



## Managing bushland on school sites

### *The North Dandalup Primary School Bushland Project*

Bushland on school sites can provide a special learning environment for students, and at the same time, a management challenge for school communities. In North Dandalup, 80 km from Perth, the local primary school has one such bushland area: a 1.78 hectare nationally significance site containing rare ecosystems. Management of the bushland has been led by the school community and the local landcare centre for over 10 years, with both groups keen to address long-term management issues such as weeds, dieback, altered fire regimes, and even possible clearing for future development.

With the PHCC's support, a project was initiated in 2016 to

prepare an Action Plan to guide management over the site for the next 10 years, and prioritise key actions. The project also assisted with the implementation of on-ground works including weed control, feral animal control and seed collecting. Baseline flora surveys and the involvement of the local Aboriginal community is also adding to the school community's knowledge and understanding of the bushland.

The PHCC is using the Action Planning approach to assist other community groups to strategically plan for their bushland areas and focus attention on priority management actions.

#### FUNDING PROGRAM

Australian Government's National Landcare Program (NLP)

#### PHCC PROGRAM

NLP Natural Assets

#### PHCC PROJECT

Community Environmental Grants

#### FUNDING

Australian Government NLP \$8,940

In-kind\* \$18,551

\*North Dandalup Primary School, Landcare SJ, Other

#### REGIONAL COVERAGE



Coastal Plain  
Forest & Scarp

• North Dandalup

#### STAKEHOLDERS

North Dandalup Primary School community, Department of Education, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Surrounding landholders, Landcare SJ Inc., Shire of Murray, Local Aboriginal community, North Dandalup Volunteer Bushfire Brigade, Department of Fire and Emergency Services

#### BENEFICIARIES

North Dandalup Primary School Community, Noongar Community, Department of Education, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

#### PROJECT MANAGER

Jo Garvey

#### STEERING COMMITTEE

Eliza Dowling, Mike Schultz, Darralyn Ebsary, Peter Hick



*'This project has enabled the school community to give the bushland the level of care that it deserves as a threatened ecological community. We now have an Action Plan and the technical support to implement that Plan. I really appreciate how Landcare SJ and the PHCC link us to the right people...who care about the bushland as much as we do'*

*~ Denise Honeybone, Teacher, North Dandalup Primary School ~*

*"(We) have a fantastic and very valuable piece of bushland that contains an amazing variety of plant communities that are threatened ecological communities! Congratulations to North Dandalup Primary School staff and students for recognizing its special values, and for looking after it."*

*~ Val English, Principal Ecologist, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions ~*

#### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Development of school-friendly 10 year Action Plan to prioritise bushland management activities
- Establishment of flora and vegetation plots to assess long-term changes in vegetation conditions
- Regular environmental education activities with students in the bushland including nature walks, revegetation, monitoring and plant identification
- New links created between teachers and experts in bushland management, ecology and Noongar culture
- Promotion of project to seven (7) other schools through the Sustainable Schools Network
- Increased consideration of bushland ecology in fire management and controlled burns
- Implementation of long-term weed control program, including control of bulbous weeds
- Other on-ground works including rabbit control and seed collection.

#### FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Weed control, monitoring of flora plots

#### LINKS TO OTHER PROJECTS

Project is linked to similar projects in other threatened ecological communities on the eastern side of the Swan Coastal Plain, including Brickwood Reserve Byford and Duckpond Reserve Oldbury.

Project achievements and learnings have been shared with a number of other schools at the Sustainable Schools' Network in November 2016, with a presentation from Project Manager Kristy Gregory. The presentation provided an opportunity for the Primary School to celebrate their achievements, and illustrated the benefits of Landcare projects as a learning tool for school children of all ages. The schools were particularly interested in setting up similar bushland management projects with relevant Landcare organisations.

#### COLLABORATION

Strong collaboration between North Dandalup Primary School and Landcare SJ Inc. Landcare SJ bring in other expertise and key stakeholders from Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions, local Aboriginal community, and professional natural area managers.