work with. Once again, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to all those who turn up, volunteer, support, speak out, donate, and even put their bodies on the line to stand up for what we believe in.

Piers Vestegen, Director

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

In this, the 50th year since its founding, the Conservation Council of Western Australia has demonstrated, yet again, just how important it is in the struggle to ensure we halt the destruction of our natural world and protect what we value from thoughtless exploitation. Over the last 12 months, I have had the great honour of chairing CCWA's Executive Committee and seeing first hand the tremendous effort expended by so many people to further the conservation of our precious natural environment. Volunteers, donors, staff, and the Executive Director, Piers Verstegen, pulled out all stops to ensure that environmental issues were properly considered by politicians and aspiring politicians in the lead up to the recent State Election.

The campaigns encompassed the whole state, from the Kimberley to the South West; from the coast to the easternmost desert county; whether it was opposition to fracking and uranium mining or campaigning to protect the Beeliiar Wetlands, developing ranger programs to protect our remote woodlands, or reducing plastic contamination, CCWA joined with local people, scientists, and activists to vividly and effectively remind voters and aspiring representatives alike that they must carefully consider the environmental impact of government decisions on the natural world and we who are part of it.

None of this would have been possible without careful planning, engaging and timely communication, well-organised events, effective fundraising, and strategic collaboration with partner organisations. Building on the efforts of previous generations of CCWA stalwarts, a new generation of campaigners and volunteers under Piers Verstegen's unflagging leadership and advocacy skills, were successful in achieving strong commitments on key environmental policies from the incoming government.

What is now vital is that the momentum is maintained and the promises delivered, at the same time as new policies are developed to confront the continuing and emerging challenges to conservation. CCWA will have a key role in ensuring that accountability and responsiveness. Building on the existing relationships with CCWA Member Groups and sister environmental groups will be critical to maintaining that pressure.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed their ideas, their labour, and their money over the last year - and indeed for the 50 years of CCWA's operations. To those far-sighted

campaigners who first set up CCWA, to those who saw the need to establish a Trust Fund to ensure CCWA could weather even the most adverse financial conditions, to the many volunteers and financial donors throughout the organisation – in the Member Groups, in the office, and on the Executive Committee – all of whom have given what they can, passionately and generously.

The high level of skills and the professionalism of members of the Executive Committee and among the staff is indicative of the regard in which CCWA and its Director is held. This legacy is one we on the Executive Committee are committed to protecting and enhancing, something that has been made a little easier by the reinstatement of some funds from government.

However, the need for effective environmental advocacy is greater now than ever and will continue to demand additional resources from all of us. Like my predecessor, Dr David Harries, I have been impressed by how much can be achieved by a small group of committed and dedicated people, led so effectively by the Director, Piers Verstegen.

However, we all know that the threats to our natural world are severe and growing, and that more is needed from all of us to avert further damage and to try to repair what has already been damaged. Together with the dedicated Executive Committee members and the staff, I am committed to ensuring that CCWA will continue to play its part in mobilising communities and governments to rise to the challenge.

Professor Carmen Lawrence, President

ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNS





ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNS

STATE ELECTION 2017

This year CCWA set out to deliver our most ambitious advocacy effort during an election campaign in recent history.

With the Barnett Government becoming increasingly hostile to the conservation sector, communities and the environment, the State Election represented an important opportunity for CCWA to secure improved environmental policies and greater protection. This was achieved through a significant and concerted effort to engage in the democratic process and encouraging our extended community to do the same, while at all times maintaining CCWA's strictly non-partisan position.

We started many months before the election by convening the largest coalition of national environment groups and CCWA members to ever work together on a shared advocacy agenda. This was a significant exercise in itself as it involved several facilitated events, a survey of Member Groups, and other methods of engagement to achieve consensus on priorities within our sector and beyond.

The resulting *Blueprint for the Future – WA Environment Groups' Policy Priorities for the 2017 WA Election* was used as a basis for direct lobbying and negotiation with political parties, and as a benchmark to evaluate the policies and commitments made by each party before the election. This document will continue to guide CCWA's policy agenda into the future.

Several major public events were held during the election campaign to provide opportunities for political parties to respond to our policy priorities, and to enable our community to



engage directly with candidates. This included a 2017 Election Environment Forum at the Perth Town Hall, a Frack Free Future forum in St George's Cathedral, and a Renew WA forum on climate change and renewable energy with Professor Fiona Stanley at Edith Cowan University.

Nearly 1700 members of our community completed our State Election Survey, with 67% of respondents indicating that environmental issues would be their main consideration when casting their vote. Feedback from this survey also helped us to identify the Renew WA, Beeliar Wetlands, and Frack Free Future campaigns as having the potential to engage a broad audience, activate our community, and become symbolic of the Barnett Government's increasingly anti-environmental agenda.

These themes became the subject of the most significant and targeted community engagement effort ever undertaken by CCWA, including numerous community events, phone banking, door-knocking, online campaigning, paid advertising (including online, radio and television) and much more.

The result is that a new government was elected with significantly better environmental policies and a strong mandate for progressive action on environment and climate change. Since the election, action has already been taken by the State Government on Roe 8, waste and plastic pollution, fracking, energy, National Parks, public transport, Aboriginal rangers, and other important policy areas that will help deliver a more sustainable Western Australia.

CCWA's election campaign also delivered a range of other beneficial outcomes, including: a more cohesive and aligned

conservation sector; significantly increased profile of CCWA; strong working relationships with a number of new Members of Parliament who will be champions for the environment; new, active community groups in key electorates; and an inspiring policy agenda that will guide the sector and its advocacy efforts into the future.

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY, AND FOSSIL FUELS

Tackling the drivers of climate change is a high priority for CCWA that informs much of our advocacy and community engagement agenda.

