

Conservation Council of Western Australia

Annual Report 2021-22



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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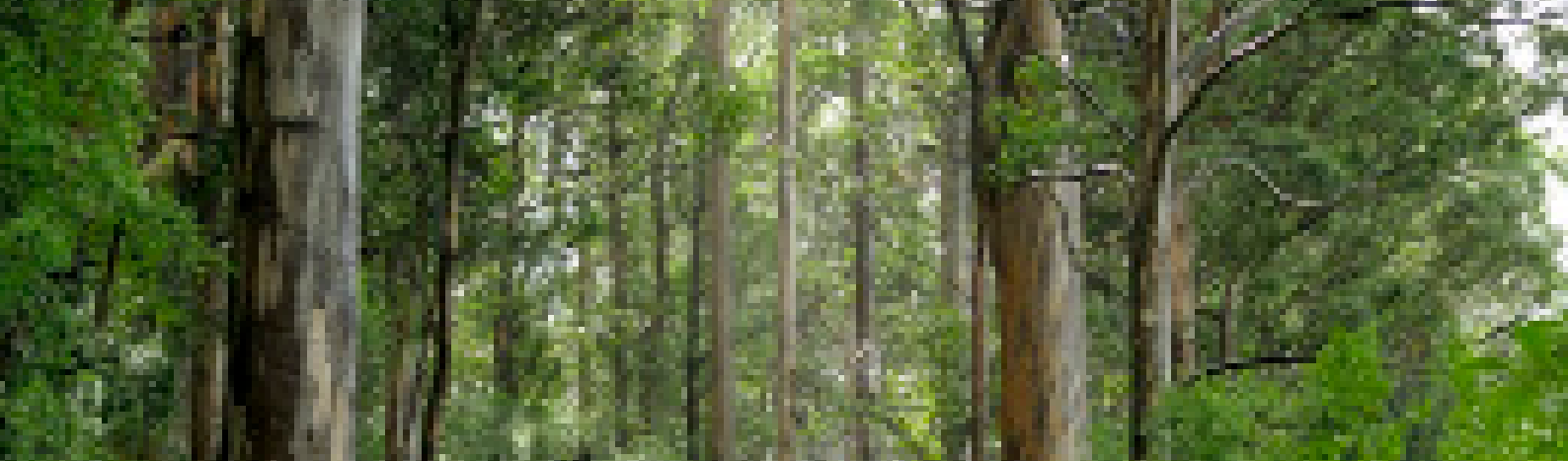
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Presidents message

This year has been one of challenge and change for the Conservation Council of WA (CCWA), placing added pressure on hardworking staff and Executive Committee (ExCo) members. These difficulties have been outlined in e-mails to member groups, and Exco and current staff appreciate the strong support we have had in response.

In addition, while philanthropic support and long-term investments have enabled CCWA to continue to operate sustainably, considerable time and energy have had to be expended to meet donor expectations about the funded programs. In both cases, we have learned from these experiences and initiated changes to policies and programs which will stand us in good stead for the long term.

For the conservation sector as a whole, remarkable progress has been made in highlighting the contribution of fossil fuels to the climate crisis which has already had devastating effects on human health and our native plants and animals. Changes in community attitudes and government policies, while still short of what is needed, owe much to the collaboration of CCWA and many climate-active allies. The Federal election results are testament to the growing impact that concern about climate change is having on public policy. Decisions by arts and sports bodies to drop fossil fuel sponsors underline the shift in public sentiment.

While some high emissions corporations are also pivoting away from fossil fuel production and use, West Australian based companies continue to flout UN targets and expand their operations with the blessing of both state and national governments. Our attempt to question the Environmental Protection Authority's (EPA) failure to properly consider pollution and environmental harm from Woodside's Scarborough gas field greenhouse gas emissions was, unfortunately, unsuccessful. However, this action, together with the highly visible "Say No to Scarborough Gas" campaign, drew welcome national attention to the outsized and expanding contribution of Western Australian companies to destructive emissions.

