

Improving Land Management Practices Across Torbay Catchment



A project delivered by the Torbay Catchment Group Inc. through South Coast Natural Resource Management Incorporated, on behalf of the *Caring for Our Country Programme Business Plan 2010-11* between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2013. Project ID: **10SC-C83**



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY



**Torbay
Catchment Group**

June 2013

Acknowledgements

Torbay Catchment Group Inc. acknowledges the following organisations and Individuals for their considerable contribution in delivering this project.

Wayne Marwick (Water Corporation), Tracy Calvert (Department of Water), Damaris Waschke (Habitat Tree Farm), Peter Warmesley (Albany Farm Tree Nursery), Diane Harwood (Denmark Weed Action Group).



Government of Western Australia
Department of Water



Department of
Agriculture and Food



Torbay Catchment Group Inc.

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1. Summary

Between July 2010 and June 2013, a Rivercare project officer was responsible for onground works within Torbay catchment to address impacts from wind and soil erosion and to help store carbon in the soil through revegetation projects. At the conclusion of the project a total of 25 hectares of revegetation and 15.7 kilometres of fencing occurred within Torbay catchment. This has resulted in a total of 80 hectares of remnant bush being protected which included 22 hectares of infill with native seedlings. A further 3 hectares of new revegetation was also established in previously grazed paddocks.

Several other activities have added to the project outcomes. These include 67 hectares of blackberry control across the catchment, 25 Ha of weed control along Unndiup Creek and a workshops series that has increased skills and knowledge in land management for hundreds of small land holders that attended.

The passion of land holders to undertake continued onground works is evident and it is hoped that future funding can be secured to build on what has been achieved over the past three years.

2. Introduction

Torbay Catchment (Fig 1) is located approximately 400 kilometres south of Perth and lies between Denmark and Albany on the south coast of Western Australia. Covering an area of 330km² (33,000 Ha) with approximately 33% remaining as natural vegetation, 51% used for grazing, 5% has commercial timber plantations and 1.6% is occupied by waterways and wetlands (Department of Water, 2006).

The population of Torbay Catchment is approximately 1000 people with most landholders falling into the category of small land holders with properties averaging 120 Ha in size.

In July 2010, Torbay Catchment Group received funding from South Coast Natural Resource Management through the Australian Governments Caring for our Country Grants to fund a Rivercare project officer to work 3 days per week to liaise with local farmers and small landholders to improve management practices and deliver on ground works.

Onground works implemented included fencing remnant bush, revegetation of previously grazed paddocks and fencing of the newly revegetated areas. The fencing of these areas was done to protect remnant bush which is important for local wildlife as it provides food and habitat. Many native fauna and flora within the catchment are endangered species that are listed in the Australian governments Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. The planting of native seedlings also increases the carbon content in the soil and assists in reducing impacts from wind and water erosion.

Between July 2010 and June 2013, 18 landholders received funding to implement onground works across the catchment. This report provides a summary of on ground projects that occurred and reflects on outcomes and practices changes made in this time.

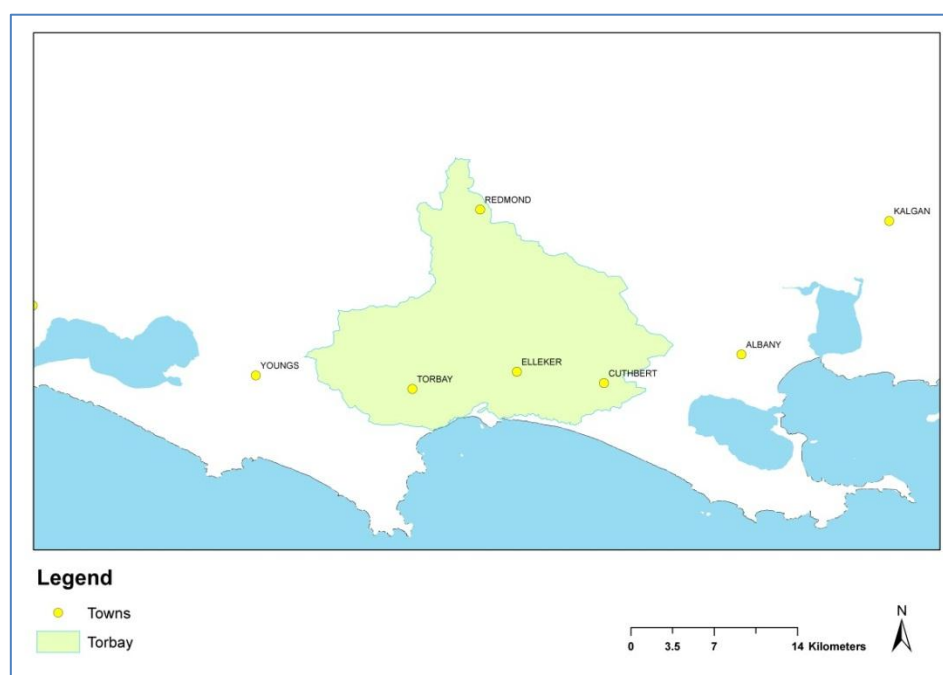


Figure 1: Map of Torbay Catchment (33,000 Ha) where the project took place

3. Project Activities

3.1 Summary of deliverables of the contract

A set number of milestones and deliverables were achieved over the duration of the project. This included onground works and the engagement of a minimum of 12 land managers to implement onground works. Of the land managers, 9 were required to be grazers (managing livestock) and 3 were required to be croppers (cultivating crops). The list below details the milestones and outputs to be achieved over the duration for the project.

