



SWAN RIVER TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT 2025–2026

Swan River Trust Annual Report 2025–26

The Swan River Trust is an advisory body created by the *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* (SCRM Act).

The Trust provides high-level, strategic advice to the Minister for the Environment and the Director General of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (the Department) on matters affecting the Swan and Canning rivers.

The Trust acknowledges and respects the Whadjuk Noongar people as the traditional custodians of the Derbal Yirragan (Swan) and Djarlgarro (Canning) rivers and pays its respects to Elders past and present. The Trust seeks to learn from their custodianship, culture and knowledge.

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Cover photos

Front Mount Henry Bridge Twilight 2025. *Photo – Rhiannon Bartley*

Back Swan and yachts on Foreshore 2022. *Photo – Zoe Beeson*



Annual Report 2025–26

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Swan River Trust Overview

The Trust is an advisory body established under the *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* (SCRM Act). It provides strategic advice to the Minister for the Environment and the Director General of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (the Department) on the protection and enhancement of the Derbal Yirragan Djarlgarro (Swan Canning river system). Under the SCRM Act, the Trust is vested with the care, control and management of the Swan Canning River reserve – the waterway – with various responsibilities including developing policies and preparing and reporting on strategic documents relating to the Swan Canning Riverpark (Riverpark), which includes public lands adjoining the Swan and Canning rivers.

The Trust recognises the need to protect and enhance the Derbal Yirragan Djarlgarro both for its intrinsic environmental and cultural value, and as a vibrant, inclusive space for people and nature. A healthy river system supports ecological integrity and community wellbeing, providing places to swim, paddle, fish, connect with nature, and connect. The rivers are rich in biodiversity and cultural significance, and their health is shaped by land and water management practices across the catchment.

A key focus of the Trust is promoting collaboration and strategic initiatives that support a healthy river system and the good management of the wider catchment. The Trust supports policies and planning that protect the rivers and provides informed advice on development proposals that may impact them. It recognises that what happens in the catchment, from land use to water flow, directly affects the health of the waterways.

The Trust's other key role is overseeing the development and implementation of a new *River Protection Strategy* to support long-term stewardship and coordinated river management to protect this iconic river system for generations to come.

Over the past year, the Trust has continued to be supported by the Department given their significant operational and management responsibilities within the Riverpark and Swan Canning development control area (DCA) as outlined under the SCRM Act.



Matagarup Bridge, Perth. Photo – Tourism Western Australia

How we function

The Trust operates as a board under the SCRM Act and through its diverse membership brings together expertise spanning conservation, natural resource management, planning and development, tourism and recreation, and Noongar community interests.

The Trust meets approximately every six weeks. These meetings enable board members to receive updates on river management matters, development considerations and provides a forum for the provision of expert advice. Meetings are attended by board members and the Department representatives, and as required, by other key river management stakeholders. Meeting schedules and governance arrangements are outlined by the Department and the SCRM Act.

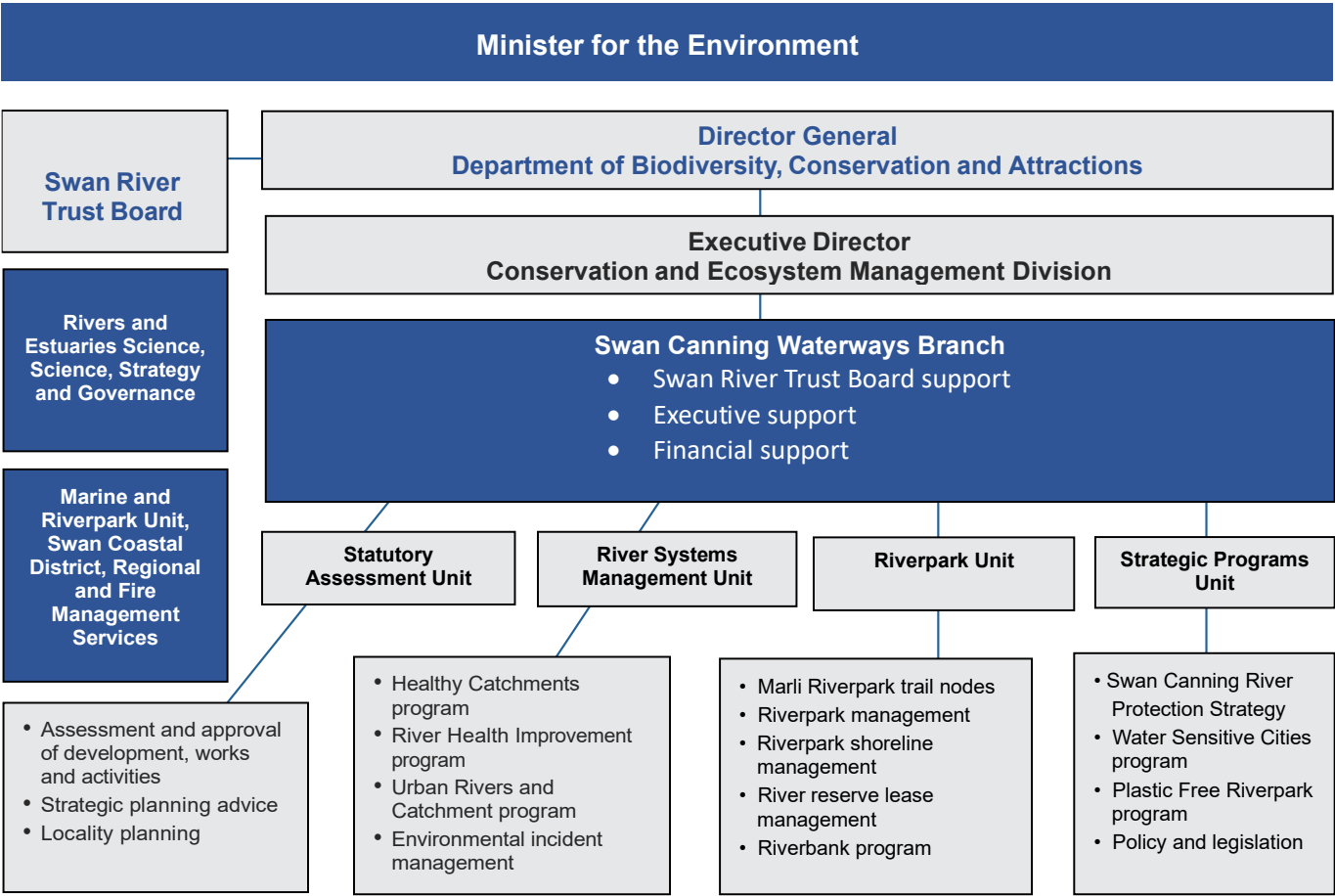
In addition to oversight of the *River Protection Strategy*, the Trust provides advice on policy, development and key river management action. The Trust's approach is grounded in sustainability, with an advocacy role that supports balanced river management by considering ecological, cultural, community, and stakeholder interests to ensure the long-term protection and enjoyment of the river system.

