

MANAGEMENT TEAM 2024 2025
REPORT
to
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 19/3/2026

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Established in 2018, our mission is to facilitate the conservation and promotion of Meelup Regional Park whilst encouraging community participation and education that ensures the long-term sustainability of the Park's unique plants, animals, and landscape.

The Friends of Meelup Management Team comprised:
Rebecca Ehlers Chairperson, Tony Smurthwaite (Acting Chairperson) Ros Hamdorf Deputy Chairperson, Greg Simpson Treasurer and team members Wendy Kilian, Bill Biggs, Simon Ringrose, Dr Bob Jarvis (also Meelup Management Committee Rep).

A big thankyou to those members that have volunteered their time on the management team to help progress the Friends of Meelup. Thankyou to Rebecca Ehlers and to Tony Smurthwaite who are both retiring from the management team.

Also, thank you to the members of the Cape Naturaliste Conservation Enterprise (CNCE) team, Bill Biggs (Chairperson) Kerry Stewart, Dr Bob Jarvis, Greg Simpson, Albert Haak, Tony Smurthwaite, Mandy Polley and Cass Dury.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP- MEREDITH AND PAUL McGARRY

Life Membership was awarded to Paul and Meredith McGarry to acknowledge the support provided to the Friends of Meelup. Paul and Meredith have contributed a substantial sum with which the Friends of Meelup have been able to pursue ambitious plans including establishing the Cape Naturaliste Conservation Enterprise which has attracted a further \$300.000 in a State NRM Grant.

MEMBERSHIP

Friends of Meelup Regional Park currently has 180 members including three Associate members. New members are welcome and encouraged to get involved though the FOM website and by attending FOM events.

TUESDAY VOLUNTEER GROUP

A group of volunteers meet every Tuesday morning at 9 am for an hour to work in the park, pruning trails, planting, weeding, some litter collection, and other small jobs along the way. Nothing too strenuous. Members are invited to join this group, please contact Rod Deakin 0400 776 073

CAPE NATURALISTE CONSERVATION ENTERPRISE (CNCE)

This project now entering its third year, commenced in 2023, and is overseen by a dedicated group of volunteers under the Friends of Meelup banner.

The CNCE project is funded by State Government NRM grant and by private donations. The CNCE project engages key stakeholder in the Meelup Regional Park and Cape Naturalist

region to assist delivery of the project including preparation of a management plan and on-ground activities including weed control, feral animal control and waterway and coastal restoration.

The CNCE project enabled a partnership with Nature Conservation Margaret River Region (NCMRR), to deliver the CNCE project and has formed an alliance with Wadandi rangers programme and the organisation Line in the Sand, to provide funding for delivery of the CNCE project.

Project Officer Mandy Polley and Cass Jury Project Manager have contributed an enormous amount of work to see this project through, and we thank them very much.

CURRENT RESEARCH AND OTHER PROJECTS

Visitor Impact Study

The visitor impact study co-ordinated by Chester Burton and Rod Deakin commenced 2021, to monitor Park visitors and to collect data on the number of vehicles, bikes and pedestrians using the Park and to assess visitor impact on the landscape and infrastructure. This information also contributes to determining the Park's social and economic value to the community and enable us to encourage/consult/lobby for the needed resources for future public use demand.

Photographic Image Monitoring

Kerry Grist is continuing photo monitoring of heavy use areas in the park. The images collected provide a visual record, to assist the long-term management and maintenance of Meelup Regional Park.

Soil Health Project

The Soil Health project co-ordinated by Dr Jenny Bryce since 2021, has developed considerable interest from other organisations since its commencement. This project seeks to better understand effects of fire on soil microbiology health and Dr Christina Birnbaum, Uni of Queensland and her master's student Genevieve Jurd is assisting this project.

Camera Trapping Programme

With support from Dunsborough Lions Club and City of Busselton, we were able to implement a camera trapping programme to capture images of fauna and feral animals within the park. Wendy Kilain and Dr Bob Jarvis co-ordinate the trapping programme and the images since commencement of this programme are providing valuable data to help guide feral animal management.

EDUCATION AND PROMOTION

Newsletters

Newsletters provide an essential means of keeping members informed of Friends of Meelup activity's, achievements and various matters relating to the park. Newsletters are posted to members as often as possible. It takes a lot of volunteer effort to prepare the newsletters, and we hope they are informative.

Website

Friends of Meelup website is up and running and provides information on current projects upcoming events, how to become a FOM member and information for those that would like to make a tax-deductible donation.