Climate change presents a fundamental threat to Western Australia's environment, our communities, and our way of life. Yet WA carbon emissions are increasing and our state is lagging behind other jurisdictions in tackling the drivers of climate change.

The immediate priority for CCWA's climate change work has been to prevent new fossil fuel developments, including the establishment of a new onshore gas fracking industry which has the potential to rapidly increase our state's emissions. Tackling existing emissions sources such as LNG, coal burning, native vegetation clearing, and forest logging have also been important areas of work for CCWA this year.

In addition to directly tackling these emissions sources, CCWA has continued to work in partnerships with a range of organisations to broaden and strengthen the community

consensus in support of climate action and a just transition to renewable energy in Western Australia.

FRACK FREE FUTURE

Hydraulic fracturing, or 'fracking', is an extremely polluting method of onshore gas extraction. At a commercial scale, fracking involves drilling hundreds or even thousands of wells through groundwater aquifers – then pumping chemicals, sand, and water underground at high pressure to fracture deep rock formations in order to release trapped gas. Fracking is banned in many jurisdictions around the world due to community opposition and observed environmental impacts.

Western Australia is host to some of the world's largest unconventional gas deposits, and several years ago CCWA identified the emerging fracking industry as a very large potential source of carbon pollution – and one of the most significant threats to our environment and communities. Though only a dozen unconventional gas wells have been fracked so far in WA, we've already seen serious environmental impacts of fracking.

Under the Barnett Government, unconventional gas exploration licenses were issued across vast areas of the state – without any community consultation or environmental impact assessment – covering some of our most important groundwater aquifers, environment and tourism areas, farmland and Aboriginal lands.





Responding to this major threat, CCWA has been engaged in a significant multi-pronged campaign effort to prevent the development of the fracking industry here in WA, led by our **Jules Kirby**.

Opposition to fracking was a major issue during 2017 State Election as CCWA's Frack Free Future partnered with influential Western Australians including Tim Winton, John Butler, and Carmen Lawrence to highlight the dangers of this industry to a large audience. Through this and other efforts, Frack Free Future played a critical role in securing election commitments to a new policy approach on fracking from the McGowan Labor team.

Action taken by the McGowan Government in response to this campaign has so far included a fracking ban in the South West, Peel, and Perth regions, and a moratorium on fracking in other parts of the state pending a scientific inquiry into the impacts of fracking.

The strength behind this campaign has been the incredible community of support that has been generated across the state, led by CCWA and other partner organisations including Lock the Gate, The Wilderness Society, and Environs Kimberley, and working in close partnership with landowners and Traditional Owners.

Over the past year, CCWA's Frack Free Future community has:

- Grown to more than 20,000 people taking action across the state

- Established Fracking Local Action Groups (FLAGs) to organise community events and other campaign activities in key communities
- Influenced the WA Labor party platform at the 2017 State Conference and supported hundreds of community members to rally outside the conference
- Published original academic research and hosted expert forums

Secured media coverage in print, online, and broadcast media, including television advertisements in the lead up to the 2017 State Election

Frack Free Future will continue to work with people, communities, businesses, and organisations across the state to secure a permanent ban on gas fracking in Western Australia.

NUCLEAR FREE WA

It is with great hope and perseverance that the Nuclear Free WA campaign endured two terms of a pro nuclear government



without a uranium mine becoming established anywhere in WA. Thanks to the dedicated community of people who fought hard to maintain WA's nuclear free status during this period, and thanks to our committed and tireless campaigner **Mia Pepper** who took maternity leave this year, and **Kerry-Anne Garlick** for ably stepping into this vacancy.

While this has been a major milestone for the campaign, we are conscious that as long as there is uranium in the ground there will be pressure to dig. The job of the Nuclear Free WA campaign is to hold WA Labor to their long standing no uranium policy and have a permanent ban on uranium mining legislated.

A significant focus this year has been responding to the environmental assessment process for three uranium mine proposals – Yeelirrie, Wiluna, and Mulga Rock. All three projects were granted state environmental approval in the weeks preceding the State Election, and Wiluna and Mulga Rock were also granted federal approval this year.

In June 2017, the McGowan Government declared that the ban on any new uranium mining proposals would be reinstated, however the four proposals granted environmental approval under the Barnett Government could proceed as there would be a perceived compensation risk if the projects were to be stopped.

In partnership with three Tjiwarl Native Title Holders, CCWA has begun proceedings in the Supreme Court this year to challenge the approval for the Yeelirrie proposal. This case is important in upholding our environmental laws and challenging a dangerous legal precedent allowing the extinction of species.

The low uranium price is assisting our efforts to keep WA nuclear free. We are pleased to report that the Kintyre uranium project in the East Pilbara was devalued in February 2017 by the proponent Cameco to a worthless status. We are confident Cameco will not proceed with this project at this time.

The proposed Vimy Resources Mulga Rock project in the Goldfields now appears to be the most likely uranium project to proceed. The project site is entirely within the Yellow Sandplain Priority Ecological Community and upstream from the Queen Victoria Springs A Class Nature Reserve. The area became a refuge for the Spinifex people who fled South Australia following the British Atomic Weapons tests at Maralinga in the 1950s, and used the Mulga Rock area for ceremony and burials. Despite this history, and the area being part of the Seven Sisters Songline, Vimy has continuously denied Aboriginal people's connection to the area.

This year we helped celebrate twenty years of national radioactive resistance by Aboriginal people in Adelaide on Kurna land, with the Aboriginal-led Australian Nuclear Free Alliance (ANFA), including a strong WA delegation supported by CCWA.

CCWA also supported the 7th Annual Walkatjurra Walkabout with Traditional Owners. The month long walk in the Goldfields region has been instrumental in strengthening connections to country and connecting and providing support for affected communities.