The Department has provided financial, technical and staff resources to the Trust throughout the year to enable the Trust to undertake its functions.

The Trust has the following functions under section 23 of the SCRM Act:

- Develop policies for the protection and enhancement of the DCA, the Riverpark and the Riverpark shoreline
- Establish targets for ecological and community benefits and amenity of the Riverpark and mechanisms for achieving those
- Prepare and implement strategic Riverpark planning and management documents
- Advise the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Department on matters relating to development
- Advise the CEO of the Department on promoting the activities of other bodies having functions in the catchment affecting the Riverpark
- Report to the Minister for the Environment on the state of the DCA and development on and adjoining the DCA
- Provide advice to planning authorities so that proper provision can be made in planning schemes for the protection and future use of river foreshores, protection and public use of land and water and protection of wildlife
- Provide advice and promote public education on any matter within its functions
- Any other functions as described in the SCRM Act or other laws. Under section 11 of the SCRM Act the care, control and management of the River reserve – that is the waterways of the Swan and Canning rivers – is placed with the Trust. The day-to-day management of the River reserve is undertaken by the Department on behalf of the Trust.

Swan River Trust Arrangements During 2025-26



Operational Agreement between the Trust and Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions 2024-25 – 2027-28

Under the SCRM Act, the CEO of the Department is required to provide the Trust with any assistance, staff and facilities of the Department the Trust may reasonably require to carry out its functions. In 2024-25, a new three-year Operational Agreement (the Agreement) between the Trust and the Department was established, from 2024-25 to 2027-28.

The Agreement details the agreed service arrangements and information about the relationship between the Trust and the Department. Schedule 1 of the Agreement reflects the anticipated financial support for the upcoming financial year and is updated annually. The Schedule does not include the Department staff time that was directed towards supporting the Trust.

Funding and administrative arrangements

Table 1. Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions financial support for the Swan River Trust 2025-2026

	Amount
Member allowances and sitting fees	\$46,048
Meeting costs	\$2,064
Total	\$48,112



Cormorant and ducks. Photo – Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

Chair's Report

It is with pleasure that I present the Swan River Trust's Annual Report for 2025-26, a year that has seen steady progress on our long-term strategic priorities alongside some exciting milestones for our rivers and the communities who use them.

Drafting a new *River Protection Strategy (RPS) for Derbal Yirragan Djarlgarro (Swan Canning river system)* with the Department remained our most significant body of work. Following extensive consultation, the Trust and the Department continue to work with the Minister for the Environment and the Government to finalise the RPS. I thank the Minister for his continued engagement on this important document.

Alongside the RPS, the Trust and the Department also released the draft Djarlgarro (Canning Waterways) Restoration Plan for public comment this year, an important complementary document that will help guide restoration priorities for the Canning River and its catchment.

Recognising the Trust's role in protecting and enhancing the Derbal Yirragan Djarlgarro, whilst at the same time ensuring the community maintains their access, enjoyment and connection to the rivers, the Trust also progressed a range of policy and planning work this year. This included reviewing and updating five of our corporate policies that guide planning and development within or affecting the Swan Canning development control area (DCA). The policies updated this year included:

- Planning for jetties affecting the Swan Canning development control area
- Planning for dredging affecting the Swan Canning development control area
- Planning for stormwater management affecting the Swan Canning development control area
- Planning for dewatering management affecting the Swan Canning development control area
- Planning for wastewater management affecting the Swan Canning development control area

In addition to these policy updates, I am particularly pleased to note a significant milestone was reached this year with the endorsement of a new corporate policy - Planning for localities along the Swan Canning development control area and associated locality plans covering the entire Swan Canning development control area. The locality policy and locality plans provide clear and consistent guidance for development and management decisions across the DCA.

It has also been a year of major infrastructure milestones on the river. Construction of the new Fremantle Traffic Bridge is well underway, with demolition of the old bridge almost complete and the new pylon towers and cable-stays now in place. The bridge closure in February 2026 allowed demolition works to proceed, and I am pleased to note that all environmental controls have proven effective to date, with no significant incidents recorded. The new bridge remains on track to reopen on schedule. We were also involved in providing advice to the Western Australian Planning Commission in the determination for development approval in late 2025 for two new ferry terminals, including at Applecross, a significant step towards the METRONET on Swan Ferry Expansion. The Trust continues to receive regular briefings and provide advice as both projects progress.