Flora Walks

Three Flora walks were held in September, all well attended. Starting at Meelup carpark and wandering up the "Car Rally Trail" with guides to show the wonders of your Regional Park.

Sundowner Events

This year's presentations coordinated by Dr Bob Jarvis, continued to attract considerable interest, and were well received by the community, with good attendance at each event.

Sundowner: Food for Thought 19 February

Rod Cary Nurseryman, horticulturist, and teacher from the Geography Community Landcare Nursery discussed and informed attendees on the use of local significant food and medicine plants in gardens and for revegetation.

Sundowner: Pets Away Possums and Phascogales will Play 12 Mar 2025

Dr Gillian Bryant, presentation talked through the impacts of cats on our biodiversity and shared success stories of on ground management. Founded in 2020, the Western Australian Feral Cat Working Group aims to improve native fauna conservation through humane management of feral cats.

Sundowner: From a Beach Nesting Birds Eye View 4 July 2025

Tegan Knowles and Kirrily Hastings gave us an informative presentation about beach nesting birds and how coastal restoration impacts nesting opportunities, and the latest research on best practice coastal rehabilitation for beach nesting birds.

Sundowner: Dynamic Earth 28th May

Peter Lane presented how a dynamic Earth has provided the foundation for a diverse ecosystem, formed the Leeuwin Naturaliste Ridge, and afforded a generous supply of both rain and groundwater. Peter also explained how a minor event on the other side of the world led to the formation of our cave system.

Sundowner: The World Under your Feet 18th June

Dr Jen Bryce presented an update on the soil research in Meelup Regional Park, which began in 2022, following a wildfire. This presentation explored the latest understanding of the relationship between soil microbes and human health from around the world and how this relates to local land management, biodiversity, and our health?

Sundowner Wild about Wildflowers 3, 7, 10 and 14 September

During September, our volunteer experts guided several small group tours to identify over fifty of our most treasured Flora. A handbook was provided to participants.

Sundowner: Capes Raptors 7 November 2025

This presentation included Tara Finch (Capes Raptor Centre) presentation about the Capes region raptors, Boyd Wykes (Owl Friendly Margaret River) speaking about "A hoo's hoo of SW WA night birds", and Poppy Mahon (Youth Action for Wildlife) speaking about "Think before you bait: Rodenticides kill more than rats!"

Sundowner: Trail Counter Project 28 January 2026

Chester Burton and Rod Deakin presented their findings from years of data collection by our Trail Counters, revealing pedestrian and bike numbers using the Walking Trails and Firebreaks in Meelup Regional Park.

Dunsborough Primary School Bay Ok

The Dunsborough Primary School Bay OK day was an enormous success for the advancement of respect for the environment. Friends of Meelup members were prominent contributors with Flora and Fauna presentations and a particular focus on Meelup. Feedback from the students demonstrated a deep understanding and respect for the natural assets of our district.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Trans Cape Swim Run 2026

The Trans Cape Swim-Run has created an initiative to raise money for local organisations that engage in protection of the area's natural environment. Fundraising from this event was achieved through an initiative called "A tee or a tree," enabling people entering the event choosing to forego their event T-shirt and instead donate the money equivalent (for the cost of the T shirt), to a local environmental protection organisation. This year the Friends of Meelup were the recipients of a donation from the organisers of this event.

QR Codes

To assist visitors to the park, QR codes on blue plaques have been fitted to the Trail Marker Boxes at the junction of most trails in the park. Visitors can use the camera on their smartphone to scan the QR code, which will take them to the Meelup Flora website.

DONATIONS

As a not-for-profit organisation the Friends of Meelup rely on community involvement and support to enable Friends of Meelup to pursue our mission which is - *to facilitate the conservation and promotion of Meelup Regional Park whilst encouraging community participation and education that ensures the long-term sustainability of the Park's unique plants, animals, and landscape.*

The Management Team would like to express our appreciation to all our supporters during the year with special acknowledge of the following donors-

- Paul and Meredith McGarry – major donor
- Line in the Sand - providing funding to support essential feral animal control.
- REBA – funding to assist FOM.
- City of Busselton- who have contributed to the many FOM project during the year.
- Sole Trails Pty Ltd - funding from the Trans Cape Run to assist FOM.
- Many individuals that have made significant donations to Friends of Meelup

Thank you to all members of the Friends of Meelup Regional Park for your continued support.

Management Team

Friends of Meelup Regional Park

19 March 2026