

Conservation Council of Western Australia

Annual Report 2020-21



We acknowledge that we meet and work on the land of the Nyoongar people. We pay respect to their Elders - past, present, and emerging - and acknowledge the important role all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play in advancing a more sustainable Western Australia.

Image from Murujuga National Park. We acknowledge and pay respect to the Ngarluma, the Mardudhunera, the Yaburara, the Yindjibarndi, and the Wong-Goo-Tt-Oo people as the Traditional Custodians of the Burrup and Murujuga National Park. We share their aspirations for the Burrup Peninsula to be world heritage listed and recognise sovereignty was never ceded.



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Conservation Council of Western Australia

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Director's message



It has been inspiring to see the impact that CCWA has been able to achieve over the last 12 months, thanks to our active and passionate supporters, a growing professional team, and increased awareness in the philanthropic and broader community about the global significance and impact of our work.

Once again, CCWA has been at the forefront of shaping public opinion and policy responses to environmental issues in WA, during what has been an incredibly busy time for the Council. During the State election campaign, we were proud to launch an innovative and forward-looking *'Bold Vision for Communities, Climate and Conservation'*. This helped shape the agenda for a new Minister and united our community behind a positive vision for the future.

CCWA's work on climate and fossil fuels has been a standout feature of the last 12 months. From leading the formation of a new national alliance, challenging the WA Government in the Supreme Court, publishing groundbreaking research, speaking out in the media and organising our community, the Council has been more active than ever on these issues.

It appears we may have finally reached a tipping point on climate change globally. It is now the dominant mainstream view among most financial markets and governments that rapid reduction in carbon pollution is not only necessary, but can bring huge economic benefits and opportunities.

Here in WA, that realisation been slower to take hold, as companies such as Woodside are actively seeking to open up some of the world's largest and most polluting undeveloped fossil fuel resources. These proposed developments not only threaten the local environment and Aboriginal heritage, but they threaten to push the entire global climate system into dangerous instability.

This means CCWA has a global responsibility as Western Australia's preeminent voice for conservation, communities and the climate and I am proud to say that the Conservation Council has stepped up to that responsibility. This year we have taken major steps towards independence for our unique Clean State initiative, while also increasing capacity dedicated to preventing new fossil gas developments.

This has occurred while CCWA has remained active on other issues and assisted with a broad range of issues and concerns on behalf of our member groups and the broader community. It was especially pleasing to see a major breakthrough on forest conservation, after 40 years of work by our community with the very welcome announcement from the McGowan Government that native forest logging would be banned in WA.

CCWA has also supported Aboriginal voices pushing for stronger laws to protect Aboriginal heritage, especially following the destruction of Juukan Gorge bringing international attention to this issue.


Piers Verstegen
Director



President's report

The 2020-2021 year has been a one of mixed fortunes for our conservation community, with the thrill we experienced when the decision to protect native forests was announced alongside the dismay at the repeated failures by government to rein in the gas industry and develop a credible climate change policy. Throughout the year, CCWA staff and volunteers have continued to campaign effectively and professionally on key environmental issues and to support local groups seeking to protect ecosystems and precious places under threat from poor land use planning and unconstrained development.

Successful requests for philanthropic support have enabled us to upgrade the Clean Sate Programs with the recent appointment of Olivia Chapman, and our ethical investments in the dedicated Trust and Bequest funds have grown steadily, meaning that we will now be in a position to devote significant funds to our citizen science program. CCWA continues to conduct quality research and develop realistic policy proposals for the attention of government and the corporate sector. Material and advocacy specifically targeted at investors in the fossil fuel sector has produced results. The successful CCWA Conference held recently demonstrated the health of our member groups and their sustained enthusiasm for environmental protection.



