

Landcare matters

Hotham-Williams sub-catchment update



PHCC Working Together
Peel-Harvey Catchment Council

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NRM is the management of natural resources such as land, water, soils, plants and animals. It brings together land use planning, water management, biodiversity conservation and sustainability of industries such as agriculture, mining, tourism, fisheries and forestry.



WA Feral Cat Symposium 2 - A Huge Success!

Congratulations to the WA Feral Cat Working Group (WAF CWG) and Executive Officer, Dr Judy Dunlop on a fantastic Feral Cat Symposium (#2) which was held over 13 – 15th February at the University of Western Australia. The WAF CWG is an initiative of and hosted by the PHCC.

The Symposium saw more than 230 people attend who stemmed from every Australian State and Territory. Themes for the Symposium included, Threatened Species management and success stories, improved and emerging management techniques and feral cats and people (cat legislation and social license). PHCC's Christine Townsend presented on the successes of the Numbat Neighbourhood project through partnerships with DBCA, local landholders and the wider community.

The event also included a field trip to the Karakamia, the Australian Wildlife Conservancy's first sanctuary, protecting 268 hectares of wetlands, granite outcrops, and large areas of Jarrah, Wandoo, and Marri woodlands. The entire sanctuary is surrounded by a feral-proof fence, which excludes cats and foxes. Karakamia is home to many species, some of which are declining or regionally extinct, providing a snapshot of what the Australian bush might have been like 200 years ago (<https://www.australianwildlife.org/>). For more information, speaker presentations, and to see the list of wonderful sponsors, please visit 2023 Feral Cat Symposium - WA Feral Cat Working Group (wafcw.org.au).

Plants going strong over summer

With many Landcare projects supported by PHCC across the Hotham-Williams involving planting seedlings for habitat or to increase farm productivity, it's been great to get updates from some of our farmers whose plants are growing well despite the dry conditions.

The plants pictured received really good site preparation. The rows were ripped and mounded to address soil compaction and saturation, and the area was sprayed to reduce competition by Spiny Rush, which was manually removed in the preceding months.

This site was planted when the land had dried out enough to access by foot and planted by hand, so there was plenty of soil moisture available to support good root growth, while not flooding the roots (thanks to the mounding).

Interestingly, areas in the same project that were planted a little later once the site was accessible by vehicles have not shown the same level of growth, so like many things in farming, timing and how climatic conditions interact at a farm scale always play a part in project success.



Some of the native and saltbush seedlings planted last year showing great growth



Dr Bruce Webber (Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute), Dr Judy Dunlop (WA Feral Cat Working Group), Hon Reece Whitby (MCA Minister for Environment, Climate Action, Racing and Gaming) and Jane O'Malley (PHCC CEO) attending the Feral Cat Symposium

Continuing partnerships with local Shires

PHCC are pleased to announce we have recently renewed the five year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Shires of Boddington, Cuballing, Wandering and Williams to June 2027. The original MOU was signed in 2018 which formalised the partnership between the respective Shires to provide natural resource management/landcare support to the landowners and community of the Hotham-Williams catchment, as defined within the Hotham-Williams NRM Plan 2015-2025 and PHCC's "Bindjareb Boodja Landscapes: A Strategy for Natural Resource Management in the Peel-Harvey Region, Western Australia".

This MoU has two primary purposes, the first is to extend the agreement to solidify and define the relationships between the Shires and the PHCC, and secondly to demonstrate a commitment to continue to work together to deliver these important community services through cash funding and/or other support. We look forward to continuing to work with our Hotham-Williams Shires and Community.

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Darminning (Ranford) Pool

Boddington locals will be familiar with the shady banks of the Hotham River at Darminning Pool, providing a popular swimming and picnic spot close to town.

In 2019, local community group Friends of the Reserves – Boddington (Inc) rejuvenated the area with the assistance from PHCC and the Shire of Boddington. Funding from South32 Worsley Alumina provided the means to stabilise the banks with rock walling, carry out revegetation and install a dedicated access point for swimming and canoeing. Darminning is one of the eight sites included in the Hotham-Williams River Action Plan (RAP) and is therefore earmarked for further restoration efforts, including the use of logs to stabilise the banks at other vulnerable locations, succession planting alongside the water's edge, and targeted weed control.

Pools provide an important refuge in the late summer months when salinity levels are particularly high. They are considered a 'refuge' because the species that are the least salt-tolerant can hang out there until the diluting winter rains arrive, and it's important that the form and functionality of pools are maintained for that reason. Threats to this include sedimentation, a drying climate and degradation of vegetation condition.

Darminning is part of the Hotham River Aboriginal Heritage site and is known to be a significant location throughout history for the Noongar people, from a mythological perspective as well as a social one, pools provided gathering places for people as well as sources of food and water.

Here is a reminder of all the RAP sites we have introduced you to so far in previous Landcare Matters articles if you want to go back and take a look! Visit our website for more information www.peel-harvey.org.au/phcc_publications/management-plan/

Koompkinning – Pumphreys Bridge

Williams

Popanyinning

Quindanning



Coming up...

Great Cocky Count Workshop

8 March 2023

Hill Street, Waroona

Register online <https://peel-harvey.org.au/events/great-cocky-count-workshop-2/>

Saltbush Field Day

16 March 2023

Email mick.davis@peel-harvey.org.au for more information and to register your interest

Event News...

Wandering Community Fox Hunt Results

The results are in from the Wandering Community Fox Hunt which was held on the 17th of February.

The 65 participants have played an important role in reducing threats to threatened native fauna and stock.

- 219 foxes
- 12 feral cats
- 4 pigs
- 25 rabbits

PHCC were able to fund the breakfast through the Numbat Neighbourhood Project.

Thank you to all of the participants and the Wandering Community Fox Hunt committee.

