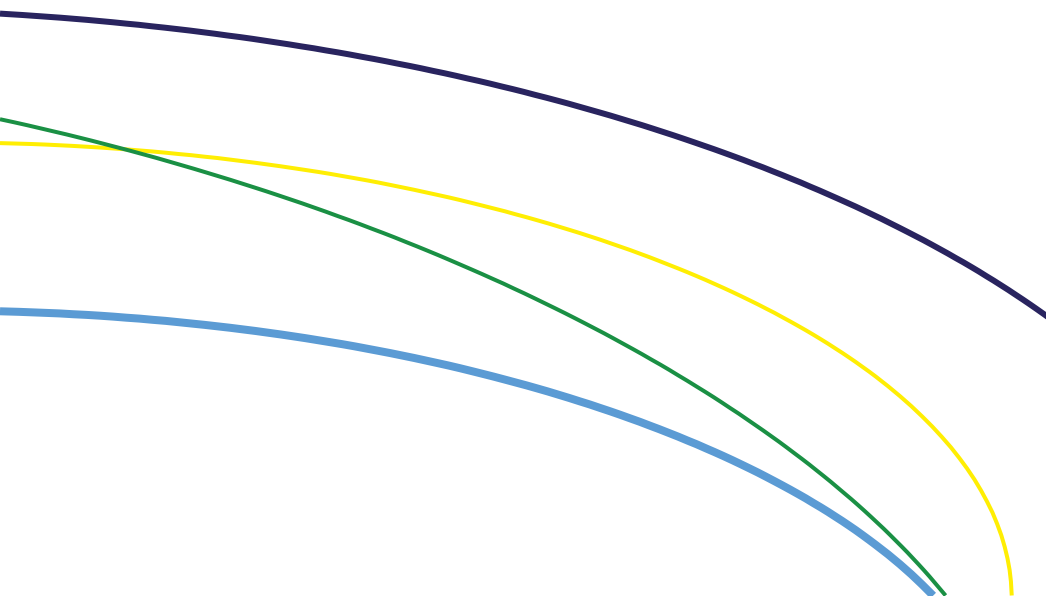




STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 – 2030



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oyster Harbour Catchment Group (OHCG) is a robust not-for-profit community group with strong values and a focus on preserving the environment for generations to come, for both conservation and land use. The 2030 Strategic Plan provides general information and maps out the next seven years of priorities and actions. Key strategies are focused on protecting and enhancing nature, facilitating sustainable agriculture, and promoting community engagement, from a base of strong governance within Oyster Harbour Catchment now and in the future.

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Menang and Goreng people as traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live. We pay respect to Elders past, present, and emerging, and the wider Noongar Community.

Vision

To foster diverse and prosperous rural, urban, and natural environments and landscapes for present and future generations.

Purpose

The purpose of the OHCG is to facilitate, coordinate, and implement natural resource management through engagement with stakeholders in the Oyster Harbour Catchment and surrounding areas.

Objectives

- ❖ Encourage the management and protection of **waterways and wetlands** through the restoration and rehabilitation of native vegetation, minimisation of erosion and nutrient runoff.
- ❖ Restore and maintain the catchment **biodiversity** through the control of invasive flora and fauna species, native flora revegetation and restoration projects, weed control and other best practice conservation and land management projects that enhance and protect the unique biodiversity of the Oyster Harbour Catchment area.
- ❖ Facilitating **sustainable agriculture** by sourcing and distributing funds and expertise to assist landowners, land managers, and others to implement environmentally sustainable practices that reduce nutrient loads and salinity in the catchment.
- ❖ **Promotion** of environmental and natural resource management of the catchment to the community:
- ❖ **Engage** land managers, First Nations peoples, the wider community, and other key stakeholders in the environment and land management activities and projects of the OHCG; and
- ❖ Provide **excellent** governance to undertake and/or do other things or activities which are necessary, incidental, or conducive to the advancement of the protection and management of the environmental values of the Oyster Harbour Catchment and surrounding areas.

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FOREWORD

Thoughts on the future management of the Kalgan River - Steve Janicke

In 1994 Dr Luke Pen completed an assessment of the condition of the Kalgan River floodway along some 90 Km of the main trunk¹. During that survey, he talked with landholders to gain information about the history of the river and what they desired for the future. This holistic assessment was the first of its kind on the South Coast and one of the first in WA and it initiated similar assessments for other rivers and these are still being planned for various catchments. The goal was to determine the environmental health of the river, but also what actions would help to protect its natural values and where possible, improve them. The work of Luke Pen sparked a vision in the community and the vision attracted a lot of interest, federal funding and agency support. People wanted to see a good result. This was a huge impetus for the formation of the OHCG. At the same time, there was growing agency focus on the condition of Oyster Harbour since this was the end point of waters flowing from the catchment. The Department of Agriculture fostered a strong research focus on the catchment soils in an effort to understand nutrient pathways leading into the waterways and to find out how to reduce off farm impacts. The Waterways Commission focused on surface water discharge and water quality. As it turned out Princess Royal Harbour got the lion's share of resources due to macro-algae blooms and the impacts on sea grass meadows. Community perception of the vision seems to be indistinct and agency focus has waned compared with the 1990's.

In 1997 Luke and Green Skills had extended the condition assessment² to a number of the larger tributaries of the Kalgan as well as the Upper Kalgan main channel. Luke Pen's original realization was that the Kalgan River was in better condition than he had initially thought. That fact enabled some tangible goals to be formulated regarding improving that condition in a measurable way as a percentage increase in condition rating. Areas of remnant bush also became a focus for rehabilitation and the goal was facilitated by the Gondwana Link concept that aimed to not only rehabilitate isolated natural bush remnants, but to link these as much as possible (Ranges Link). This grand vision, which seems very ambitious at times, has nonetheless motivated many people to try and much has been achieved. The need of an ambitious vision cannot be underrated. Communities rally to a challenge, despite the inevitable objectors. I suggest this is something the OHCG does well to enlarge and promote in the strategic plan.

The three ingredients for project actions, as always, are embodied in the Plan-Act-Assess cycle and each of these ingredients needs to be adequately addressed, particularly the Assess component, which is why strategic planning is essential. It is important to distinguish between strategic planning and project planning, although they are synergistic.

