

Wilson Inlet
Cultural Management Plan
2008

Written by Myles Mitchell

In collaboration with

The Pibulmun and Menang People

Of South-West Western Australia

A community initiative supported by

Department of Water
Department of Indigenous Affairs
South Coast Natural Resource Management
Restoring Connections Project

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PART 1: BACKGROUND

1.1 Purpose of the Wilson Inlet Cultural Management Plan

The purpose of the Wilson Inlet Community Cultural Management Plan is to provide a tangible, practical and broad assessment of Noongar cultural values associated with Wilson Inlet. The assessment will address key management issues for immediate and future management of the Inlet and aim to provide a mechanism for sustained Noongar community involvement in the management of Wilson Inlet.

The Wilson Inlet Cultural Management Plan has been written in response to concerns of the Noongar community about maintaining the integrity of cultural and natural values associated with Wilson Inlet. Traditional Owners felt it was important to document many of the key cultural values associated with the Inlet while emphasising the significance of the Inlet as a cultural landscape that cannot be divided simply into sites and features. Everything that impacts the health and integrity of the Inlet, impacts upon Noongar cultural values.

The aspirations of the Noongar community to undertake cultural mapping at Wilson Inlet coincided with those of the Department of Water who were seeking input from Traditional Owners on cultural values and management practices for the Inlet. The Department of Indigenous Affairs and South Coast Natural Resource Management through the collaborative *South Coast Heritage Restoration Project* were also seeking to support the Noongar community in conserving cultural values at Wilson Inlet.

The Shire of Denmark is updating its Foreshore Reserves Management Plan for the Inlet at the time of writing this document and require Noongar input as part of that process. Information provided in this document will be used to inform the Denmark Foreshore Reserves Management Plan being prepared by Green Skills Inc.

This document collates the outcomes, data and recommendations of the *Wilson Inlet Cultural Management Project 2008*.

The purpose of this document is:

1. To document Noongar cultural and community values associated with Wilson Inlet
2. To communicate Noongar perspectives on key management issues for the Inlet
3. To provide a mechanism for ongoing Noongar engagement in managing Wilson Inlet.

The purpose of this document is NOT to provide a comprehensive inventory of all cultural values, sites and features associated with the Inlet. The report will NOT remove the need for ongoing consultation with the Noongar community but instead aims to facilitate future consultation and involvement of Traditional Owners in managing Wilson Inlet.

1.1.1 Methods

Fieldwork for the project was directed and conducted by the Noongar Traditional Owners in collaboration with agency partners. The project combines Traditional Owners of the Pibulmun cultural groups and Menang cultural groups, Elders, leaders and young people. The fieldwork consisted of:

1. Archaeological surveys around the extent of the Inlet
2. Consultation and site visits with local Elders
3. Assessment of ecological/environmental threats
4. On-ground restoration actions

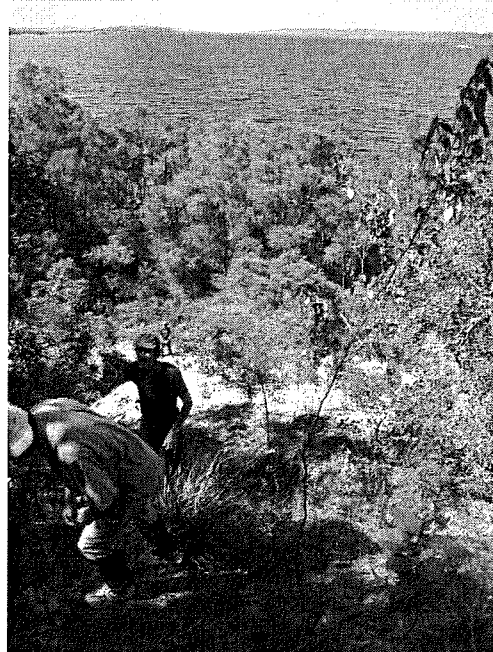
Archaeological surveys were conducted on foot around all accessible foreshore areas of the Inlet. Surveys were not conducted where thick vegetation or high water levels made access too difficult or visibility impossible. The survey aims were to locate and document areas with archaeological remains or cultural significance. As such, no efforts were made to systematically record or sample all archaeological remains. Photographs were taken of artefacts and features. GPS locations were noted and mapped. No artefacts were collected.