This year we also launched an ongoing 'selfie' photo campaign that has sent more than 400 photos to WA Labor so far. This campaign has and will continue to be used for projections around Perth and at future events.

As always, the nuclear free campaign has worked closely with Traditional Owners and communities affected by uranium proposals, to bring those voices to the city to meet with government and Members of Parliament, and to attend the annual general meetings of uranium miners. It has also been very important to assist communities in responding to the government assessment process of the uranium mine proposals.

Another important part of the campaign has been to maintain a constructive relationship with government agencies and regulators. We have met with the new Ministers for Mines and Petroleum and Environment to discuss mechanisms for ensuring the strictest possible standards are applied to any further assessments for the four approved uranium projects.



Over the year, CCWA in partnership with the Electrical Trades Union (ETU), United Voice, and AMWU produced the Ensuring a Nuclear Free Future for WA booklet. The campaign has also continued to develop and strengthen working relationships with trade unions, health professionals, and academics to ensure a high level of critical analysis of the uranium industry in WA. These voices have supported and strengthened the credibility and integrity of the campaign.

Western Australia remains nuclear free and we remain resolute in our ambition to keep it that way.

RENEWWA ALLIANCE

Working in strategic partnerships and alliances to broaden and strengthen the community consensus in support of climate action and a just transition to renewable energy, is an essential part of CCWA's work.

This year CCWA was instrumental in bringing diverse organisations together to form the RenewWA Alliance. Over fifty civil-society and business organisations from a wide range of sectors endorsed the RenewWA Climate Change Consensus Statement in the lead up to the March State Election. This statement presents a blueprint for transitioning to a low carbon economy. Supported by CCWA, the RenewWA alliance held a series of significant events during the election campaign, involving eminent Australians such as Professor Fiona Stanley. Online and newspaper advertising was also purchased to combat anti-renewable energy campaigning by the Liberal Party of WA during the election, and to educate the community about the benefits of a renewable energy transition.

The RenewWA Alliance continues to play an active role in policy development, lobbying, and community engagement around priority climate change issues, and CCWA continues to support and actively participate in the Alliance.

WASTE AND RECYCLING

Resource consumption and waste generation remain significant drivers of environmental degradation in WA. After little attention to this issue by the WA Government for many years, our state continues to have high rates of litter and the majority of waste continues to be landfilled.





CCWA has maintained a focus on waste for many years, however this year the election of a new State Government presented a opportunity to increase our efforts in partnership with a number of allies.

PLASTIC FREE WA

In just a few short decades, plastic has found its way into almost every part of our lives and into every corner of the planet. Plastic waste is now found in the deepest parts of our oceans, in the most remote ecosystems, and even in our own bodies.

And Western Australia is no exception – our own CCWA Citizen Scientists have found microplastics polluting the sand of every beach we have tested.

We launched Plastic Free WA in partnership with Sea Shepherd Australia's Marine Debris Campaign, Plastic Free July, and Boomerang Alliance on 8 June 2017 – World Oceans Day – to call for behavioural and legislative change around single use plastic bags, single use drinks bottles, and microbeads.

The story of Tina the Turtle played a central role in building awareness of the Plastic Free WA campaign this year. Tina was a juvenile green sea turtle who was rescued from a ramp in Shoalwater and taken to Perth Zoo for treatment, where the team discovered that her digestive system was completely blocked by plastic rubbish.

Tina was humanely euthanased, and her story continues to compel us and others to advocate for a Plastic Free WA.

Since its launch earlier this year, the Plastic Free WA alliance has welcomed an announcement from the State Government on their ban on single use plastic bags by 1 July 2018, as well as their community consultation on the container deposit scheme.

Through Plastic Free WA we have:

- United more than 12,000 people in the vision for a cleaner, safer environment through consumer behaviour change and improved waste management
- Built relationships with partner organisations Sea Shepherd Australia's Marine Debris Campaign, Plastic Free July, and Boomerang Alliance
- Attracted over 3000 signatures for a ban on single use plastic bags, the implementation of a container deposit scheme, and a ban on microbeads
- Received over 400 responses on our recycling survey, which will be sent to the State Government as part of their community consultation for the container deposit scheme
- Secured online and broadcast media coverage across the state
- Hosted a public forum and community leaders panel that united experts, NGOs, and politicians
- Supported CCWA's groundbreaking Citizen Science Microplastics Project which was featured on Today Tonight

The next steps for Plastic Free WA include supporting community members to encourage their local businesses to go plastic free.

NATURE AND WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Protection of nature and wildlife was a major focus for CCWA when it was formed 50 years ago, and biodiversity protection continues to play a central role in our advocacy agenda today. With the impacts of climate change, logging, land clearing, fire, feral species and pollution taking their toll, what remaining biodiversity we have left needs our protection more than ever.

Our strategic focus remains the achievement of long-term protection for all wildlife and biodiversity through better laws, expanded protected areas and improved land management. At the same time, CCWA and local communities will have to continually step in with place-based campaigns to defend parts of our natural environment from damage and destruction. This year the Save Beeliar Wetlands campaign was one such high profile example.



PROTECTING THE BEELIAR WETLANDS

In the months leading up to the State Election, CCWA partnered with Save Beelihar Wetlands, Rethink the Link, and thousands of community members to protect the Beelihar Wetlands from the proposed Roe 8 highway extension in what became one of the most significant and dramatic environmental campaigns in WA history.

The result was an incredible community victory which shaped not only the project itself, but the outcome of an election.