There is another strategic ingredient, one that is critical to future project activity. It is the continued promotion of a vision and demonstrating how completed projects complement that. That vision should be based on a clear understanding of where the entire catchment community is at with respect to the value of the waterways and what their aspirations are individually. Sustaining community interest in pursuing project development is harder to achieve than simply seeking opportunities for scattered on-ground rehabilitation projects. Periodic projects aimed at gaining demographic understanding are paramount and are more than specific community engagement exercises as adjuncts to on-ground projects. This is why a compelling vision is better built upon current community values.

¹ The Condition of the Kalgan River Foreshore 1992/93. Waterways Commission Report No 52 (1994).

² Survey of River Foreshores in the Oyster Harbour Catchment 1997.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This OHCG Strategic Plan is a dynamic document, reviewed and updated by volunteers.

The OHCG wishes to acknowledge historic support of the Land Conservation Districts Committees in the Kalgan LCDC, Napier LCDC and Manypeaks LCDC. The OHCG now works to continue with the LCDC's legacies in the Oyster Harbour catchment and beyond.

PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to guide the OHCG's priorities and actions over the next seven years. The group recognises the need to plan for long-term environmental actions, monitor and evaluate the plan's effectiveness and the need to widely communicate this to its stakeholders.

During 2023, the OHCG has focused on local community and environmental needs, providing best-practice governance and business management processes. A current Strategic Plan will be compiled with other important governance documents to form an induction pack for committee, staff and members going forward.

THE OYSTER HARBOUR CATCHMENT GROUP INC. (OHCG)

History and Status

The Oyster Harbour Catchment Group was established in 1992 as a community catchment group, with the aim of protecting and rehabilitating the Kalgan River System. It became an incorporated body in 1994. Over the last 30+ years the group has worked with a range of stakeholders and:

- Attracted many millions of dollars of funding, all matched at least dollar for dollar by project participants,
- Coordinated many hours of volunteer labour, and
- Implemented on-ground activities including:
 - Fencing of creeks and remnant vegetation,
 - Revegetation of remnant vegetation and waterways (including, protecting biodiversity, buffering and establishing wildlife corridors),
 - Adoption of best-practice pasture management to intercept and utilize excess water and nutrients,
 - Installation of engineered earthworks to address salinity or waterlogging,
 - Surveying of vegetation communities and priority fauna, and
 - Pest plant and animal species control.

Beyond the on-ground works, the OHCG has been committed to raising awareness of environmental issues, with landholders and the wider community, and promoting the benefits of conservation and good land management. The group has been involved in all levels of regional planning and with developing and implementing the regional strategy including auspicing like-minded unincorporated groups. The group has been steadfast in its resolve to ensure that there is an active team of staff members to implement projects, the level of which has fluctuated over the group's history, predominately due to reliance on government funding.

The OHCG is the key natural resource management group of the Oyster Harbour Catchment and forms one of the three community natural resource management (NRM) groups for the Albany Hinterland sub-region of the overall South Coast NRM region.

More information about the groups historic activities is in the office archive, electronic database and available on request.

OHCG Management Committee

The OHCG Management Committee is comprised of farmers, scientists, NRM specialists, interested community members and other stakeholder groups.

OHCG Staff

The staffing levels of the group fluctuate depending to what extent the projects that are funded and group needs. As of May 2023, the OHCG staff positions:

- Communication Officer
- Senior Project Officer (Healthy Estuaries Initiative),
- Contract Project Officer,
- Policy and HR Officer, and
- Secretary

Stakeholders and Partnerships

The OHCG works in with a range of organisations and programs to ensure maximum benefit from the available resources. These include:

Community Groups:

- Albany and Surround Feral Cat Working Group
- Albany Wildflower Society,
- BirdLife Australia,
- Conservation Council of WA,
- Friends of Ingoldby-Jackson Reserve
- Friends of Mondurup reserve
- Friends of the Porongurup Range,
- Friends of Yakamia Creek,
- Gillamii Centre Inc.,
- Gondwana Link Inc.,
- Kalgan River Stewards,
- Kendenup Bushland Management Group,
- King River Action Group,
- Mount Barker Aboriginal Progress Association
- Southern Aboriginal Corporation
- Southern Beef
- Stirling's to Coast Farmers Inc.,
- Torbay Catchment Group
- Wagyl Kaip Southern Noongar Aboriginal Corporation
- Weedy Wattle Action Group (linked to Green Skills) and,
- Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee Inc.

Government and Agencies:

- Australian Government's National Landcare Programme,
- City of Albany,
- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions,
- Department of Fisheries (including: RecFish West),
- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development,
- Department of Water and Environmental Regulation,

- Landcare Australia,
- Local Government Alliance (Mt Barker, Albany and Denmark),
- Mount Barker Community College,
- Museum of the Great Southern,
- Shire of Plantagenet,
- Southwest Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, and
- Western Australian Government's State NRM Programs.

Consultants:

- FORM Forest and Environment,
- Geoff Baystan,
- Gondwana Seeds,
- Green Skills Inc.,
- Joy Ugle,
- Janicke's Environmental,
- Kevin Collins,
- Kurraca Pty Ltd,
- Kurrah Mia,
- Mini Mals Australia and,
- Sandra Gilfillan.

Sponsors, Business Partners and Funding sources:

- Agrimaster,
- Australian Government
- Bendigo Bank
- Cartehil Accountants,
- Donations to Oyster Harbour Catchment Public Fund
- Elders Rural Services,
- Kendenup Fencing Contractors,
- Lottery West,
- Minorba Sawmill,
- Mount Barker Co-operative.
- Mount Barker Legal
- Mt Barker Chicken,
- Shire of Plantagenet,
- South Coast Natural Resource Management,
- Universities; including: University of Western Australia and Curtin University,
- Waratah, and
- Western Australian Government's State NRM Program.



THE OYSTER HARBOUR CATCHMENT

Location and Geography

The Oyster Harbour Catchment is situated along the South Coast of Western Australia and is a part of the South-West Botanical Region. It stretches from Albany, north to Tenterden, east across the Stirling Range to Chillinup and south to, but not including Two Peoples Bay. The entire area is approximately 3000 square kilometres and includes populated centres of the City of Albany and the townships of Mt Barker, Porongurup and Kendenup. There are a total of 48 sub-catchments contained within the Oyster Harbour Catchment.

