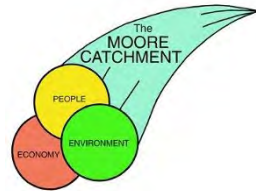


# MOORE to the point



*Serving the Moore  
River catchment  
since 1995*

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**Issue 29 Autumn 2013**

Welcome to the Moore Catchment Council's (MCC) 29th *Moore to the Point* newsletter. MCC are delighted to announce their new NRMO Julia, plus reports on workshops and projects coming up. Read on.....  
editor *Rachel Walmsley*

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## Moore estuary workshop well attended

The Moore estuary is a much loved asset of the Mid West, and that's why over 35 people gathered in Guilderton on the 6<sup>th</sup> April to learn about its natural processes and also discuss issues which are threatening its future. The Northern Agricultural Catchment's Council (NACC) and the Moore Catchment Council (MCC) organised the day as part of NACC's Summer Estuary workshop series funded through Caring For Our Country. The day kicked off with a Moore estuary cruise. Local resident Phil Cook runs these boat trips which help to show and explain to visitors the importance of protecting the Moore estuary. Phil is particularly concerned with the artificial breaking of the sandbar which can cause devastating consequences to local fauna further upstream. Phil's passion for the estuary is obvious and everyone on board appreciated his talk.



Left: Upstream - tranquil, but for how long?



Right: Phil (inset) takes us to the closed bar at the river mouth

Back on land, the presentations started with Mic Payne (NACC) talking about estuary processes and the ecology estuaries support. This was followed by Bev Port-Louis from the Yuat (Yued) Group who gave the audience an Aboriginal perspective of the Moore River and the importance the river/estuary holds to the Traditional owners (*see page 2 for more*). Finally, Dr Malcolm Robb (Dept of Water) gave a fascinating presentation on the estuaries throughout the southwest. Malcolm compared each to water quality testing results, human impact and issues. The Moore River ranked high in most tests which again demonstrates why the river should be protected for the future. Click on link for in-depth look at the Moore estuary <http://www.water.wa.gov.au/PublicationStore/first/41141.pdf>

MCC and NACC wish to thanks everyone who came along, the speakers, and the Guilderton Community Association for their help organising the day.



Left: Mic Payne explains estuary processes



Right: Malcolm Robb compares estuaries of the WA



# Protect and Respect the Yuat Country



After meeting Bev Port-Louis (left) and other members of the Yuat Group at the Moore Estuary workshop, MCC obtained the presentation material to share with MCC members. It makes very interesting reading about the Traditional Custodians of the Moore Region and their hopes for the future.

Huge thanks to Bev for sharing this information with us.

## **HISTORICAL CULTURAL YUAT BACKGROUND:**

Nyoongar people have been living and caring for country for over 40,000 years. The Cultural Heritage of Nyoongar people who are the traditional owners of the South West of Western Australia reflects a society that developed a complex yet subtle relationship with country.

The Shires of Dandaragan and Coorow were first settled by Europeans in the 1850's. The predominant activities in these areas were grazing (sheep & cattle), wheat cropping and horse breeding. The Gingin Shire was also settled around the 1830's. All the Shire's have a significant historical and spiritual connection to the Yuat people for they are all rich in waterways, brooks and heritage sites.

There is significant diversity among Nyoongar people with connections to estuaries and traditional knowledge of land and its biodiversity. This interconnectedness is explained through traditional law and customs, creation stories, song and dance, with other cultural practices transferred from generation to generation to explain Nyoongar peoples knowledge of country. Nyoongar cultural heritage involves both areas of mythological or ceremonial places, where historical events took place.

There is ongoing physical and spiritual involvement of the Nyoongar people with the land. It is important that Nyoongar heritage is acknowledged and preserved as it provides Nyoongar people with an essential emotional, physical and spiritual links to their cultural traditions.

## **NYOONGAR TRADITIONAL USE OF ESTUARIES:**

Yuat and Amangu Tribes gathered together on the coast where they camped, traded and hunted around estuaries and swamps. A major part of this coming together of the (2) tribes was the performing of corroborees and dances on the Bora Grounds.

In the summer months both tribes had plenty of food like fish, fresh water turtles, frogs, water-fowl, snakes and lizards. They also performed fire stick burning of the surrounding areas, to encourage new growth that would appeal as food for the kangaroos and emus.

Nyoongar people were very skilled in fishing and used the sea environment and its marine life to assist their survival. They used technology to make nets and spears and also made tools from shells, and fishbones. Marine life was also integrated into cultural stories and ceremonies.

Nyoongar people used their traditional knowledge and skills to build fish traps in certain tidal locations. Creations of middens showed they consumed shell fish. Some of these practices are still performed in more contemporary times even with modern technology.

Music has a central role in traditional Nyoongar/Aboriginal societies and cultures. Like other forms of creative expression, music is often linked with ceremonies and is integral to ancestry and kinship, the landscape, connection to country, the totemic systems and the animals of the area.