As Chair of CCWA's Executive Committee, I would like to thank the members give so generously of their expertise and time. We devoted time and resources during the year to update and renew policies in a variety of areas of CCWA's operations, including Human Resources. The full suite of operational policies should be completed early in the coming year. I would like to thank the staff of CCWA and its Executive Director, Piers Verstegen and now Maggie Wood, for their sustained dedication and hard work across the wide range of tasks that make up CCWA's work program –research and advocacy, on-ground citizen science, media outreach, membership liaison and financial and operational management.

As members know well, the task of environmental protection is never complete; new challenges inevitably emerge as old ones are completed. Thanks to our staff, our members, supporters and donors, I believe CCWA is well placed to respond to these challenges.

Professor Emerita, Dr Carmen Lawrence
President CCWA



Staff

Our work would not be possible without the commitment and dedication of our staff and many volunteers. We are so grateful for your effort and tireless service towards the work we do together.

Executive Committee

Prof. Carmen Lawrence (President)
Tim Barling (Vice President)
Jason Parish (Treasurer)
Lou Scampoli (Secretary)
Lillian Ryan
Caroline Perks
James Eggleston
Paul Jarvis
Catherine Tan (2021)

Current staff (CCWA)

Sara Boranga
Robert Davies
Dominic Donaldson
Dr Kelly Duckworth
Dr Nic Dunlop
KA Garlick
Paul Goonting
Alison Goundrey
Wendy Low
Stephanie Murphey
Mia Pepper
Luke Sweet
Piers Verstegen
Maggie Wood

Clean State

Cheryl Balfour
Emma Barrett
Olivia Chapman
Vivienne Glance
Jordan Rowand

Others working with us in 2019/20

Inan Ahmed
Samudra Bhattacharya
Nikita Binetti
Chantal Caruso
Anabel Cressie
Matthew Curry
Tommie Diloroto
Dylan Eagles
Sara Glaser
Ben Lawrence
Guy MacDonald
Leslie McNulty
Rachel Rainey
Adam Reader
Danae Snell
Giovanni Torre
Abbi Ward
Melissa Wheeler



Membership

CCWA represents more than 100 community environment organisations from across Western Australia, each with a commitment to nature conservation and environmental protection.

Our Member Groups are part of our vibrant democratic community network, which collaborate with other members, contribute to statewide environmental campaigns, shape organisational policy, and access our services and support.

In 2020 CCWA established a member engagement project, in recognition of the important role CCWA members play in both our governance but also our advocacy agenda. The aim of the project was to connect with CCWA member groups through dedicated face-to-face visits.

Overwhelmingly the outcomes of this project were positive, with member groups appreciative of the time and effort CCWA put into engaging with them. Our member groups are involved in important and inspirational work and it was a real pleasure to be able to engage with them in this way.

Since the initial engagement project, CCWA has made changes to the way we interact with our members. We have appointed a part-time staff member to support our ongoing engagement work, hold regular meetings with member groups to discuss the issues that matter most to them, and have started a regular monthly newsletter.

Over the next 12 months we will look to further refine our membership offering, including:

- Reviewing the Council Meeting structure to provide a renewed focus on member groups, their work and an opportunity for groups to provide feedback to CCWA
- Quarterly zoom meetings are organized on issues relevant to our 5 clusters: Natural History Groups, Local 'friends of' and Action Groups, Coastal and Marine Groups, Environment Centers and National Organizations
- Improved administration of the member database
- Work to better articulate the value of CCWA membership (for current members and prospective ones).
- Showcasing member group activities and achievements on the new CCWA website.
- Conducting events in conjunction with members
- Setting up a member group technical advisory committee made up of experienced, professional volunteers to assist member groups with technical advice on environmental and procedural issues.



Advocacy & Impact

A Bold Vision for Western Australia

In the lead up to the March state election campaign, CCWA helped shape the agenda by launching a bold new plan for action on our economy, environment, and action on climate change. This plan will inform and underpin CCWA's advocacy work for the coming period.

CCWA's 'bold vision' represents a new way of thinking that can solve environmental challenges while future-proofing our economy, creating jobs and providing a better quality of life for all West Australians.