Through the Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation, local Elders were engaged on a roster basis to accompany the survey and work team each day. Elders were actively involved in the cultural mapping process and asked their perspectives on current management issues.

The survey team also identified ecological and environmental threats and in response made recommendations to relevant authorities or undertook restorative actions to redress the threats. Accompanying the survey team at different times were officers from Department of Water, South Coast NRM, Department of Indigenous Affairs, Denmark Weed Action Group, Green Skills and the Denmark Dieback Working Group.

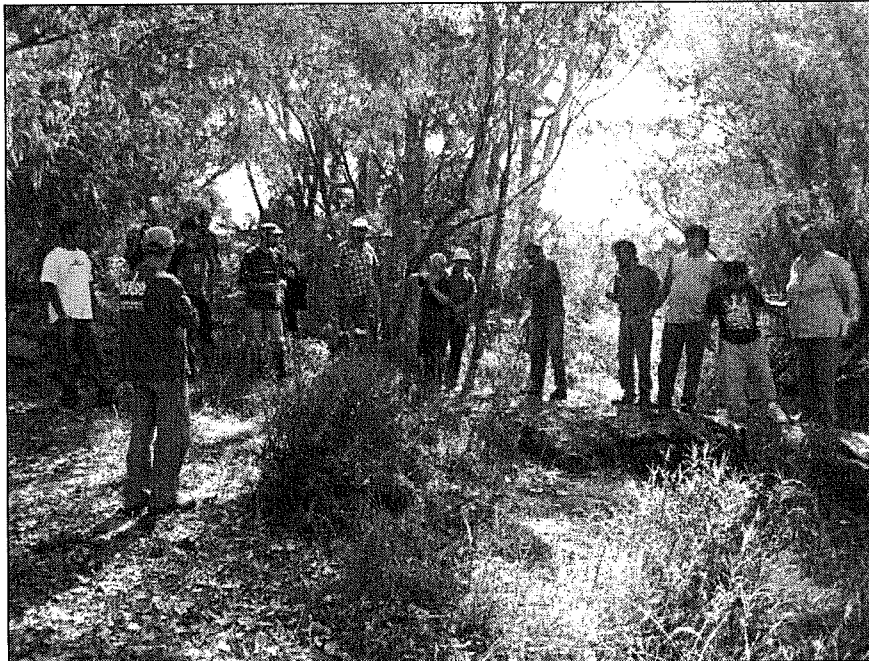
In partnership with the Denmark Weed Action Group and Albany Aboriginal Corporation, the survey team undertook large-scale environmental weed eradication programs around the Inlet, focussing particularly on cultural sites affected by invasive weed species.





1.1.2 Project Team

- **Wayne Webb:** Field Director (Traditional Owner from the Pibulmun-Wadandi people, with 30 years experience in archaeology and heritage management)
- **Myles Mitchell:** Archaeologist (Department of Indigenous Affairs, South Coast Heritage Project Coordinator)
- **Jeff Wynne:** Works Crew Supervisor (Albany Aboriginal Corporation NRM Field Crew)
- **Robert Farmer:** Field Crew (Albany Aboriginal Corporation NRM Field Crew)
- **Graeme Miniter:** Field Crew (Albany Aboriginal Corporation NRM Field Crew)
- **Kevin Brown:** Field Crew (Albany Aboriginal Corporation NRM Field Crew)
- **Bradley Farmer:** Field Crew (Albany Aboriginal Corporation NRM Field Crew)
- **Kenny Dean:** Field Crew (Albany Aboriginal Corporation NRM Field Crew)
- **Jet Coyne:** Field Crew (Albany Aboriginal Corporation NRM Field Crew)
- **River Coyne:** Field Crew (Albany Aboriginal Corporation NRM Field Crew)
- **Lynnette Knapp:** Field Crew (Albany Aboriginal Corporation NRM Field Crew)
- **Deon Cummings:** Field Crew (Albany Aboriginal Corporation NRM Field Crew)
- **TiaKahn Munmurray:** Field Crew (Albany Aboriginal Corporation NRM Field Crew)
- **Vernice Gillies:** Elders Support and Coordination (Chairperson, Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation)
- **Jerry Narkle:** Project Officer (Restoring Connections Project)
- **Isaac Webb:** Project Officer (Restoring Connections Project)
- **Diane Harwood:** Weed Management Program Coordinator (Denmark Weed Action Group)
- **Denmark Weed Action Group**

