

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING COMMITTEE REPORT 2023 2024

COMMITTEE

The past year has been busy for the Committee and for many of our members as we continue to establish the Friends of Meelup.

Friends of Meelup are here to protect Meelup for the future. FOM are an independent group of people, founded 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 Committee comprised: Rebecca Ehlers Chairperson Ros Hamdorf Deputy Chairperson Sherrie Makeham (retired) Secretary, Greg Simpson Treasurer and Committee Kerry Grist, Janine Gasbarri, Bill Biggs, Tony Smurthwaite, Dr Bob Jarvis (also Meelup Management Committee Rep)

A big thankyou to those members that have volunteered their time on the committee and sub-committee to help progress the Friends of Meelup.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP- KERRY GRIST

Life Membership was awarded to Kerry Grist Inaugural President Kerry Grist at Special General Meeting in October 2024. Kerry has worked tirelessly, since Friends of Meelup inception in 2018, to get us to our current position. Without Kerry's dedication and enthusiasm, the Friends of Meelup would not be in the position we are today.

MEMBERSHIP

Friends of Meelup Regional Park currently have around 180 members including three Associate members. New members are welcomed and encouraged to get involved through the FOM website and by attending FOM events.

TUESDAY VOLUNTEER GROUP

A group of volunteer's meet every Tuesday morning at 9 am for an hour to work in the Park; pruning trails, planting and weeding mostly with some rubbish collection and other jobs along the way. Nothing too strenuous. If you would like to join this group please contact Rod Deakin 0400 776 073

CAPE NATURALISTE CONSERVATION ENTERPRISE (CNCE)

This project now in its second year, commenced in 2023, and is overseen by a subcommittee of the FOM. It is a long term project.

Thanks to donated funds already available FoM contracted Nature Conservation Margaret River to "scope" a project to protect Meelup Park from invasive weeds and feral predators and protect and enhance the environment of the Cape Naturaliste area. NCMRR also helped

FoM apply for a State Natural Resource Management (NRM) Grant. Many Stakeholders supported us in this project.

FOM was successful in securing the grant of approx. \$300,000 over 3 years, which partially funds a Project co-ordinator to assist delivery of the project including preparation of a management plan of this important area and on-ground activities including weed control, feral animal control and waterway and coastal restoration.

Friends of Meelup has contracted Nature Conservation Margaret River Region (NCMRR), to deliver the CNCE project and has formed an alliance with the organisation Line in the Sand, to provide funding for delivery on ground feral animal controls in the short term. We hope local Wadandi rangers will be involved. The State NRM Grant requires a 50/50 contribution, to be fulfilled by "in kind" support from our volunteer base and the City of Busselton works however cash of approximately \$35,000 each year is required to satisfy the Grant.

The first year has been supported by generous donations from individuals however there needs to be long term commitment from Philanthropic people or organisations to guarantee the future of this MULTIGENERATIONAL project.

It is a waste of money and the effort of the individuals involved if this project can not be continued indefinitely.

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.

Kerry Grist is continuing Photo monitoring of heavy use areas in the 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 affects of fire on soil microbiology health and Dr Christina Birnbaum, Uni of Queensland and her masters student Genevieve Jurd is assisting this project. FoM have assisted financially for laboratory work.

In October 2024, the team presented preliminary findings of fire effects on soil fungal and plant community diversity in a stimulating Sundowner.

EDUCATION AND PROMOTION

NEWSLETTERS

Members should be receiving a newsletter, thanks to Dr Bob Jarvis. The newsletter is emailed out to all members as regularly as possible to keep members informed of the activity's achievements and various issues. It takes a lot of 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 project 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 SERIES

A series of presentations coordinated by Dr Bob Jarvis attracted considerable community interest and were well received by the community with very good attendance at each event.

LEEUWIN NATURALISTE REGION -- ITS GEOLOGY AND LANDFORMS

Retired Geologist Michael Freeman presented on the geology and landforms of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste ridge and its relationships to plate tectonics, India and the Perth Basin volcanics".

SANDY BEACHES

The following evening Dr Anton McLachlan shared his perspective on "SANDY BEACHES - playgrounds or unique ecosystems" the role and function of beach ecosystems and their place in sandy coasts. Dr McLachlan has had a long and established career in beach ecology. Working around the world in research institutions including the Sultan Qaboos University in Oman.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Rod Cary - Geographe Community Landcare Nursery presentation on locally significant food and medicine plants in gardens and revegetation.

PETS AWAY POSSUMS PLAY

Presented by Nicole Lincoln from Geocatch and Dr Gillian Bryant EO WA Feral Cat Working Group discussed the impact of feral animals.

DUNSBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL BAY OK

The Dunsborough Primary School Bay OK day was a great success for the advancement of respect for the environment. FoM members were prominent contributors with Flora and Fauna presentations and particular focus on Meelup.

Feedback from the pupils demonstrated a deep understanding and respect for the natural assets of our district.

BIRDS IN THE PARK

This event attracted a lot of community interest with one of our region's top birdlife experts, Christine Wilder and convenor of BirdLife WA's Cape to Cape Bird Group conducting birdwatching walk and demonstrating hands-on conservation work to boost bird habitat.

OTHER ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR

TRANS CAPE SWIM RUN IN 2025

The Trans Cape SwimRun has created an initiative in order to raise money for local organisations that are involved in protection of the areas natural environment. The fundraising was achieved through an initiative we called "A tee or a tree" which meant people entering the event could choose to forego their event T-shirt and instead have the money equivalent to the cost of the shirt donated to a local environmental protection organisation. The Friends of Meelup received a donation from the organisers of this event.

QR CODES

You will see these blue plaques attached to the light green Trail Marker Boxes at the junction of most of the trails in the Park. Using the camera on your smartphone you can scan the QR code which will take you 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.

Committee would like to express our appreciation to everyone that has supported FOM during the year and acknowledge -

- Paul and Meredith McGarry – major donor
- Line in the Sand - providing funding for delivery on ground feral animal controls.
- REBA – funding to assist FOM.
- City of Busselton- who have contributed to many FOM project during the year.
- Sole Trails Pty Ltd - funding to assist FOM.
- Several individuals that have made significant donations

Rebecca Ehlers
Chairperson
Friends of Meelup Regional Park
20 March 2025