The goals and targets set out in the plan provide a blueprint for tackling climate change and addressing WA's biggest environmental challenges. But it is more than a plan for our environment and climate - it is also a plan to create thousands of secure, well-paid jobs by investing in future growth industries with the benefits shared among all West Australians.

The eight goals set out in the bold visions document are:

- 350,000 clean jobs by 2025
- Halve carbon pollution by 2030
- 700% renewable energy by 2040
- 2,500 conservation partnerships by 2025
- 1% of Gross State Product invested in conservation
- Zero loss of endangered wildlife habitat by 2022
- 10 million hectares of revegetation and carbon farming by 2025
- 1 million hectares of forest protected for nature and climate by 2025

The report released by CCWA explains each of these goals and describes how it can be achieved. The measures will improve the quality of life for everyone while providing new hope and real opportunities for those who have been missing out.

While governments must play a critical role, the goals cannot be achieved by the government alone. We invite all sectors, communities, landholders, businesses, and agencies to work together to realise this exciting vision for our state.

The plan will invigorate regional economies while supporting our communities, farmers, and businesses to flourish as part of a cleaner, fairer and more sustainable future for Western Australia.

Climate change & fossil fuels

As most other countries and states move towards stronger action on climate change, here in Western Australia our pollution continues to rise and we are facing an onslaught of new fossil fuel developments. As our state's preeminent voice for conservation, communities and the climate, CCWA has a global responsibility to step up to this challenge and the Council has answered this call with renewed emphasis and increased capacity in this area.

While all other Australian states have cut their pollution toward the goals of the Paris Agreement, growth in emissions from the WA gas industry has driven up our state's carbon pollution to record highs, this year passing 20% above 2005 levels. We have a special responsibility for these direct emissions here in WA, however this is only part of the problem. The much greater indirect or 'scope 3' emissions resulting from our fossil fuel exports are threatening a devastating impact on the global climate.

Currently we are facing plans for highly polluting fossil gas developments across three major regions of the state as well as giant new offshore fields up to 400km from the WA coast. The Woodside Scarborough project and other onshore gas projects in the MidWest (Perth basin) and Kimberley (Canning basin) would open up some of the world's largest undeveloped gas resources. Not only will these projects push our climate further into dangerous, unstable territory but they will have a devastating effect on the environment and cultural heritage.

This year CCWA has significantly stepped up our efforts, and our resolve to challenge the new onslaught of climate wrecking gas developments proposed by companies like Woodside.

Our research and advocacy has raised global awareness about the dangers of gas developments in WA, and our targeted engagement with shareholders and investors is constraining the supply of finance to these companies. Initiated and led by CCWA, the campaign against the Woodside Scarborough development is now supported by one of the largest alliances of environment groups ever to work together in Australia.



CCWA has also been active on the legal front, with a major challenge to environmental approvals for Woodside's gas expansion projects before the WA Supreme Court, while further legal action is planned to hold polluters to account for damage they are causing to our climate and environment.

Increased engagement and support for Traditional Owners has also been a feature of our work on climate change and fossil fuels this year, with the growing awareness in Aboriginal communities that planned projects on Murujuga (or the Burrup Peninsula) and the Kimberley will have a devastating impact on irreplaceable living cultural heritage.

Clean State

The launch of the Clean State initiative in 2018 saw the establishment of a new voice for action on climate change in WA. We have continued to develop and refine this initiative as a distinct advocacy voice that reaches and engages all members of the community, not just traditional progressive audiences. Through Clean State, we are committed to promoting positive solutions to address our largest pollution sources in ways that generate new jobs and economic opportunities for Western Australians. In this way, we are setting a new narrative that presents action on climate change as a positive for jobs, communities and the economy.

Clean State has continued to attract interest and active partnerships from a wide community including academics, businesses, and not-for-profit organisations, and continues to grow and develop its own distinct identity.