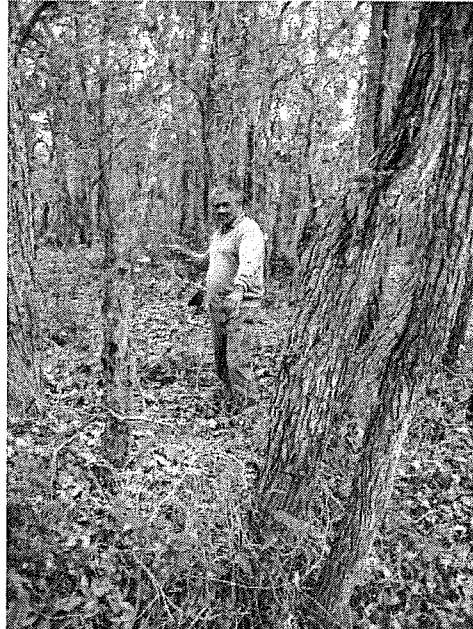


Elders and Family Representatives

- **Bill Woods Senior** (Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation)
- **Kelvin Penny** (Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation)
- **Alwyn Coyne** (Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation)
- **Averil Dean** (Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation)
- **Bill Woods Junior** (Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation)
- **Roslyn Wynne** (Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation)
- **Treasy Woods** (Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation)
- **Elizabeth Smith** (Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation)
- **Stanley Loo** (Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation)
- **Brenda Dean** (Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation)
- **Iva Woods** (Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation)

Volunteers and In-kind Support

- **Toni Webb:** Field Officer (20 years experience in Archaeology and heritage management)
- **Mieke Bourne:** Department of Water
- **Sheryn Prior:** South Coast NRM
- **Eugene Eades:** Greening Australia
- **Anthony Galante:** Department of Indigenous Affairs



1.1.3 Project Partners

Albany Aboriginal Corporation were engaged to provide field crew for the entire project.

Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation were engaged to coordinate a roster of Elders and family representatives for the Menang people.

Denmark Weed Action Group coordinated the conservation works program for the project as part of an in-kind partnership. The works focussed on weed eradication and management.

Department of Water commissioned and co-funded the initiative. DoW will also be the lead agency in implementing actions resulting from this plan

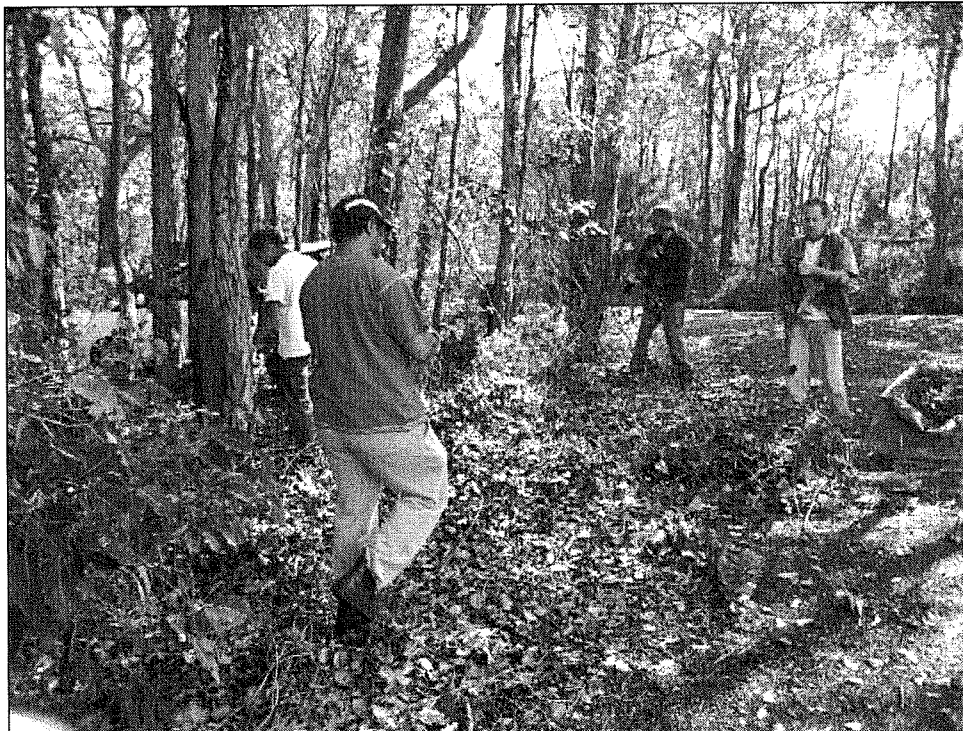
Department of Indigenous Affairs provided coordination, archaeological support and funding through the *South Coast Heritage Restoration Project*.