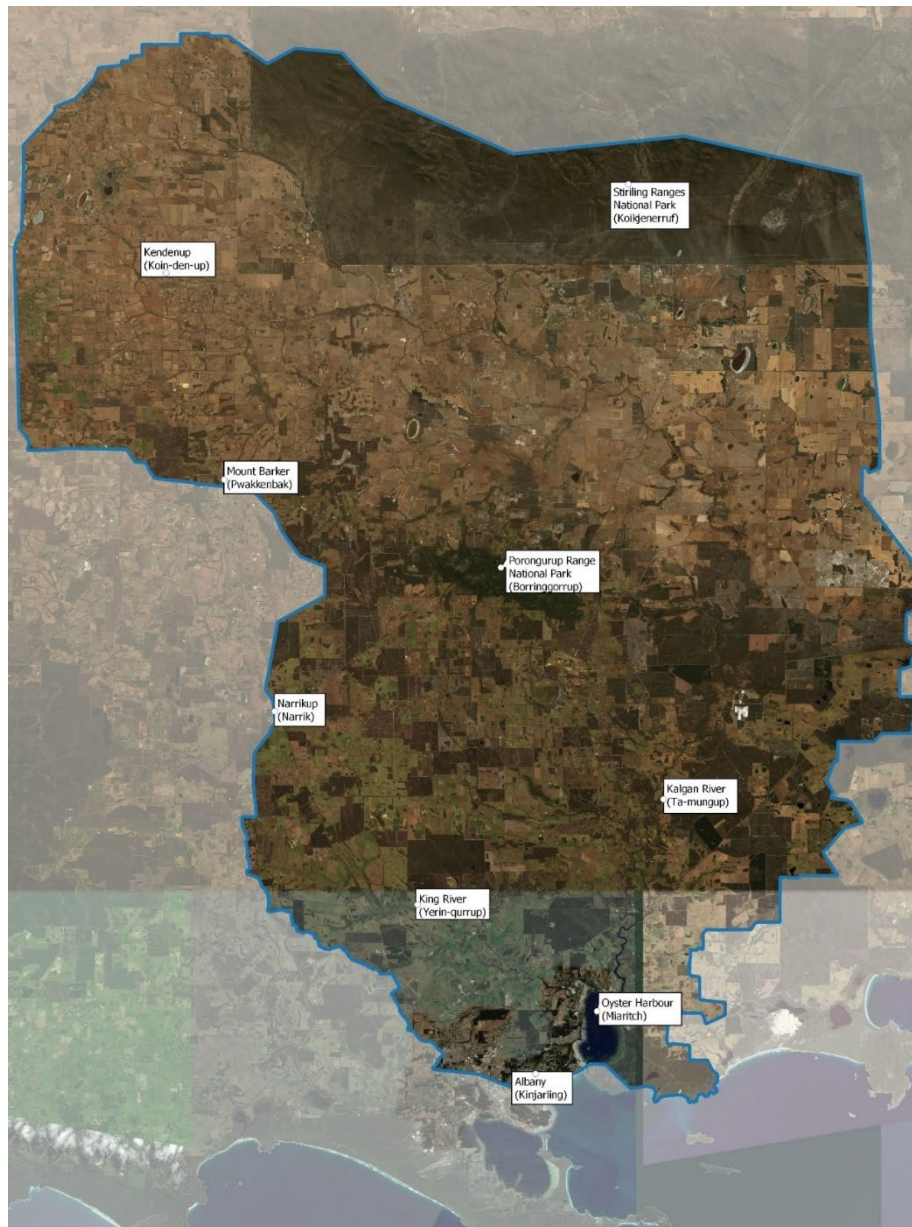


Figure 1: The Oyster Harbour Catchment boundaries identifying sub-catchment boundaries within. It includes the City of Albany, Mt Barker and the Oyster Harbour.

Oyster Harbour Catchment is part of the Albany Hinterland and shares its common borders with the Wilson Inlet Catchment to the West and Gillamii Catchment to the northwest. These catchments fall into the South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. region that includes the South Coast, from Walpole in the West to Esperance in the East. In recent years the OHCG has also worked in adjoining areas of the Albany Eastern Hinterland.

Rainfall and Soils

Rainfall and soil type varies greatly between the southern and northern parts of the catchment. Annual average of around 950mm closer to the coast, compared to 450mm in the north. The northern and central areas of the catchment are dominated by tertiary sediments over granitic bedrock and the terrain is undulating with low lying stagnant flats. Whilst in the southern parts the soils are derived from granitic material and the landscape is more dissected.

The most common soil supergroup in the Oyster Harbour Catchment is the ironstone gravelly soils representing 28 percent of this area, followed by deep sandy duplexes (20 percent), deep sands (13 percent) and wet or waterlogged soils (12 percent).

Soil groups are defined within soil super groups and are used to identify the soil component of the land resource datasets maintained by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. Duplex sandy gravel, grey deep sandy duplex and pale deep sandy soils are the most common soil groups in this area, together covering 44 per cent of the Oyster Harbour Catchment. All other soils were found in less than 9 per cent.

Major soil degradation hazards in this area include subsurface soil compaction, water repellence, soil acidity, salinity, water erosion and wind erosion.

Groundwater

Water that has travelled down from the soil surface and collected in the spaces between sediments and the cracks within rock is called groundwater. Groundwater fills in all the empty spaces underground, in what is called the saturated zone, until it reaches an impenetrable layer of rock. Groundwater is contained and flows through bodies of rock and sediment called aquifers. The amount of time that groundwater remains in aquifers is called its residence time, which can vary widely, from a few days or weeks to 10 thousand years or more. Groundwater is everywhere beneath the soil surface and can be ever-present in many places if allowed to recharge. Even in dry conditions, it maintains the flow of rivers and streams by replenishing them, providing a valuable substitute for precipitation.