On statutory matters, the Trust provided advice to the Director General of the Department and the Minister for the Environment on four development applications and four requests for variation, determined under Part 5 and Section 84 of the *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* respectively, while the Department under the Trust's oversight assessed and provided advice on a further 119 applications on the Trust's behalf under the Metropolitan Region Scheme. The proposed redevelopment of the Belmont Park Racecourse also continued to require the Trust's close attention as the project has evolved.

River and foreshore planning and projects also progressed well this year, including various projects through the Urban Rivers and Catchments Program, undertaken together with our local government and community partners and the Australian Government. The Department's Swan Canning Waterways Branch has continued implementation planning for the Ashfield Flats Master Plan in Bassendean. Foreshore planning also progressed well, with plans now prepared for the Hinds Reserve, and Riverside Gardens Bayswater along with the foreshore at Peninsula Farm, alongside further plans for Tranby House and Bardon Park.

The progress made on Stage 2 of the Hurlingham Living Stream project in the City of South Perth continues to demonstrate how the investment in the environment can deliver significant ecological and amenity benefits. We

were also delighted to see the opening of the Department co-funded City of Belmont Esplanade Foreshore project in November 2025, a great example of the on-ground outcomes this collaboration delivers.

I want to acknowledge the outstanding ongoing support from the Department's Rivers and Estuaries Science team on river health matters throughout the year, including the regular updates to the Trust on water quality and algal bloom events, continued oxygenation of the Swan and Canning rivers, and special briefings on reef restoration projects and bull shark tracking. This work remains critical to keeping our rivers safe and healthy.

A particular highlight of the year was the River Guardians Family Festival, held in May 2026 at Sir James Mitchell Park on the South Perth foreshore, which attracted more than 1,000 attendees and showcased the wonderful community spirit that underpins our River Guardians program, now with more than 2,700 members. My thanks go to all our volunteers across our community programs, including River Guardians, Dolphin Watch and Community Rivercare, whose dedication continues to be the backbone of our conservation, restoration, enhancement and activation efforts.

Finally, I thank my Deputy Chair, Peter King, and all my fellow Board members but particularly the retiring Board Members, Jacquie Stone and Sara Saberi, for their contribution to the Trust over many years. The Board's collective expertise, commitment and good humour over another busy year is much appreciated, and, on behalf of the Board, I extend our thanks and appreciation to Stuart Smith, Glen McLeod-Thorpe and their teams at the Department for their ongoing advice, support and passion for our Swan and Canning river system.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our successes this year. Together, we will continue to protect, enhance and activate the rivers for the benefit of all.

David McFerran

Chair Swan River Trust Board

General Information

Legislative context

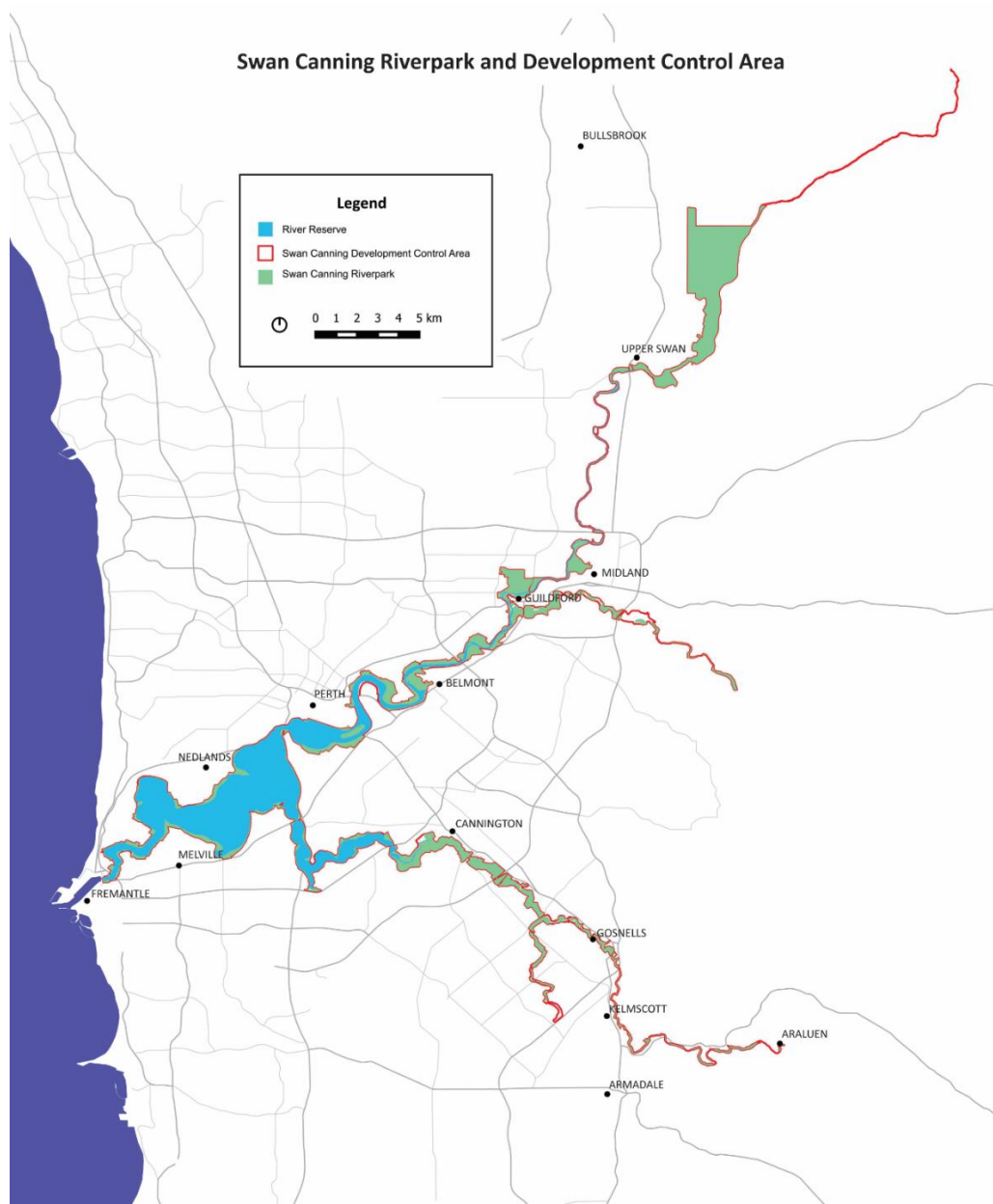
The Trust undertakes its functions in accordance with the SCRM Act. Under the SCRM Act, the Trust is the vesting authority for the River reserve. It has functions in relation to the River reserve, the Riverpark, the DCA and the broader catchment area.