South Coast NRM Inc. provided funding and coordination through the *South Coast Heritage Restoration Project*

Wilson Inlet Management Group remained informed and supportive of the project and will play a coordinating role in implementing actions resulting from this plan.

Restoring Connections Project made a funding contribution to the project and offered important in-kind support with Jerry Narkle and Iszaac Webb providing valuable assistance in survey work.

Green Skills Inc. have been supportive of the project through the provision of information used in this document and through incorporating findings of this project into the Denmark Foreshore Reserves Plan.

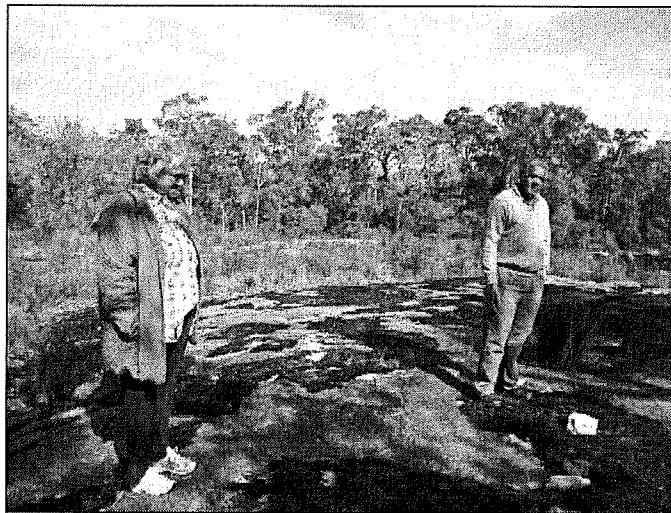


1.1.4 South Coast Heritage Restoration Project

The *South Coast Heritage Restoration Project 2007/08* is a joint initiative of *Department of Indigenous Affairs* and *South Coast NRM*. Based on the recommendations of the *South Coast Heritage Assessment Project Report 2006*, the current project aims to implement protective and rehabilitative actions at high priority Indigenous heritage places identified by Traditional Owners. On-ground actions are implemented through community initiatives with an emphasis on collaborative approaches between Traditional Owners and relevant agencies.

Specific project objectives vary across the region but all actions aim to achieve outcomes for the protection and promotion of Indigenous culture and heritage, protection and promotion of land, water and ecological values, building community capacity, and fostering strong working relationships between communities and agencies. The project delivers a range of NRM actions across diverse landscapes and maintains a focus on community, culture and caring for country.

The *South Coast Heritage Restoration Project* is an ongoing initiative and will continue to engage Noongar communities across the South Coast region in Cultural Heritage Management and NRM. The project will continue to support the Noongar community in working to preserve and promote cultural/natural values at Wilson Inlet.