Groundwater flow systems are local and roughly align with the direction of surface drainage. The more dissected areas have a high groundwater gradient, which allows groundwater to move towards low-lying discharge areas such as creeks and valley floors. Shallow bedrock can partially obstruct groundwater flow and causes hillside seeps in this region.

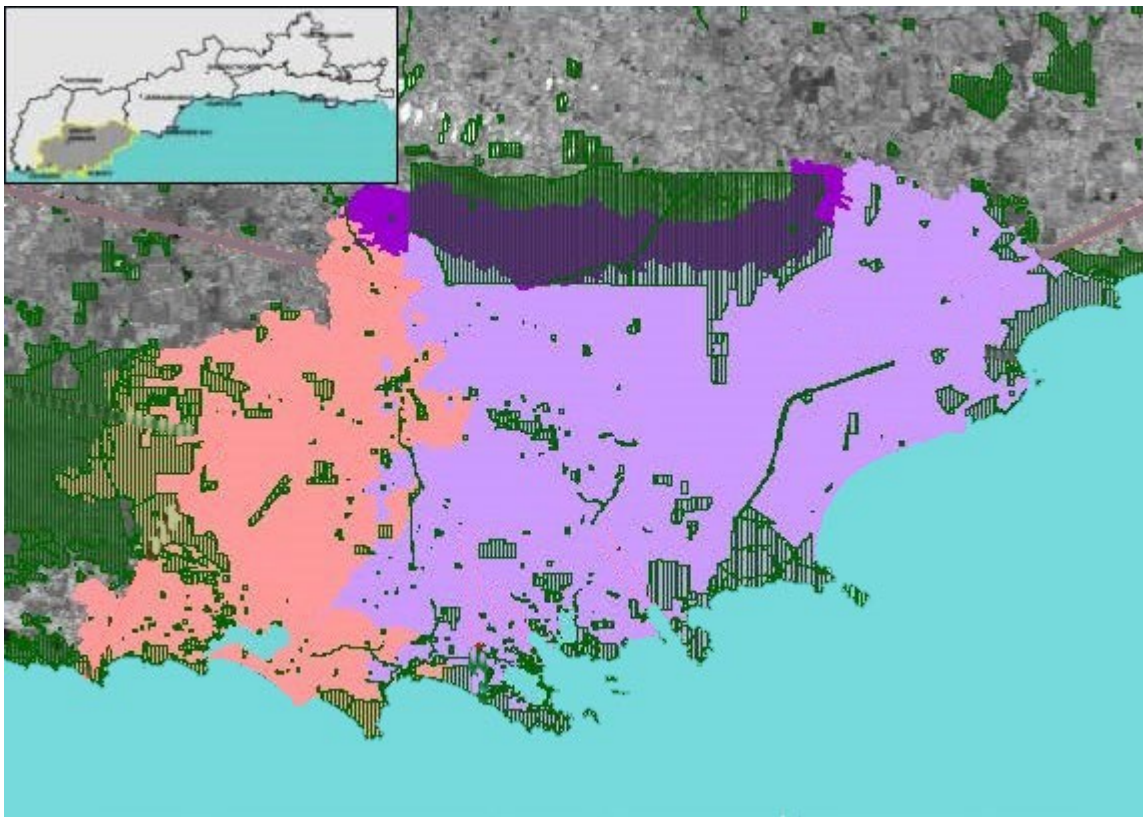


Figure 2: Albany Sandplain Central zone ³

Oyster Harbour Catchment aligns with the Albany Sandplain Central Zone [see figure 2](#). This covers one-third of the Albany Hinterland sub-region on the South Coast. It is bounded by the Stirling Ranges to the north, the Pallinup River to the east, the Kalgan River catchment divide to the west and the Southern Ocean in the south. It contains broad plains with numerous lakes and seasonally inundated depressions. The sandplain has poor internal drainage. Linear sand dunes and lunettes adjacent to swamps are common. Some of the deeper lakes are saline. Closer to the coast, small rivers improve drainage.

The Groundwater flow systems lie beneath the sandplain is an intermediate to regional saline system with very low gradients (<0.5%) resulting in very little lateral flow.

Groundwater discharge does occur in some places in areas where lakes intercept groundwater; however the effect of this discharge is minimal. The smaller rivers close to the coast have local to intermediate groundwater systems and discharge into the Southern Ocean.

Groundwater depth, in the sandplain area ranges from 7 m to more than 20 m, while areas that drain into creeks have water within 5 m of the surface.

The sandplain has a medium risk of shallow watertables due to current depth and rate of rise. At the current rate, it will be more than 50 years before groundwater is close to the surface. Low-lying areas where groundwater has risen and intercepted the surface will create discharge areas (usually lakes). The number of these areas will increase and more low-lying areas will become affected by salinity as groundwater levels rise.

Salinity, Inundation and Water-logging

Salinity, inundation and water logging affects discharge zones and their fringes, where groundwater is <1.5m from the soil surface. Salinity issues are caused by recharge in the nearby areas. Groundwater salinity ranges from 300 mS/m (brackish) to 3,300 mS/m (saline). Groundwater pH is 6 to 7 (neutral). Levels are currently rising at a steady rate of 0.10–0.15 m/yr (Figure 1: bores Koj1d88 and SH1d90).

³ Ryder, A. (2004). *Groundwater Trends in the Albany Hinterland Sub-region*. Department of Agriculture.

The recovery of salt-affected land has a low technical feasibility because it would require a significant reduction in recharge over a large area to impact on the regional aquifer. However with current management practices it is possible to adapt to salinity. Additionally, with the relatively deep groundwater, there is time to plan and implement containment strategies. Treatment of recharge zones in this area will have a quick effect on salinity of landscape and groundwater levels will start to drop a few years after treatments. Growing perennial pastures are the best option in the Oyster Harbour Catchment area. See [Saltland Genie](#) for the latest information on profitable saltland solutions for your property.

Land use

Land use varies with the northern end of the catchment dominated by cropping (wheat, canola and barley) and sheep production. The central region consists mainly of sheep and cattle production with some viticulture and agro-forestry. The lower part of the catchment includes cattle and sheep production, intensive horticulture and agro-forestry plantations.

