



*Discover the latest landcare news and outcomes*

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## Kaya! Welcome,

Well things have greened up across the catchment, though a dry relatively dry April saw some of the germination die off from earlier rains. While most are in a better situation feed wise than last year, each season brings new challenges – dare I mention fuel and fertiliser price/availability! Although we have little control over World factors, information such as recent soil test data can be useful in adapting programs based on evidence. The DPIRD ‘nutrient calculator’ is a handy tool to run scenarios through, as is the experience of local agronomists in working out a program to maintain production with current price and availability.

We have a heap of activities going on, the Annual Ringtail Tally finished at the end of April with some great numbers, an exciting Dam enhancements bus trip occurs this week, funding applications have been completed, as well as fencing and site preparation getting underway for this year’s revegetation projects. Read on to find out more...*Bruce Radys – Executive Officer*

### 1. Healthy Estuaries Stream Restoration and Fertiliser Management Program

Healthy Estuaries WA is a flagship project for the Oyster Harbour Catchment Group, it brings together community, land managers, science and government to improve outcomes for South-West and Great Southern estuaries. There are a few key activities undertaken within the Healthy Estuaries WA program.

#### Stream Restoration

We are now accepting expressions of interest for subsidised 2027 revegetation and/or fencing works to protect rivers, streams and tributaries in the catchment. This is done on our website and sites are chosen based on a number of factors including potential habitat value, connectivity to remnant vegetation and location within the stream order. With winter upon us the 2026 planting season will soon be commencing. We have approximately 4 ha flagged for revegetation and over the next couple of months these areas will be prepared by completing weed control and tailored earthworks. Fencing to exclude stock from waterways continues to be erected with the valued assistance of landowners and managers.

#### Fertiliser Management Program

Farmers participating in the 2025-26 Program received their soil test results at the **Grow Your Pasture Profits** workshop held in February, which was well attended and provided valuable information about soil nutrients and fertiliser management.

Post-program surveys have been completed for the 2024-25 participants. We give thanks to all the farmers for giving up their time to complete the feedback

*This project is part of Healthy Estuaries WA, a State Government initiative to improve the health of our South West estuaries.*



survey and fertiliser audit. It's a valuable tool to provide input to the Healthy Estuaries WA team, helping them to improve the Program in the future.

Two Accu Spread field days were held in our catchment in March. The annual field days are an excellent tool to help measure and calibrate your spreader. Testing and calibrating your spreader ensures even distribution of product over the whole paddock, reducing patchy yield and making sure the right amount of product is going to the where it's needed.

Expressions of interest for the 2026-27 Fertiliser Management Program will open in mid-June. This long running, popular Program includes subsidised soil and plant tissue testing, laboratory results, interpretation and advice valued at over \$5,000 for a heavily reduced cost (starting from just \$300 for new participants). The Program helps farmers make informed decisions about fertiliser requirements and application, with potential to save money whilst keeping nutrients out of waterways and on farm where they're needed. New or returning participants are always welcome, with discounts available to those who refer a friend. There is already a lot of interest from previous participants which is a testament to the value and success of the Program. To find out more contact NRM Officer Lorna McDonald ([nrmo@ohcg.org.au](mailto:nrmo@ohcg.org.au)).



In addition a free workshop is coming up in July, Soil Health Assessment Workshop with David Hardwick. This in-depth workshop gives you a comprehensive understanding of nutrient cycling and function in your system. Further information will be made available closer to the time. Save the date in the diary!

*Testimonials from previous Fertiliser Management Program participants.*

"Knowledge is power. Through soil testing you are saving time and money and working smarter."

"It's good to be involved in a community-based program to improve the water quality in Oyster Harbour and I encourage all land managers to get involved."

"The program is an essential part of my farming as it saves an enormous amount of money, increases production, improves soil health and animal welfare."

