

**Effectively developing and managing our natural resources for the benefit of the whole community**

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**Ord land and Water welcomes two new Board members**

The Board held its second AGM on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March with three Board positions having their term of office expire. Fritz Bolten was reelected with Tanya Vernes and Matt Bolam coming on to the Board.

Tanya was a member of the original steering committee that had put together the Ord Land and Water Plan and will soon take up the position of wetlands project officer for the Worldwide Fund for Nature Australia. Matt will bring his broad knowledge of pastoral issues to the team including his interests in rangelands sustainability.

Support for Ord Land and Water was evident in the amount of interested people who attended the meeting. A total of 42 people listened to Fritz make his annual report and stayed on for drinks after the meeting.



*Dick Pasfield and Scott Goodson counting votes at the OLV AGM.*

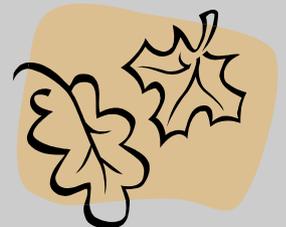


**WA Museum in town**

The State Government and W A M u s e u m ' s 'Sustainability WA' exhibit will be in town from 11<sup>th</sup> April to 24<sup>th</sup> April at the Kununurra Historical Society. The exhibition tells the stories of people who are working now to achieve a sustainable

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**Local Agenda 21**

What is it exactly? It was devised and agreed to by most of the world's leaders at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 on how to best implement sustainable development at a local level.

From this summit came four requests of local Government to be commenced by 1997, they were-

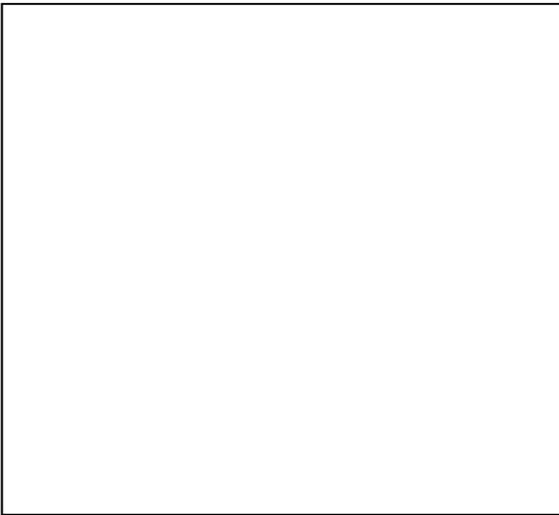
1. To start talking to its community, exchanging information on sustainable development.
2. Come to some consensus on a local strategy to implement sustainable development.
3. Modify programs, laws and policies in accordance with those strategies.
4. Share the results with others.



## Weeds and Seeds

A few people were surprised at the scores in the weed priority table listed for Lake Kununurra in our last newsletter. Why were weeds such as date palm and wild mango rated above the weed on every one's lips 'neem'?

Unfortunately the reason for this is that this list also identifies weeds that we have the best chance of controlling or eradicating as well as their impact. The sad truth is that neem will require a major effort to it under some sort of control. Even Mirima National Park has neem growing in it.



## What have we been doing?

Here's a brief overview of what we have been involved in the past 12 months-

- Employed a full time coordinator.
- Farm water efficiency trials.
- Review of the Ord regeneration reserve.
- Search for old chemical drums.
- Growers meetings looking at chemical use.
- Contributing to the Waterways Management Group.
- Contributing to the Ord Bonaparte Program
- Secured funding for an environmental impact study on reintroducing barramundi into Lake Kununurra.
- Contributing to the weeds group.
- Talking with the shire about a local environmental policy.
- Secured funds for an environmental workshop.



Our support has come from-

- Natural Heritage Trust
- Ord River District Cooperative.
- Department of Agriculture.
- Ord Bonaparte Program.
- Water and Rivers Commission.
- Ord Irrigation Cooperative.
- All the people who have put their time into the plan and care about their local environment.



*Jade Goodson releasing a tagged juvenile barramundi into lake Kununurra*

**Fish tags**

The tagging program by the local RFAC group is starting to show results. To date there have been eight tag returns on barra released into Lake Kununurra last year. These fish have been caught in the lake and back down in the Lower Ord. Growth rates are pretty impressive, going from the 35 to 40 cm range on release to 60 to 70 cm on capture less than a year later.