1.2 Location, Tenure and Physical Characteristics

Situated on the South Coast of Western Australia immediately adjacent to the town of Denmark, Wilson Inlet is 14km long, 4km wide and has an area of 48 square kilometres. The Inlet was formed 5000-6000 years ago when sea levels stabilized to their current level. Fed by the Sleeman River, Hay River, Denmark River, Little River, and the Cuppup Creek and Lake Saide Drain, the Inlet has a combined catchment area of 2263 square kilometres.

The opening of the Inlet into the Southern Ocean is blocked by a sand bar, which is artificially broken each year when the water level reaches a set level. Last year 2007, was the first in 52 years that the sandbar was not breached due to the water levels not exceeding the set level after very low rainfall.

Wilson Inlet is located within two local government areas, the Shire of Denmark to the west of the Hay River and City of Albany to the east. Land tenure around the Inlet is various, with foreshore reserves managed by local government, private land including agricultural and residential, Department of Environment and Conservation managed land and a small parcel of unallocated crown land adjacent to the western edge of the Hay River. The Wilson Inlet catchment area extends northward from the City of Albany and Shire of Denmark areas into the Shire of Plantagenet.

(Section 1.2; Information obtained from *Jewel of the Rainbow Coast, Wilson Inlet*: Evans, Haigh and Schur for Green Skills: 2001)

1.3 Environment

1.3.1 Climate

Wilson Inlet and its catchment is subject to a Mediterranean climate with mild, wet winters and warm to hot, dry summers. Average annual rainfall ranges from 1100mm at the coast to 600mm inland further up the catchment. Long-term average rainfall has fallen by 200mm over the last 100 years (as of 2001) and the long-term average temperatures have risen by 1°C.

(Section 1.3.1; Information obtained from *Jewel of the Rainbow Coast, Wilson Inlet*: Evans, Haigh and Schur for Green Skills: 2001)



1.3.2 Topography and Landforms

Wilson Inlet is situated on a narrow coastal plain about 10km wide, with coastal dunes to the south and a mildly undulating, hilly plain to the north leading up to the plateau of the upper catchment which is dominated by low hills. East of the Inlet, the land is dominated by stagnant, low-lying flats and plains. West of the Inlet there are moderate hills and grades.

The Denmark and Hay Rivers flow from the upper catchment which is home to granitic plains and wide, swampy, flat-bottomed valleys. As the rivers flow towards the coast, the wide plains and valleys give way to a more diverse landscape with streams carving contours deeper into the landscape. The lower catchment tributaries to the rivers flow down off the coastal plain from north of the Inlet. East of the Inlet, drainage is obstructed by coastal dunes and the land is low lying and swampy. These swampy areas are artificially drained into the Inlet by the Cuppup Creek-Lake Saide drainage system.

(Section 1.3.2; Information obtained from *Jewel of the Rainbow Coast, Wilson Inlet*: Evans, Haigh and Schur for Green Skills: 2001)



1.3.3 Geology

The greater part of the Wilson Inlet catchment consists of Precambrian granitic bedrocks 600 million years old and older. The bedrock is overlain by Tertiary (65 to 1.8 million years old) sedimentary rocks and quaternary (less than 1.8 million years old) sands and laterite. The granitic bedrock underlying the catchment is 2500 to 600 million years old.

Granite outcrops are found along the eastern and western shores of the Inlet as well as in the hilly terrain in the east and north-east of the catchment. Apart from these outcrops, most of the granitic bedrock is covered by sedimentary rock that ranges in depth from a couple of metres to 150 metres. The first layer of sedimentary rock (sandstone, siltstone and dark clays) occurred as a result of weathering of bedrock material by ancient wetlands, swamps and rivers. This is overlapped by a second layer of sedimentary rock (spongolite and siltstone) derived from marine deposits during times when shallow sea water inundated the area. Soils around Wilson Inlet and its catchment consist of a variety of silts, sand, clays and gravel. The coastline consists of sand dunes.

