

Hotham-Williams Project REPORT

PHCC General Meeting April 2020

Melanie Durack, Program Manager, Hotham Williams



RLP – Numbat Neighbourhood

Jul 2018 – Jun 2023 \$2,174,505

Managed by Mel Durack, supported by Christine Townsend (Farmers for Fauna Coordinator) 3 days/week.

- The **Year 2 Q3 reporting was completed** and submitted into the MERIT reporting tool (\$52,568.41 exc GST).
- Remaining to be **delivered in Q4** (\$179,337.50 exc GST):
 - o Controlling access/km x 5 (delivered through Community Environmental Grants (CEG) 2019/20)
 - o Community stakeholder engagement/Onground works x 5 (delivered through CEG)
 - o Establishing/maintaining feral free enclosures/No. enclosures x 2 (DBCA agreement)
 - o Establishing/maintaining monitoring regimes/ No. regimes x 3 (DBCA agreement)
 - o Establishing/maintaining breeding programs/No. programs x 1 (DBCA/Perth Zoo agreement)
 - o Fauna survey/No. surveys x 1 (DBCA agreement)
 - o Habitat augmentation/No. structures x 4 (PHCC)
 - o Managing disease/No. ha x 10 (PHCC)
 - o Project planning and delivery of documents/No. days x 42.5 (PHCC)
 - o Removing weeds/initial ha x 12 (delivered through CEG)
- Reviewing the remainder of deliverables for year 2 and on-track with some possible adjustments how we deliver are required with the current COVID-19 crisis. See details below:
 - o Community Environmental Grant Round for 2019-20: communications in progress with grant recipients for all 14 project receipts to see how they are tracking with progress and if they foresee any issues with project delivery during the COVID-19 crisis. Issue with one project where a farm is changing ownership in April. This will relate only to the revegetation component of the project. Fencing will be completed. PHCC working through a potential solution with the Hotham-Williams Steering Committee; propose to transfer seedlings to another potential project. Also looking at impact of COVID-19 on completion inspections which takes into account intraregional travel.
 - o Year 2 Q4 Disease management: Disease mapping to occur in the Yornaning Dam reserve which is immediately adjacent to the Dryandra Woodlands. Shire of Cuballing have been sent an MOU to allow a PHCC contractor access to conduct the work. This work needs to be completed by June. Currently working through intraregional travel restrictions and possible exemptions for PHCC as Hotham-Williams is part of the Peel and Wheatbelt regions.
 - o Year 2 Q4 Nestbox installation for red-tailed phascogale: Planned for April/May. As above currently working through intraregional travel restrictions and possible exemptions for PHCC as Hotham-Williams is part of the Peel and Wheatbelt regions.
 - o Year 2 Q4 DBCA Deliverables: Perth Zoo/DBCA Science and the Narrogin Wheatbelt Parks and Wildlife branch have deliverables through two agreements which are currently on track.
- A **Hotham-Williams Steering Committee** meeting was held on 22nd March. Planned budgets and works associated with these were recommended by the group. Minutes in progress.
- A **1080 accreditation classroom** training session was coordinated by PHCC and held in the Narrogin DPRID office. This was well attended by farmers as well as Newmont staff and Newmont contractor

group Indigenous Work About. Farmers had the opportunity to apply for PHCC financial support towards their accreditation costs and 12 months of 1080 baits.

- **Community Environmental Grant Round for 2020-21:** plans to open a grant round for 2020-21 in May/June however will need careful planning on staff movement and assisting landholders in consultation with other Program Managers and CEO to take COVID-19 restrictions.
- **Farmers for Fauna project:** planning to ramp up communications with landholders and encourage more loaning of cage traps and get involved with feral animal control in this situation when people need to stay home. Also planning to communicate the use of FeralScan to record feral animal sightings and culling.
- **Numbats in the Neighbourhood S.H.A.R.E** was held on 17th March in Dryandra Woodland. A great turn out with 71 people in attendance. Approx. 30 guests stayed on and enjoyed the Barna Mia nocturnal tour. Everyone was very accommodating and practiced social distancing. Great feedback on evaluations forms. Narrogin Observer attend the event and have since produced as article. See attached.
- PHCC supported the **Wandering and Williams Red Card for Red Fox Events** which occurred over single nights in February and March. The combined tally of feral animals culled was 395 foxes, 23 feral cats, 14 feral pigs and 240 wild rabbits; totaling 627 feral animals removed from the environment.
- Video conferenced into the **Numbat Recovery Team meeting** on 23rd March. PHCC present to the group under the Numbat "Recovery Action 4. Increase community awareness and participation in the conservation of the Numbat. PHCC's support through the Numbat Neighbourhood project was acknowledged by the group.