Building on the work of the Jobs Plan, Clean State has spent the past 12 months further engaging with local communities through the community roadshow event series. The Clean Jobs Roadshow was a series of community forums held between August 2020 and

May 2021 by partners Conservation Council of WA and Clean State with support from Lotterywest. Through this initiative, West Australian communities in both regional and metropolitan areas were brought together to discuss and workshop ideas that can generate jobs and new businesses for a clean and sustainable WA. Roadshow stops included the regional cities of Bunbury, Albany and Geraldton, and the Perth metropolitan centres of Mount Lawley, Scarborough, Joondalup, Dawesville and Midland.

The Roadshows followed on from the launch of the Clean State Jobs Plan - 26 Big Ideas for 200,000 WA jobs. The Clean State Jobs Plan provided a launchpad and a map of opportunities for the first important steps in Western Australia's journey to decarbonisation. Over time, the ideas and initiatives have been further developed as new opportunities arise and new challenges addressed. The Roadshows were designed to engage all parts of our community to share and discuss the benefits and opportunities from action on climate change.

The Roadshow attracted more than a thousand participants representing diverse experiences and expertise from various sectors, including Members of Parliament and local government Councillors ahead of the 2021 elections.

The Roadshow events clearly demonstrated West Australians overwhelmingly support action on climate change. Investment in conservation and the care economy are seen as powerful job creators that will boost our economy moving forwards. There are high levels of support for electrifying our economy with renewable energy that can sustain our mining and manufacturing industries. There is a strong desire to work together more closely to develop local climate solutions with social impact, for example, building more energy-efficient schools and social housing and supporting Aboriginal tourism initiatives in Perth, regional and remote areas. Participants consistently recognised climate action as an opportunity to diversify WA's economy and solve multiple issues at the same time.

Nature and wildlife protection

Protection of nature and wildlife continues to be a critical focus of CCWA's work, and after climate change, this is the highest priority for CCWA's Member Groups and the communities we work with.

During this year, significant progress was made on forest protection, however there is still much work to be done on the protection of native vegetation and wildlife across the state. Threats such as road construction, clearing for urban development and prescribed burning are all adding pressure to our wildlife and ecosystems which are threatened by habitat fragmentation, feral species, reduced rainfall, higher temperatures and other impacts of climate change.

Western Australia is still lacking any comprehensive or effective policy approach to the protection of wildlife and native vegetation. The lists of endangered species continue to grow while remaining habitat is degraded or sliced away by insensitive development.

CCWA's activity in addressing these challenges has primarily been through partnerships with other organisations. Our support for the PEW Charitable Trust has enabled the ongoing advocacy efforts towards expanding the conservation estate, and realising the WA government's Plan for our Parks which aims to protect an additional 5 million hectares across the state. The focus of this work is now starting to turn to marine parks again, in order to fill key gaps in the State network of Marine Protected Areas. Progress is being made towards a new marine park on the South Coast

The Protect Ningaloo campaign achieved a significant breakthrough this year, with the withdrawal of the Subsea7 proposal to develop a pipeline facility in Exmouth Gulf, however the area continues to face new challenges in the form of salt mining projects and industrial port developments.

One of the most important and hard-fought outcomes in Western Australian conservation this year, and in recent history, has been the commitment from the McGowan Government to end the logging of native forest in the next WA Forest Management Plan.

CCWA has supported and at times led the campaign against logging of native forest for 40 years. For those who have been committed to this issue, and people across Western Australia it came as a huge relief to know that our southwest forests would not continue to be destroyed for the sake of this destructive loss-making industry. CCWA's special acknowledgement goes to the WA Forest Alliance (WAFA) and the incredible campaigning led by Jess Beckerling and others over the last 12 months which has made this outcome possible.





Supporting our Community

Supporting community campaigns to protect special places or prevent inappropriate developments is an important feature of the Council's role as Western Australia's peak community-based conservation organisation. This year was no different with CCWA staff and volunteers supporting a number of ongoing and new community conservation campaigns and initiatives.