## 2. Building capacity with Rio Tinto.

Our main revegetation equipment is a 'Walker' tree planter, dating from the 1980's, whilst it has been taken care of and recently refurbished, we found that it has limited direct seeding capacity compared to modern 'Çommveg' machines. Direct seeding can be a highly effective method for large scale revegetation as it is lower

*This project is supported by funding from Rio Tinto.*



cost compared to nursery grown tube-stock, allows higher density planting, increased species diversity, greater establishment flexibility, and encourages hardy root growth. Compared to our 'Walker' tree planter most Commveg machines also have a narrower and lighter scalping mechanism which reduces the risk of erosion and dry inter-row conditions allowing for more precision, less seed loss and greater access for follow-up weed control. However! The cost to acquire a new Commveg machine is outside of our potential funding capabilities, so after consultation with Dr Geoff Woodall it was determined that our 'Walker' tree planter could be modified with specific Commveg parts and scalper alterations to make it the dream machine.



Rio Tinto are driven to increase their support for environmental protection in the region and with funding from them work is well underway to complete these modifications. Further to the engineering there will be;

- 3 new revegetation demonstration sites set up with the modified 'Walker-Veg' machine.
- 2 community planting days, to hand plant specific sensitive seedlings, such as banksias
- 2 training sessions in the use and maintenance of the modified 'Walker-Veg' for individuals and community groups, as the unit will be available for hire
- Evaluation of success at revegetation sites to determine best practice parameters in terms of timing, species selection, site preparation and level of soil disturbance.



**Community Planting Day 2026** will be off Red Gum Pass Road adjacent to the Stirling Range National Park on **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July.**

### 3. Dam enhancement a dam good investment.

An enhanced farm dam is usually fenced to manage the impact from livestock and includes a healthy buffer of native vegetation around the dam. Farm dam enhancement improves water quality, water security and biodiversity, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions from the dam.

Thanks to funding from Australian Governments Natural Heritage Trust Climate Smart Agriculture – Future Ready South Coast program, two farm dams in the Oyster Harbour Catchment will be enhanced over the next couple of years. Enhancements include stock exclusion fencing, revegetation and an alternative

*Supported by the  
Australian Government  
through funding from the  
Natural Heritage Trust  
under the Climate-Smart  
Agriculture Program &  
delivered through South  
Coast NRM.*



stock water point. Site preparation has begun at the first site which will be fenced and planted this financial year. The learnings from the two sites will provide information for farmers interested in enhancing their farm dams, and provide demonstration sites for future field days. Watch this space for updates!

A few places are still available for the free ***Dam Good! Farm Dam Enhancement field day*** on **Thursday May 7th**. Join scientists from ANU Sustainable Farms and Bovitech Veterinarian Dr Milly Watts on a bus tour of enhanced dams in Denmark. Find out the benefits, latest research and practical advice through fencing and vegetating your farm dam, including improved water quality and stock health, water security and biodiversity.

Register by scanning the QR code or visiting:

<https://events.humanitix.com/dam-good-from-farm-dams-to-the-dam>



#### 4. Who is the Moytj?

Not like any rat! The Moytj is the local noongar name for Australia's native water-rat, colloquially known as the Rakali from the language of the lower Murray River peoples. This elusive rodent is a long-term resident of Australia, inhabiting our fresh and marine waterways since arriving approximately 1 million years ago, according to a 2022 study by Dr Emily Roycroft of ANU. They are just one of over 150 species of rodents now endemic to Australia and New Guinea. Their scientific name, *Hydromys chrysogaster* refers to the golden fur on their belly and it's easy to see why they took out the award for most underrated animal in the ABC's 2025 national science week poll, with over 20% of the 65,000 total votes. They are our largest native rodent and clever to boot. They've been recorded flipping cane toads on their backs to avoid poison glands. They've been known to repel introduced black rats. And yet despite being widespread across Australian waterways, including urban settings, they are secretive and rarely seen.

This includes the King River in Albany, the area of focus for our Community-led restoration of King River Warracoolyup project, funded by the federal government's Urban Rivers and Catchment program. This project aims to rehabilitate and revegetate significant areas along the length of the King River whilst undertaking fauna and water quality monitoring activities. One of the key species we are seeking is the Moytj.