Music is also connected with important events such as changes of seasons, water and rain healing and triumph over enemies. Like cultural stories told through the oral storytelling tradition, songs can sometimes be built upon and developed over time and could be of sacred significance or for entertainment.

Dance can also tell a story, through movement about their land, relationships between people, the journeys and the lives of ancestors.

## **MYTHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

All our sacred sites are places within the landscape that have a special significance under Nyoongar traditions throughout the Yuat area where the waters flow from creeks, swamps, brooks, lakes, springs and waterholes into the Moore River and onto the mouth of the Moore (Gabbadah) where the fresh water meets the salt water is a significant connection to Lore, land, country, and the Yuat people that is called the "Dreaming Track".



Above: Yued/Yuat area shown on map



These Lore's are characterised by a strong spiritual connection to 'Country' that means caring for places of sacred significance and the natural environment.

The "Dreaming Track" was both a fertile hunting ground and spiritual meeting place that sustained and nurtured our ancestors throughout history, travelling to and from the coast to the mainland to attend to traditional Lore business as they moved with the six seasons. Along the "Dreaming Track" they had an abundance of water source, bush tucker, plant source for traditional medicines, food source such as kangaroos, emus, emu eggs, lizards, snakes (land fish), porcupine, fish, cobbler, turtles, gilgies, marron, swamp hen/fowl, wild turkey, ducks, wild honey, bush berries, manna and wattle gum, canoes and yams.

The Yuat Nyoongar people's meeting places and camping areas were always beside the rivers and brooks where they had shelter, food, comfort and shared and cared for all families.

Our land was and is always vital to the social and emotional wellbeing of all Nyoongar people. The land is not just soil, rocks or minerals, but a whole environment that sustains and is never ending for our people and culture. The land is the core of all spirituality, relationships and the spirit of country is central to the issues that are important to our people today, We keep our cultural heritage alive by passing on our knowledge, arts, rituals, language, ad performances, from one generation to another, also protecting cultural materials, sacred sites and significant sites and objects, that are very important to us the first Australians.

In the early days, the "Dreaming Tracks" traditionally linked every place visited by our local Nyoongar people, then extended to connect every place utilised by neighbouring clans. It is the belief of Nyoongar people that the spirit ancestors created "Dreaming Tracks" in the journey of creation across the land. We recognise the significance to the stories of land and river formations and movements of the rainbow serpent, the (Wagyl), as it carved out the water course, rivers, and wetlands that are named and linked to creation stories. Many are believed to be inhabited by spiritual beings.

### **THE MOORE RIVER**

"Waugal" is the Nyoongar word for Carpet Snake. It is also the name given to the central spirit figure that is recognised by each of the thirteen groups that make up Nyoongar territory. Yuat is part of this thirteen.

The "Waugal" is by far the most important spirit figure to Nyoongar people.

One story common to all groups tells of how the "Waugal" appeared before the coming of man and moved both across, under and above the land to create deep furrows and caves and at the same time it created a great storm that flooded the entire area. The floodwaters ran through the furrows and caves to create the Beeliam (Rivers).

As the waters receded the Beeliam and wetlands remained. The "Waugal" came to rest in a deep pool or springs along the Moore at the Mogumber Mission Farm.

Because the river is heritage listed, we the Nyoongar people would like it protected and respected because it is our special heritage and we want it there for our future generations to enjoy.

The river and wetlands provide the Nyoongars with fish, gilgies, turtles, plant food and give animals water such as kangaroos and emus and goannas that we associated ourselves with for food.

The river and pools provided our people with essential places for the birth of our families over many generations and there are large areas along these water ways where our people are buried. These are sacred sites to the Yuat people.

Moora, Koojan, Mogumber, New Norcia, Wannamal, Gingin and Neeragabby are the most sacred of places along the Moore.

The Yuat people, the traditional inhabitants of this region, have a very different relationship with the land and it is up to us to look after it.

*For more information try this website:*

<http://www.noongarculture.org.au/>

**Right:** The MCC NRMO's were invited along by the Yuat Group to look around Mogumber Farm in mid April. The native vegetation along the river and throughout the farm is sensational with little degradation. MCC are looking to carry out future partnerships with the Yuat group including collaborating on a biodiversity booklet detailing significant species and traditional medicine plants.



## New NACC funding available

Through the Northern Agricultural Catchment's Council (NACC), MCC has a Rivers and Wetlands project to offer incentives through.

If you interested or want more information, then give us a ring on **9653 1355**. Details below:



**Overview:** Incentives for fencing and revegetation/enhancement of rivers and wetlands

**What do I get?**

- Fencing - \$3,500/km
- Revegetation - \$1,000/ha

**4 year project**

## NACC Regional Team Meeting in Guilderton

It was MCC's turn once again in April to organize and host a NACC regional team meeting. These two day meetings bring together members of staff from NACC and the other sub regions in the Northern Agricultural Region to discuss current and future projects, talk about issues, and showcase project works in the chosen area. Last time MCC hosted a regional team meeting was in 2008 when the team went to New Norcia and looked at agricultural projects, so this time MCC chose to host it in Guilderton and show off some of what the Moore estuary has to offer.