I wonder what the fish think of the ride through the gates? If you find one of these tagged fish take its measurements and return the tag to Fisheries WA (next to the Kimberley Echo) or post to PO Box 1381 Kununurra. There's a stubby holder in it for those who return a tag.



## Thumbs up to-

Kids and their respect for environment: I watched a mob of them fishing in a creek a while back. There were plenty of fish caught but only two kept for a feed. The rest went straight back in. It was very clear to the watching parents that the buzz came in watching the fish swim away (a couple of kids even donned the goggles and followed).

One under 10 that I know has his own personal slot limit for barramundi of over 70 and under 80 cm. How many of us adults would impose that sort of standard on our fishing I wonder.

## Thumbs down to-



While we are on the fishing thing, hands up who left the pile of beer cans and other assorted rubbish a popular launching spot on the Lower Ord? Listen you pack of dinosaurs! I know there's not much upstairs but surely if you came in your fancy vehicle, flash lures and a car fridge then you, the fish that you caught and your rubbish can all leave by the same means.

PS in future don't chuck the catfish up on the bank to die and end up in someone's foot, show some respect to world you live in and release them back into the water unharmed.



*Some of the rubbish left on the lower Ord*

## FUTURE PROJECTS

Some of the work that OLW intends to carry out in the region

### Irrigation Drains

When is a drain not a drain? The answer is when it can be used for something else. An Ord Land and Water project on the drawing board is designed to look at other uses for our irrigation drains that will hopefully lead to better water efficiency and better water quality. The project hopes to identify points where drainage water can be recycled into the delivery channels and where artificial wetlands can be constructed to stop chemical and fertiliser runoff.

### Plan to be translated

The Ord Land and Water Management Plan can certainly be called a community plan. Unfortunately not all the community got the opportunity to take part in its development. The Board is working to address this situation with a plan to introduce sections of it to the traditional owners through the radio. Initial talks with some of the Mirriwoong people have proved to be very beneficial. It is especially interesting to note that both the local Aboriginal and European cultures have very similar concerns on both environmental and social levels.

# **KIMBERLEY WILDLIFE AND ORPHANS CARERS' ASSOCIATION (KWOCA)**

For nearly two years, a dedicated group of Kimberley residents have been working to care for and rehabilitate injured and orphaned wildlife. Members of the Kimberley Wildlife and Orphans Carers' Association (KWOCA) assist hundreds of injured and orphaned birds, mammals and reptiles every year. Following care and rehabilitation, wildlife are released back into their natural environment.

Whilst based in the town of Kununurra, members come from across the Kimberley including Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek. KWOCA provides members with advice and information (often based on other members personal experience) about caring in order to prevent the loss and injury of our native wildlife. In addition, the group provides carers with assistance in the purchase of specialised food and equipment.

Argyle Diamond Mine (ADM) is a strong supporter of the efforts of KWOCA and has established a "soft-release" site for kangaroos and wallabies. The ADM "soft-release" site is a 1-hectare, fully enclosed area that provides the opportunity for the animals to forage for themselves and interact with others in an area that is safe from predators. Releasing the animals at the ADM site also helps to remove the attachment between them and their human carer. Following a period of time at the "soft-release" site, animals are then returned to the wild.

For those unable to directly care for wildlife, support for KWOCA can also be provided through donations (including equipment such as aviaries) or contributing to regular fundraising efforts. KWOCA appreciates any help the community may be able to offer in support of its efforts.

KWOCA meetings are held at 7pm on the second Wednesday of each month in the Hotel Kununurra dining room. All new members are welcome to join us there.



## **River Drums**

It seems that the Kimberley is littered with old drums of one sort or another. Even our rivers are not spared these decorations; a trip from the Skull Rock boat ramp to Collins Creek would give you a count of a dozen or more rusting away on the bank side.

What are a little less common are dumpsites where drums have been left in the bush after use. One such site known to a few folk around town is a site with close to a hundred or more stacked neatly in the bush on the banks of Spring Creek. For those unsure of the name it's the creek that flows for most of the year through Button's Gap, just inside the old quarantine gates on the Old Wyndham road.

Ord Land and Water would like to have identified what these drums were used for. The only marking still visible on the drums are the words 'RHEEM AUST' followed by numbers 24 and 54. We are pretty sure they are not old bush hot water heaters. If anyone can help clear up the mystery can you please contact the coordinator on 91 692 222 or fax 91 692 683.

## **Articles Please!**

If you have something to say or an article of interest please send them into me at the OLW office or e-mail me on [olw@nits.net.au](mailto:olw@nits.net.au).