



## Cocanarup Conservation Alliance Inc.

*Protecting and promoting the environmental and cultural integrity of the Ravensthorpe region*

### MEMBERS NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2019

#### CCA "Class A Reserve" Proposal heads into "Plan for Our Parks" process

We've recently been informed by Minister Dawson's office that our comprehensive submission relating to the future reservation of the Cocanarup – Kundip area has now been included in DBCA's "Plan for Our Parks" process. This stems from a Government commitment to add 5 million hectares to the state's conservation estate in the next 5 years, and more information can be found at: <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/parks/plan-for-our-parks>

Whilst we welcome this step, it is far from time to relax, for Plan for Our Parks (PfOP) is already wildly over-subscribed in terms of areas under consideration. Further, we understand that some kind of "priority list" has been developed – and at this stage we're not confident that we're on it. And lastly, this process could take 3-4 years yet – and during that time ongoing exploration works could significantly degrade one of the greatest positive attributes of the Cocanarup – Kundip area: its relative intactness.

Given these concerns, we need to now focus on making it very clear to DBCA and the Minister's Office that:

- ◇ The Cocanarup – Kundip area should be assessed much more quickly, via DBCA's own internal "Reserve Proposal" process, and
- ◇ That if it is to remain in PfOP it must be elevated onto the priority list.

Consequently, we have revised our **Take Action** page to provide a draft letter addressing these points (and more), to be sent to Mark Webb, CEO at DBCA (with a copy to the Minister's Office).

We know that many of you have already sent letters of support – but we'd plead with you to once again put your shoulder to the wheel and let these folk know just how important our Cocanarup – Kundip area is. We know that in "competitive" processes like this the voice of the community counts for much – so the more noise we can make via this route the better our chances. We already have a strong track-record of "community engagement" – so head to <https://cca.asn.au/take-action> and take action!

#### Meetings, meetings and more meetings

July was a month loaded with meetings, some of which proved very fruitful while others were less so. Locally, we had an excellent evening briefing session with 25-30 members of a number of important Ravensthorpe groups, including:

- ◇ Ravensthorpe Historical Society (the organisers)
- ◇ Ravensthorpe Wildflower Show
- ◇ Ravensthorpe Progress Association

*Southern boobook (left) and tawny frogmouth (below), photographed recently in the proposed Reserve area. The boobook appears to have found its nesting hollow for this year.*





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In trips to Albany and Perth we engaged with:

- ◇ South Coast Natural Resource Management
- ◇ DBCA Regional Office, South Coast
- ◇ GondwanaLink
- ◇ Dept of Planning, Lands & Heritage
- ◇ ACH Minerals \*
- ◇ Rick Dawson, Carnaby's expert
- ◇ Walter Witt, formerly of the Geological Survey
- ◇ Two advisors from Minister Dawson's office

This last meeting was one that had long been anticipated, and we hope the urgency and importance of our message filters up to the Minister (with whom we will continue to seek a direct audience).

\* ACH Minerals holds exploration tenements over much of the east and south-east portion of our proposed Class A Reserve area. They are a small but active gold and copper company, and it's fair to say they were not totally enamoured of our proposal. Nonetheless, we feel engaging directly with them is important, and we will continue to seek to do so.

Meetings take time and energy – but we understand that we have quickly created a positive impression for our professionalism and our commitment to engagement. They will go on, as we have more politicians (and others) to brief – and a major “strategy / planning” workshop scheduled for late September. This will set our direction for the coming months, and outcomes will be communicated in the next Newsletter.

*Carnaby's feeding on royal hakea (below) and pincushion hakea (lower right) in the Reserve area recently – and fattening up on radiata pine seeds on a nearby farm (right).*



### The Carnaby's are on the move (finally)

As will be well known now, protecting one of the three most important nesting sites for Carnaby's black-cockatoos in the state (and therefore world-wide) is central to our Reserve proposal. Consequently, there has been excitement lately as the birds have at last moved inland and at least some had arrived in the Cocanarup salmon gum area by August 23<sup>rd</sup> – which is about a month later than usual.