The campaign was a genuine community effort with many individuals and organisations playing critical roles. Here at CCWA we:

- Contributed to the campaign's media strategy, and helped it reach a state and nationwide audience through our innovative reporting using social media platforms
- Contributed to the campaign's political and community engagement strategy, including commissioning polling and social research to guide campaign messaging

- Provided leadership and support to make protecting the Beelihar Wetlands a statewide issue
- Connected the campaign with the broader agenda around state environmental policy and law reform
- Helped recruit volunteers and staff to work on the campaign
- Set up and facilitated the use of online organising tools such as databases, campaign platforms, and crowdfund platforms

While some of the most important bushland in the metropolitan area has been badly damaged, what we have gained is a community powerfully united by a shared passion for the collective task of protecting their environment and cultural heritage.

Through the campaign, neighbours met for the first time. Strangers from across political, cultural, and economic divides worked together in ways they had not previously imagined.

From the very beginning of the planning process, to the felling of the last tree in the Beelihar Wetlands, almost every element of the Roe 8 project revealed serious flaws in the policies, laws, and agencies that are supposed to protect our environment.

Thanks to Roe 8, the inadequacy of environment and heritage laws in WA are no longer an abstract concept discussed only by environmentalists and academics. Thousands of Western Australians have now witnessed firsthand the results of weak policies and inadequate nature protection laws.

As the Beelihar Wetlands begin to regenerate, CCWA has been working to ensure our state's environmental policies, laws, and planning processes are also repaired and strengthened





to provide the real protection that our environment and communities need.

Today, the restoration of Roe 8 road reserve provides an opportunity to re-imagine the area as a nature and wildlife corridor that connects communities across its length. We are pleased to see the Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor organisation take shape and step forward to realise this vision. CCWA is also represented by Vice President Tim Barling on the Roe 8 Rehabilitation Working Group established by the McGowan Government to guide the rehabilitation efforts.

OUTBACK COUNTRY

The vast majority of the state's area – including some of our most important ecosystems and environmental values – is covered by Pastoral Leases and Unallocated Crown Land. The potential to reform the policy and legal framework governing the management of these areas has presented significant opportunities for improving environmental management and protection across the outback.

CCWA has continued to advocate for reform through coordinating the Partnership for the Outback together with Pew, Bush Heritage Australia, and The Wildflower Society. Through the Partnership for the Outback, CCWA has been active in engaging the community and government on improved management solutions for the outback, and the need to overhaul the governance of these vast and unique areas to ensure a sustainable future for outback communities and environments. These efforts were instrumental in securing strong election commitments from WA Labor on pastoral

land reform, and CCWA is now working with the State Government to see these commitments implemented.

This year, CCWA also played an active supporting role in the Create Ranger Parks campaign which was instrumental in securing a \$20m commitment to an expanded Aboriginal Ranger program from the McGowan Government.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION LAWS

Strengthened, contemporary wildlife and biodiversity protection laws for WA have been a long-term priority for

the conservation sector, and CCWA has maintained an ongoing focus on this goal.

Following the passage through parliament of a new Biodiversity Conservation Act in 2016 that was fundamentally inadequate and completely lacking in support from the environment or scientific community, CCWA has turned our efforts towards building support within WA Labor for further legislative reform to improve protection for our wildlife and biodiversity.





CCWA worked closely with the WA Labor opposition to develop amendments that would improve the legislation, and these amendments were recently endorsed as part of the party's policy platform at the WA Labor Conference. We are now working with Environment Minister Stephen Dawson and the State Government to progress these amendments while also seeking to ensure the strongest possible regulations are formulated under the existing legislation.

PERTH-PEEL STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

The Strategic Assessment for the Perth Peel Region (SAPPR) has continued as an important area of focus for CCWA during this year. The SAPPR is one of the most significant and ambitious environmental policy initiatives in WA in recent decades and presents an opportunity to secure significantly expanded conservation estate, address some of the worst threats to biodiversity in the region, and promote the development of a more compact and sustainable city.

After highlighting the inadequacies of the Barnett Government's Green Growth Plan, CCWA worked with the WA Labor opposition to build support for a complete overhaul of the plan.

Since the election of the McGowan Government, CCWA has convened a process to reach a consensus position on the SAPPR by the state's leading conservation groups, which has now been presented to the new government. We will continue working with the Department of Premier and Cabinet on this process to secure the best possible outcomes for the environment.

PROTECTING THE KIMBERLEY

Marine protection in state waters continues to show significant progress, with concrete steps made towards the realisation of a Great Kimberley Marine Park to be managed jointly with Traditional Owners.

Working with Pew Environment Group, The Wilderness Society, Environs Kimberley, and other partners, CCWA has played a key role in securing community and government support for marine protection in the Kimberley region.

The Like Nowhere Else campaign secured significant election commitments from both political parties, and we are now working with the McGowan Government to see those commitments delivered. This will eventually see the creation of a truly world class network of marine and terrestrial protected areas in the Kimberley.

COMMONWEALTH MARINE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK

CCWA continues to be an active partner in the Save Our Marine Life campaign. The focus of this campaign has been defending the Commonwealth network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) during a review commissioned by the Abbott Government. This has involved community outreach and technical input during the review process.

ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION AND POLLUTION CONTROL

CCWA's long term focus on improving environmental regulation and pollution control has continued this year. This has included representing the sector on government boards and committees, engaging the media, undertaking research, supporting advocacy by CCWA Member Groups, and facilitating community participation in government decision making.



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Engagement with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process continues to be a significant activity for CCWA. This includes referring projects for assessment, making formal and informal submissions and representation to the EPA, and where necessary lodging appeals against EPA decisions and recommendations where they are out of step with community values. Assisting the community to engage with these process is also an important and ongoing part of our work.

In addition to engaging with the EIA on specific development proposals, CCWA continues to advocate for strengthened EIA processes and policies, increased independence, and additional resources for the EPA.