Newmont - Hotham-Williams NRM & Conservation Project

Jan 2018 - Dec 2022 \$500,000

Managed by Mel Durack, supported by Kristy Gregory 2 days/week until 30th June 2020.

- Hotham-Williams staff currently reviewing the second version of the **River Action Plan (RAP)** which has been produced through a partnership with Urbaqua. The report has also been provided to Newmont for their review.
- Using the recommendations from the RAP we are progressing with the development of **on-ground project proposals (restoration plans)** for each of the 8 sites which were field assessed (the remainder of the catchment was desktop assessed due to budget). The PHCC requires further funding to engage Urbaqua for the development of detailed and **site specific concept plans**. These will form a major component of the project proposals and will focus on technical requirements such as the location and design of stock crossings/riffles, rock pitching, access points for recreation, and modification to surface drainage, including environmental engineering concept drawings. Once the designs and cost requirements have been completed, the full project proposals (restoration plans) can be finalised for each site and further funding sought for implementation. PHCC has been in discussions with South32 to potentially fund the concept plans (with Newmont funding PHCC's FTS time), awaiting written confirmation.
- In addition to the above, we have been discussing with **South32 and Newmont longer term plans to support on-ground projects** (based on the RAP recommendations) and potential longer term partnerships. Further discussions are planned with the two organisations in April.
- The **Autumn River Health Studies** occurred in early March. Landholders were very accommodating providing access to their private property through memorandum of understandings. A draft report is being prepared by Wetland Research and Management.
- The Minerals Council of Australia Environmental and Community Workshop planned for 31st March in Perth has been postponed until November. Mel was requested to present under the topic of water

stewardship following on from the joint presentation by Mel and Newmont's Cath Pattenden at the 2018 MCA Melbourne conference about the Newmont-PHCC partnership.

- Newmont is currently preparing several variations to the Community Partnership Agreement for PHCC review. These are due to improvements made to the project.
- An annual progress report was submitted to Newmont along with the annual invoice for payment (\$100,000).

Mel Durack will continue to represent PHCC at the quarterly Newmont Community Reference Group meetings in 2020 and is the current chair.

- The advertising for a permanent replacement for this project (replacing Kate Barr) is currently on hold due to the COVID-19 crisis.

South32 - Tunbridge Gully Stage 3&4 (South32)

Jul 2018 – Jun 2021 \$78,141

Managed by Mel Durack and delivered by Helen Parsons working 2 days/week.

- Planning is currently in place for the 4th round of weed spraying; due to occur in April working around contractor travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 crisis.
- Planting activities planned with the local schools will need to be re-assessed closed to the time depending on COVID-19 restrictions.
- A field day on *Juncus acutus* control is being planned for mid-year to demonstrate the work which been undertaken to control the invasive weed within a natural creekline and on farm land. This will be a jointly coordinated workshop with the Greening Farms project. Timing will be depending on gathering restrictions due to the COVID-19 crisis.
- Mel Durack will continue to represent PHCC at the quarterly South32 Mine Community Liaison Committee meetings in 2020. South32 will be undertaking extensive consultation for their expansion project ahead of a public environmental review period which is due the second half of this year.
- An annual progress report has been drafted for stage 3 and 4 of the project.
- Helen Parsons assisting with this project and additional other project support 2 days per week.

Hotham-Williams Shires MOU *(subject to annual budget approvals)*

Aug 2018 – Aug 2023

\$180,000*

Managed by Mel Durack and delivered by Helen Parsons working 2 days/week.

- PHCC will be assisted Friends of the Reserves Boddington (Inc.) with the final acquittal for the Camballing Reserve Project in February. This project has had three stages of funding from State NRM and the aim was to control Bridal Creeper control in Camballing Reserve (Boddington) and other locations in the Boddington Shire.
- Further works at Ranford Pool in Boddington on hold due to social distancing requirements. Final works include additional rock placement on walkways and a celebration and unveiling event. This project is funded by South32 with coordination support from PHCC and the Shire of Boddington.