Strategic documents

The Trust oversees the development, implementation and reporting of strategic documents prepared under the SCRM Act. Working in partnership with the Department, the Trust guides the preparation of policies, plans and other strategic documents that support the long-term management of the river system and through expert advice, stakeholder collaboration and oversight of strategic initiatives, the Trust helps ensure these documents deliver long-term ecological, community and amenity outcomes across the catchment.

River reserve

The River reserve contains the waterways of the Swan and Canning rivers, Helena River and Southern River.



Swan Canning Riverpark

The Riverpark consists of the land and waterways of the Swan, Canning, Helena and Southern rivers and public foreshore reserves surrounding them. It is a significant feature of Perth's landscape, prized for its natural values, recreational opportunities, and cultural and social importance.

Throughout 2025-26 the Department was responsible for planning and managing the waterways and conservation reserves of the Riverpark. The Department has joint responsibility for the Riverpark's shoreline in conjunction with other foreshore land managers, including local government authorities and several State government agencies in which the land is vested.

Swan Canning development control area

The DCA includes the waterways of the Swan and Canning rivers and the adjoining parks and recreation reserves (extending upstream from the Fremantle Traffic Bridge to Moondyne Brook on the Avon River, to the lower diversion dam on the Helena River, along the Southern River to the Allen Road crossing and the Canning River to its confluence with Stinton Creek). In some cases, the DCA includes private property.

Swan Canning Catchment

The Swan Canning Catchment covers 2090km² of the total catchment area in the Swan Avon system. The Swan Avon Catchment is approximately 126,000km². Surface water and groundwater flow into the Riverpark from tributaries and drains across the Swan Canning Catchment.

Swan River Trust Membership

The Trust members are appointed under the provisions of the SCRM Act, and are to be persons who, in the opinion of the Minister for the Environment, have knowledge and experience which is relevant to the functions of the Trust.

The legislation provides for the appointment of eight members, with one member appointed on the nomination of the Western Australian Local Government Association and one member appointed on the nomination of the Department assisting in the administration of the *Planning and Development Act 2005*.

The Minister directly appoints the remaining six members including one as the Chair and one as the Deputy Chair. Membership of the board comprises persons who between them have knowledge and experience in the fields of conservation, natural resource management, recreation, tourism, planning, development, matters of interest to the rural community and matters of interest to the Noongar community. The duties of the Chair, Deputy Chair and members are on a part-time basis. Members are appointed for terms not exceeding three years and are eligible for reappointment.

Appointed Members of the Swan River Trust Board

MR DAVID MCFERRAN CHAIR



Mr David McFerran is currently a Director of McFerran Advisory, an independent property, planning and projects consultancy, providing project and development management services, planning and property advice to a range of government and private sector entities. He has previously held senior positions in several State Government agencies and departments and has significant experience in policy development along with providing advice to Ministers. As a former business manager at DevelopmentWA, he has extensive experience in land use planning, statutory and strategic planning, property development as well as stakeholder and community consultation. David was previously the Chair of the Exmouth Gulf Taskforce and was a Director of Western Dairy. He has completed a Bachelor of Science (Agriculture) degree with Honours from The University of Western Australia (1996) and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD) and Leadership WA's Signature Program (2013). David was appointed Chair of the Trust Board in May 2023.

MR PETER KING DEPUTY CHAIR



Mr Peter King currently consults to the Western Australian resources industry on the development and approval of large State significant projects. He has held senior positions in several State Government agencies, including the former Department of Agriculture, the former Department of State Development, and the Pilbara Ports Authority; as well as local resource companies and consultancies. Peter has also had overseas postings in the Middle East and Subcontinent. His areas of interest include agriculture, natural resource management, land use planning, project facilitation, infrastructure planning and development. He is very experienced in State approvals processes and facilitating development of major resource projects and port infrastructure in the Pilbara. Peter has a Bachelor of Science (Hons) from The University of Western Australia. Peter was appointed to the Trust Board in October 2016, and appointed Deputy Chair in May 2023.