Despite the constraints on staff time and resources, we have been planning for a major biodiversity campaign this year and have now allocated funds to enable the appointment of a program director. Member groups will be invited to participate in shaping the program to drive changes to government, business and community actions to ensure conservation and rejuvenation of habitats and protection of our native species. Links with our very effective Citizen Science and Uranium Free programs and our membership of the WA Forest Alliance will strengthen CCWA's capacity to secure much improved outcomes for our invaluable biodiversity.



Presidents message cont.

During the year both the Executive Director and the Director of “Clean State” resigned, meaning that a substantial workload has fallen to Maggie Wood, as Acting Executive Director and on Paul Goonting, our Finance and Operations Manager. On behalf of Exco and CCWA staff and members, I would like to place on the record our sincere thanks to Maggie and Paul for the outstanding work they have done in trying circumstances.

I would also like to thank our dedicated CCWA staff, our generous volunteers and our engaged member groups who have continued to campaign effectively to raise awareness about the environmental threats we are facing and to encourage innovative solutions to minimising these threats. I am also pleased to announce that a new Executive Director has been selected via a rigorous selection procedure and that the successful candidate will commence work early in the New Year.

As outgoing President of the Executive Committee, I thank my colleagues on the Committee who have contributed so much this year to complete the reform of CCWA’s policies and procedures to ensure they are consistent with best practice in the non-government

sector. I also commend the commitment and professionalism of all our staff across such a range of activities that are critical for CCWA’s successful operation - research and advocacy, on-ground citizen science, media outreach, membership liaison and financial and operational management.

Finally, in concluding my term as President, I would again like to acknowledge our member groups and supporters who continue to exhibit the best of human qualities – compassion, decency, and a determination to improve life on our planet for all its inhabitants.

Professor Emerita, Dr Carmen Lawrence
President CCWA



Executive Committee & 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

Dr Carmen Lawrence (President)
Lillian Ryan (Vice President)
Jason Parish (Treasurer)
Lou Scampoli (Secretary)
Tim Barling
Caroline Perks
James Eggleston
Paul Jarvis

Conservation Trust of WA Trustees

Dr Carmen Lawrence (President)
Jason Parish (Treasurer)
Sue Graham-Smith
Philip Jennings
Peter Ewing

Current staff

Isobel Armstrong
Emma Barrett
Sara Boranga
Anthony Collins
Robert Davies
Kelly Duckworth
Claire Greenwell
Vivienne Glance
Paul Goonting

Rhiannon Hardwick
Liam Lilly
Wendy Low
Angelica Munoz
Stephanie Murphey
Mia Pepper
Jordan Rowand
Maggie Wood



Employee engagement survey

CCWA is committed to being a place where people want to work. This year CCWA undertook an independently managed and verified employee engagement survey to help understand how our employees are feeling, and to identify potential improvements in leadership and human resources management practices.

This survey will be conducted on a rolling 2-year basis, and the results feed into the performance indicators for the CCWA Executive Management team.

Our strengths:

- **100% of staff surveyed (18 team members) indicated that they feel like their supervisor seems to care about them as a person**
- **100% of staff surveyed indicated that they feel like they have some control over how they prioritise their daily work schedule**
- **93.75% of staff felt like they could talk with their manager if they needed assistance**
- **93.75% of staff felt like their fellow team members are committed to doing quality work**
- **87.50% of staff felt like the organisation made them feel like their job was important**
- **87.50% of staff felt like the people around them were positive and looked for ways to keep the office mood positive**
- **81.23% of staff felt like they know what is expected of them at work, and that their opinions seemed to count**

Areas for improvement:

- **33.34% of staff felt like they were able to resolve workplace conflicts without involving management**
- **37.50% of staff felt like they were provided information about organisational strategy**
- **43.75% felt like they had certainty and security in their role**



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.

This year, CCWA continued to roll out recommendations from the member engagement project, in recognition of the important role CCWA members play in both our governance but also our advocacy agenda.

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.

