



Draft Forest Management Plan 2024–2033

The South West Settlement and Noongar involvement in forest management



The South West Native Title Settlement (the Settlement) is the largest and most comprehensive agreement to settle Aboriginal interests over land in Australia.

The Settlement was negotiated between the Noongar people and the Western Australian Government.

The full details of the Settlement are recorded in the six identical Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) with the Ballardong, Gnaala Karla Booja, Karri Karak (formerly South West Boorah), Wagyl Kaip and Southern Noongar, Whadjuk, and Yued groups.

The Settlement will enable the State Government to work in partnership with the Noongar people to improve economic, social and cultural outcomes. Six Noongar Regional Corporations will represent the rights and interests of each of the six Agreement groups.

The South West Conservation Estate

The South West Conservation Estate covers approximately 3.8 million hectares, and refers to all CALM Act lands and waters within the Settlement area. This includes State forests, national parks, nature reserves and other areas set aside for conservation.

Through the Settlement, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and each of the Noongar Regional Corporations will enter into formal management agreements for the South West Conservation Estate. These agreements will acknowledge the continuing cultural, spiritual and social connections of the Noongar people to the region, and their unique traditional knowledge and expertise.

The south-west forests, known to Noongar people as djarilmari, are an important component of the South West Conservation Estate. The area covered by the Forest Management Plan 2024-2033 constitutes about two-thirds of the South West Conservation Estate (approximately 2.4 million hectares). *The Forest Management Plan* area has relevance to all six Regional Corporations, though to differing degrees.

New management partnerships: cooperative and joint management

New management arrangements with Noongar Traditional Owners will be established in a two-staged process:

Stage 1: Cooperative Management

Six Cooperative Management Agreements, one for each of the six Noongar Agreement Areas, will be signed by DBCA and the relevant Noongar Regional Corporation. The agreements set out how Noongar Traditional Owners and DBCA will come together and provide advice about how the South West Conservation Estate is managed, including on how to best protect and conserve Noongar cultural heritage values.

A Cooperative Management Committee will be established to implement each Cooperative Management Agreement. Each committee will comprise Noongar representatives and senior staff from the DBCA. The committees will meet several times a year.

Stage 2: Joint Management

The Cooperative Management Committees will also work to identify and prioritise specific areas of the South West Conservation Estate to be jointly managed.

Joint Management Agreements will set up a Joint Management Body, which will meet regularly to make decisions about how these specific parks and reserves are managed. At least one Joint Management Agreement in each of the six Noongar Agreement areas will be in place by February 2026, with further Joint Management Agreements by February 2031.

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These partnerships present a range of benefits and opportunities, including improved protection of Noongar cultural heritage values, sharing of Noongar knowledge to enhance forest management, and employment and training of Noongar people to participate in on-ground management activities.

References:

South West Native Title Settlement [wa.gov.au/organisation/departments-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/south-west-native-title-settlement](https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/departments-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/south-west-native-title-settlement)



The management of Western Australia's south-west forests will be outlined in the *Forest Management Plan 2024–2033*.

For more information visit our website at dbca.wa.gov.au/forest-management-plan