

What is happening to our environment?

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The Context

- SW WA is a biodiversity hotspot – only two in Australia, 35 worldwide
- The Swan Coastal Plain is a unique ecosystem and part of this hotspot
- The Noongar nation managed this natural heritage successfully for 50,000 years
- The European settlers did not appreciate this heritage and applied inappropriate farming practices to this fragile landscape
- There are many threatening processes affecting this ecosystem



Banksia Woodland

Pristine Wetland



Lake Monger
c. 1914



Destruction
of Watts
Road Lake
September
1985



Climate Change at North Lake

July 1995



July 2012





Salinity in the wheatbelt, WA

DPSIR Model – a framework for describing the interactions between human society and the natural environment

Developed by the OECD and refined by the European Environment Agency

- Drivers
- Pressures
- State
- Impacts
- Responses

DPSIR MODEL

Driving Forces Primary causes

- agriculture
- manufacturing
- transport
- etc.

Pressures

- atmospheric emissions
- waste production
- industrial discharges in water
- etc.

Driving Force

Pressures

State

State and trend

- air quality
- water quality
- soil quality
- biodiversity
- etc.

Responses

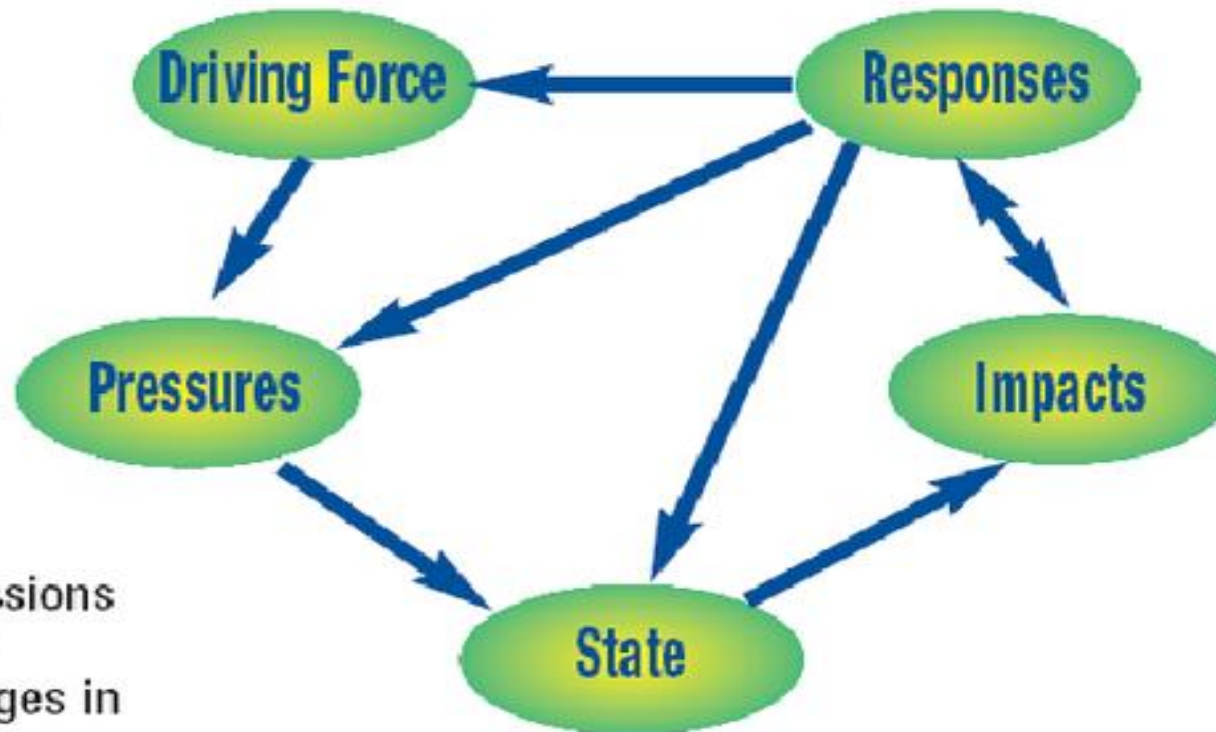
Responses

- laws
- plans
- rules
- etc.

Impacts

Impacts

- on health
- on ecosystems
- etc.



Drivers of Environmental Damage

- economic growth
- technology
- GHG emissions
- population growth
- Consumption
- materialism

Pressures on our Environment

- Climate change
- Urban and industrial development
- Weeds and feral animals
- Plant diseases
- Drainage
- Groundwater extraction
- Waste disposal
- Fire management
- Urban infill
- Waste disposal

The State of our Environment

Key indicators

- Air Quality
- Water Quality
- Soil Quality
- Vegetation
- Wildlife

Reports

- SoE 1992, 1997, 2007
- Biodiversity Audit 2004
- EPA Annual Reports

Impacts

- Biodiversity loss – 90 TECs, 300 PECs
- Wetland loss – 2 ha /day (2007)
- Polluted waterways – algal blooms
- Dry land salinity – loss of agricultural productivity
- Dieback disease
- Reduced air quality, especially in large regional centres
- Coastal erosion due to climate change
- Urban heat island effect due to infill policies
- Greater frequency of bushfires

Responses

- EPA established 1971 – 50th anniversary 2021
- System 6 and other system reports (1980)
- Bush Forever (1996)
- Wetlands Conservation Policy (1997)
- AQMP (2000)
- Regional Parks (1997)
- TECs (1998)
- SAPPR (2015)

Successes

- Environmental conditions for major projects
- Bush Forever and WCP partly implemented
- AQMP partly implemented
- Regional Parks partly implemented
- Many TECs and PECs listed
- Strong community input to environmental management

Failures

- WA has not done SOE since 2007
- Governments failed to respond to three SoEs
- Biodiversity Audit 2 was abandoned
- WCP has not been updated – 2008 draft abandoned
- SAPPR has been abandoned
- EPA and DBCA are seriously underfunded
- EP Act has been weakened by successive governments since 1986.
- Important policies have not been completed (eg Bush Forever, Regional Parks)
- Ministerial Conservation Grants scheme was abandoned in 2015.