We are looking forward to further developing this and expanding our membership over the next 12 months.

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**
- **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

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 pre-eminent 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.

Our fossil fuel program has grown substantially over the past 12 months and we are proud of the work we have done to raise the profile of the Scarborough gas project, and build national alliances to support our program objectives.

The challenges we face are not getting any smaller. The nature of our threats has also changed with a new Federal Government, and have become more complex as the world looks to find new sources of gas to alleviate supply constraints due to the Ukraine/Russia conflict.

We are also seeing an increase in fossil fuel aligned technologies such as carbon capture and storage (CCS) and fossil hydrogen being proposed at a large scale across Western Australia.

To make matters more complicated, we are consistently hearing from both State and Federal Governments that continued gas use and expansion

is not only important for our economic prosperity, but it is also an integral part of our energy security.

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.

Woodside's Burrup Hub 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.

CCWA has coordinated a diverse national campaign against gas expansion in Western Australia alongside organisations like the Australian Marine Conservation Society, Greenpeace, Australian Conservation Foundation, The Sunrise Project, ACCR, and MarketForces.

As an alliance we held a number of national and international briefings with supporters to raise the profile of the project and ask for support in lobbying Government to reject the proposal.

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.

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 made headway to establish a positive public narrative through the digital communications e.g., website, newsletter, social media as well as meetings and events. It has also created alliances and partnerships, promoting the 'building back better' narrative and has engaged key community, business and civil society groups.

While some of these strategies are yet to be fully realised, substantial work has been invested to lay a foundation for sustainable and meaningful impact. This includes, for example, organising 5 roundtables; engaging with over 200 stakeholders; producing new research and political analysis, liaising with CCWA member groups and climate strategists; collating and analysing data on Australia's climate policies, sectoral emissions, economic contributions, employment, key demographics and emissions in the energy sector; producing power maps for the WA Premier and key WA ministers as well as mapping of WA seats plus newly won federal seats to identify strategic opportunities; public polling and a survey with young people.

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.

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.

Despite our collective efforts, 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.

In order to address these issues CCWA has started working on the development of a nature campaign, which will help raise the profile of nature across Western Australia and deal with the issues our native vegetation and wildlife face across the state. In particular, 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.

Over the past 12 months, CCWA has continued to work in partnership with others to try and address some of these challenges. Our work with 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.

CCWA has also been working closely with Pew and Australian Land Conservation Alliance (ALCA) and its members, on proposed amendments to the *Land Administration Act 1997*, and encouraging expanded conservation across the Pastoral estate.

One of the most important and hard-fought outcomes in Western Australian conservation 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 (FMP). The consultation process for the FMP is currently underway and we are looking forward to seeing an additional 400,000 hectares of forest moved into the conservation estate.

We have also spent a significant amount of time engaging with stakeholders as we prepare for the next mining boom in Western Australia led by demand for critical minerals. This work has involved consultation with local communities, Traditional Owners, and other landholders as well as mining and renewable energy companies.

Engagement with the regulators

CCWA has ramped up our engagement with the regulators over the past 12 months, and has increased the volume of submissions and appeals made to the various regulatory agencies. This has included:

- 46 submissions to the EPA on proposed projects, predominantly focused on greenhouse gas emissions, native vegetation, contamination, and water.
- 23 appeals to the WA Appeals Convenor
- 12 submissions to the Federal offshore regulator, National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA)
- 8 submissions to other government agencies

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, groups, and initiatives supported by CCWA included:

- WA Forest Alliance
- Black Cockatoo Coalition
- Northern Jarrah Forests Alliance
- Friends of Gelorup Corridor
- Protect Ningaloo
- Frack Free Kimberley
- Preserve Gnarabup
- Save Smiths Beach
- Fire and Biodiversity WA (FaBWA)
- Save Our Sandalwood
- Protect Binningup, Protect the Yalgorup Plain
- Aboriginal Heritage Action Alliance (AHAA)
- Save Our Songlines

Nuclear-free WA

Mia Pepper



In January 2022 we celebrated that both the approvals for Yeelirrie and Wiluna expired (joining Kintyre which expired in March 2020). Attempts from Cameco to extend the approval for Yeelirrie and Kintyre have both been unsuccessful. It is with great pleasure that we report that in 2022 there are still no operating uranium mines in WA and that three out of four uranium projects are now unable to proceed.