PROTECTING WATER RESOURCES

CCWA continues to advocate for improvements to the way water resources are managed and protected in WA, including through the Water Reform Stakeholder Advisory Group. A particular focus is to ensure that water allocations are sustainable in the changing climate, and that water quality is protected from industrial and other pollution sources.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION

CCWA continues to undertake research and engage the public, media, politicians, and government regulators, as well as participate in the regulatory system through making submissions to government agencies and parliament.

This year we have focused on the following key sectors and impacts:

- Petroleum activities
- Coal mining
- Energy generation
- Forest logging
- Land clearing
- Carbon pollution
- Impacts to groundwater
- Air quality

REPRESENTATION ON ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

CCWA has continued to represent the WA conservation sector in a number of different government forums and consultation processes. However, we have not emphasised or relied upon this method of advocacy, as it can occupy much time while delivering limited environmental outcomes.

Boards and committees that CCWA has represented the community on during the year include:

- Environmental Protection Authority Stakeholder Advisory Group
- Water Reform Stakeholder Reference Group
- Keep Australia Beautiful Council
- Department of Mines and Petroleum Environmental Liaison Committee
- Department of Mines and Petroleum Environmental Regulation Reform Group
- Department of Mines and Petroleum Land Access Working Group
- Strategic Assessment for the Perth-Peel Region Stakeholder Reference Group
- Cockburn Sound Management Committee
- Perth Air Quality Management Committee
- Roadside Vegetation Working Group
- Department of Environmental Regulation Stakeholder Reference Group (inactive this year)
- WA Marine Science Research Advisory Committee
- Roe 8 Rehabilitation Working Group



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At CCWA we are powered by community, and we know the power of people and communities working together for a sustainable future. All across our beautiful state, we support people to work and volunteer to protect our environment for present and future generations.

This is why we celebrate our diverse community of creatives, organisers, parents, researchers, teachers, communicators, and visionaries – and support the many ways in which people wish to contribute.

Through our communications, campaigns, and events, we support members of our community to develop their skills and knowledge, access resources, and build their networks in order to be the most effective advocates they can be.

With our **Sarah English** leading our community engagement efforts this year, we surpassed 50,000 email subscribers, 20,000 social media followers and 300 active volunteers as part of a diverse and growing community of interest.



WORKING WITH MEMBER GROUPS

The collective strength that comes from a united and connected membership enables CCWA to be a robust and independent voice for Western Australia's environment.

This year we have enjoyed representing and working with more than one hundred Member Groups, covering a wide variety of issues across the state.

This is a positive demonstration that the community conservation sector in WA continues to thrive, and community based conservation and sustainability groups continue to see value in membership and affiliation with CCWA.

In June 2017, we conducted a Member Group survey, which returned some encouraging results. Respondents recorded a high level of satisfaction with CCWA's representation and the other types of support and engagement we provide. We were also pleased to see that groups valued our communications, in particular our monthly email newsletter.

WORKING WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND PROTECTING ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

As advocates for people and nature, we recognise that we must respect and have a mandate from the Traditional Owners and cultural custodians of the environment we seek to protect.

We recognise that the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people must be a central consideration in any advocacy around conservation and land use, and that cultural heritage and connection to country is an inseparable part of the environment we value.

CCWA also recognises the complex relationship that exists between environmental conservation, economic development aspirations, continuity of culture and community, and Aboriginal custodianship over land.

CCWA makes it a priority to work closely with Traditional Owners as part of our campaigns on gas fracking, uranium mining, wildlife protection, and other issues. We seek a mandate to speak for country where appropriate, and allow Traditional Owners to guide our advocacy efforts to ensure they are respectful of culture and connection to country at all times.



For this first time this year, protection of Aboriginal cultural sites and values was explicitly included in CCWA's advocacy agenda, featuring as a policy priority in Blueprint for the Future – WA Environment Groups' Policy Priorities for the 2017 WA Election.

We were also proud to award our highest honour, the Bessie Rischbieth Conservation Award, to **Elizabeth and Shirley Wonyabong**, Traditional Owners of the site of the proposed Yeelirrie uranium project. This is the first time this award has been bestowed upon Traditional Owners. We have further strengthened our working relationship with Traditional Owners by initiating Supreme Court proceedings with them to challenge the environmental approval for the Yeelirrie uranium project on their traditional lands.

This year, CCWA also played an active supporting role in the Create Ranger Parks campaign which was instrumental in securing a \$20m commitment to an expanded Aboriginal Ranger program from the McGowan Labor Government.

CCWA has also continued to work with the Aboriginal Heritage Action Alliance as a recently affiliated Member Group, after



providing support and assistance for the establishment of the organisation in 2015. The Alliance is an Aboriginal-led group formed to advocate for the protection of Aboriginal heritage, and to resist the Barnett Government's proposed amendments to the Aboriginal Heritage Act.

WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

CCWA is a volunteer-led organisation and supporting and inspiring volunteering is a central part of our work. In addition to our volunteer Executive Committee, Trustees and Patrons, CCWA's volunteers drive much of our advocacy and community engagement, and volunteering multiplies our impact many times over.

Through our volunteer program led by **Catherine Atoms**, we strive to provide meaningful opportunities which enhance the skills of volunteers, and positively impact our environment and community.

CCWA currently has almost 300, active volunteers who undertake a wide range of activities that contribute to the protection of our environment and a more sustainable WA. Our current volunteer teams include: Citizen Science, Research and Policy Analysis, Campaign teams, Fundraising and Donors, Data and Admin, TAFE and University Interns, and, Events and Communication.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CITIZEN SCIENCE

Once again CCWA's volunteer-led Citizen Science program led by **Dr. Nic Dunlop** has continued to deliver outstanding results in community engagement and education, while producing original science and new knowledge about our environment which has directly influenced decisions and regulation.