Milestone and Outputs to be achieved

- 3 Croppers establishing fencing to assist in reducing wind & water erosion
- 3 kilometres of fencing provided to protect 3 Hectares of remnant vegetation protected by croppers
- 6 Grazers establishing fencing to assist in reducing wind & water erosion
- 3 grazers with improved management practices addressing increased soil carbon content in the soil
- 14.5 Kilometres of fencing provided to croppers & grazers to protect 15 hectares of remnant vegetation to assist in reducing the impact of wind and water erosion
- 25 Ha of revegetation increasing carbon content of soil & improve stability of soils prone to wind & water erosion
- 3 land managers completing soil acidity surveys completed
- Two media products produced
- Two media publications

4. Engagement of Land Managers to Undertake Ongoing Works

Over the duration of the project a total of 18 land managers completed onground works. The total amount fencing completed was 15.665 kilometres and 25 hectares of revegetation. Of the 18 land managers, 4 were croppers and 14 were grazers. The following is a breakdown of milestones and what was achieved against each on.

- 3 Croppers establishing fencing to assist in reducing wind & water erosion
- 3 kilometres of fencing provided to protect 3 hectares of remnant vegetation protected by croppers

A total of 4 croppers received funding during the project and completed 3.05 kilometres of fencing. This exceeded the milestone by one cropper. The fencing was for protection of remnant bush, revegetation or a combination of both. A total of 15 Ha of remnant vegetation was protected by croppers which included 4 Ha of seedlings as new infill among remnant bush. A further 0.45 Hectares was also planted as revegetation (total 4.45 Ha). Observations made of bush fenced off in 2012 and 2013 have shown that the bushland is recovering well once the area has been fenced off from livestock. Native plants are responding well and natural regrowth is starting to create an understory again. This has ensured habitat is preserved and will attract native fauna species back to these areas as well as allowing endemic flora to recolonise.



Figure 2: Fencing off remnant bush that was fenced by a cropper. The area was also in filled with seedlings

- 6 Grazers establishing fencing to assist in reducing wind & water erosion
- 3 grazers with improved management practices addressing increased soil carbon content in the soil

A total of 14 Grazers were allocated funding to complete 12.615 kilometres of fencing. This was short of the original milestone of 14.5 kilometres as during the project this was reduced down to 12.665 kilometres to allow for other budgetary requirements.

The fencing provided to grazers protected 65 Ha of remnant bush which included 18 hectares of seedling planted as infill among the remnant vegetation. A further 2.55 hectares of seedlings (total 20.55) were planted as revegetation in previously grazed paddocks.



Figure 3: Fenced off remnant bush by a grazer has preserved habitat for local native animals

- 25 Ha of revegetation improving soil stability making them less prone to wind & water erosion

As stated the amount of revegetation completed by croppers (4.45 Ha) and grazers (20.55 ha) totalled 25 Ha. A total of 4 hectares of the revegetation by croppers was as infill among existing remnant bush and Grazers 18 Ha. This has resulted in a total of 22 Ha of native seedlings being planted in existing remnant bush areas. Species that were planted included taller species such as Jarrah, Marri and Karri as well as understorey. Species chosen were endemic to the area and suited to the locality where they were planted.

The large amount of seedlings that were planted during the project will enhance the existing native bushland and help it recover to its natural state now that it has been fenced off from livestock. The seedlings will also enhance the carbon content of the soil, as well as stabilise it and prevent wind and water erosion.

➤ 3 land managers completing soil acidity surveys completed

During the project, the plan for involving land managers in a soil acidity project and subsequent surveys did not eventuate. An alternate program took place in 2012 where landholders were invited to participate in a soil pH testing program that South Coast NRM was running. The program asked land managers to have soil testing for the mid and sub soil pH testing (10-20cm layer and 20-30cm layer). This was part was fully funded and would be conducted by a qualified soil testing organisation called Precision Soiltech. The first 10cm layer would need to be paid for by the land holders themselves.

An insert (Fig. 4) promoting the project was placed in the summer/autumn edition of the Torbay Catchment Group newsletter that was delivered to 780 households across the catchment in early January 2013. If landholders were interested in participating in the project they were sent a detailed letter about the program and application form. The response to the program has been minimal with only 3 landholders making contact to take part in the soil testing program.