We encourage anyone along the King River who has seen a Moytj to please report this to our Operation Coordinator Natalie ([Natalie.reeves@ohcg.org.au](mailto:Natalie.reeves@ohcg.org.au)) so we can pass the information onto our local ecologist, and congratulate you on spotting these beautiful nocturnal creatures.

*This project is funded by  
the Australian  
Governments Natural  
Heritage Trust under the  
Urban Rivers and  
Catchments program.*



**Community-led  
Restoration of  
King River  
Warracoolyup**



(Left) Rakali photographed at St Kilda Pier Melbourne. (Right) Moytj at night on King River Albany.

## 5. CLAWS bringing “catios” to the Great Southern.

Catios are safe outdoor spaces for your pet cat that allow them to enjoy the outside world, while keeping them safe at home, and helping protect native wildlife. Roaming cats, that is cats that are not confined and allowed to roam freely, contribute to the decline of native animal populations, as well as increase their own risk of injury, illness and mortality. As part of a current State NRM project CLAWS (Cat Laws and Wildlife Survival) are helping offset some of the cost by offering **\$200 rebates for new catio construction** for residents in the **Great Southern** region. Register your interest for the CLAWS \$200 rebate by scanning the QR code and completing the online registration form.

CLAWS and Albany Pet Structures will be running several DIY workshops over the duration of the project allowing you to learn the ins and outs of constructing your own catio. The latest one was held at Bunnings Albany on the 18<sup>th</sup> April with a fantastic turnout. CLAWS will also be at the upcoming City of Albany **Green Fair on the Square**, 9<sup>th</sup> May.

For more information on upcoming CLAWS activities follow CLAWS on their social media platforms or contact CLAWS Project Officer James Barr directly on [claws@ohcg.org.au](mailto:claws@ohcg.org.au)

*This project is supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program*



## 6. Staff Contacts

**Bruce Radys** – Executive Officer - [eo@ohcg.org.au](mailto:eo@ohcg.org.au)

*Healthy Estuaries WA Stream Restoration, Rio Tinto Reinvigorating Revegetation*

**Natalie Reeves** – Operations Coordinator - [Natalie.reeves@ohcg.org.au](mailto:Natalie.reeves@ohcg.org.au)

*Community-led Restoration of the King River Warracoolyup, Salvaging Australasian Bittern Habitat*

**Lorna McDonald** – NRM Officer - [nrmo@ohcg.org.au](mailto:nrmo@ohcg.org.au)

*Healthy Estuaries WA Fertiliser Management Program, Future Ready South Coast*

**Cassie Dressler** – Project Officer - [Cassie.dressler@ohcg.org.au](mailto:Cassie.dressler@ohcg.org.au)

*Fitz-Stirling Priority Place, Mapping the Past to Plan the Future, General Communications*

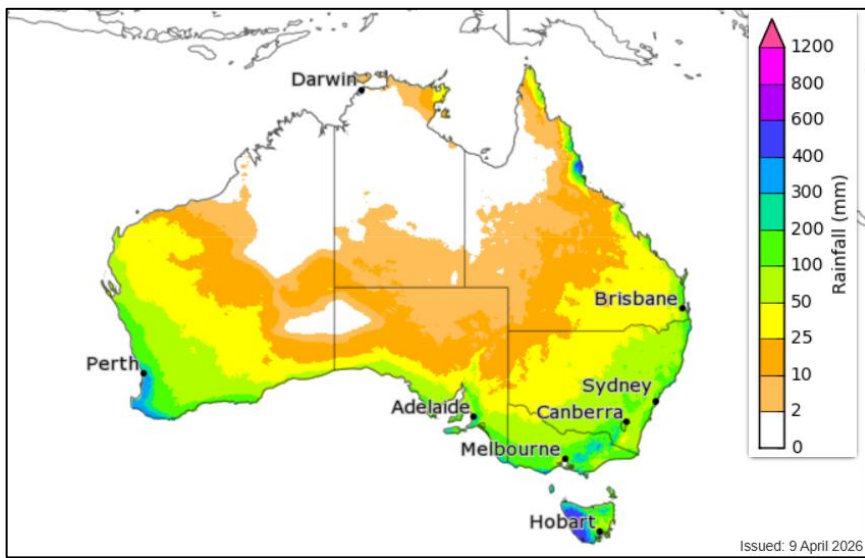
**James Barr** – CLAWS Project Officer – [claws@ohcg.org.au](mailto:claws@ohcg.org.au)