This year we have been able to employ two part time project officers, **Kady Grosser** and **Merryn Pryor**, on a major project assessing the ecological development of revegetation projects in the Gondwana Link corridor with a grant from the State National Resource Management (NRM) office. Kady has also been engaged on a casual basis with a grant from Fremantle Ports to establish and manage our Fairy Tern Conservation Network.

Sampling rolled on in our nine established long-term ecological monitoring projects involving around twenty field trips – some advertised, others routinely attended by our band of regular Citizen Scientists.

Scientific highlights have included recording the world longevity record for the Bridled Tern at 30 years and the Australian Fairy Tern at 20 years, and the Australian record for the Common Noddy at over 22 years.

A paper on foraging patterns and mercury exposure in local Caspian Terns was published in the international journal *Marine Ornithology*. This paper was immediately useful in causing the EPA to reassess the environmental approval for the Point Grey Marina in the Peel-Harvey Estuary.

We also partnered with the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council (NACC) to publish a guide called *Sentinel Seabirds*, showing how seabirds can be used to efficiently monitor changes in marine ecosystems.

The Citizen Science team conducted two series of bird identification and sampling training courses with Birdlife WA, one involving sites in the Gondwana Link and the other in the Gundurra Conservation Region straddling the North Eastern Wheatbelt. The program has also been assisting the Fremantle Port Authority, City of Mandurah and Rottnest Island Authority with projects to protect the Australian Fairy Tern, as well as supporting NACC Bioblitzes and engaging with NRM activities in a variety of ways.

The program continues to provide formal and informal training in ecological sampling for our participants. We now collaborate with Central Regional TAFE to deliver a course in fauna sampling that utilises our guide as a textbook. This is just one of the social enterprise activities that we use to self-fund the Citizen Science program.

This year we have showcased the CCWA Citizen Science program with presentations at universities, Rottnest Guides, Naturalist Clubs, NRM Forums, the State NRM and Coastal Conference, the WA Threatened Species Forum, and at a WALGA natural area managers meeting. Interactions we have had at these events have indicated a high level of recognition for our program.

This year, the Citizen Science program was supported financially by generous donations from some of our regular participants, 'social enterprise' revenue, and grants from the WA State NRM Office, the Northern Agricultural Catchment Council (NACC), the Gundurra Regional Conservation Association, and Fremantle Ports.

ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

We hosted two Environment Matters events during this financial year. This was less than usual, however we also hosted several large and successful community forums in the lead up to the 2017 State Election.

The first Environment Matters was The Significance of Helena Aurora Range held in September, and the second was The Future of Landcare and NRM in WA held in November.

Both events attracted expert speakers and were well attended by community members, who were informed and inspired to take action afterwards, including make submissions to the EPA on the Helena Aurora Range. Among other things, this helped to secure the June 2017 EPA recommendation that the Helena Aurora Range be protected.

Thank you to the organisers and volunteers who made Environment Matters possible.



ECO MAY 2017

During the month of May each year, CCWA supports community organisations, individuals, and councils to host a program of events and activities across the state which celebrate and conserve nature.

Every year, Eco May celebrates people, families, community groups, schools, and councils who enjoy nature, build community, promote sustainability, and help protect our beautiful state.

Eco May 2017 was our biggest ever, with more than 120 eco events and activities registered and promoted across the state by individuals, groups, and councils. From Kununurra to Esperance, community members enjoyed activities around healthy living, conservation, revegetation, Aboriginal culture, the arts, and more.

This year, we also conducted a survey after Eco May had ended, and were pleased to see that the majority of participants provided very positive feedback.

SPRING ECO FEST 2016

Spring Eco Fest is our annual free community event that celebrates efforts to protect and promote our unique WA wildlife and environment.

The theme for 2016 was "Sustainable Living", and the program included interactive workshops and talks on the environment, transport, recycling, gardening, and more. There was even a sustainable fashion show, featuring WA eco-fashion label Green Embassy.

The event was organised by a dedicated and talented team of volunteers, who put many hours into organising the program. Thanks to their efforts, hundreds of people were able to attend and enjoy the workshops, stalls, and entertainment on offer in Forrest Place on Sunday 23 October.

Thank you to **Ethical Homeloans**, **Ethical Adviser's Co-op**, and **Replants.com** for supporting Spring Eco Fest 2016!

ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM 2016

CCWA's Annual Conference 2016 focused on the upcoming 2017 State Election, enabling participants to provide input on the sector's joint election priorities and learn how they could influence the policy agenda themselves during the election. Through a dedicated session facilitated by **Catherine Atoms**,

CCWA Member Groups and individual delegates were able to build a shared sense of purpose and commitment to joint advocacy around the election policy priorities.

Delegates at the conference also contributed to a workshop on the Sustainable Development Goals and what they mean for us here in WA, and heard from community leaders in the faith, trade union, Aboriginal, regional, and other sectors as they discussed their key priorities and how they related to the environment.

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AWARDS 2016

Elizabeth and Shirley Wonyabong were presented with the Bessie Rischbieth Award for spending a lifetime fighting to protect Yeelirrie from uranium mining. CCWA congratulated Elizabeth and Shirley on their important work and achievements in protecting their country and culture over the past forty years, despite the pressure of three separate mining companies attempting to mine uranium on their Traditional Lands.

Gasfield Free Southwest Alliance WA were presented with the Len Howard Community Award for their significant political and media achievements, and for establishing numerous community campaign groups across the South West.

Jen Mitchell was awarded the John Oldham Conservation Employee Award for her impressive role in the Citizen Science Microplastics Project. Jen organised the collection of more than 30 beach sand samples, managed volunteers, and raised the project's profile in the media and community.

Kerry Theiss, **Carolyn Bloye**, and **Lucy Hancock** were named on the Conservation Council of WA Honours List for their long term commitment to the Western Australian environment. All three have been actively involved in the conservation movement for many years, have made a constant and invaluable contribution to their groups, and have contributed to vital networking and cooperation between conservation groups.