MS MARENÉE PROVOST 	Ms Marenée Provost has worked in a diverse range of positions, including 21 years with the former Department for Child Protection, 10 years in the disability sector in senior management and overseeing projects involving architectural design and extensive building development for people with severe disability. Marenée has significant expertise in managing community-based projects and working in partnership with others which has been fundamental to the successful outcomes achieved. These projects have been diverse in nature with many being based in rural and remote areas of Western Australia, ensuring particular emphasis has been placed on achieving positive outcomes for Indigenous people and their communities. Marenée was appointed to the Trust Board in September 2018.
MS SARA SABERI 	Ms Sara Saberi is an experienced board member with expertise in local government, as a former elected member and technical experience as a current officer. She is passionate about environmental matters and support for a number of local community and sporting groups. Sara has a range of qualifications including a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Management and a Graduate Diploma in Environmental Health. Sara was appointed to the Trust Board in July 2018.
MS TRACY SHEA 	Ms Tracy Shea has held a range of policy, advisory and leadership roles across State government in environment, conservation, recreation and nature-based tourism during a career spanning 38 years, with the last 10 spent as an assistant director in parks and visitor services at the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. After retiring from the Department in 2018, Tracy has focused on running her own consultancy business plus her short-term accommodation property in Bridgetown. In recent years Tracy has also worked in the not-for-profit sector where she developed and activated the Spring into Parks program for the WA Parks Foundation which has become an ongoing feature of the Foundation's calendar. Tracy has been a Park Ambassador for the Foundation since 2017 and continues to volunteer with programs that showcase the health benefits of spending time in nature. A longstanding board member of FACET (Forum Advocating Cultural and Eco-Tourism Inc.), Tracy took over the day-to-day running of FACET in July 2020 and is now Chief Executive Officer. She also volunteers her time as Secretary of Geoparks WA and as a judge in the annual WA Tourism Awards. Tracy was appointed to the Trust Board in May 2023.

MS JACQUIE STONE 	Ms Jacquie Stone is an urban planner with 30 years' experience, having worked in both the State and local government sectors. She is currently the Executive Director of Policy at the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, where responsibilities include overseeing policies on water, wetlands, native vegetation, coastal, bushfire, climate change, public open, tourism and Crown land management. Jacquie was appointed to the Trust Board in July 2018.
MR MICHAEL VOROS 	Mr Michael Voros is a Partner of Ashurst Perkins Coie law firm. He is a leading lawyer for environment, climate change, planning and related issues. This includes that he acted for the WA State Government for all environment, planning and water matters for the construction of the new Perth Stadium. He enjoys experiencing Perth's beautiful rivers with his family. In particular he is a keen cyclist and loves the opportunity to cycle around our rivers. Michael is an Independent Director of WestCycle, the not-for-profit peak body for bike riding in Western Australia. Michael was appointed to the Trust Board in March 2024.
MS ROSEMARY WALLEY 	Ms Rosemary Walley is a Whadjuk Noongar woman with connections to other clans throughout the south-west of WA. She holds a Bachelor of Applied Science in Aboriginal Community Management and Development, and a Masters of Philosophy (Health Sciences). As well as her research and studies, Ms Walley, as a part of Kambarang Services, works as a cultural awareness trainer and assists organisations in developing Reconciliation Action Plans. Ms Walley also worked as a Researcher at the Telethon Kids Research Institute. She also lectures in social work courses and delivers workshops and keynote addresses to various health conferences throughout Australia. Rosemary was appointed to the Trust Board in March 2024.

Swan River Trust Meetings

The Trust meets approximately every six weeks. Members' attendance at the eight meetings held during the year is outlined below.

Meeting notices and attendance

Please see below attendance for Trust Board members this financial year.

Table 2. Swan River Trust meetings for the 2025-26 financial year.

Board Member Attendance 2025-26	
David McFerran	8 of 8
Peter King	7 of 8
Marenée Provost	8 of 8
Sara Saberi	5 of 8
Tracy Shea	8 of 8
Jacquie Stone	8 of 8
Michael Voros	8 of 8
Rosemary Walley	4 of 8

Table 3. Swan River Trust members conflict of interest declarations

Month	Issue	Agenda Item No	Board decision
Jul-25	Standing Declarations		
Sep-25	The Chair noted that while his tenure for the Exmouth Gulf Taskforce was completed on 30 June 2025, he then returned to Exmouth for the announcement of the establishment of a new marine park.	General	The declaration was noted and there were no objections by Trust members
Oct-25	Mr Michael Voros advised the Trust that his employer Ashurst Perkins Coie law firm on occasion represents the Public Transport Authority and Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure in Metronet rail related matters. Deputy Chair, Peter King, reminded the Trust of his standing declaration relating to being a member of the Royal Perth Yacht Club which is located in Matilda Bay.	Items 4.2 and 4.3	The Board agreed that Mr Voros would participate in the discussions regarding agenda items 4.2 and 4.3, however would abstain from voting. The Board agreed that Mr King would participate in the discussions regarding agenda items 4.2 and 4.3, however would abstain from voting for item 4.3 (proposed Matilda Bay Ferry Terminal).
Dec-25	Ms Jacquie Stone noted that she had abstained from participating in the ferry terminal development applications with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage given her role as a Swan River Trust Board member.	General	The declaration was noted.
Feb-26	The Chair declared that he is working on the North Ellenbrook West project as well as working with landowners in the Swan Valley.	General	The declaration was noted.
Mar-26	Standing Declarations		
May-26	Standing Declarations		
Jun-26	Standing Declarations		

Table 4. Swan River Trust members standing declarations

Standing declaration
The Chair, Mr David McFerran on occasion works for Hesperia, a Western Australian property development company.
The Deputy Chair, Mr Peter King is a member of the Burswood Park Board and a member of the Royal Perth Yacht Club.
Ms Tracy Shea works for the Forum Advocating Cultural and Eco-tourism (FACET) as its Executive Officer, and volunteers with the WA Parks Foundation.
Michael Voros works at Ashurst Perkins Coie law firm, and is an Independent Director of WestCycle.