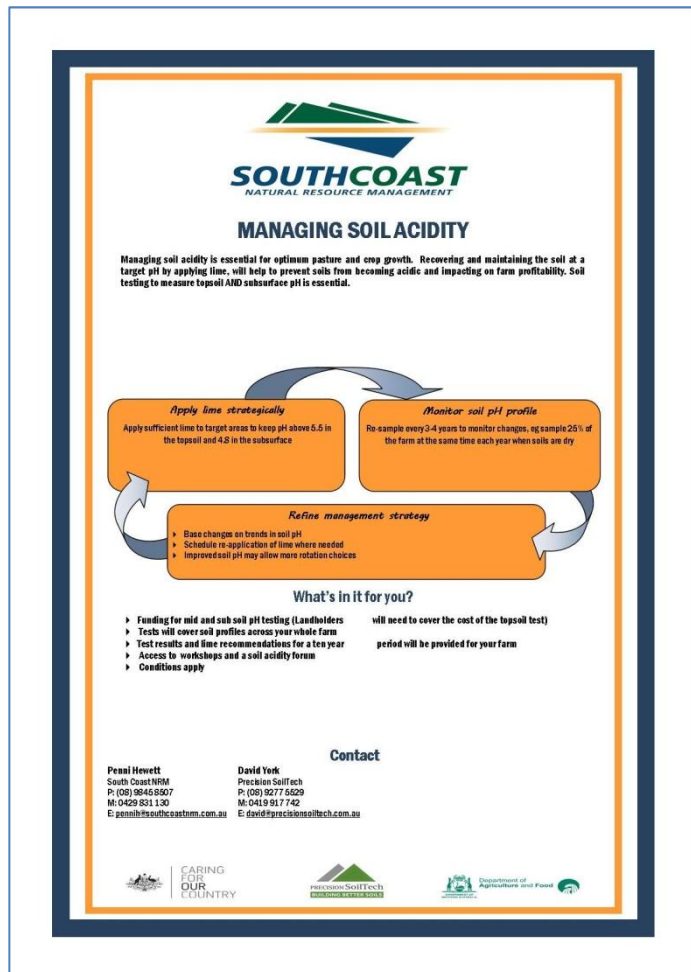


Figure 4: Soil acidity testing insert that was sent out in January, 2013 to Torbay catchment landholders

A further effort to get land managers across the catchment to practice better soil management was through encouraging regular soil tests. This was done through newsletters and a successful program to install signs across the catchment. Land managers were also educated about soil health and management through a series of workshops held in 2013. Alternative funding complimented the aims of this project with revegetation, fencing remnant bush and a variety of property planning topics discussed as well. These efforts are covered in further detail on page 14 of this report.

➤ Two media products produced

During the project total of 2 media products were produced to promote funding available (Appendix 1) and project achievements that occurred (Appendix 2). Further promotion

efforts took place through newsletters and a stall at Torbay markets that are discussed on pages 9-11 of this report.

➤ Two media publications

Promotion of the project through newsletters occurred through the project and was sent to 780 households on the Torbay Catchment rate payers list. A total of 5 newsletters came out during the project which regularly advised readers of Caring for our Country funding that was available (Fig. 5)



Figure 5: Landholders were regularly advised of funding availability through newsletters throughout the project

5. Promotion

Promotion of the project occurred through several avenues including newspapers, newsletters, workshops and the local Torbay Markets. As mentioned, 2 newspaper adverts appeared during the project which resulted in increased uptake of available funding and subsequent on-ground works.

5.1 Newsletter

The production of 5 newsletters also kept the Torbay catchment community up to date on project activities and funding availability. The 5 newsletters (Fig. 6) that came out during the project were sent out in June 2011 (Appendix 3), November 2011 (Appendix 4) June, 2012 (Appendix 5), January 2013 (Appendix 6), and June 2013 (Appendix 7). The November edition also included an insert alerting land managers to available funding available (Fig. 7).



Figure 6: During the project a total of 5 newsletters appeared promoting the project & sustainable land management

Fencing and Revegetation Subsidies Available Now!



- Shelter belts
- Remnant bush
- Creeklines
- Wetlands
- Drainage lines



Do you have a project you are thinking about?

The Torbay Catchment Group is flush with funds to assist you.

All projects will be considered.
None are too big or too small.

We'd rather not send the funds back, so nominate your project NOW!

Funding rates :
FENCING \$2,400/km
REVEGETATION \$540/ha
(other assistance may be possible upon request)



For an application form or more information call
Lesley Hart on 9845 8504

Cut down prevailing winds, improve production, protect your stock, create wild-life bird habitat, make property improvements and GET PAID FOR IT !!!



Figure 7: The subsidies flyer included in the November 2011 edition of the Torbay Catchment Group newsletter

5.2 Torbay Markets

On several occasions Torbay Catchment group had a stall at the Torbay markets (Fig. 8) where members of the Torbay Catchment Group were able to talk to community members about the work they do, environmental management and current projects including promotion of the Caring for our Country project. Feedback to the group is always positive and the markets are also a successful place to recruit more members to add to the current 110 people strong membership.



Figure 8: Former chair (Phil Mellon) & current chair (Pip Tilbrook) at the Torbay markets stall in November 2011

5.3 Torbay Catchment Group Website

The Torbay Catchment Group website (Fig. 10) has been another source of promotion for the project with a dedicated grants page. The grants web page details the types of funding that are available including funding rates and a facility to download an application form to apply for funding. The page also contains a link to the resources webpage where land managers can download best management brochures on how to undertake revegetation and manage remnant bushland.