The Young Environmentalist Award was presented to **Aleesha Hanczakowski** for her significant contribution to the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, 350.org, No Fracking WAy, Nuclear Free WA, and Fossil Free Murdoch. In addition to her work with these groups, Aleesha served as an independent journalist on RTR FM.

We would like to thank all the volunteers who assisted with the event, and our Awards Committee **Mary Gray**, **Peter Robertson**, and **Travis**.

OUR FINANCES

OUR PEOPLE

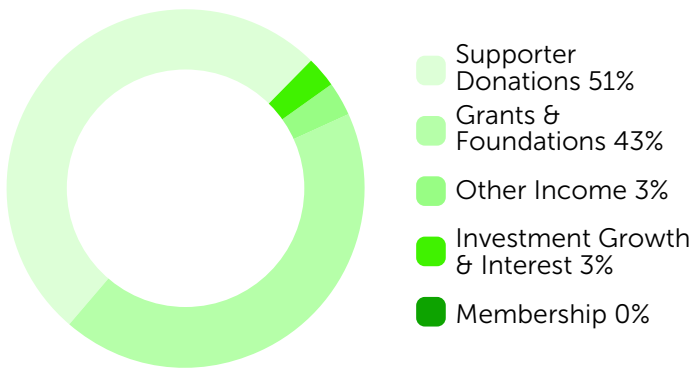




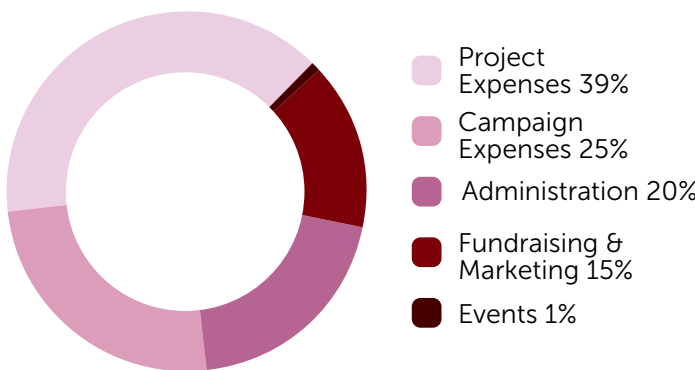
OUR FINANCES

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE PRIVATE DONATIONS

In 2016/17 the Council's Consolidated Income was \$2,492,480, a large proportion of which was from supporter contributions (51%) and secondly income from Grants and Foundations (43%).



Consolidated Expenditures for the year was \$2,552,710; consisting of 39% spent on Projects, 25% spent on Campaigns, 20% on Administration and 15% on Fundraising efforts.



The Council's consolidated financial position remains strong with Consolidated Reserves at \$982,788 (inclusive of the Conservation Trust).

CCWA's achievements in 2016–2017 would not have been possible without the charitable support of our generous and farsighted donors. We are grateful for the generosity of every individual donor, and we rely upon this support more than ever.

The Council's fundraising efforts resulted in a growth of 33% in contributions from donations to the Council and its Campaigns this year.

Reviewing what we have achieved, we can be confident that CCWA provides an exceptional way for supporters to leave a powerful legacy by creating permanent conservation outcomes, or sustainability improvements, that will benefit future generations in perpetuity.

CCWA continues to invest in fundraising efforts, with the dividends from this investment delivering increased resources to support the Council's advocacy work. Through these efforts, the Council's operating costs were entirely covered this year without reliance on government funding, placing the CCWA in a strong, independent position.

SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

CCWA would like to extend a sincere thanks to the following organisations for their financial and in-kind support during the year:

Australian Ethical Investment
 Australian Manufacturing Workers Union
 Bird Life WA
 City of Fremantle
 City of Perth
 Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, WA
 Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
 Electrical Trades Union
 Future Super
 Gunduwa
 HealthWise WA
 JustInvest Financial Planning
 Leederville TAFE
 Lotterywest
 Maritime Union of Australia
 Murdoch University
 Northern Agricultural Catchment Council
 Peel-Harvey Catchment Council.
 Pew Environment Group
 Replants.com
 State Natural Resources Management WA
 The Wilderness Society WA
 University of Western Australia
 Useful Design
 Volunteering WA
 Waste Authority WA

WHITEMAN PARK CONSERVATION TRUST AND ENDOWMENT FUND

CCWA maintains a Conservation Trust to receive tax-deductible donations which support the Council's work. It was also established to provide an Endowment Fund and 5% of all tax-deductible donations are retained in the Trust as a contribution to this Fund.

For the Financial Year 2016/17, the Conservation Trust's dividends were \$36,029 – a 31% increase from the previous Financial Year.

The Conservation Trust Endowment Fund is invested in ethical shareholdings managed by the Council's Trustees and **James Baird** from **JustInvest Financial Planning**. This outperformed benchmark managed funds again this year.

As a result of donations, reinvested dividends and growth in the value of investments, the Trust Endowment Fund has achieved strong growth this year. Total Equity for the Conservation Trust increased by 12% this year to reach \$1,028,137

OUR PEOPLE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Carmen Lawrence (President)
 Timothy Barling (Vice President)
 Louisa Charlet (Honorary Treasurer)
 Vic Grant (Honorary Secretary)
 Adam Marrs Ekamper
 Brian Hartmann
 Caroline Perks
 David Harries
 James Eggleston
 Jill Downward

COMMITTEE OF TRUSTEES

Carmen Lawrence (Chair)
 Peter Ewing
 Philip Jennings
 Susan Graham Taylor
 Louisa Charlet

VOLUNTEERS

We extend a tremendous thank you to everyone who has made an outstanding effort in a voluntary capacity this year:

Alastair Leith, Alex Hegarty, Alison Goundrey, Andrew Woolley, Angela Lightfoot, Ann Callen, Anthony Ivory, Basel Ghazel, Bilbo Taylor, Brendon Cahill, Brian Spittles, Caroline Delaisse, Carolyn Bloye, Claire Anderson, Danielle Kinder, David Zaugra, Ellouise Dittrich, Emanuela Davis, Emmanuel Rotich, Eugene Thomas, Heidi Nore, Hilda Chan, Jim Lyon, Kavya Koonampilli, Kelly Rayner, Kristine Reid, Luran Jenkins, Lisa Bastian, Lucy Hancock, Marcus Atkinson, Matthew Finucane, Megan Tighe, Michael Thomas, Michael Williams, Natalia Quintanilla, Olivia, Paul Longva, Pip de Fonblanque, Robin Scott, Rob Phillips, Rocio Uculmana, Rosa Paparini, Sandra Peruc, Sara Boranga, Shammanan Rao Krishnasamy, Shiqing Huang, Simone Van Hattem, Steve Parin, Tegan Douglas, Tom Kettle, Travis and Wendy Morris.

STAFF

Director Piers Verstegen

Citizen Science Dr Nic Dunlop, Kady GROSSER, Kate Born, and Meryn Pryor

Community Engagement Sarah English and Simone Van Hattem

Data Gita Sonnenberg

Finance Inan Ahmed

Frack Free Future Campaign Claire McKinnon, Jules Kirby, Luke Skinner, Michelle Sheehy, Karen Davis, Katherine Neaves, and Monica Fitz

Fundraising Duey Faria, Jo Finburgh, Marc Thornley, and Meredith Hartmann

Nuclear Free WA Campaign KA Garlick and Mia Pepper

Participation Catherine Atoms

State Election Campaign Janelle Sewell



MEMBER GROUPS

350 Perth
 Aboriginal Heritage Action Alliance
 Albany Community Environment Centre
 Alliance for a Clean Environment
 Animal Rights Advocates Inc
 Australia Cuba Friendship Society (WA Branch)
 Australian Marine Conservation Society
 Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc
 Australian Youth Climate Coalition
 Avon Valley Environmental Society Inc
 Balingup Friends of the Forest
 Bassendean Preservation Group
 Bindaring Vision
 BirdLife Australia WA Inc
 Blackwood Environment Society
 Bridgetown-Greenbushes Friends of the Forest
 Bunbury Bushwalking Club Inc
 Busselton-Dunsborough Environment Centre Inc
 Canning River Residents Environment Protection Asn (CREPPA)
 Cape Conservation Group Inc
 Carbon Neutral Ltd
 Care for Hedland Environmental Association Inc
 CREW
 Darling Range Wildlife Shelter
 Denmark Environment Centre Inc
 Doctors for the Environment (WA)
 Eco Faeries
 Ecocean
 Environment House
 Environmental Defender's Office WA Inc
 Environs Kimberley Inc
 Federation of Western Australian Bushwalkers(Bushwalking WA)
 FoodWatch WA
 FRAGYLE INC
 Friends of Australian Rock Art
 Friends of Bold Park Bushland
 Friends of Brixton St Wetlands Kenwick
 Friends of Fitzgerald River National Park
 Friends of Moore River Estuary
 Friends of Paganoni Swamp
 Friends of Porongurup Range Inc
 Friends of Star Swamp Bushland Inc
 Friends of Stratton Bushland
 Friends of The Bluff
 Friends of the Earth Southwest WA
 Friends of the Western Swamp Tortoise
 Friends of Underwood Avenue Bushland
 Friends of Wireless Hill
 Friends Of Yellagonga Regional Park (Inc)
 Guilderton Community Association
 Hands Off Point Peron Inc
 Inventors Association of WA
 Jarrahdale Forest Protectors
 Joondalup Community Coast Care Forum
 Lake Mealup Preservation Society
 Leeuwin Environment Inc
 Leighton Action Coalition
 Local Environmental Awareness Forum (LEAF)
 Margaret River Regional Environment Centre Inc
 Men of the Trees Inc
 Nature Reserves Preservation Group Inc
 Nest Egg Foundation
 No Fracking Way
 No Shark Cull
 Northern Heathland Conservation Group Inc
 Northern Agricultural Catchment Council
 Peel Preservation Group Inc
 Peel-Harvey Catchment Council
 People for Nuclear Disarmament
 Perth Advocates for the Earth
 Perth Bushwalkers Club (PBW) Inc
 Pilbara Wildlife Carers Association Inc
 Pollution Action Network
 Port Kennedy LCDC
 Possum Centre Busselton Inc
 Quinns Rocks Environmental Group
 Rethink Perth Freight Link Alliance
 River Conservation Society Inc
 Rockingham Regional Environment Center (Naragebup)
 Roleybushcare Inc.
 Save Beeliar Wetlands
 Sea Shepherd WA Chapter
 Society for Kimberley Indigenous Plants and Animals
 South Coast Environment Group
 South West Environment Centre Inc (SWEC)
 South West Forests Defence Foundation Inc
 Speleological Research Group of WA
 Sustainable Energy Now (SEN)
 Sustainable Population Australia Inc. (SPA)
 Sustainable Transport Coalition
 Swan Estuary Reserves Action Group Inc.
 The Black Cockatoo Preservation Society
 The Rottne Society
 The Wilderness Society
 UN Association Of Australia (WA)
 Urban Bushland Council WA
 WA Native Orchid Study and Conservation Group
 WA Naturalists' Club Inc
 WA Speleological Group
 Walpole Nornalup National Parks Association
 Waterbird Conservation Group Inc.
 Western Region Environment Network
 Wetlands Conservation Society
 Wildflower Society of WA Inc – Armadale
 Wildflower Society of Western Australia Inc