During the year, Trust members attended events such as the opening of the Department co-funded City of Belmont Esplanade Foreshore project in November 2025, the Swan Alcoa Landcare Program Funding Ceremony in February 2026, the Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group's Celebration of 30 years of landcare in March 2026 and the River Guardians Family Festival in May 2026.

The Director General of the Department, or their representative, is entitled to attend any meeting of the Trust and take part in the consideration and discussion of any matter before a meeting but cannot vote on any matter (section 22A of the SCRM Act).

Under section 22 of the SCRM Act, the Trust's Chair is required to invite a representative of DevelopmentWA or the relevant local government to attend a meeting of the Trust if a matter to be considered at that meeting is relevant to DevelopmentWA or the local government. When a representative of DevelopmentWA or local government attends a meeting for this purpose, they have all the functions of a Trust member in considering the particular matter. This year, the City of Nedlands, City of Melville, City of Canning, Town of Mosman local governments accepted invitations to attend Trust meetings.

Where it is considered appropriate, the Trust also invites persons with an interest in matters to attend meetings including proponents of development applications and representatives of peak bodies with an interest in the Riverpark and resource management. This year, the Trust invited numerous stakeholders to meet to discuss river management matters, including The Nature Conservancy, Western Australian Planning Commission, Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure, and the Public Transport Authority.

Governance matters

The Trust operates in accordance with Schedule 6 of the SCRM Act, *Public Sector Management Act 1994*, the Department's Code of Conduct and its own Board Charter. The Charter outlines the role, composition and processes relating to the key governance activities of the Trust in accordance with the SCRM Act.

Throughout 2025-26, the Trust continued to implement the outcomes of the Swan River Trust: Communications and public interface review (June 2023) and the Board Effectiveness Review Report (July 2023). One of the key initiatives completed was review and update of the Trust's website to improve communication, the public interface, and external understanding of the Trust's roles, functions and strategic focus.

The Trust continued to regularly review and update its Risk Register throughout the year and re-committed to a six-monthly review of the register.

Delegations

The Trust maintained its delegations to the Department throughout 2025-26.

Performance monitoring and reporting

The Department's officers provide written six-weekly reports on key activities to the Trust. Annual performance is reported in the Trust's Annual Report and the Department Annual Report to Parliament and the Minister for the Environment.

Science updates and advice

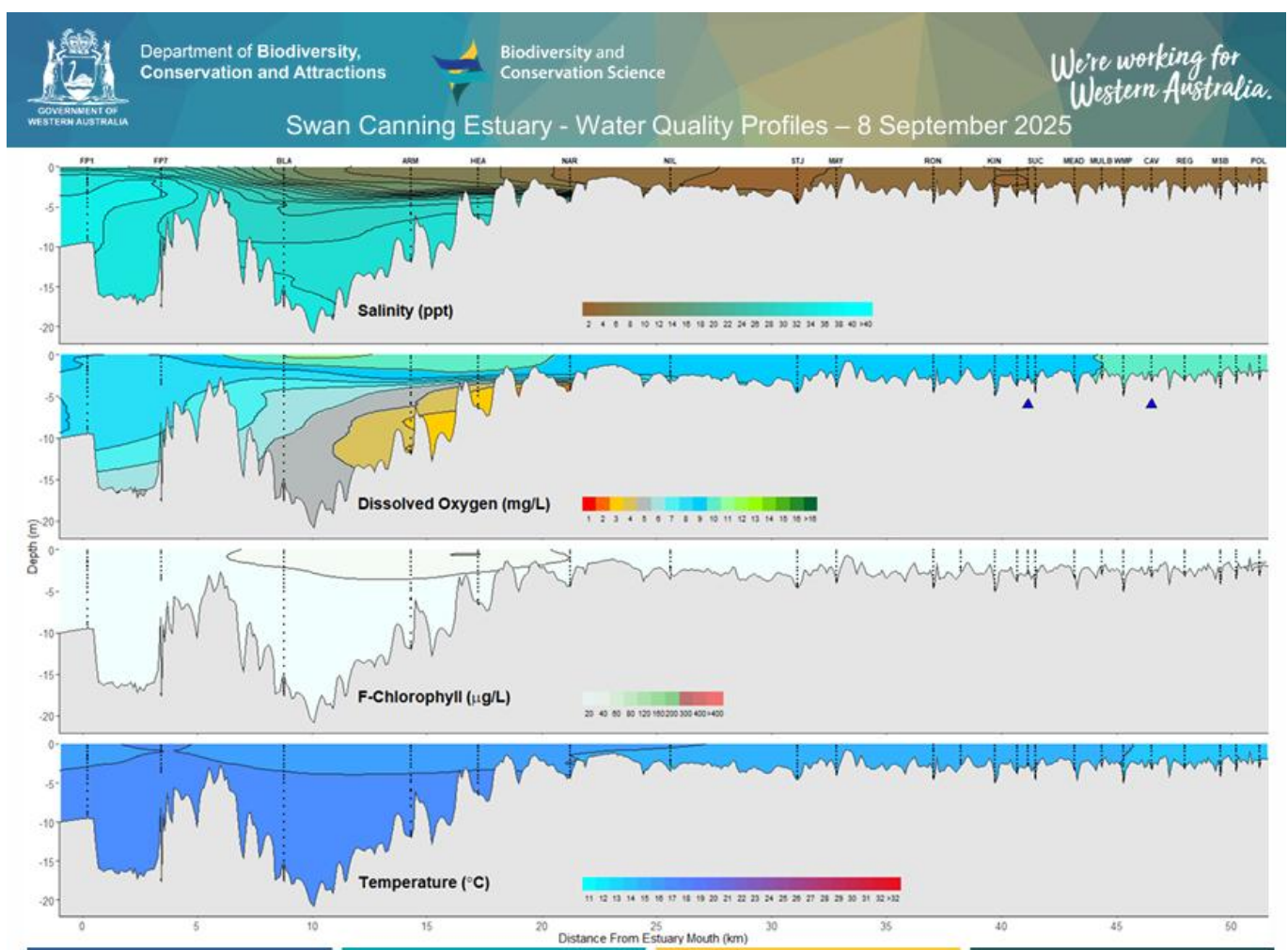
The Department's Rivers and Estuaries Science Program works to coordinate scientific effort and information needs for management of the Swan Canning river system. The program provides scientific advice and support to the Swan Canning Waterways Branch, in relation to waterway condition, management and incident response including, but not limited to, fish kills, algal blooms, sewerage overflows and dolphin deaths. Science information is underpinned by an intensive water quality and biological monitoring and reporting on the estuary and its catchment, as well as focussed research effort that is consistent with the Department's Science Strategy.