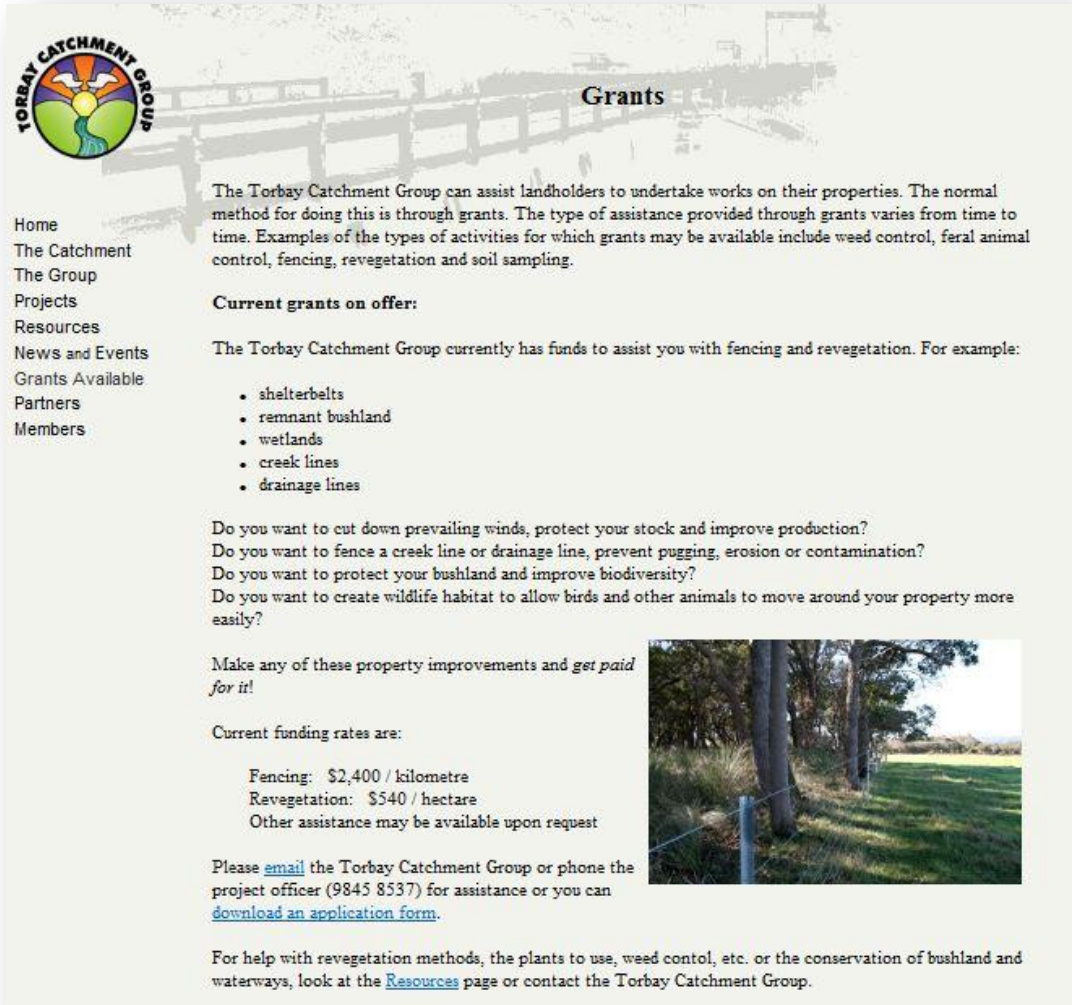


Figure 9: Torbay Catchment Group website with a dedicated grants web page that promoted available funding

5.3 Other Forms of Promotion

Although not promoting the project directly, people were reminded to conduct regular soil testing through the installation of 3 signs at strategic locations across the catchment. These signs which display the message “ Soil Test, It makes cents!” were posted onto the 3 Torbay catchment boundary signs, 2 on South Coast Hwy and one in the south western end of the catchment on Lower Denmark Road (Fig. 8). This soil testing message has potentially reaches thousands of landholders across not only Torbay Catchment but the entire great southern region.



Figure 10: Soil testing signs located at 3 locations around the catchment remind land managers to regularly soil test.

Between March and June, 2013 Torbay Catchment Group ran a series of 8 workshops that attracted 318 people to learn about a variety of topics relating to land management. At the conclusion of the “2013 Workshop Series” it was found that 85% of participants that attended workshops (Fig. 11) were small land holders which represent a large percentage of the Torbay catchment population. The workshop series covered topics relevant to this project such as revegetation, managing remnant bush and weed control (essential for site preparation prior to revegetation). Other topics discussed during the workshops included wind and soil erosion, as well as shelter belts, pasture management and property planning/management. A summary of the workshops and amount of participants that took part are shown in table 1.



Figure 11: Many of the participants to the 2013 workshop series were small land holders from the Torbay Catchment

| Workshop | Presenter(s) | Date | No. |
|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|-----|
| Weed Control Workshop | Dianne Harwood & Peter Hennig | Saturday 02-March-13 | 23 |
| Heavenly Hectares Workshop (1) | Chris Ferreira | Sunday 14 -April-2013 | 63 |
| Heavenly Hectares Workshop (2) | Chris Ferreira | Sunday 14 -April-2013 | 43 |
| Organic Farm Workshop (1) | Lex and Karen Langridge | Sunday 14 -April-2013 | 47 |
| Organic Farm Workshop (2) | Lex and Karen Langridge | Sunday 14 -April-2013 | 55 |
| Torbay Inlet Estuary Paddle Tour | Tracy Calvert, Sarah Barrett & Sheryn Prior | Sunday 12- May- 2013 | 19 |
| Torbay Catchment Bus Tour | Keith Smith, Lex & Karen Langridge | Sunday 19-May-2013 | 15 |
| Horse & Pasture Care Workshop | Chris Ferreira, Morgan Sounness & Dr Shey Rogers | Saturday 08-June-2013 | 53 |
| | | Total | 318 |

Table 1: List of workshops held during the 2013 workshop series and the number of participants that attended

Due to the success of the 2013 workshops series, the profile of natural resource management within the Torbay Catchment has increased substantially and it is expected that the flow on effect will raise awareness of future projects within the catchment as well as greater uptake of available funding. Ultimately this will result in better land management practices that will reduce impacts on the surrounding natural environment.

