Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge and Estuaries

Cultural and Environmental Protection - Hand in Hand

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(Community Engagement Program Manager)

working together to make a difference today and develop a sustainable environment for tomorrow.
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Culture and Environment - Inseparable

Aboriginal people value our waterways and estuaries for a range of reasons.

When you protect the environment, you protect cultural heritage, and vice versa.

Indigenous knowledge is integral to managing our natural resources appropriately.

Working together to make a difference today and develop a sustainable environment for tomorrow.
Aboriginal people - the first environmentalists

Truly sustainable living
(Zero budget, zero red tape, zero problems!)

Valued and respected estuaries and waterways for their multiple uses and values

Followed the Dreaming = lived by the law
SWCC’s Position

A core philosophy of SWCC is that there is an intrinsic link between protecting culture and protecting the environment.

It is core operational policy to work with Nyungar people and incorporate Nyungar cultural knowledge into our NRM projects.

We want our work with the Nyungar community to not only continue, but grow and mature.
SWCC’s Practice
How are we doing this?

• Consultation guidelines

• Cultural education and awareness program

• Cultural support services

• Actively working with SWALSC

• General project work

• Undertaking Cultural Landscape Assessments
How does this relate to estuary management and why are our estuaries so important?
Vasse-Wonnerup Estuary
A biodiverse and multiple use system

- Ramsar listed wetland
- Migratory bird habitat
- Vital for local fish stocks
- Home to unique vegetation assemblages
- Intrinsic value
- Residential value
- Fishing and other recreation
- Commercial value – agriculture, tourism and industry

AND....
Aboriginal cultural values....
Cultural Landscape Assessment
The sum is greater than the parts

• Sites of cultural significance are more than just dots on a map

• They are part of a greater landscape

• They are identified in association with environmental and landscape features

• They all fit together and tell a story

• They form a framework for making future landscape management decisions
The Vasse-Wonnerup Cultural Landscape

Figure 36. Map showing the settlement and land use model of the Vasse-Wonnerup system and surrounds.
Community Recommendations
Future management based on community priorities

• Consultation process

• Selection of priority areas – the hardest bit!

• Recommendations from TOs as to on-ground actions

• Involvement in undertaking the activities

• Ongoing input into site maintenance
Figure 41. Map showing the three cultural NRM project areas as nominated by the Traditional Owners.
Current Project
Abba River rehabilitation site

- 10ha weed control
- 5ha revegetation
- Working with local TOs and Needac works crew
- Interpretive signage
- Case study – multiple partners
Future Directions

To continue to truly integrate NRM and cultural landscape management

To continue to work in partnership with Nyungar people to protect the environment of the South West
Any questions?

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