Natural Assets; A Biodiversity Hotspot

The National Parks, reserves and remnant vegetation in catchment are rich in natural assets, particularly in biodiversity includes the Oyster Harbour, the Kalgan River, the King River, the Porongurup National Park and the Stirling Range National Park. In total, there are approximately 31 Nature Reserves within the catchment.

The Oyster Harbour Catchment is located within the Southwest Australia Ecoregion, an internationally recognised biodiversity hotspot (Conservation International, 2023). This was the first biodiversity hotspot identified in Australia (36 currently registered). The South West region has an astonishing 7,239 vascular plant species, almost 80% of which are found nowhere else in the world though more than 70% has been cleared.



Figure 3: The Kalgan River is a major river system running through the Oyster Harbour Catchment. It is approximately 118 km in length, starting up near Tenterden and draining into the Oyster Harbour near the City of Albany.

The Oyster Harbour Catchment has a wide variety of native vegetation assemblages that vary with soil type and differences in rainfall. There are 5 known major assemblages found within the confines of the catchment boundaries.

1. The main vegetation types around the coastal areas include stands of paper barks and reeds around the harbour and wetlands. There are also mixed Jarrah and Banksia heaths and Jarrah and Karri are found on sand dunes. Peppermint woodlands can commonly be found in low-lying areas and in between dunes.
2. Slightly inland from the coastal areas Jarrah, Marri and Wandoo can be found.
3. Vegetation along the Kalgan River is very different at either ends of the river due to the different climatic environments. Assemblages include low Jarrah and Marri and some Karri, Sheoak and Yate further north and in the lower reaches of the Kalgan. Jarrah, Wandoo, Yate and Mallee are found in the headwaters of the Kalgan.
4. The vegetation in the Porongurup area include large stands of Karri divided by stands of Jarrah, Mallee and Marri. The surrounding lowlands contain Banksias, Jarrah, Mallee and Marri.
5. The final major area is the Stirling Range and surrounds with varying assemblages from the high to low slopes. The high slopes contain Jarrah woodlands changing into open Eucalypt woodlands on the lower slopes. Vegetation in the valleys usually consists of Jarrah, Marri and Wandoo.

The types and distribution of native animals varies from one end of the catchment to the other. This is due to the different environmental conditions, vegetation corridors/linkages and changing floral assemblages between the upper and lower catchment.

The catchment contains approximately 30 mammal species and, 240 bird species, 30 reptile species and an unknown number of amphibians, arachnids, and insects with species still being discovered. Including 2 National Heritage Places, 3 Threatened Ecological Communities, 96 Threatened Species and 59 Migratory Species. See more:

<https://pmst.awe.gov.au/#/map?lng=131.52832031250003&lat=28.671310915880834&zoom=5&baseLayers=Imagery,ImageryLabels>

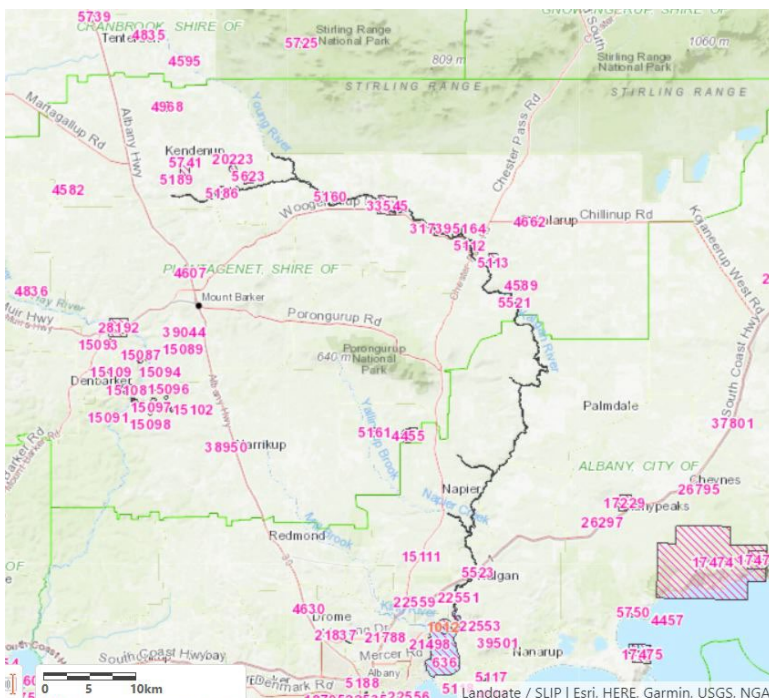


Figure 4: See current registered sites here
<https://espatial.dplh.wa.gov.au/ACHIS/index.html?viewer=ACHIS>
 acknowledging that there are many more unknown or hidden.

Cultural assets

All natural resource management actions in the South Coast region recognise and respect natural cultural heritage values. Aboriginal practices, spiritual and cultural values are considered across all activities, to support conservation and protection of our natural environment. Sustainable and responsible management of natural resources can only be achieved through acknowledgement and understanding of the region's cultural heritage.

Our local people are called Noongar meaning 'a person of the south-west of Western Australia,' It is one of the largest Aboriginal cultural blocks in Australia, made up of fourteen different language groups (which may be spelt in different ways). Mineng covers the south of the

catchment and Goreng the north. Each of these language groups correlates with different geographic areas with ecological distinctions. Noongar have ownership of our own *kaartdijin* and culture. Not all Noongar cultural history and *kaartdijin* can be shared. See more www.noongarculture.org.au/noongar/

There are more than 50 registered sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage in our catchment. Land tenure for these sites varies from private freehold to public land held for reserves, national parks and the like. Unregistered sites are still being found, documented, and registered on both private and public land.

Aboriginal people hold generational knowledge of significant sites that are both recorded and unrecorded. Unregistered cultural or archaeological sites are not officially registered for reasons of cultural importance and integrity and remain known only to the custodians. It is therefore important not to confine the management frameworks to sites and areas “registered” with State and Australian Government databases.

Aboriginal cultural heritage exists throughout the lands and waters of Australia and all aspects of the landscape are important to Aboriginal people. The rights and interests of Aboriginal people arise in their heritage through their spirituality, customary law, languages, original ownership, custodianship, developing traditions and recent history. The effective protection and conservation of this heritage is an important asset in maintaining our Australian identity and the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people.