The support we provide is highly varied and can range from fundraising, media support, strategy development and advice, facilitation, research, events, representation and lobbying, supporter engagement and many other functions that are required to support a successful campaign or initiative.

This year the community campaigns and initiatives supported by CCWA included:

- WA Forest Alliance
- Friends of Gelorup Corridor
- Protect Ningaloo
- Frack Free Kimberley
- Preserve Gnarabup
- Fire and Biodiversity WA (FaBWA)
- Save Perth Hills
- Save Our Jarrah
- Protect Binningup, Protect the Yalgorup Plain
- Aboriginal Heritage Action Alliance (AHAA)

Nuclear-free WA

KA Garlick and Mia Pepper

Another extraordinary year full of challenges, connections, and celebrations in our nuclear free work. Our work currently is focused on the expiry of environmental approvals for each of the four uranium sites which provide the WA Government with an opportunity and a responsibility to protect the environment and public health from the threats of uranium mining.

Earlier this year, CCWA and the Mineral Policy Institute released an important publication, *The Road to a Nuclear Free Future for WA*. The report was launched at an Environmental Matters live and online event which was very well attended both in WA and nationally. The report has strong recommendations for the WA Government, and provides a clear path forward to ensure that WA remains Nuclear Free.

Of particular interest to our campaign this year is the Mulga Rock project. The current environmental approval for Vimy's Mulga Rock uranium mine project expires on 16 December 2021 unless the company can demonstrate that they have "substantially commenced" mining.



Vimy are pulling out all the stops to try to demonstrate "substantial commencement" including clearing extensive areas of native vegetation and refurbishing the existing exploration mine camp and airstrip. This land clearing is premature, unnecessarily destructive and has removed important habitat for the endangered Sandhill Dunnart, the Southern Marsupial Mole, Brush Tailed Mulgara, Crest Tailed Mulgara, Woma Python, and Rainbow Bee Eater.

The campaign is currently working with allies in Industrial Labor, the Government, environmental lawyers, experts and academics to ensure a high level of critical legal investigation and analysis of the Mulga Rock uranium proposal. These alliances have been crucial in pursuing all possible procedural and legal interventions. This work will continue in 2022 with a renewed focus on a legislative ban on uranium mining in WA.

We are very pleased to report that Cameco's Kintyre uranium project no longer has a valid environmental approval, it expired in March 2020 and there is progress in dismantling the mine camp. Toro Energy's Wiluna project is now focused on minerals other than uranium and Yeelirrie has not progressed. The environmental approvals for both Wiluna and Yeelirrie uranium proposals are set to expire in January 2022.

We continue our work with Tjiwarl Traditional Owners from Yeelirrie, to create a memorable photographic book to celebrate 50 years of resistance. The book will document the length, breadth and strength of the historic campaign to stop uranium mining at Yeelirrie, a community-led campaign, that is still strong.

Western Australia still remains nuclear free and our ambition to keep it that way is unflinching and we will continue to create a stronger campaign that is public, vocal and relevant in every area in which we work. We are hopeful going into the new year, that we will see a legislative ban on uranium mining in WA.

Citizen Science

Dr Nic Dunlop and Alison Goundrey

It was back to business with the Citizen Science Program as most of the COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings reduced. This year, we held field trips at most of our long-term project areas.

We were able to use our annual summer monitoring trip to Rat Island in the Abrolhos to collect feather samples from Sooty Terns as part of a global study on mercury in the world's oceans led by a laboratory at La Rochelle University in France. Mercury concentrations in the oceans have been increasing primarily as the result of burning fossil fuels and this has major implications for the safe consumption of fisheries resources.

Our projects that use bush-bird communities to monitor ecological processes have been in full swing with particular emphasis on bushland restoration on farmland in the Gondwana Link and carbon-sequestration projects in the Yarra Yarra Catchment. So far in the current reporting period, our observer teams have spent approximately 220 person-days doing systematic bird community sampling.