But there is still much work to do. We have spent most of the year building the case and lobbying for the government to use new section 47A laws in the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* to withdraw the expired approvals at Kintyre, Yeelirrie and Wiluna – to ensure these approvals are not extended by a future government.

We had hoped that all four projects would have expired but the Mulga Rock uranium mine, on Upurli Upurli country North East of Kalgoorlie, has been allowed to continue. What the government accepted as “substantial commencement” we argue is premature and destructive land clearing. The company still does not have the finance to the develop the project, has not made a final investment decision and is still key approvals needed. In August 2022 the proponent Vimy Resources merged with Deep Yellow. We are deeply concerned about the new owners whose executive team have led companies with a concerning track record on workers' rights, environmental protection, and heritage protection.

In March 2022 CCWA and nuclear free campaigners visited the site with Upurli Upurli and Spinifex women. CCWA continues to work with the community to protect Mulga Rock from uranium mining. We will continue to track developments with the project and oppose its development We will continue to work with our allies and partners to challenge this project at every opportunity and will work to create opportunities to challenge and undermine this unwanted, un-economic and unsafe project.

Also in 2022 we:

- Worked with Friends of the Earth Australia to deliver “nuclear power no solution to climate change” training to climate campaigners
- Hosted a book launch with Professor Ian Lowe and our President Carmen Lawrence looking at nuclear power and climate change
- Collaborated with ICAN, MAPW, Mayors of Peace to run an interactive event connecting to the UN Treaty to Abolish Nuclear Weapons conference in Geneva
- Worked with Martumilli and FORM to promote the Kintyre painting at the Art Gallery of WA – a protest painting by 23 Martu artists in a bid to protect Kintyre from uranium mining and restore Native Title over the Karlamilyi National Park.
- Met with WA Labor branches who passed motions calling on the government to withdraw approvals
- Made submissions to government inquiries, responded to works approval applications, tracked and challenged reporting and compliance of uranium companies in WA
- Engaged with relevant ministers and departments to track and challenge the development of Mulga Rock
- Worked with our allies in industrial Labor, in faith, union, indigenous, environment and health organisations to deliver the Uranium Free Charter signed by over 5,000 individuals and 20 organisations representing 100s of thousands of Australians.

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.



A Sandhill Dunnart

Citizen Science

Dr Claire Greenwell

It was a busy year for CCWA’s citizen science team. Our 2021/22 Citizen Science Program had a range of projects on offer and, once again, we were supported by skilled teams of enthusiastic volunteers. We are extremely grateful to the many participants that gave up their time to join us in the field.

There was a strong emphasis on bush bird community monitoring, using a standard hybrid search methodology. These projects were designed to help monitor changes in ecological processes at some of our long-term monitoring sites including in the Gondwana Link and Yarra Yarra Catchment. This data will be analysed to investigate trends in species composition and functional groupings according to habitat/treatment type over time.



A Western Pygmy Possum sighted by the team in the Gondwana Link.

We also had the opportunity to visit a new site in Bowgada in WA’s mid-west and undertake a biodiversity assessment across 1,050 hectares of remnant vegetation. The remnant boasted a diverse topography with breakaways, banded iron ridge, mature mixed eucalypt woodlands (listed as a nationally threatened ecological community, i.e. WA Wheatbelt Woodland ecological community), Acacia scrubland. These habitats were found to be in good condition and supporting diverse flora and avifauna communities.

Our Living with Nature Project continued, this year focusing on the movement and persistence of bushland fauna within the peri-urban sub-division of Seaview Park, Karakin. The project is also examining floral diversity and the effect of slashing and mulching, as a method of reducing fuel loads and revitalising aging heathland.