Noongar People are formally recognised, through an Act of the WA Parliament, as the Traditional Owners of the Southwest region of Western Australia. The Noongar (Koorah, Nitja, Boordahwan) (Past, Present, Future) Recognition Act 2016, proclaimed on 6 June 2016 to coincide with WA Day 2016 and were the central component of the most comprehensive Native Title agreement negotiated in Australian history. The [South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council \(SWALSC\)](#) is the Central Services Corporation for the South West Native Title Settlement. To support the Settlement, SWALSC delivers a range of administrative, corporate, financial, and unique services to the six Noongar regional corporations. The [South West Native Title Settlement](#) is the largest native title settlement in Australian history. It affects an estimated 30,000 Noongar people, encompasses approximately 200,000 square kilometres in Western Australia's south-west, and has a financial worth of approximately \$1.3 billion. The Settlement is made up of six individual Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs). Each of the following areas has a corresponding ILUA: [Yued](#), [Gnaala Karla Booja](#), [Karri Karrak](#), [Wagyl Kaip Southern Noongar](#), [Ballardong](#), and [Whadjuk](#). This negotiated agreement is a great opportunity for our Noongar people to come together, to control their own destiny, and to build a solid future for generations to come.

Acknowledging the Noongar peoples' important relationship with the Noongar lands, and their significant and unique contribution to the heritage, cultural identity, community and economy of WA. The Settlement is made up of six (6) individual Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs). Oyster Harbour Catchment is part of the [Wagyl Kaip and Southern Noongar](#) (Katanning, Gnowangerup, Albany) ILUA.

FURTHER READING

For further reading on the history, work carried out by the OHCG in the catchment and surrounds, and general information about the catchment, please see:

- SOUTHERN PROSPECTS 2019-2024
- Various documents produced by Steve Janicke (see: <http://janicke.com.au/about-us-2/>).
- DAFWA: Rapid Catchment Appraisals.
- South Coast Snapshot, published by SCNRM in 2017. Available at: http://southcoastnrm.com.au/images/user-images/documents/publications/Snapshot_-_full.pdf
- The Condition of the Kalgan River Foreshores 1992/93 published by Albany Waterways Authority, Oyster Harbour Catchment Group Inc and the Department of Agriculture of WA November 1994.
- Survey of River Foreshores in the Oyster Harbour Catchment 1997 by APACE Green Skills and Dr Luke Pen, Water and Rivers Commission.
- Middle Oyster Harbour Strategic Catchment Project Final Report, November 2009.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Vision

To foster diverse and prosperous rural, urban and natural environments and landscapes for present and future generations.

Purpose

The purpose of the OHCG is to facilitate, co-ordinate and implement natural resource management through engagement with stakeholders in the Oyster Harbour Catchment and surrounding areas.

Values

The OHCG will work together and uphold the core values of the group:

- **Sustainability:** Advocate for the environment and best practice management. In doing so, have a flexible, longer-term approach and assist stakeholders in building resilience.
- **Excellence:** Deliver a quality and ethical service and maintain a high standard of project and business management by being accountable, respectful, and honest in all operations.
- **Strong Partnerships:** Be open and collaborative through excellent communications and relationship management.

Objectives

- ❖ Encourage the management and protection of **waterways and wetlands** through the restoration and rehabilitation of native vegetation, minimisation of erosion and nutrient run off.
- ❖ Restore and maintain the catchment **biodiversity** through the control of invasive flora and fauna species, native flora revegetation and restoration projects, weed control and other best practice conservation and land management projects that enhance and protect the unique biodiversity of the Oyster Harbour Catchment area.
- ❖ Facilitating **sustainable agriculture** by sourcing and distributing funds and expertise to assist landowners, land managers and others to implement environmentally sustainable practices that reduce nutrient loads and salinity in the catchment.
- ❖ **Promotion** of environmental and natural resource management of the catchment to the community:
- ❖ **Engage** land managers, First Nations, the wider community and other key stakeholders in the environment and land management activities and projects of the Oyster Harbour Catchment Group Incorporated; and
- ❖ Provide excellent governance when undertaking activities which are necessary, incidental, or conducive to the advancement of the protection and management of the environmental values of the Oyster Harbour Catchment and surrounding areas.

Core Business

- Comply with the West Australian Associations Incorporation Act 2015.
- Maintain charity status
- Operate an ethical, efficient, accountable and sustainable organisation.
- Encourage and maintain local membership
- Facilitate environmental and sustainable agricultural on-ground works and events.
- Act as a point of contact for the community, partners and external parties.
- Building community capacity.
- Promote the Oyster Harbour Catchment Group.
- Manage archive of group activities
- Proactively source funding opportunities.
- Encourage behaviour that is inclusive, innovative and informative.
- Maintain the organisation's key documents including Rules of Association, policies, procedures and strategic plans.

Key Strategies

1. Have minimum 1 FTE staff carrying out key strategies and actions.
2. Match appropriate grant funding and sponsorship with on-ground priorities.
3. Provide clear policies and procedures for effective management.
 - a. Provide training to members and staff to ensure correct procedures are followed.
 - b. Build community trust by operating with integrity.
4. Innovative project development, communication, implementation, evaluation and management.
5. Provide relevant and up to date information and stimulate ideas.
6. Coordination of data collation, analysis and evaluation.
7. Foster and support small local likeminded groups
 - a. Provide administrative, equipment, resources and technical support to associated groups
 - b. Support other community groups to develop relevant proposals and activities.
8. Bulk purchase materials and support local business where possible.
9. Identify and develop potential new activities and opportunities.
10. Facilitate relevant research projects which promote innovation and best practice.
11. Encourage local government collaboration and support.
12. Continue engage and build relationships with funding entities and pursue grants and corporate sponsorships opportunities.
13. Collate, promote and deliver relevant information, field days, events and workshops to the catchment.
 - a. Use multiple communication platforms and methods including available technologies.
 - b. Collect and disseminate current research and materials.
 - c. Promote a balance between conservation, agriculture and other industries.
 - d. Facilitate the provision of information to the community.
 - e. Promote the value, positive perception and appreciation of the natural environment.
 - f. Advocate and lobby for funding and recognition of agricultural and environmental significance to all levels of government and non-government organisations.
 - g. Recognise and celebrate achievements.
 - h. Develop productive relationships with local media.
 - i. Promote matching land use to land capability
 - j. Promote landholder carrying out best/ innovative practices
14. Demonstration of innovation.
15. All activities need to have a monitoring and evaluation component.
 - a. Monitoring and evaluation is to be simple to implement and interpret
16. Facilitate opportunities for community interaction with the natural environment.
17. Identify, facilitate and support local champions in their efforts and raise awareness.
18. Maintain and improve relationship with local aboriginal groups
19. Improve understanding of community values and expectations.
20. Develop beneficial partnerships.
21. Be a positive and consultative organisation that encourages contributions from members, staff and

stakeholders.

Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Core success indicators will be:

- Number of OHCG financial members
- Securing ongoing funding to maintain at least one full-time Project Officer,
- Number of successful grant applications and projects completed,
- Number of landholders involved with group activities, and
- Number of OHCG active (regularly attending meetings, involved in sub-groups, assisting in core business functions) committee members.

Further to these core success indicators, the 2023-2030 Action Plan provides for more detail regarding key performance indicators for strategies and actions.

Monitoring and evaluation of projects are as per project plans. Monitoring and evaluation of the OHCG business will be conducted by way of a review undertaken and reported on annually at the Annual General Meeting amongst other annual reports presented.

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Appendix A: 2023- 2030 Priority Action List

Last updated: 22nd November 2023

Note: Prioritise based of S.M.A.R.T. method.

ACTION	COMMENTS NEEDED
Continue and build upon caring for the King River.	Seek funding to support on-ground works including corporate sponsorship to continue program and Government funding program monies (ie: via State NRM, SCNRM, NLP2). Monitoring and evaluation.
Continue and build upon caring for the Kalgan River.	Seek funding to support on-ground works including corporate sponsorship to continue program and Government funding program monies (ie: via State NRM, SCNRM, NLP2). Monitoring and evaluation.
Continue and build upon protecting and maintaining creeklines and tributaries	Maximise opportunities to leverage exposure and funds. Communications critical, especially with funders.
Continue and build upon protecting and maintaining local lakes and wetlands	Maximise opportunities to leverage exposure and funds. Communications critical, especially with funders.
Encourage sustainable hydrological land use practices	Maximise opportunities to leverage exposure and funds. Communications critical, especially with funders.
Encourage and facilitate invasive species control	Take on monitoring and evaluation? Promote work more broadly. Foster and support continued community involvement. Dieback focus?

Continue and build Wildlife corridors	<p>Seek funding to support on-ground works including Corporate sponsorship to continue program and Government funding program monies (ie: via State NRM, SCNRM, NLP2).</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>Foster and support continued community involvement.</p> <p>Highlight achievements of this landholder driven program and communicate widely.</p> <p>Dieback focus?</p>
Environmental weed control: beyond the current best practice.	<p>Need to develop some out of the box ideas for management: topic for further discussion.</p>
Protect and manage remnant native vegetation	<p>Promote appropriate sustainable native vegetation management.</p> <p>Fence remnants with stakeholder engagement prioritizing those with high value</p>
Encourage and facilitate strategic farm and catchment planning.	<p>Advocate with SCNRM for need to return to focus on land to address NRM issues rather than themes.</p> <p>Back to basics... scope it up and integrate into project proposals. Strategic catchment approach. Utilise EOI log to build catchment projects. Collaborate with grower groups.</p> <p>Promote matching land use to land capability. Generation of farmers who have not been through this. Needs to be backed up with agency/ specialist support. Risk here though as the agency has been stripped of capacity. Can SCNRM, grower groups and industry fill this gap? Is there market failure? Who will drive this at a wider scale?</p> <p>Farm plan is driven by desire to conserve the natural and farming (economic) environment based around waterways and to make properties more resilient to adverse weather effects.</p> <p>Simple nutrient farm trials (link to Regional Estuaries Initiative).</p> <p>Revisit farm and catchment planning and develop case studies of success (years on, monitoring and evaluation).</p>
Promote soil testing as best practice for soil resource understanding and management.	<p>Part of ongoing NRM messaging (marketing strategy). Opportunity to develop soil specific projects in the catchment to build on Regional Estuaries Initiative.</p>

Maintain representation on SCNRM reference groups	
Ensure relationships with sponsors and funders are nurtured and openly appreciated	<p>Personal contact is critical.</p> <p>Maintain link to SCNRM through reference groups/ NRM committee.</p> <p>Annual Appreciation to sponsors</p> <p>Nurture and Promote sponsorships better through marketing strategy.</p>
Annual/ bi-annual presentation to the Shire of Plantagenet and City of Albany.	<p>Prior to budget. Shire provides building. Car lease through Shire. Potential to request funding for woody weed control funding on verges and in reserves. City of Albany relationship needs some attention.</p>
Maintain and enhance communication and support of smaller affiliate groups and investigate opportunity to have reciprocal membership with OHCG.	<p>Could be better facilitated through representative membership on the OHCG management committee of areas as well as smaller groups.</p> <p>Reciprocal membership offering many benefits to both parties. Needs to be discussed by Committee.</p> <p>Funding accessed via OHCG: Loose arrangements suitable and no need for a Terms of Reference where funding is not involved.</p> <p>Terms of Reference and greater governance when OHCG is sponsoring/ underwriting because of GST status.</p> <p>Assist with cross pollination of stories i.e. promotion and wider media coverage. Piggy back off each other's successes.</p> <p>Collaboration is King! Local content attracts attention.</p>
Investigate the opportunity to cost share capacity costs for marketing through collaboration with neighbouring groups.	<p>Being done as opportunity arises. WICC often collaborate. SCNRM: utilise opportunities more effectively while maintaining independence for ideas and ownership. Utilise governance assistance from SCNRM.</p>
Maintain and enhance links with researchers and innovators and facilitate opportunities available for research in the catchment.	<p>Maintain relationships and keep door open for collaboration with UWA. Contact with Peter Speldewinde. Links with CENRM, Gondwana Link. Advocate for research in the catchment. Location of catchment is ideal, particularly with UWA and CENRM located in Albany. Need to make the most of the opportunity. OHCG membership and direct link to farmers is the key opportunity for researchers. Include opportunity on EOI form and feed information directly to researchers about suggested topics from land holders.</p>