Key research themes are:

- Waterway health and investigations: Measuring and reporting on ecological health and investigating threats and ways to mitigate them;
- Catchment science and data integration: integrating data and information to build knowledge and tools that support management and decision making;
- Enhancing biodiversity and habitat: developing better understandings of biodiversity, species distribution, habitat dynamics and function and how to improve and protect it.

Regular updates on routine monitoring and scientific investigations are provided to the Swan River Trust via a service report to help inform management of the Riverpark and River reserve. In 2025-26, the Program was invited to provide quarterly presentations to the Swan River Trust on seasonal conditions, including water quality and harmful algal blooms. Special updates were also provided on a major fish kill event, reef restoration projects and bull shark tracking.

Scientific advice to inform appropriate monitoring and mitigation measures for development approvals and commercial activities within the DCA was also provided, including major infrastructure projects.



Strategic Documents

River Protection Strategy

Part 4 of the SCRM Act outlines the responsibilities of the Trust and the Department to prepare strategic documents for approval by the Minister for the Environment. The first River Protection Strategy (RPS) was released in 2015 and, following a review process, with the endorsement of the Minister for the Environment, the Trust and the Department developed a new RPS.

The RPS provides a coordinated multi-stakeholder strategy to protect and enhance the ecological and community benefit and amenity of the DCA and the Riverpark. To do this, it is understood that action in the wider catchment is needed.

A key aim of the new RPS is to improve collaboration between stakeholders with responsibilities for the Swan Canning river system, by providing strategic direction for the next 10 years.

To develop the new RPS, the Trust and the Department undertook significant external consultation with the community, Whadjuk Aboriginal Corporation, State government agencies, natural resource management groups and the 24 local governments that intersect the Riverpark or have a significant portion of the wider catchment in their boundaries.

In 2025-26, the Trust and the Department finalised the RPS for consideration by the Minister of the Environment and other Ministers with portfolios having river management responsibilities.

Swan Canning Corporate Policies

Corporate policies are a key mechanism through which the Trust and the Department provide clear and consistent direction for planning, development and management of activities within the Swan Canning DCA. During 2025-26, the Trust and the Department progressed a significant program of policy renewal and development to ensure its policy framework remains contemporary, responsive and aligned with the unique values of the DCA.

In 2025-26, five corporate policies relating to planning for wastewater, dewatering, stormwater management, jetties and dredging activities affecting the DCA were reviewed and updated. The wastewater and dewatering policies were substantively updated to reflect contemporary best practice and strengthen guidance for proponents and decision-makers. Updates to the stormwater, jetties and dredging policies were administrative in nature, ensuring consistency, clarity and alignment with current legislation and assessment processes, while continuing to support appropriate development outcomes and protection of the DCA.

Complementing these updates, a new corporate policy comprising locality-specific statements supported by nine locality plans and associated action plans was also developed. This new policy framework recognises the distinct character, values and pressures of different reaches of the river system and provides tailored direction to help ensure that planning, development and ongoing management protect and enhance the unique qualities of each locality.

Djarlgarro (Canning Waterways) Restoration Plan

The Trust played a key strategic role in guiding development of the *Djarlgarro Beeloo Mulgang Beeliar: The River of the Three Peoples: Djarlgarro (Canning Waterways) Restoration Plan*. The Djarlgarro Plan is a multi-stakeholder, waterway restoration plan led by the Department in partnership with Local and State government agencies, Natural Resource Management groups and the Whadjuk Aboriginal Corporation.

The Djarlgarro Plan includes the waterways of the Canning, Southern and Wungong rivers (collectively known as Djarlgarro), which includes the largest freshwater river system in the Perth area. The Plan stretched from the Canning and Wungong dams to Canning Bridge in Applecross/Como.

The Djarlgarro Plan is a 10-year aspirational plan comprising more than 130 actions. It serves as an important reference document for the new RPS, which provides the strategic direction needed to protect and enhance the ecological and community values of the Swan Canning Riverpark and its catchment.

Statutory Assessments and Projects

In its statutory assessment role under the SCRM Act, the Department assesses and determines, or provides advice to the Minister for the Environment on, development proposals within the Swan Canning DCA. In performing its assessment function under Part 5 of the SCRM Act, the Department must seek advice from the Trust and include that advice in its report to the Minister.

During 2025-26, the Trust provided advice to the Director General of the Department on four development applications determined in accordance with Part 5 of the SCRM Act and four requests for variation of a development approval made pursuant to Section 84.

Significant developments were considered within the public foreshore reserves and river this year. Highlights included planning and design for the rehabilitation of the foreshore around Coode Street in South Perth.