Other Project Support

- Mel has been assisting Andrew with the contract documentation required to the Australian Government for the "Protecting WA Black Cockatoos" project which PHCC has received a draft "Additional Services Work Order".
- Mel presented at the Greening Farms Pigs, Pest and Biosecurity Workshop (focus on feral pigs): 5th March in Cuballing (Greening Farms Project: Paula Pownall). The focus of the presentation was PHCC projects and support to Hotham-Williams Community.

- Mel attended a Wandering Farm Productivity Group meeting on 4th March. The group is trying to re-invigorate. Plans for an event to bring people together has been put on hold.

Planned Events (and/or PHCC sponsoring or presenting) – check website

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all face to face events have been delayed until later in 2020.

- Tunbridge Gully
 - o *Juncus acutus* field Workshop (to be delivered with Greening Farms project) – mid year TBC
- Planned Numbat Neighbourhood events:
 - o Williams Primary School Excursion to Dryandra (inc. Project Numbat) – October 2020
 - o Numbat Dig Workshop with landholders – November 2020
 - o 1080 accreditation workshop – February 2021
 - o Pest animal workshop and support – March 2021
 - o Potential Project Numbat School Incursions TBC
 - o Dieback Green Card Training (in conjunction with disease mapping) – Sept/Oct 2020

Communications – See most recent issues of ***“Landcare Matters: Hotham Williams” March and April 2020 Edition*** attached.

Work Health Safety

There are no incidences to report.

Melanie Durack

Program Manager, Hotham-Williams

Landcare matters

Hotham-Williams sub-catchment update



PHCC Working Together
Peel-Harvey Catchment Council

Edition 40
March 2020



NRM is the management of natural resources such as land, water, soils, plants and animals. It brings together land use planning, water management, biodiversity conservation and sustainability of industries such as agriculture, mining, tourism, fisheries and forestry.



Wandering Community Fox Hunt



The recent Wandering Community Fox Hunt was a huge success with 114 foxes, 5 feral cats, 1 feral pig and 32 rabbits removed from the environment in one night, helping both agriculture and threatened species.

PHCC is proud to support this event and would like to thank the 51 people who participated in this annual community event.

1080 Accreditation

Local Landholders, Indigenous Workabout and Newmont employees attended a 1080 accreditation course at the DPIRD office Narrogin on the 25 February. Thank you to Mike Clark from DPIRD who taught landholders how to safely use 1080 to control introduced animals, including foxes, to protect stock and threatened species from being predated.

If you are interested in completing your 1080 training please contact Christine on 0455 166 780 or christine.townsend@peel-harvey.org.au

Hotham-Williams Welcomes New NRM Support Officer

Kristy Gregory from Landcare SJ is kindly helping out the Hotham-Williams team two days a week until the end of the financial year.

We're very happy to have Kristy as part of the team and are grateful to Landcare SJ for sharing her time with us. Kristy has many years of Landcare experience and her local knowledge is exceptional.

Kristy will be helping to finalise the River Action Plan for the Hotham and Williams Rivers. This will lead to potential restoration projects to be discussed with the community and relevant local Governments.



Thank you!

Thank you to all the local community members who nominated PHCC as their local community group to donate their reward for completing the Voconiq Local Voices Survey about Newmont Boddington Gold's activities in Boddington, we appreciate it!

Coming Up...

4 Wandering Productivity Group
MAR 7pm at Wandering CRC
contact Max Watts 0428 841 069 or maxwatts@skymesh.com.au

5 Pigs, Pests and Biosecurity
MAR **Event** in Cuballing *contact paula.pownall@peel-harvey.org.au*

11-13 Talkin' Soil Health Conference
MAR *contact paula.pownall@peel-harvey.org.au*

17 S.H.A.R.E. Numbats
MAR *contact christine.townsend@peel-harvey.org.au*

20-22 Williams Red Card Fox Shoot
MAR *contact williamsfoxshoot@yahoo.com*

*Do you have an NRM event you would like us to promote? Please contact Mel Durack at melanie.durack@peel-harvey.org.au or 0455 166 780 or **6369 8801***

Numbats in the Neighbourhood – SHARE Out and About



Photo: John Lawson

(DBCA), Peter Lacey (DBCA), Peter Mawson (Perth Zoo) and PHCC's Melanie Durack. There will also be short talks from Project Numbat, John Lawson (Numbat Task Force), Rob Harris (Local Farmer) and PHCC's Christine Townsend.