5.4 Additional Projects That Took Place

Over the course of the Rivercare project there were a few other projects that value added to milestones and objectives to be achieved. One project was the Drain Restoration, Revegetation & Weed Control that took place along a section of Unndiup Creek, Torbay and a Blackberry control project.

A grant from State NRM resulted in restoration and revegetation along Unndiup Creek has resulted in 25 Ha of weed control taking place and 4800 native seedlings being planted. There has also been enough community interest that a weed action group has been formed.

The control of blackberry across the catchment has been significant with a total of 67 Ha being controlled through spraying alone. Additional areas were controlled manually in areas around Torbay Hall as well.

6. Land Manager Involvement

A total of 18 land managers participated in the project who achieved great results with many revegetation projects now well established and creating habitat for local wildlife. The infill of 22 hectares (23,760 plants) has seen many areas of remnant bush that had little understory, transformed. The thicker understorey that is now present is due to the seedlings planted and also the natural recovery of the understorey now that it is not being grazed. It is estimated that any noticeable difference in understorey will take a minimum of 2 years.

The technique used by many landholders was to spray long strips of grass areas within fenced off remnant bush and plant seedlings in the controlled site (Fig. 12).



Figure 12: Native seedlings after 3 months growth will thicken up the understory of this stand of remnant bush

The land managers that have been involved in the project have shown a real dedication to what they are trying to achieve with all land holders putting in many hours either building fences or revegetating large areas.

Much time has also been spent undertaking site preparation for planting as well. Good site preparation and planning is important so that excellent results can be achieved as was the case with land managers Des and Wendy Coffey. Seedlings planted during the project are now over 6 feet tall (Fig. 13) and succeeded in creating a shelter belt for their cattle and rehabilitating an area which now is habitat for frogs, insects and birds (Fig. 14).



Figure 13: Revegetation site prior to fencing in 2010 and same site in July 2013 which has created shelter & habitat



Figure 14: After 3 years growth, a shelter belt protects cattle from wind and has created habitat for birds & frogs

A well-constructed fence is also important to keep stock out to allow remnant vegetation areas to recover and infill of native plants to grow (Fig. 15)



Figure 15; Fencing at Wendy and Des Coffey's property that is protecting remnant bush & Native seedlings

7. Mapping of Fencing and Revegetation projects

Mapping of all the projects was done using Geographical Information System (GIS) over the course of the project (Fig. 16). Mapping has allowed for an accurate record of where and the amount of onground works occurred. Photographs taken of all sites will also allow for future monitoring to take place as well.



Figure 16: Mapping of an area of remnant bush that has now been protected (4.2 Ha) with 850m of funded fencing

As stated, a total of 18 separate fencing/revegetation project took place over the entire catchment. A map showing where projects took place is displayed in figure 17. A list of landholders who undertook on ground works during the project including the amount they completed is shown in Table 2.

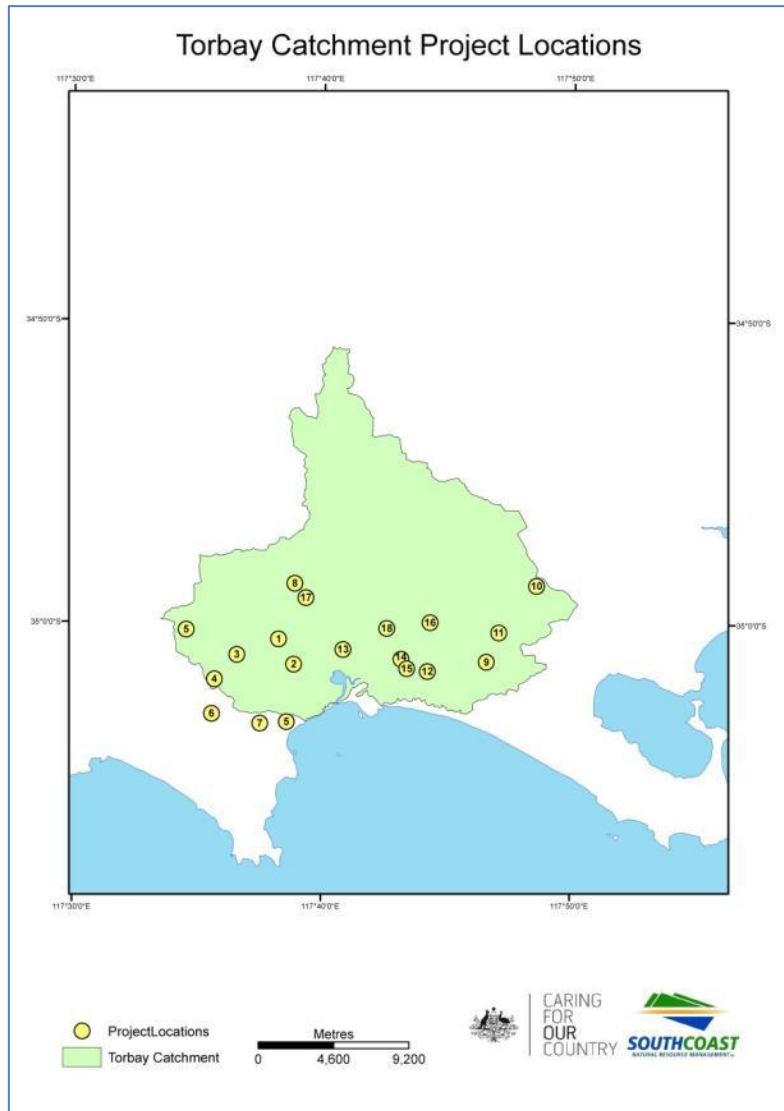


Figure 17: Map of Torbay catchment showing locations where on ground works took place