(Section 1.3.3; Information obtained from *Jewel of the Rainbow Coast, Wilson Inlet*: Evans, Haigh and Schur for Green Skills Inc.: 2001)

1.3.4 Vegetation

The natural vegetation is “diverse” and “complex” due to a range of soil and climatic conditions. Before being cleared for agriculture, most of the low-rainfall northern part of the catchment was Jarrah-Marri forest, jarrah low forests, a variety of open woodlands often dominated by Wandoo, and a range of heath and shrubs in sandy swampy soils. The higher rainfall lower half of the catchment had a belt of Jarrah-Marri forest and Karri forest. The coastal plain still supports Jarrah Low forest, dense woodlands dominated by Melaleuca, Banksia and peppermint gums, with scattered Karri, coastal heath and scrub and diverse swamplands. Granite outcrops on the coastal plain support a range of woodlands and heath.

It is estimated that 28% of the Denmark River Catchment, 70% of the Hay River Catchment, 77% of the Sleeman River Catchment, and 50% of the Little River Catchment have been cleared.

(Section 1.3.4; Information obtained from *Jewel of the Rainbow Coast, Wilson Inlet*: Evans, Haigh and Schur for Green Skills: 2001).



1.3.5 Fauna

Approximately 20 species of mammals and 12 species of introduced mammals are present around Wilson Inlet and its catchment. These include bandicoots, dingoes, dunnarts, kangaroos, possums, quokka, cats, foxes, mice and rats. Prevalent reptiles include tiger snakes, dugites and skinks. Fish and shellfish commonly caught in the Inlet include cobbler, sea mullet, garfish, Australian herring, King George whiting, pink snapper, black brim, crabs and prawns.

About 240 species of land, water and marine birds can be found around the Inlet and its catchment at different times of the year. Migrating species include waders from Siberia. Currently the most abundant bird species on the Inlet are black swans which Traditional Owners suggest are more prevalent than ever, a good indication for the health of the inlet and health of the seagrass populations.

(Section 1.3.4; Information obtained from *Jewel of the Rainbow Coast, Wilson Inlet*: Evans, Haigh and Schur for Green Skills: 2001).

PART 2: Heritage Values and Management Issues

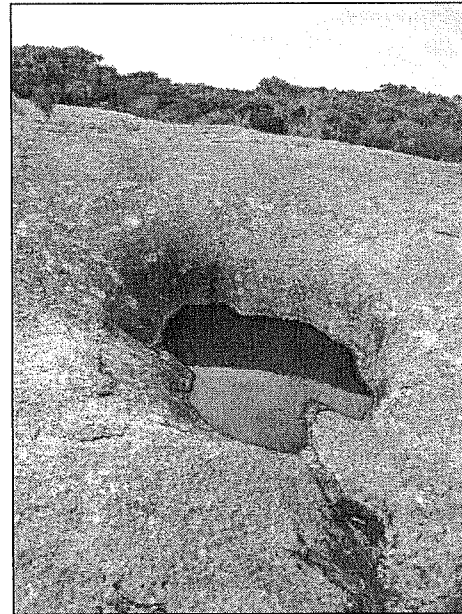
2.1 Wilson Inlet: a living cultural landscape

Wilson Inlet is the focal point of a large catchment area and home to complex and varied ecosystems. The Inlet formed a focal point for Noongar people who managed and utilised the Inlet and its abundant natural resources during the later Holocene period (anytime from around 6000 years ago after the Inlet formed), though they would have inhabited the area long before this time. Extensive archaeological remains found at multiple locations in and around Wilson Inlet attest to its function during traditional times as a significant cultural landscape that was utilized by Noongar people for a variety of cultural activities and resource acquisition.