Re-establish connection and open door to communication with City of Albany.	Need to contact Environmental Officer. is history of involvement. Active on Yakamia Creek catchment. Offer to assist within current capacity. Financial support - currently none. Weed control focus ideal. Waterways work with King and Yakamia. Weeds and waterway management focus?
Work with schools to deliver NRM messages and engage with youth.	Potential project idea. Look to develop a local environmental education program like Esperance program funded via SCNRM. SCNRM to be approached about roll out of program in sub-region. Note 4-week lead for permissions. Risk: curriculum is quite full. Possible Youth Ambassador Program – approach Bendigo Bank for support.
Identify champions in NRM and promote positive stories across the area of operation.	Utilise as a story for NRM messaging. Link in with SCNRM Land Reference Group who is looking to do similar (collaboration opportunity). Almost an annual NRM Ambassador type program.
Develop on-ground community events/workshop/ action events as part of projects to get wider community involvement.	Tag on to other events where possible.
Develop, review and adapt marketing strategy and action plan.	Attend State NRM Conference, align with broader RNM messaging. Projects have their own communications plans (part of good project management, link to policy and procedure and staff PD).
Seek and attain staff training and professional development.	Important for staff retention, ongoing skills development and succession. Part of good human resource management. Ensure project budgets and staff funded projects have adequate budgets for PD.

Undertake succession planning.	<p>Links to membership and EOI form. Membership drive could bring in new interested parties. Provide environment of good policies and procedures and induction to allow for effective governance and transparency, as well as succession (information up front). Recognise current social trend away from volunteering. Need to think about this one and devise new strategies. Volunteering is not the flavour of the month. What can OHCG do about this? Big focus on social, entertaining, enjoyable... is this enough or are there too few of us?</p> <p>Up skilling and training being provided may be an incentive.</p> <p>Recognise capacities and limitations and work within these and/ or increase capacity and up skill.</p> <p>Representation on SCNRM to be factored.</p>
Review and ensure all areas of catchment are suitably supported.	<p>Utilise skills within the staff and Committee. Networking and communicating critical.</p> <p>Need to find local mover and shakers.</p> <p>Personal contact with individual landholders is critical. Staff capacity is crucial for this.</p> <p>Link with new landholder information package action.</p>
Investigate the opportunity to cost share capacity costs for marketing through collaboration with neighbouring groups.	<p>Being done as opportunity arises. WICC often collaborate. SCNRM: utilise opportunities more effectively while maintaining independence for ideas and ownership. Utilise governance assistance from SCNRM.</p>
Develop and implement OHCG Life Membership program.	<p>Very important to acknowledge publicly the input of key individuals to OHCG.</p> <p>Part of membership policy</p>
Adapting to extreme weather events associated with climate change	<p>Help to mitigate and educate</p>



Appendix B: SWOT Analysis

As part of strategic planning processes the committee undertook a SWOT analysis with results presented in Table 1. Both documents seek to address the majority of the items raised.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis (updated 23rd August 2023).

STRENGTHS (Internal organisational attributes helpful to achieving the objective.)	WEAKNESSES (Internal organisational attributes harmful to achieving the objective.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation, • Have attracted investment (\$), • Residual funding, • Continuity, • Landholders on committee, • We exist and have for a long time • Good track record, • Good reputation (project delivery), • Lots of experience, • Diversity of skills, • Dedicated committee and members who are hands on, driven and loyal, • Expertise, • Heather Adams, • Flexible in funding environment, • Good economic managers. • Passionate, dedicated volunteers • Good diversity of landholder representation in membershipGood partnerships (Gondwana Link, Green Skills, Friends of the Fitz), • History of strong links with government agencies, • People want to work in the area, • Strength in operating with sub-regional groups, • Many successfully completed projects, • Practical implementation, hands on (especially compared to others), • Goal driven group • Good level of staffing currently, • Good quality of staff (current and previous), • Competing favourably in wages environment, and • Independence (less red tape). • High profile natural assets • Office Centrally Located, • Have more effective archiving procedure and policy, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time (everyone), • Other community commitments, • Funding, • Not managing records well, • Lack of provision to fund full time staff. • Being reactionary, • Dealing with dieback • Dependent on small number of volunteer committee members, • Drawing younger people in to the committee, • Burnout of committee and members, • Succession planning strategy, and
OPPORTUNITIES (External environmental attributes helpful to achieving the objective.)	THREATS (External environmental attributes harmful to achieving the objective.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are passionate about the environment and location, enabling them to make and deliver good locally specific projects. • Develop mentors, • Involve Younger generation/ family friendly projects and activities, • Staff and volunteers are vested in having a vibrant and sustainable community as they live locally and see/hear about local issues and interests, • Provides local community members enabling a launch point for sustainable behavioural change. • Opportunity to preserve and rehabilitate. • Give time to documenting project progress (M&E). • Information feedback to funders and community, • Document what we do better (Project Idea – case studies), • Oyster Harbour Catchment is a world class seagrass restoration site providing a wider promotional opportunity. • A diverse landscape allows for a breadth of project opportunities, • All rivers drain to lakes/ estuaries to South Coast/ Albany, • Don't have as many bad weeds – we can win, • Population (experts, volunteers, manpower, audience), • Prosperous and reliable farming area, • Diverse agricultural landscape and products, • Evolving political trends, • Opportunity to improve environment and production, • Tourism (promotion on a wider scale), including through traffic, and • To be proactive in project development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term nature of funding, • Ongoing secure funding • Political focus, • Environmental disasters, • Extreme weather events (ie: fire and flood), • Eutrophication and erosion of waterways • Fire control legislation, • Introduced weeds and pests. • Soil health issues including salinity, acidity, and non-wetting. • Loss of biodiversity • Disconnect/ break with landholders, • Loss of committee, brains trust, history (succession), • Increasing population unfamiliar with Landcare/ NRM, • Urban development and increase in peri-urban, • Failure to spawn new opportunities, • Community engagement (maintaining relevance and engagement with the community),