Bird observer team receiving instruction at Carbon Positive's restoration site at Yarraweyah in the Gondwana Link.

Over the past 12 months, the CCWA Citizen Science Program has organized 3 feedback forums for our participants and partners. All the forums were fully subscribed at venue capacity. These included:

- **What the Birds Told Us:** Using bush-bird communities to monitor ecosystem development in restoration, regeneration and carbon sequestration treatments (December 2020).
- **Infection:** Ecosystem health on a nearshore island nature reserve adjacent to Perth metropolitan area (March 2021).
- **Rat Island Recovery:** Documenting the recovery of what was originally WA's largest seabird colony following the cessation of guano mining and the eradication of black rats, cats and house mice (August 2021).



Rat Island Recovery Forum, partnered with BirdLife WA

The Citizen Science Program also organized a 'Living with Nature Forum' at the Seaview Park Estate, Karakin. The forum was supported by the Northern Agricultural Catchment Council (NACC) aimed at people living in bushland estates and managing natural vegetation and wildlife. We were also invited to present at the Carbon Positive Twenty-year Celebration, the Bicton Probus Club, Carbon Farming Foundation planning workshop, Australian Citizen Science Association WA Chapter launch and the City of Melville.



Participants in the 'Living with Nature Forum' Karakin, 2 October 2021

Over the year CCWA (as the WA Fairy Tern Conservation Network) facilitated and produced a 'Fairy Tern Conservation Strategy for the Lower West Coast Region' with a grant from Fremantle Ports. The Strategy will be officially released in the near future.



Monitoring the Common Noddy colony on Lancelin Island.

This year, we have also spent some time wrapping up and finalizing data collection and decommissioning of several projects. This being the unfortunate outcome of an increasing bureaucratic burden resulting from regulatory changes (Biodiversity Conservation Act) and policy changes in the application of the Animal Welfare Act. CCWA has been assisting the community citizen-science sector in getting a workable regulatory system. We now have our own Scientific Use License (Animal Welfare Act) to cover our projects which are also available to CCWA member groups.



Representation on boards & committees

CCWA continues to actively represent the sector on a range of government advisory boards and committees. This provides opportunities to influence government policy outcomes and prosecute the case for action on conservation and climate change.