Whilst we can only speculate as to why they were “late” arriving, it is thought that the very dry conditions through autumn and winter may have prevented them building up body-fat as quickly as usual – and this is a necessary precursor to nesting. Adding weight to this theory is the observation that they have recently been feasting on all three species of pines planted on nearby farms, including their least-favoured *radiata*. Hopefully they'll fatten up quickly, and time will prove that there is no flow-on negative impact to their nesting rates or fledging success. We will have a clearer image of this by late October when the annual nest monitoring program has been completed.





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*The great Camaby's pine-nut eating race: Ready... Set... Go!*

This will be the 13<sup>th</sup> year that local “citizen scientists” (supported by BirdLife Australia) have undertaken this remarkable activity – and the data that flows from it is one of our chief “weapons” in the push to have this area placed securely in the reserve system. We will provide a full report in a Newsletter soon after all the information has been collated.

This is a good opportunity to acknowledge and thank BirdLife Australia for their ongoing and outstanding support for CCA. Having the backing of a national organisation of this stature and calibre lends considerable gravitas to our cause, and we are deeply grateful.

### **Becoming a true “Alliance”**

Yes, BirdLife Australia is a key organisational supporter of CCA, but we are delighted with the array of other groups who've chosen to join us in recent times. Our list of “Organisational Members” now includes:

- ◇ Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute
- ◇ Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park
- ◇ Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network Inc
- ◇ Glossy Black Conservancy
- ◇ Gondwana Link Ltd

- ◇ Ravensthorpe Wildflower Show
- ◇ Friends of Underwood Ave Bushland Shenton Park
- ◇ Ravensthorpe Progress Association
- ◇ Ravensthorpe Historical Society Inc
- ◇ Friends of Paganoni Swamp

In addition, we have three other major “Organisational Supporters” (rather than “Members”) in:

- ◇ Wildflower Society of WA
- ◇ West Australian Naturalists Club, and (of course)
- ◇ BirdLife Australia

We salute and thank all of these organisations for becoming part of the Alliance. We know that our collective voices will be far more powerful than just CCA alone – and look forward to finding creative ways to use the great strength of togetherness.

Individual membership is approaching 70 now, with the majority living either locally or in Albany or Perth. Again, we're grateful to all those who've joined up: every new membership gives a boost to those of us on the coal-face, so encourage your friends and family to sign up at: <https://cca.asn.au/contact-join-cca>



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### The Ravensthorpe Wildflower Show

The annual Wildflower Show – the BIG event of the year down here – opens on Monday September 9<sup>th</sup>, and runs for two weeks, closing with a gala long-table lunch on Sunday September 22<sup>nd</sup> at which the guest speaker will be Prof. Hans Lambers, speaking about kwongan (a key vegetation type in the proposed Reserve area). Many local members are heavily engaged with this fabulous display of the best of nature in the Ravensthorpe region – and as a result, the next month will be quieter than usual for CCA.

The Show regularly has 600-700 named species on display, all collected within the Shire - which is testament to the amazing diversity of plants in this region. Speaking of diversity – the focus of the show this year is “Eucalypts” – not surprising, given that “Euc expert” Malcom French has called the Shire of Ravensthorpe the “Eucalypt epicentre of the universe, and with good reason too: of the more than 700 species Australia-wide, 104 occur in our Shire! By comparison, there are only 103 in the whole of South Australia and 141 in Victoria and Tasmania combined. Ravensthorpe rocks! And the Cocanarup – Kundip area is in the thick of it all...



*The sandplain country in the southern part of the proposed Reserve area (down Moir Road) is fast approaching full bloom, with many species already out in glorious colour. One only has to step out of a vehicle and look around to be amazed at the diversity of species growing on these “poor” soils.*



### Tax deductible donations

If you'd like to support our campaign financially you can do so through our friends at Gondwana Link, who accept donations on our behalf and return the funds to us for our work in protecting and promoting the natural and cultural values of the region. CCA is a low-cost operation - but we do have regular website maintenance, printing, room and equipment hire and other small expenses, so please consider making a donation, no matter the size. Go to: <https://cca.asn.au/donate>

### The final word (thanks to Scott Sanders, nature writer)

*"The more fully we belong to our place, the more likely that our place will survive without damage."*