*Cat Laws and Wildlife Survival's reducing roaming felis catus*

## 7. Weather Update

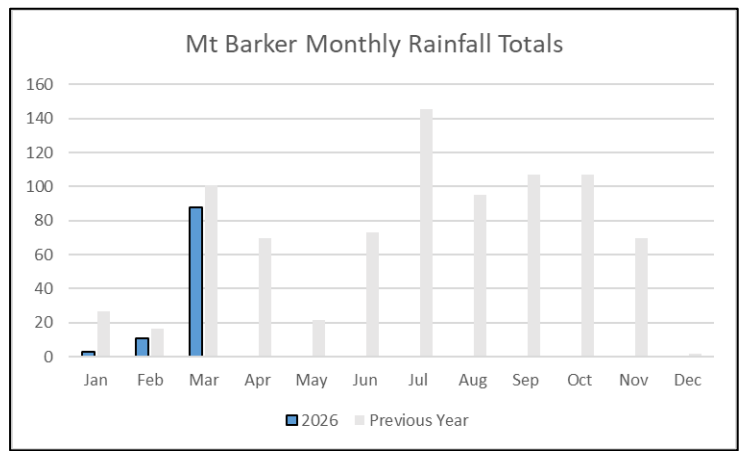
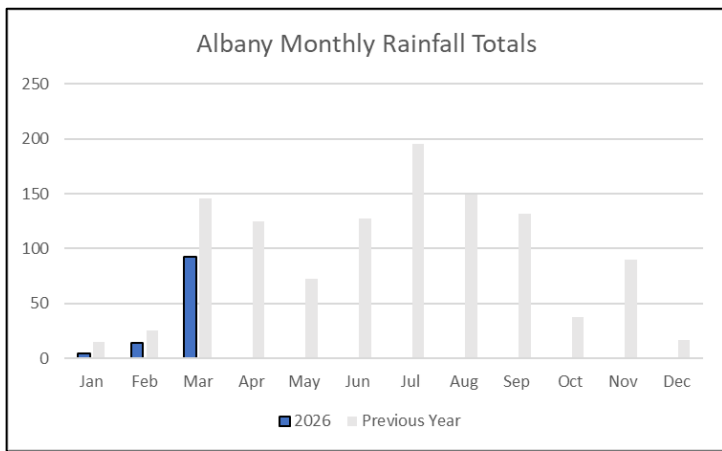
The rainfall and climate outlook for **May to July**;

- Rainfall for the 3-month period from May to July is likely to be below average (60% to more than 80% chance) for much of eastern and south-west Australia.
- Maximum temperatures over May to July are likely to be *above* average (60% to greater than 80% chance) across most of Australia.
- Most of the southern half of Australia has an increased chance of *unusually high* maximum temperatures (over 50% chance) and *unusually high* minimum temperatures, with the highest chances of unusually high maximum temperatures (over 80% chance) occurring across eastern New South Wales and neighbouring border regions, north-east Tasmania, and south-west Western Australia.
- Indications are that a warmer-than-average SSTs are likely off most of the southern coast of Australia, reaching up to 2 °C warmer than average in the Tasman Sea and to the south-west of Australia.
- Warmer oceans can provide increased moisture and energy, that can enhance the severity of storms, cyclones and rain systems.