Question: What is happening to our environment?

Answer:

We don't really know because we aren't monitoring it any more.

What can we do about this?

- Most environmental reform in WA has come from community activism and advocacy
- Community involvement in government policy committees is important
- Citizen science is particularly important
- Awareness raising via environmental education is essential
- Community involvement in environmental management is satisfying and beneficial
- Sometimes political action and/or legal action is necessary, but it should be the last resort

Bessie
Rischbieth at
Mounts Bay
21 April 1964

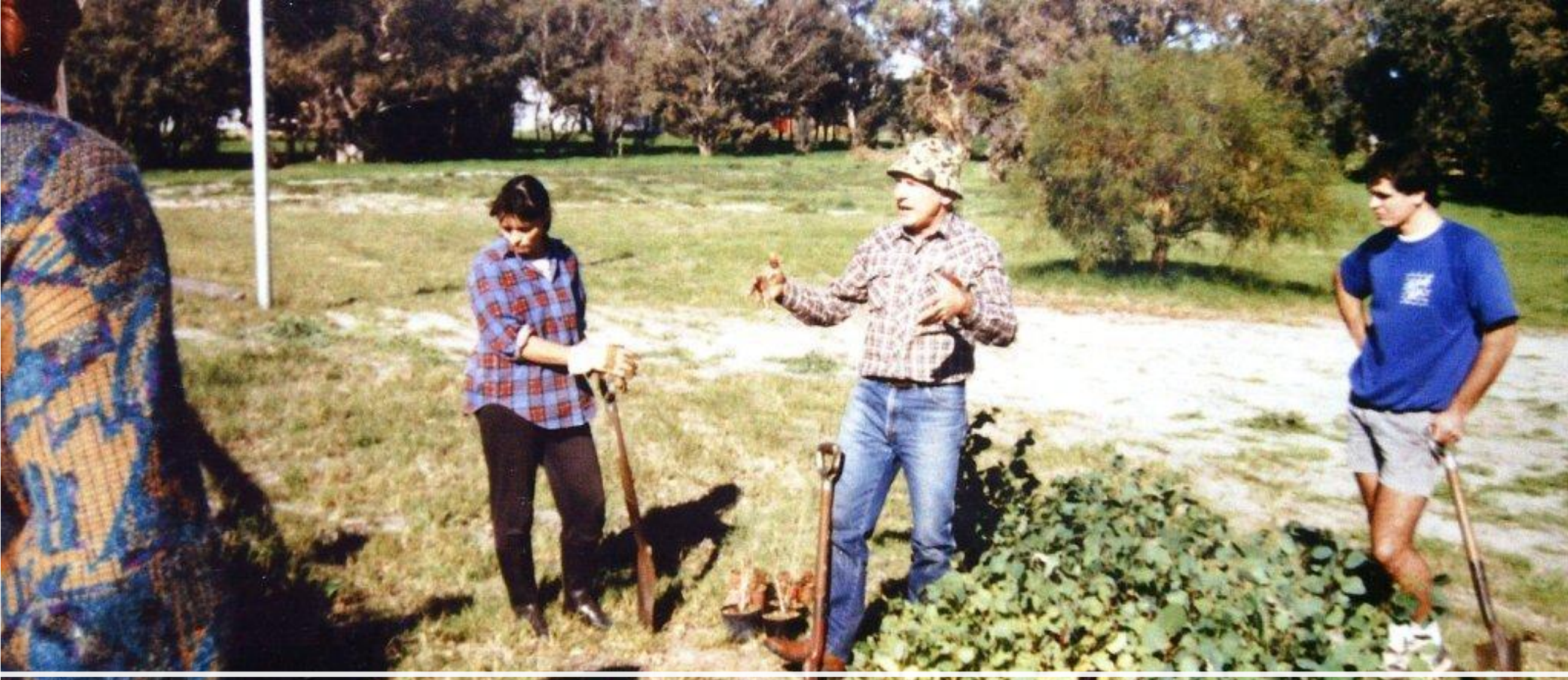


Farrington
Road Blockade
10 September
1984



Roe Highway Campaign 2016-2017





Tree planting





School Group at Bibra Lake

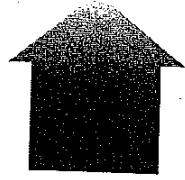
H G Wells, English author 1866-1946

- *Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.*

The Outline of History (1920), vol. 2, ch. 41, pt. 4

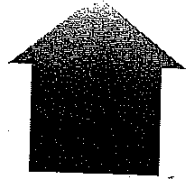


CONSERVATION



Management

Policy



Awareness



Research

Education

The Process of Conservation

An Agenda for Action

- Continue with **advocacy** for policy implementation and reform (Bush Forever, Regional Parks, SAPPR, Wetland Buffer Guidelines, etc)
- Push for **legislative reforms** (EP Act, BCA, SoE, Biodiversity audits)
- Participate in **environmental management** (revegetation, monitoring)
- Get involved with **environmental education** (esp. biodiversity and wetlands)

Finally

- The role of the public in conservation has never been more vital.
- Join a group that matches your interests.
- Campaigning is a long haul.
- It's much easier if you enjoy it.
- Make friends and enjoy the social aspects too.
- Never give up!

NEVER EVER GIVE UP



Thanks for Listening?

Any Questions?