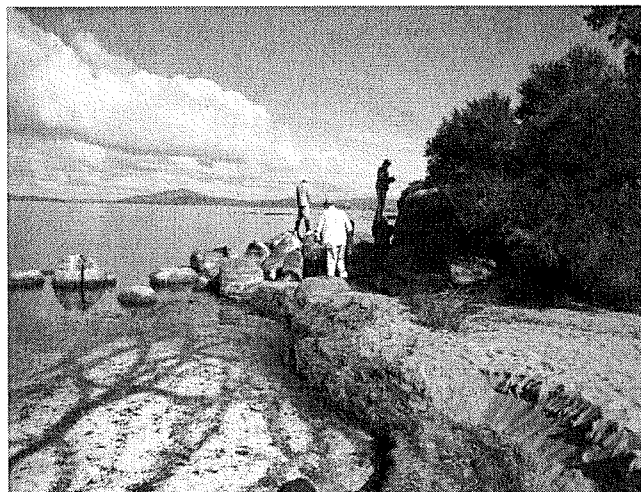
Fish traps, lizard traps, gnamma holes (man-made granite waterholes), burials, stone artefacts, tool making sites and ceremonial materials all exist at different locations around Wilson Inlet today as physical manifestations of the ways in which Noongar people engaged with Wilson Inlet in the past. None of the archaeological features exist in isolation from one-another or from the ecosystems and natural features of which they are a part. The features are all important components of a cultural landscape now, just as they were components in a cultural system in the past. Noongar cultural systems at Wilson Inlet in the past were interwoven with the landscape and its ecosystems, just as today the cultural landscape is an inherent part of the natural landscape.



If we are to recognise and value the Noongar cultural features associated with Wilson Inlet we need to understand that each and every feature is part of an extended eco-cultural landscape and does not exist in isolation. The term "eco-cultural landscape" in this document refers to the interaction of natural and cultural features within the landscape. In isolation, archaeological remains represent a static record of past activities. In their full natural context however, cultural features exist as part of a living, changing landscape and living culture. That is, information on past land-use activities and cultures (archaeological remains) is interacting with changing natural processes and land-use practices to form a living cultural landscape. Archaeological evidence of past cultural systems is static but the interaction of modern Noongar people with this cultural landscape is dynamic and forms the basis of a living cultural landscape.



The Noongar community, as cultural custodians at Wilson Inlet wish to care for and conserve the natural health and beauty of the Inlet and its catchment. Noongar custodians place a high importance on the whole of Wilson Inlet and its tributaries as an eco-cultural landscape. The preservation of cultural values at Wilson Inlet is dependent upon maintaining ecological values and on the active involvement of Traditional Owners in managing the Inlet.



2.2 Nullaki and the Wilson Inlet Ecosystem

Nullaki is the traditional name for Wilson Inlet and in Noongar language means seagrass. Traditional Owners say the traditional naming of Nullaki emphasises the fundamental importance of seagrass populations within the aquatic ecosystems of Wilson Inlet. The seagrass serves as a natural hatchery and home for micro-organisms making it an important basis of the whole ecosystem. Traditional Owners say the food chain begins in the seagrass and healthy seagrass populations are fundamental to the overall health of the Inlet. The seagrass ecosystems also rely heavily on the interaction of fresh water flowing into the Inlet from tributaries and salt water entering the Inlet from the ocean during strong onshore winds or when the sandbar is open. Noongar people utilize the seagrass like a net to collect small shrimp and other food sources that live in it. Little is known about whether seagrass populations have changed much since traditional times but Noongar Custodians are opposed to any artificial interference with the seagrass populations.

2.3 Inlet Opening: saltwater, spawning, tides and fish traps

A source of ongoing debate is the annual sandbar opening that connects Wilson Inlet with the Southern Ocean. Many questions arise over this activity relating to current land-use activities and the health of the Inlet. Little was known previously about whether the sandbar opened during traditional times either naturally as a result of high rainfall or artificially as a result of Noongar land management practices.

We can now ascertain from the presence of archaeological features and traditional knowledge that the sandbar certainly was open during traditional times. Wilson Inlet contains numerous fish traps (more information on fish traps see Section 2.12) in various parts of the Inlet. These are circular features that Noongar people used to build out of rocks, or sometimes sticks and rely on tidal movements to trap fish. This means that in order for the fish traps to work and the initial investment of labour required to build the traps pay off, the Inlet must be exposed to the tidal movements of the ocean and hence the sandbar must have been open.