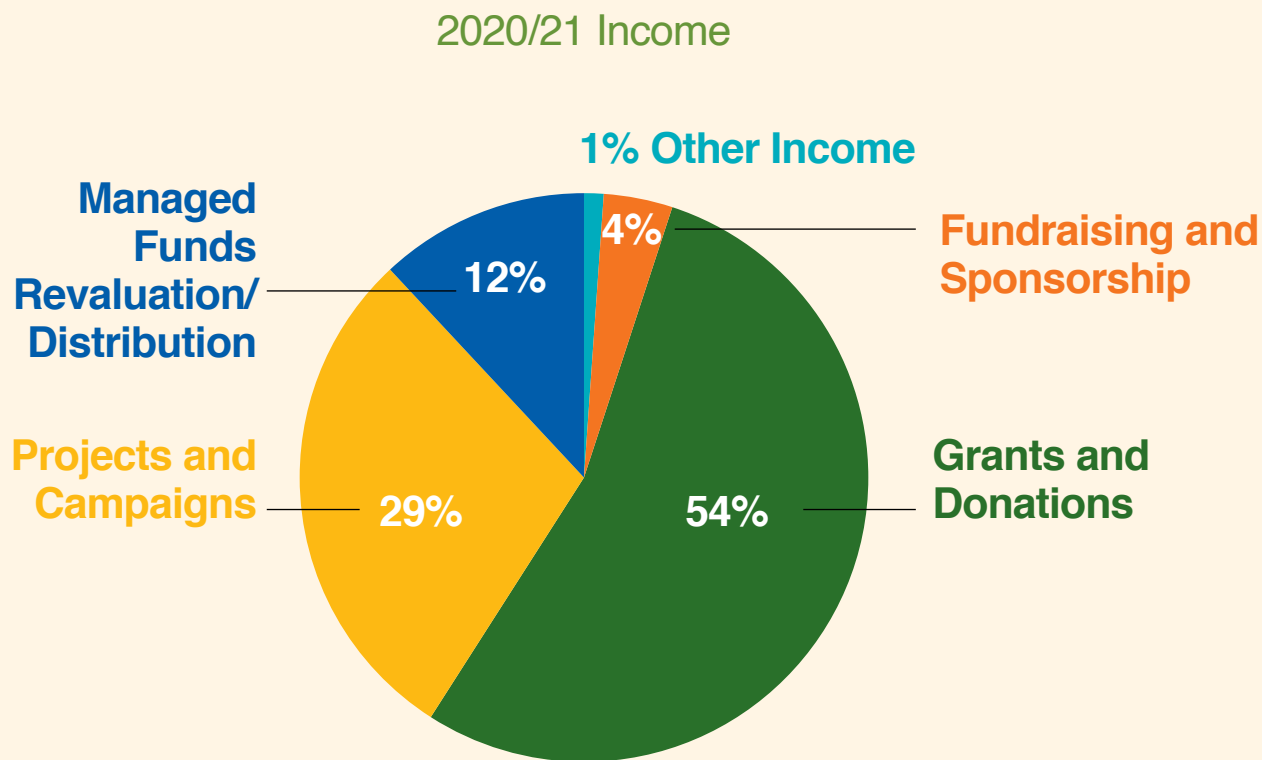
- Covid-19 Recovery Stakeholder Advisory Group
- Environmental Protection Authority Stakeholder Advisory Group
- Water Reform Stakeholder Reference Group
- Keep Australia Beautiful Council
- Department of Mines and Petroleum Environmental Liaison Committee (inactive)
- Cockburn Sound Management Council
- Perth Air Quality Management Committee
- Department of Water and Environmental Regulation Stakeholder Reference Group
- Ministerial Waste Advisory Group
- Ministerial Reference Group for the Non-Lethal Shark Drumline Trial



Our finances

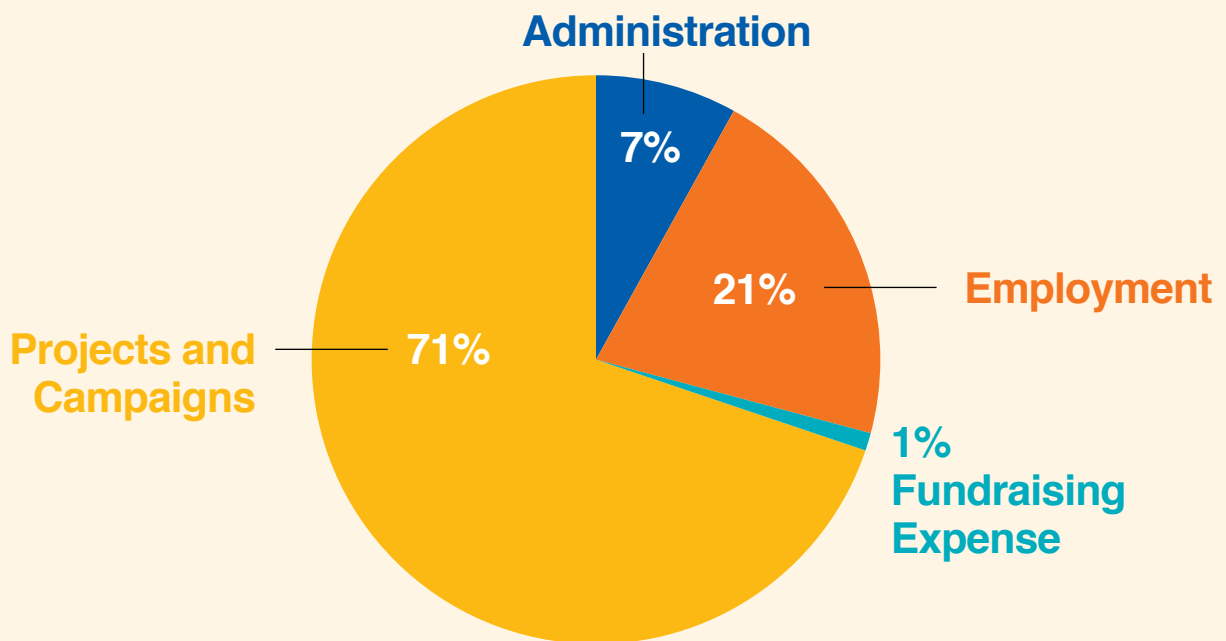
For the financial year, the total consolidated income was **\$3.379 million** (2020 - \$2.448 million), and total consolidated expenditure was **\$3.157 million** (2020 - \$2.170 million). A moderate surplus of **\$222,138** was achieved.