Guests will have the option to attend the Barna Mia Nocturnal Animal Sanctuary after enjoying a light supper.

RSVP is essential so if you are interested in attending this event please RSVP to events@peel-harvey.org.au or call 6369 8800.

PHCC's quarterly S.H.A.R.E event will be held in Dryandra Woodland on Tuesday 17th March. **Numbats in the Neighbourhood** will start at 4:30pm. Guest speakers include Tony Friend



These projects are supported by the Peel-Harvey Catchment Council through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, Newmont Goldcorp and the Shires of Boddington, Cuballing, Wandering and Williams



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Landcare matters

Hotham-Williams sub-catchment update



Edition 41
April 2020



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Numbats in the Neighbourhood

PHCC's latest SHARE event was out and about in Dryandra Woodland presenting Numbats in the Neighbourhood.

The 71 attendees were treated to interesting presentations on all things numbats from guest speakers Tony Friend (DBCA), Peter Lacey (DBCA), Peter Mawson (Perth Zoo) and PHCC's own Mel Durack. Guest speakers in the 'speed dating' session spoke on a range of topics including a farmers perspective, how Numbat Taskforce is raising numbat awareness, what Project Numbat is up to and why we should all visit Barna Mia animal sanctuary. Dr Sally Box, the Threatened Species Commissioner sent through a video presentation which you can find on the event page of our website.

After supper the rain that had been falling most of the afternoon cleared for the visit to Barna Mia animal sanctuary. Guests saw boodies, bilbies, woylies, mala and quenda in their natural environment. Thank you to all the quest speakers and for everyone who attended the first SHARE out and About.



Photo: Peter Mawson, Tony Friend, Rob Harris (local farmer), Peter Lacey, John Lawson (Numbat Taskforce), Jock Abraham (Local Noongar Elder), Christine Townsend and Mel Durack.



Pigs, Pest & Biosecurity

The Cuballing Recreation Centre was buzzing on Thursday 5th of March when over 20 landholders and community members attended a three hour intensive Pigs, Pests and Biosecurity event.

Four guest speakers including Graeme Dent, President of the Western Australia Pork Producers Association, and Jo Wills from the Lake Muir Denbarker Community Feral Pig Eradication Group sparked lively discussion on a range of issues, including feral pigs, African Swine Fever, roadside weeds, PHCC projects and support.

The event was part of PHCC's Greening Farms project which supports farmers with management of on-farm vegetation, revegetation, fodder and soil health.

If you missed out and would like further information, please email our Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator, Paula on paula.pownall@peel-harvey.org.au

Coming Up...

- If you have received a Community Environment Grant we will be in touch soon to see how you are going with your projects.
- Christine Townsend our Farmers for Fauna Coordinator will be in touch with landholders surrounding Dryandra soon to see if you need any help with feral cat management and to provide some information on how to use Feralscan. If you have recently trapped a cat or if you would like to loan a cage trap please email christine. townsend@peel-harvey.org.au

Do you have an NRM event or information you would like us to promote? Please contact Mel Durack at melanie.durack@peel-harvey.org.au or 0455 166 780 or 6369 8801

Covid-19 We value the health and safety of our whole community and PHCC has made the decision to temporarily close our office to visitors. We are still working and you can reach us via phone on 6369 8801 or 0455 166 780 or via email.

Soil Health Champion: Shaun Wittwer



Congratulations to Cuballing farmer Shaun Wittwer on being awarded the 2020 PHCC Soil Health Champion at the recent Talking Soil Health #TSH2020 conference in York, hosted by Wheatbelt NRM.

PHCC nominated Shaun for the work he and his family are doing to increase production and profitability by improving soil health and the landscape from the ground up. The Wittwer family have been involved in Landcare activities for more than 30 years and have planted over 200,000 salt bush shrubs.



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