Rainfall forecast – totals that have 75% chance of occurring May to July 2026

Current monthly rainfall totals;



## Upcoming Events / Opportunities

7<sup>th</sup> May @ Bus Tour | **Dam Good! From farm dams to The Dam** various 8am – 230pm

Enhancing farm dams field day!

On this bus tour scientists from the Australian National University’s Sustainable Farms program, will share the latest scientific research on the many benefits of enhancing farms dams. Topics will include:

- The practical steps involved in enhancing a farm dam,
- Benefits for agricultural production - improved water quality, increased water security, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions,
- Benefits for biodiversity.

**Dam Good!**  
From Farm Dams to “The Dam”  
Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May

Bus tour exploring dam enhancements

Scientists from the **Australian National University’s Sustainable Farms** program, landholders and local water specialist will share the latest scientific research and their experience on the many benefits of enhancing farms dams.

**Pick up:**  
Mt Barker 8.00am  
Albany: 9.00am  
Lunch: 12.30pm

**Limited self drive opportunities**

**Topics include:**

- Practical steps involved in enhancing a farm dam,
- Benefits for water quality, increased water security,
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions,
- Benefits for biodiversity.

[www.ohcg.org.au/dam-good-dam-enhancement-bus-tour-may-2026](http://www.ohcg.org.au/dam-good-dam-enhancement-bus-tour-may-2026)

**Register now: FREE**  
Limited places! Includes lunch @ The Dam Denmark

**Oyster Harbour Catchment Group Inc.**  
**SOUTHCOAST**

**Australian Government**  
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

**GROWER GROUP ALLIANCE**  
Australian National University

This event is supported by the Australian Government, through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate Smart Agriculture Program, and South Coast NRM

We will visit two properties with enhanced dams near Denmark followed by a complimentary lunch at our last stop Raintree's The Dam restaurant in Denmark. Registration is essential. Please click the button below to register via Humanitix or scan QR code.

**Pick up:**  
-Mt Barker 8.00am  
-Albany: 9.00am  
**Set down:**  
-Albany approx 2:00pm  
-Mt Barker approx 2:30pm

9<sup>th</sup> May @ Albany Town Square | **Green Fair on the Square** 9am – 1pm

This year the City of Albany's Green Fair on the Square returns and CLAWS (Cat Laws and Wildlife Survival) will be hosting a booth to encourage responsible pet ownership. Pop in to learn more about their Catio Rebate program and the latest science on the impacts of cat predation on our native species. The event is free entry, no registration required.



4<sup>th</sup> June @ Woodlands Distillery | **Distilling the Dry** (afternoon with sundowner)

Join us as we share successes, hard lessons and support networks which helped during previous dry seasons, all aimed at helping keep your farming enterprise on track in the next dry spell. With an interesting line-up of guest presenters, this in-formal and interactive session includes a complimentary drink and feed.

For early RSVP please email Lorna McDonald on [nrmo@ohcg.org.au](mailto:nrmo@ohcg.org.au)

Beginning of June @ Online | **Fertiliser Management Program 2026/27 EOI Open**

Registrations for the 2026/27 program will be opening soon. The program consists of confirming soil sampling paddocks and completing a digital survey in early August, completing soil sampling post harvest and interpreting your results in February/March of 2027. It's that simple and the return on your heavily subsidised investment is robust, locally proven and independent soil nutrient data which can help you make informed decisions on your fertiliser program.

Please keep an eye on our social media and emails to learn how to submit your EOI. For early RSVP please email Lorna McDonald on [nrmo@ohcg.org.au](mailto:nrmo@ohcg.org.au)

10<sup>th</sup> July @ TBC | **Soil Health Assessment Workshop**  
with David Hardwick 930am – 3pm

Good nutrient management is important for both profit and the environment! In this hands on workshop we will explore how nutrients cycle on your farm and within the soil environment. Learn how to effectively maximise their potential. Presented by David Hardwick of Soil – Land – Food this workshop is open to all landmanagers, big and small. It is free and includes a complimentary lunch at a venue within the Shire of Plantagenet.