MCC booked Tuppin House as the one stop venue and it suited the team perfectly. After the main meeting, Jim Laffer from the Guilderton Community Association took the group to the northern dunes and showed them the problems associated with 4x4 driving and multi tracks. The GCA and NACC are in the process of implementing a project to close off tracks and provide signage to encourage drivers to stick to the one path and respect the dunes. To conclude the day, MCC took the group on a late afternoon Moore estuary cruise. Phil Cook was on hand as ever to talk the group through the estuary processes and issues. The weather was perfect for the cruise and the group saw lots of birdlife settling to roost.



Above: Jim Laffer shows the group dune issues



Above: Afternoon Moore River cruise was enjoyed by all.  
Below: Fabulous sunset at the River mouth

For the second day, the team were entertained for a few hours by Mic Payne from NACC who showed the group a new smartphone app for beach photo monitoring followed by a 'weed' walk on the local beach. Unfortunately there wasn't a lot of weed on the beach but that didn't stop Mic giving us a fascinating talk about the wonders of weed on the beach. To finish the day, members of the Lower Moore River Working Group showed the group rehabilitation works around Silver Creek.

This has involved creating a canoe launch point, fishing platform and bird spotting signage and benches. Everyone was impressed with the dedication of the volunteers in this community

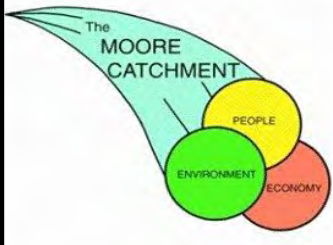
Thanks to everyone that was involved to make this regional team meeting a successful two days.



Above: Looking at Silver Creek rehab projects







# Plant feed species for the endangered Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo

The Moore Catchment Council is managing a project to increase the area of feeding and nesting habitat for the endangered Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo in the Moora and Koobabbie Important Bird Areas.

Carnaby's struggle to rear chicks to fledgling due to a shortage of feeding and nesting habitat as a result of clearing for agriculture. These Important Bird Areas form small islands of feed and nesting trees within a largely cleared landscape.

Native trees including Grevillea, Hakea, Salmon Gum, Wandoo and York Gum will be planted.

If you live in and around Moora and would like to plant trees, please call:

**Julia White**

**Natural Resource Management Officer**

**9653 1355**

**[mcc.nrmo1@bigpond.com](mailto:mcc.nrmo1@bigpond.com)**



# New NRMO for MCC

# Funding received



'Julia White has recently joined the Moore Catchment Council after graduating from Murdoch University with a Bachelor of Science degree majoring in Environmental Restoration and Conservation and Wildlife Biology. She was born in South Africa and immigrated to Perth when she was a child.

Julia is passionate about environmental conservation and restoration, particularly within wetland systems. She hopes to use her skills and knowledge acquired at university to help protect the Moore Catchments natural resources'.

Moore Catchment Council (MCC) has been successfully in being awarded a single year grant of \$2500 under the 2012-13 funding round for the Grants to Voluntary Environment, Sustainability and Heritage Organisations (GVESHO) program to assist with the everyday Finance/Administration wages and the increased cost of having to insure the organisation for Volunteers and Committee/Directors Insurance.

Being able to retain the services of an Executive Officer who is focussed on the administration/promotion of all projects frees MCC's Natural Resource Management Officers to utilise their time entirely engaged with facilitation of the project on the land, significantly improving outcomes for the project and reinforcing MCC's public representation.

# Successful Community Landcare Grant for perennials trial

The Moore Catchment Council is delighted to announce that they were successful in obtaining funds through the Caring For Our Country (CFOC) Community Landcare Grants for their 'Demonstrating different establishment techniques of perennials in deep sand' project. This small project was the brainchild of a Koojan farmer who visited the MCC office on the off-chance that there was funding available for his idea. Luckily, it was the day before the application closing date so MCC NRM officer Rachel Walmsley helped draft out the idea and wrote up the project quickly before the deadline.

Establishing perennial plants in deep white non-wetting sands is problematic. This is due to poor water and nutrient holding capacity of the soil at the root zone, and ensuring the plants survive their first summer in the NAR.

This project will investigate and demonstrate a variety of proven soil amelioration techniques to improve the soil quality at the root zone. This will include applying organic matter, clay spreading, and spading and deep ripping. A field walk at the Koojan farm will help communicate results and key learnings in Spring 2014.



Above: well established perennials on poor sand

## facebook

Keep up to date !! Find the MCC on Facebook

for lots of photos from projects and events.

Type **Moore Catchment Council** and **like** to have regular info on your feed :)

## Upcoming events

- ★ Watch the email updates and local press for:
- ★ **Carnaby's Black Cockatoo plant ID workshop in Moora**
- ★ **Moora Community Carnaby's tree planting day**

# Moore Catchment Council

*protecting the natural resources in the Moore River Catchment*



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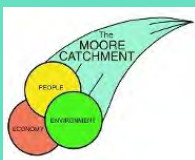
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