Volunteers surveying flora in a Seaview Park estate. Photo: Living with Nature.

This work took place across four properties within the estate and will continue into 2024. The project is supported by the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council NRM and funded by the Australian Government through the National Landcare Program.

CCWA's WA Fairy Tern Network undertook a range of workshops and presentations throughout the year. These education forums were aimed at raising awareness about the plight of these vulnerable seabirds and increasing conservation outcomes. Special thanks to BirdLife Bunbury and the South-West Science Council, Busselton Naturalists Club, Perth NRM, and Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions in Shark Bay for hosting these community workshops and helping to spread the word.

In June, the WA Fairy Tern Network held a workshop, to develop a conservation strategy for Fairy Terns on the mid-west coast and Houtman Abrolhos Islands. It was well attended by land managers, volunteer groups and individuals working in the area. It was a very successful event, with great discussion, ideas, and commitments to improve conservation efforts along this area of coastline. The Strategy will be released for comment in the near future.

In September, the WA Fairy Tern Network was recognised at the 2022 Western Australian Coastal Awards for Excellence. The group won in the Science and Research category - awarded for 'innovation applied to science or research which assists to protect, conserve and enhance the Western Australian coast.' This award is thoroughly deserved for the hard work of all those associated with the fairy tern network and the tireless efforts to help the conservation of this iconic species here in WA.

The team has also been investigating the diet of

Greater Crested Terns on Penguin Island, to gain insights into the locally available forage fish. Coastal foraging terns, like Crested Terns, feed by plunge diving and carry their prey crosswise in their bills, back to colonies to feed mates and chicks. This behaviour lends itself to prey sampling using digital photography – a non-invasive methodology to investigate diet.

Predicting the availability of the forage fishes is very useful for the management of coastal fisheries and marine wildlife. In our case, we are interested to understand what Crested Terns are feeding on as a proxy for Little Penguin diet. In the spring/summer of 2021/22, tern diets were dominated by Blue Sprat, Sandy Sprat, Australian Sardine and Australian Anchovy. This work is continuing.

A *Climate Adaption Strategy for the Little Penguin (Edyptula Minor)* was prepared by CCWA's Citizen Science Programme and WA scientists. The strategy examined the impacts of climate change on Penguin Island's the dwindling penguin population and proposed a number of measures to support the population and encourage its growth.

This work formed that basis for a State NRM Grant application, which was recently awarded.

The funding provided will enable several key interventions identified in the Strategy to be implemented. These include selective vegetation enhancement, insulated penguin nest boxes, and a misting system to help keep penguins cool during the summer months. With careful management and the controlled use of climate adaptation strategies, we hope to reduce the pressures of climate change, maximise the opportunity for successful breeding, and enhance the potential for the recovery of little penguins.



Claire Greenwell (CCWA) and volunteers (Robyn Bickell, Barbara Sing and Carolyn Bloye) accepting the Science and Research Award on behalf of the WA Fairy Tern Network from Jessica Stojkovski MLA. Photo: Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage.

Our finances

For the financial year ending 30 June 2022, the Conservation Council of Western Australia recognised income of \$5.389 million (2021 - \$2.878 million), and reported total expenditure was \$3.933 million (2021 - \$3.064 million). A surplus of \$1.456 million was achieved due to changes in accounting practices and income recognition criteria.



Financial Position	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
ASSETS		
Current assets	5,381	5,743
Non-Current assets	35	126
TOTAL ASSETS	5,415	5,869
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities	1,535	3,274
Non-current liabilities	14	2
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,549	3,276
NET ASSETS	3,867	2,593
EQUITY		
Retained earning	3,867	2,593
TOTAL EQUITY	3,867	2,593

There has been a significant movement in equity growth over the years. For the financial year, there has been a marginal decline in investment value due to various asset portfolio performances. Rebalancing of asset allocations has been initiated to improve future returns and is constantly monitored by the Trustees of the Conservation Trust of WA.