For early RSVP please email Lorna McDonald on [nrmo@ohcg.org.au](mailto:nrmo@ohcg.org.au)



**Soil health assessment workshop**

HEALTHY ESTUARIES WA

**Get soil health savvy!**  
Measure, monitor and manage your own property

Join us for a workshop with soil health expert David Hardwick. You will receive the following for FREE:

- Results of extra soil tests from your farm's samples
- Advice on how to interpret these soil tests as indicators of soil health
- A soil health assessment kit to take home
- Advice to develop a plan to measure, monitor and manage soil health on your own property

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July, 9am to 4pm**  
**Location: TBC**  
**RSVP: by emailing Lorna McDonald [nrmo@ohcg.org.au](mailto:nrmo@ohcg.org.au)**  
**Bring along a spadeful of your soil!**

Limited places and kits available, please RSVP as soon as possible

Government of Western Australia  
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation  
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Oyster Harbour  
Catchment Group

SOIL LAND FOOD  
A COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

This project is part of Healthy Estuaries WA, a State Government initiative to improve the health of our South West estuaries.

26<sup>th</sup> July @ Red Gum Pass Road | **Community Planting Day** 10am – 3pm

To celebrate National Tree Day we invite the community to participate in a tree planting day at the foot of the Stirling Range National Park. This event will showcase our refurbished Walker Tree Planter which now has direct seeding capabilities and is all funded with support from Rio Tinto.

For early RSVP please email Project Officer [cassie.dressler@ohcg.org.au](mailto:cassie.dressler@ohcg.org.au)



30 YEARS

Join us for a planting workshop this  
**National Tree Day**  
SUNDAY 26 JULY

National Tree Day  
PLANETARK

10<sup>th</sup> October @ Emu Point Marina | **2026 Oyster Harbour Miaritch Showcase** 10am – 3pm

**SAVE THE DATE!** – As the year speeds along we want you to lock Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> October into your calendar. On this day we invite all members and community to join us as we celebrate over 30 years of positive cumulative impact on the health of our environment and waterways. There will be special panel discussions which consider the past, present and future of landcare in our region. With an interactive showcase of our projects, initiatives and partners, including Healthy Estuaries WA, CLAWS, Friend of the Porongurups and the ASHS Marine Science team. There will also be family and nature friendly activities and a special guest. This free spring event is sure to have something to interest everyone, we look forward to seeing you there!

## Community Awareness Weeks



### NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK 18-24 May

At Oyster Harbour Catchment Group volunteerism takes many different forms. Our volunteers are farmers, land managers, property owners, families, community partners, students, scientists and our hands-on management Committee. The roles and responsibilities vary from attending our awareness raising workshops to completing revegetation, from contributing to citizen science initiatives to protecting remnant natural bushland. Is this your year to volunteer? Get started by signing up to our newsletter which gives you automatic free membership! → [www.ohcg.org.au/newsletter.html](http://www.ohcg.org.au/newsletter.html)



### NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 27 May – 3 Jun

This is a time for all Australian to learn about our shared histories, cultures and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia. It is a time to reflect on our shared responsibilities to the environment which nurtures and sustains us and makes the Great Southern a unique and beautiful place to live. For more information on local #NRW2026 events please keep an eye on the Shire of Plantagenet and City of Albany events pages or visit → [www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au)



### NATIONAL TREE DAY 26 Jul

National Tree Day was established by Planet Ark in 1996 and this year marks its 30<sup>th</sup> year. It has grown into the largest community tree planting and nature care initiative with

over 5 million volunteers having planted over 28 million native trees, shrubs and grasses to date. You can participate by volunteering, hosting a site or donating to the cause. This year Oyster Harbour Catchment will be hosting a planting site. Please keep up to date with details by following our social media or signing up to our newsletter. To find out more about other National Tree Day activities visit: → <https://nationaltreeday.org.au/>



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