Income was generated from several sources as depicted in the diagram below, with majority of funding being received by the ongoing support of our donors as well as grants from the Federal and State Governments. Other income includes bank interest, membership fees and other fees and charges.





2020/21 Expenditure



Conservation Trust of WA

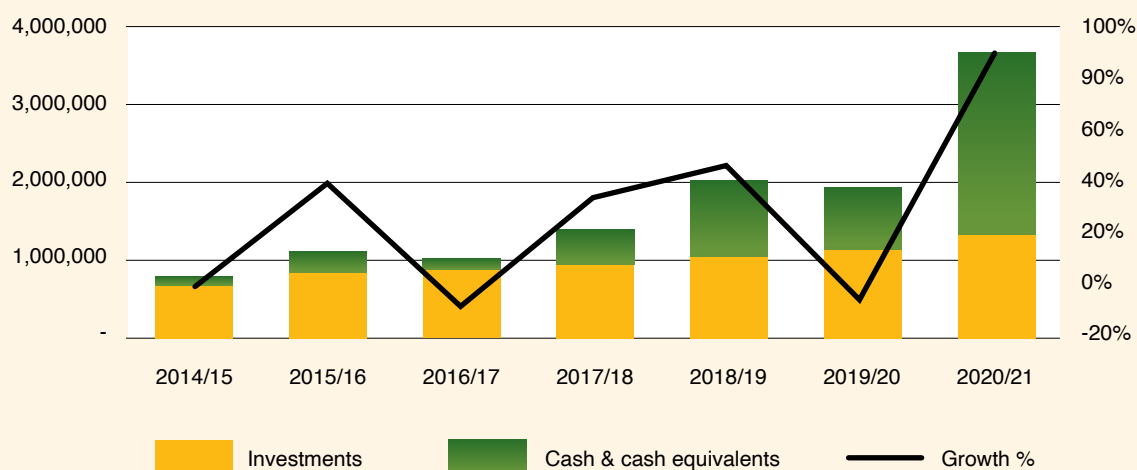
The Conservation Trust of WA remains an important endowment providing financial security to the Conservation Council of Western Australia (Inc.) by enabling tax-deductible gifts to support our charitable works.

During the financial year, the Trust received \$2.224 million (2020 - \$1.807 million) in tax deductible donations. This is an increase of 23% from the previous year demonstrating the commitment by individuals, groups and organisations who strongly support the objectives of the Council.

Similarly, there was an increase in the value of managed funds invested during the year with \$1.332 million invested at the end of the reporting period (2020 - \$1.143 million), representing a growth of \$190 thousand.

The trustees of the Conservation Trust of WA are Professor Carmen Lawrence (President), Jason Parish (Treasurer), Sue Graham-Taylor (Trustee), Philip Jennings (Trustee) and Peter Ewing (Trustee).

Conservation Trust of WA Growth in Equity



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