



Newsletter 1/23

January 2023

WA Wetlands Conference 1, 2, 3 February 2023

The 19th annual WA Wetlands Conference will be held at the Cockburn Wetlands Centre on 1, 2, 3 February 2023. This conference is held annually to celebrate World Wetlands Day which is observed on the anniversary of the signing of the International Convention on Wetlands in the Iranian city of Ramsar on 2 February 1971. This year's Ramsar theme is "Wetlands Restoration" and the conference speakers will address this topic and many others.

The Conference format consists of six half day sessions devoted to Leadership, Reconciliation, Sustainability and Partnerships. The first two days are devoted to plenary lectures, contributed presentations and posters. The third day is devoted to half-day workshops. You may attend all sessions or just a few if you wish. The fee schedule provides options to suit your circumstances.

This year's conference will be held in the recently refurbished and expanded facilities of the Cockburn Wetlands Precinct. It is a great opportunity for you to enjoy these excellent facilities while catching up with colleagues from all over the State.

Information about the program and enrolments may be found at <https://www.thewetlandscentre.org.au/conference/register/>

Outlook for 2023

After the McGowan Government's resounding victory in the 2021 election, we were hoping for good news for wetlands in this term of Government. They began well by deleting Roe 8 from the Metropolitan Region Scheme and followed up by releasing an improved State Planning Policy 2.9 on Groundwater Resources. This was followed by the Gngangara Mound Water Allocation Plan. While these initiatives are welcome, we would also like to see some progress on further Ramsar nominations and the completion of SPP 2.9 and the Wetland Buffer Guidelines.

Unfortunately, the Government also appears to have dropped the plans for a strategic assessment of land use in the Perth and Peel Region, which could have secured the

conservation estate as the City grows. They have opted instead to go with piecemeal planning which the developers and politicians prefer. The Regional Park system has not been expanded, despite frequent requests for the Peel, Lower Serpentine, Gnangara and Yule Brook Regional Parks. Bush Forever is still incomplete and poorly managed. There is clearly still a lot of advocacy needed to complete our vision for conservation in this biodiversity hotspot.

On a more positive note, the Government announced late in 2022, its intention to rezone the now redundant Roe 8 and Roe 9 road reserves. The concept plan includes a mix of conservation, recreation and urban land uses. This project provides a wonderful opportunity to develop a recreational and wildlife corridor linking North and Bibra Lakes to Manning Lake and the Cockburn Coast. However, there are many competing plans for this land, so there is a need for our ongoing input as the rezoning proceeds.

Planning is also well under way on the new Westport project for Cockburn Sound. The stated aim of the planners is to make this not just a sustainable port, but a regenerative port in which the final result is a win for the environment as well as the economy and society. Clearly there are great opportunities here to repair some of the damage done by previous generations to the marine and terrestrial environments. These could include the completion of the Peel Estate Tramway Trail project and the regeneration of the Mt Brown area. We are making our views known to the project team.

We clearly have great opportunities and much work to do in 2023.

Subscriptions Are Due for 2023

A membership renewal form for 2023 is enclosed with this newsletter. Please renew your membership today and help us to maintain our campaign for wetland conservation in WA. A donation to our Wetlands Trust Fund would also be very welcome and it is tax-deductible. You may pay your subs by cheque or bank transfer. Details are provided on the renewal form.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2023

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