| Project No. | Land Manager Name | Land Use | Area Protected | Reveg Area(ha) | Fencing (km) |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1 | Pip Tilbrook | Grazer | 0.4 | 0.28 | 0.15 |
| 2 | Damian Rathbone | Grazer | 1.1 | 0.55 | 0 |
| 3 | Tony Higgs | Grazer | 7.5 | 5.1 | 1.15 |
| 4 | Mike Simojoki | Grazer | 8 | 7.0 | 1.15 |
| 5 | Geoff Spence | Grazer | 7.0 | 2.1 | 0.4 |
| 6 | Lex Langridge | Grazer | 6 | 1.7 | 0.85 |
| 7 | Natascha Atanassoff & Aaron Cross | Grazer | 1.05 | 1.05 | 0.125 |
| 8 | Daren Barker | Cropper | 6.8 | 0.2 | 3.3 |
| 9 | Mandy Arnold | Grazer | 0.1 | | 2.15 |
| 10 | Murray Gomm | Cropper | 4.3 | 2.0 | 3.96 |
| 11 | Karl Hansom & Debra Fitzgerald | Grazer | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.15 |
| 12 | Steve Westcott | Cropper | 0.7 | 0.22 | 0.4 |
| 13 | Laurie Brenton | Grazer | 9.5 | | |
| 14 | Andrew Zacher | Grazer | 1.85 | 1.85 | 0.53 |
| 15 | Phil Harding | Cropper | 1.0 | | 0 |
| 16 | Larry Martin | Grazer | 21.2 | | 0.42 |
| 17 | Mark Muscat | Grazer | 2.0 | 1.5 | 0.63 |
| 18 | Wendy & Des Coffey | Grazer | 0.5 | 0.45 | 0.300 |
| | Total | | 80 | 25 | 15.665 |

Table 2: List of landholders who completed on-ground works across Torbay Catchment during the project

8. Project Learning's and Future Recommendations

At the completion of the project it was found that numerous land holders were keen to undertake future revegetation projects as well as fencing remnant bushland. Therefore the desire by land holders to continue with onground works is there. It is hoped that future funding will see a continuation of the work that has been achieved which will resulting in positive outcomes for the environment.

During the project, it was noted that some landholders lost a large percentage of seedlings that were eaten by kangaroos. It is recommended that in the future, properties be assessed for possible kangaroo impacts and if funding permits, be able to purchase tree guards and stakes to help mitigate this problem. There is also the possibility of using products that may keep kangaroos away such as Deter or similar products.

A minor problem that also occurred was the growing of seedlings that took 2 years. Some species of native seeds such as Narrow leaved waterbush (*Bossiaea linophylla*) take two seasons for plants to reach a suitable height before they go in the ground. These plants are an essential component to create a diverse revegetation project and should always be included. The non-availability of *Bossiaea linophylla* after one season was not taken into account during the project. This resulted in plant species being shuffled around to accommodate certain projects.

9. Conclusion

The Rivercare project has been successful in engaging 18 land holders undertake onground projects across the Torbay Catchment. This has resulted in 25 hectares of native seedlings being planted and over 15 kilometres of fencing being constructed. A highlight of the project has been that fencing construction by Torbay catchment land managers which has resulted in 80 hectares of remnant bush being protected. This is a great outcome for the project and reflects well on the commitment and environmental values of the people who received funding.

It is hoped that future funding can be gained to build on the work that land managers have achieved over the past 3 years. The high involvement of Torbay land managers in this project and many supporting project demonstrates that the community wants to see the environment managed well and want to take part and contribute where they can. The recent workshops series also showed that land managers are keen to learn more skills and gain more knowledge so that they can have a property that is sustainably managed and does not impact the environment in a negative manner

10. Appendices



Appendix 1: Funding advert that appeared in the Albany extra in December 2011



Appendix 2: Story on project that appeared in the Albany extra on 17th May 2013



Appendix 3: June 2011 edition of Torbay catchment Newsletter



Appendix 4: November 2011 edition of Torbay catchment newsletter



NEWS

No. 31

June 2012

What's inside...

- Our halls
- Unndup Creek
- Water Corporation Tree Farm visit
- 50 years of volunteer service
- Former Chair remembered
- Adopt-a-trail
- New website
- Weed action groups
- Blackberry control agreements
- Upcoming meetings
- Community planting days

Current Committee

Pip Tibbrook
Chair

John Blaney-Murphy
Vice Chair

Wendy Coffey
Secretary

Graeme Highton
Treasurer

Other Executive Committee members

Philip Marshall
Maurice McCormick
Des Wolfe
Keith Smith
Roger Holey
Charlie Gilbert

What's Happening

Watsonia control season is here and the City of Albany (CoA) and the Torbay Catchment Group Inc. (TCG), with help from the Department for Corrective Services prison crews, will be undertaking an integrated program of Watsonia control along road verges. If you would like an area included in this or future year's programs, please contact jan@torbay.southcoastwa.org.au

Fencing and revegetation works are commencing around the catchment. Local landholders took advantage of grants on offer and are now starting their fencing with revegetation works to begin in coming months.

Adopt-a-trail has been started after keen volunteers decided they wanted to look after a small section of the Torbay Rail Trail. Locals will be trimming and weeding the small sections they have adopted. More inside this issue...