Further, long term planning around the river continued through the preparation of important foreshore reserve plans for the Hinds Reserve – Riverside Gardens foreshore, within and around Peninsula Farm, and at Bardon Park within the City of Bayswater. In addition, implementation of the Ashfield Flats Master Plan in Bassendean progressed with rehabilitation plans being prepared to allow implementation in the 2026-27 financial year.

The Department also provided advice under delegated authority of the Trust to the Western Australian Planning Commission and local governments in accordance with the Metropolitan Region Scheme (MRS), regarding planning proposals that abut, are partly contained within, or affect, the DCA. During 2025-26, the Department’s Swan Canning Waterways Branch assessed, and provided advice, on 119 development applications on behalf of the Trust in accordance with the MRS.

In relation to development under the MRS, of particular note, negotiations relating to the urban redevelopment of the Belmont Racecourse continue to warrant significant involvement. The project has continued to extend around the peninsula, and therefore planning advice continues to focus on foreshore restoration, development setback, ensuring appropriate public access and infrastructure provision within future Regional Open Space Reserves.

Table 5. Swan River Trust statutory assessment advice

Approval type	Number
Part 5 SCRM Act development applications	4
Section 84 SCRM Act requests for variation to development approvals	4
MRS development applications	119



Construction of Canning Bridge apartments. Photo – Peter Howie, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

Major Proposals

Swan River Crossings (Fremantle Traffic Bridge replacement)

On behalf of the Trust, the Department continues to provide on-going advice on construction management of the Fremantle Traffic Bridge replacement project.

The new bridge will replace the previous Fremantle Traffic Bridge at its current alignment and consists of an extradosed design that incorporates cantilevers and cable support.

Construction of the bridge is well underway, and demolition of the old bridge is almost complete with the new pylon towers and cable-stays now in place. To facilitate bridge demolition, the bridge closure took place in February 2026. Bridge deck pours are currently underway (see below image) and all environmental controls are proving effective, with no significant incidents recorded.



First deck concrete pour on the northern side of the bridge. *Photo – Main Roads WA*

Ferry Service Expansion on the Swan River

Following the Department's assessment of the proposed ferry terminal development application at Matilda Bay Reserve and Applecross, and subsequent advice provided by the Swan River Trust, the Western Australian Planning Commission granted development approval for the two terminals in January 2026. The Department has also further engaged in discussions with the Public Transport Authority and the Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure regarding the operational component of the Metronet on Swan Ferry Expansion.

The Trust continues to receive regular briefings, and provide advice on the project, as required.

Community Engagement and Projects

River Guardians Family Festival

The Trust continued to support the River Guardians program, which promotes community stewardship and encourages practical action to protect the Derbal Yirragan Djarlgarro (Swan Canning river system) and its catchment. The program, established in 2008, now has more than 2,700 members who contribute to river protection through volunteering, education and community-led action.

A key initiative during the year was the 2026 River Guardians Family Festival, a free community event held on the South Perth foreshore. The festival attracted more than 1,000 attendees and was delivered in partnership with Josh Byrne & Associates, Nature Play WA, the City of South Perth and 16 participating organisations, including wildlife and conservation groups, educators, and State and local government agencies.

The festival provided opportunities for the community to learn about river health, biodiversity conservation and sustainable living through presentations, interactive displays, hands-on activities and informal discussions with environmental practitioners, scientists and community groups.

A dedicated children's activity zone, delivered by Nature Play WA, encouraged young people to connect with nature and learn about the rivers through play-based experiences. The event commenced with a Welcome to Country by Elder Vaughn Joshua McGuire and featured a main stage program including presentations, panel discussions and a RiverWise gardening session presented by Josh Byrne and Sabrina Hahn.

The festival highlighted the important role that informed and engaged communities play in protecting and enhancing the Swan Canning Riverpark and its catchment for future generations.



The 2026 River Guardians Family Festival held at Sir James Mitchell Park, South Perth. Josh Byrne facilitating a panel discussion featuring behaviour change and citizen science specialists. Whadjuk Elder Vaughn Joshua McGuire opening the event with a Welcome to County. *Photos – Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions*

The Esplanade Foreshore Stabilisation and Landscaping Works, Ascot, City of Belmont

In November 2025, the Esplanade Foreshore Project reached practical completion. The project stabilised 200m of degraded foreshore including the replacement of 75m of failing riverwall through a variety of foreshore management techniques including rock revetment, rock toe protection, bio-engineering and the establishment of riparian vegetation. In addition to improving the long-term resilience and ecological health of the foreshore, the project enhanced recreational opportunities for the community through the construction of a viewing deck and an informal nature play space. These improvements provide greater public access to, and appreciation of, the river environment while supporting the ongoing protection of this important foreshore area.



Completed works at the Esplanade, Ascot. *Photos – Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions*

Hurlingham Living Stream, Sir James Mitchell Park, South Perth, City of South Perth

The Hurlingham Living Stream Project has progressed to Stage 2, with more than 20,000 riparian seedlings planted in May 2026. This three year project is transforming an area of underutilised, frequently waterlogged turf adjacent to the existing drain into a thriving native vegetation corridor. Funded through the Swan Canning Riverpark Urban Forest Program and delivered in partnership with the City of South Perth, the project will significantly enhance local biodiversity and ecological resilience. Over the life of the project, more than 40,000 native seedlings will be planted, creating critical habitat and connectivity for local fauna.

An informal path network has also been constructed along both sides of the 360 metre channel, providing the community with new opportunities to experience and connect with nature within the Swan Canning Riverpark.



Progress of the Hurlingham Living Stream project, Sir James Mitchell Park, South Perth. *Photos – David McFerran, Swan River Trust Chair*



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