Community planting days are being held in late June and early July in association with two grants the catchment group currently has. More on the back page of this issue...

Fox traps to loan

There's nothing worse than discovering your beloved chooks decimated after a visit from the Red Fox. The Red Fox is a skilled hunter of wildlife and has adapted well to living amongst humans in urban and peri-urban areas. A fox may have taken your chooks, but also be raiding your garbage bin or eating the dog and cat food from your verandah. What is not readily seen is the amount of native animals such as bandicoots, frogs and lizards that are killed and eaten by this introduced predator.



The Torbay Catchment has many landholders who due to the small size of their properties are not legally able to use firearms or 1080 baiting to control foxes. So, with an eye on future Red Card for Red Fox hunting, the Torbay Catchment Group (Inc) is trialling two fox traps recently manufactured by Sheffield Wire Products in Welshpool.

We are also in the process of arranging the safe and humane disposal of any fox caught through our local Sporting Shooters Association. Even though the Red Fox is an introduced species, it deserves to be treated humanely.

If you would like to register your interest in borrowing a trap, please phone 98446424 or email jan@torbay.southcoastwa.org.au

Trapping a fox takes patience and effort, the Torbay Catchment Group (Inc) will provide a brochure with information on setting the trap, suitable bait and site location with each borrowed trap. The Shire of Capel NRM Officer Rae McPherson has kindly allowed us to share their Fox Trapping project research information in the brochure.

Appendix 5: June 2012 edition of Torbay catchment newsletter



NEWS

Executive Committee

Office Bearers
Chair Pip Tibbrook
Vice Chair
John Blaney-Murphy
Secretary Wendy Coffey
Treasurer Graeme Highton
(Project Officer Craig Carter)

General Members

Philip Marshall
Des Wolfe
Keith Smith
Roger Holey
Les Langridge
Tania Scates
Mandy Arnold

No. 32

Spring / Summer 2012

Torbay Catchment Group Inc. P.O. Box 1900 Albany Western Australia 6331

www.torbay.southcoastwa.org.au chair@torbay.southcoastwa.org.au

The Torbay Catchment Group is a community-based volunteer organisation whose primary focus is protecting and restoring the health of the lands and waterways in the Torbay Catchment as well as supporting a prosperous and sustainable community within the catchment area.

Torbay Catchment Farmer Focus

2012 is the Year of the Farmer and the International Year of Sustainable Energy

Philip Marshall, local farmer and founding member of the Torbay Catchment Group (TCG) deserves credit for his environmentally sympathetic farming practices and his support of the TCG. A farmer from the UK, he arrived in Torbay in 1970 with wife, Sheregh and family having decided that the Torbay / Albany area was the best place to bring up their kids and make a living.

Their first farming initiative was to fence off their remnant bush and waterways to preserve the native landscape on their 615 hectares.

This was followed up by a vigorous weed control program (with support from the council and the Catchment Group) focussing on Taylerson, Blackberry and Watsonia.

Initially they farmed beef cattle, but when prices took a dive the family planted asparagus and raised their first harvest in 1971.

As a founding member of the Albany Farmers' Markets, Philip has been selling asparagus since the markets commenced ten years ago.

The family (including son Bruce, daughter in law Fiona and grandchildren Henry, Alice and Elsie) have also grown horse radish, sweet corn, espers, artichokes, sugar peas and boysenberries. At present they look after 450 head of beef cattle plus olive that are paddocks rotated every 3-7 days to aid pasture production.



Philip with his farm produce

Kiayuu is their main grass as it stabilises the soil and binds nutrients.

Philip has rigorously practised soil testing every three years since 1970 and states that this is one of the most important acts he undertakes as a land carer and farmer.

Philip is very knowledgeable about local sustainable farming practices and like many others in the TCG is willing to share his knowledge. If you would like to know more, contact the TCG.

Rail Trail update

A grant to establish toilets, water tanks and parking areas at both ends of the Torbay Rail Trail is now complete thanks to funding from Royalisea for Regions, Elliker Sporting and Progress Association, Torbay Agricultural Trail Committee and the City of Albany.

Bush Fire Brigade Contacts

Bornholm
Laurie Nissen 0429 838 038
Chris Ayres 0427 451 123

Elliker
Roy Parsons 0422 607 347
Brett Smoker 0438 939 613

Redmond
Lance Flett 08 9845 3048
Phil Dunkley 0417 273 931

South Coast
Derek Jones 0409 882 958
Darien Prior 0417 965 822

Torbay
Philip Marshall 08 9845 1045
Leith Nicholson 08 9845 1054

Youngs
Kevin Martin 0427 452 032
Martin Peterson 08 9845 2010

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Appendix 6: January 2013 edition of Torbay catchment newsletter



TORBAY CATCHMENT GROUP

NEWSLETTER

No. 33 Winter 2013 www.torbay.southcoastwa.org.au

Executive Committee
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 Vice Chair: John Sawyer-Murphy
 Secretary: Wendy Collier
 Treasurer: Deanne Hodgson
 Project Officer: Craig Carter

General Members
 Phil Marshall
 Don Hefley
 Keith Smith
 Les Langridge
 Tania Scott
 Maria Arnold

Torbay Catchment Group Inc., P O Box 1900 Albany WA 6331 chair@torbay.southcoastwa.org.au

The Torbay Catchment Group is a community-based volunteer organisation whose primary focus is protecting and restoring the health of the lands and waterways in the Greater Torbay Catchment as well as supporting a prosperous and sustainable community within the catchment areas.

Myrtle Rust Threatens Native Flora

Myrtle rust is a disease caused by a certain class of fungal pathogens. In this case the pathogen is *Rustia paspali*. Myrtle rust is one of a group of rusts known as the "Puccinia paspali complex", which only affect plants of the family Myrtaceae. It originates from South America & so far has been found in many regions around the globe to the Caribbean (1900-200), Florida (1977) (USA), Hawaii (2005), Japan (2007), Australia (2010), China (2011) & New Caledonia (2013).

This is the new scourge to hit Australia and damage our native flora and under ecosystem. The rust is not found in WA, but is causing problems in NSW, Victoria and Queensland. This is a great concern as Myrtle rust is known to affect a multitude of Myrtaceae species, including species in the genus *Eucalyptus*, *Corymbia*, *Callistemon*, *Banksia*, *Chamaecyparis*, *Leptospermum*, *Melaleuca*, *Kunzea* & *Dawsonia*. Only 2 other native myrtaceous rusts have been recorded in Australia and so they are extremely rare.

The species within *Eucalyptus*, *Melaleuca* and *Corymbia* play important roles in our ecosystems and Myrtle rust could well be a devastating blow to iconic forests in our South West and plant communities already under threat from a multitude of invaders. Not all plant species or even cultivars are affected to the same extent. Some plants such as *Melaleuca alternifolia* (from which Tea Tree Oil is made) have shown little negative responses, others are not so lucky. The *Corymbia phoenicea* (ool) found in WA, is so affected that one species has gone from common to potentially under serious threat. Damage is usually caused by young foliage and restricting growth. This reduces the plants ability to flower, set seed and recover from fire. Unfortunately it is also known to damage and kill new seedlings. In a field situation no chemical control is a real solution at this point.

Visible signs vary with the underside of the leaves first showing signs of yellow pustules, then complete yellow pustules on all surfaces of young growth although this can depend on the species. Spores can survive for various lengths of time, dependent on conditions. Optimum germination conditions observed mainly overseas include temperatures of 12°C to 22°C, with high relative humidity at night, low light and at eight hours of darkness are preferred. Initial symptoms can appear within 3-7 days and in optimum conditions the full reproductive life cycle could be complete in 10-12 days in warmer months. At the point of yellow pustulation any control to be left as spores are highly mobile and as you should suspect take a suspect sample to be identified. Photograph the specimen and consider yourself as an infected vector as the spores are so mobile you are likely to spread the rust in your hands. If you suspect you have detected myrtle rust, contact Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA) and alert the biosecurity officer.

Given the fast movement of people & common use of air travel in these days, it would be very easy for this disease to be introduced unwittingly into

this state. You should be very cautious on return from travel in respect to infected clothing, particularly if you have been hiking and in field situations. Department of Agriculture and Food WA. Go to the following link: http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/soil/infected_plants/infected_plants/myrtle_rust

Department of Agriculture and Food, Plant and Disease Information Service
 3 Seron-Hay Court, South Perth WA 6151 Freecall: 1800 064 881
 Email: info@ag.wa.gov.au

DEC Myrtle Rust Information Page <http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/management-and-protection/plants/native-plants/myrtle-rust.htm>



Flustered Foxes

Over the past 18 months a small team of local shooers have carefully monitored a large number of foxes from properties within the Torbay Catchment. Detailed records of sightings & confirmed deaths since mid-October 2012 (7 months) show that 71 foxes and 1 cat no longer roam the catchment.

Averaging around ten foxes per month over the period, the guys have now noticed positive results from the continued pressure on the fox population. In the last six months sightings of both dingoes & brush-tail possums have been steady & during one night over six possums of both species were hunted upon during a routine stroll. Other landholders have noticed a significant increase in bandicoot numbers.

If reports a vacuum effect occurs at particular times of the year with foxes thinning back into regularly shot populations. However, overall fox numbers within the catchment would be taking a sustained hit thereby reducing their numbers. Interestingly it appears 50% of foxes taken are males, maybe the boys are not so cunning!

Habitat Protected & Native Bush Increased Across Catchment

Over the past three years Torbay Catchment Group (TCG) has been implementing a highly successful program to protect native remnant vegetation and transform former grazing paddocks back to native bush. With the current round of federal government Caring for our Country funding concluding in June 2013, a total of 16km² of fencing protecting 75 hectares remnant bush and the planting of 25 hectares of native seedlings (approx. 27,000 plants) will have been completed.

These large areas of newly protected bush will not only help prevent soil loss, create shelter and reduce runoff, but also act as safe havens for many rare flora and fauna. "This is great news for endangered wildlife, which includes rare endemic species like Baudin's, Carnaby's and Red-tailed black cockatoos as well as the Western Ringtail possum," said project officer Craig Carter.

June 2013 will see this year's remaining 15,000 seedlings planted, with many of the plants having been grown from seed collected within Torbay catchment. This will add to the 12,000 seedlings planted in 2012. These positive environmental outcomes would not happen without the commitment and enthusiasm provided by the 18 landholders who received funding.

To continue the work in protecting and restoring habitat, waterways and fostering environmental awareness, TCG has applied for more funds to continue this work and should know if we were successful by late July, 2013. For more information on available funding, land care advice and free workshops, contact Craig Carter at projectofficer@torbay.southcoastwa.org.au or Pip Tilbrook at chair@torbay.southcoastwa.org.au

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Carnaby's Black Cockatoo and Western Ringtail Possum