We cannot be sure about whether the sandbar opened to the ocean naturally every year, however based on the 200mm drop in average rainfall that has occurred in the Wilson Inlet catchment over the past 100 years (Evans *et al*, 2001) it appears likely that it did. Field Director Wayne Webb states that if the bar did not open naturally, Noongar people would certainly have opened it in order to maintain consistency in annual cycles of the Inlet and to utilize the fish traps as an important source of food. Wayne explained that opening rivers and inlets to the ocean at particular times of the year was a common practice of Noongar people around the region and that he and his family continued with this practice around the Busselton area up until the 1970s. Opening sandbars had the dual purpose of allowing fish to enter the rivers, inlets and swamps to spawn, and providing an easily caught feed of fish. Wayne explains that once the fish had entered the swamp or river, they would block the passage back to the ocean using rocks and teetree branches then corner or trap the fish so they could be easily speared or caught by hand.

This was the same principle that the fish traps worked on. Noongar people would “burley up” the area inside the trap with worms or scraps and stir the sand on the bottom to attract fish through an inlet on a declining tide. They would block the inlet

with teetree branches and sticks and as the tide went out the fish would be trapped in the circular enclosure and easily speared or caught. There were other methods employed for trapping fish also, these are explained in Section 2.12

In contrast to the modern bar openings which rely on mechanical excavators to dig a deep channel between the Inlet and the ocean, when Noongar people opened the bar, the hand dug channels would have allowed the Inlet to regulate its own levels. Wayne Webb emphasised that if a small channel is dug artificially to stimulate water flow, then the size of the channel and extent of water flow will be self-regulating based on the water levels in the Inlet in a given year. During years of high rainfall the water will rush out and form a deep and wide channel. During years of low rainfall, the water will flow more slowly and only create a shallow channel, thus regulating its own levels.

Noongar Custodians involved in this project agreed that the sand bar should be opened each year, even during years of low rainfall. The reasons for this are based on saltwater-freshwater interactions and fish spawning. Noongar Custodians emphasised the importance of saltwater flowing from the ocean and mixing with freshwater flowing in from the tributaries in maintaining the Inlet ecosystems and their annual cycles. In particular, the species Black Brim, Sea Mullet and Pink Snapper who have the ability to live and breed in differing ratios of salt and fresh water, utilize the Inlet to spawn each year. These species will specifically target the Inlet to swim into fresher waters for spawning. The opening of the bar each year is integral to this process and allows semi mature fish spawned in previous years to leave the Inlet for the Southern Ocean.

The question from the Noongar community is not whether to open the Inlet or not, or what level to open it at, but how should the Inlet be opened? If it were to be opened by digging a much smaller channel, allowing for the water to determine the size and depth of the channel through its natural flow, would this be a more effective way to allow the Inlet to regulate its own level each year based on rainfall and tributaries?

The Noongar community are strongly opposed to any proposals suggesting that a permanent channel could be dredged through the sandbar and lower portion of the Inlet. Such a proposal would seriously affect the natural processes of the Inlet and may pose a risk of exposing acid sulfate soils.

Recommendation:

-Consider current methods used for sandbar opening and whether this is the best approach.

-Any proposal to dredge a channel through the sandbar and lower portion of the Inlet is DEFINITELY NOT supported by the Noongar community

Action:

-Wilson Inlet Management Authority Group give consideration to alternative methods for bar opening to allow for Wilson Inlet to regulate its own water levels (details, see text).

2.4 Acid Sulfate Soils and the Inlet

The community are concerned by any development that requires excavation or dredging within the Inlet due to the threats caused by acid sulfate soils. Acid sulfate soils are known to exist in the soil layers beneath Wilson Inlet and if disturbed will pose a serious threat to the ecosystems present in and around the Inlet.

Potential aquatic impacts of disturbed acid sulfate soils include loss of habitat, reproductive stress in fish and invertebrates including shellfish, accumulation of metals in aquatic plants and animals, dominance of acid tolerant species, increased disease risk in aquatic organisms, and fish kills.

The Noongar community are concerned about increased development around the Inlet in general due to impacts associated with natural aesthetics and cultural values. The presence of acid sulfate soils presents an additional threat associated with any development that may require major earthworks or dredging.

Of particular concern is the 'makeshift' boat launch area created by professional fishermen (see section 2.15). In making an area for boats to be unloaded at the Inlet's edge, local fishermen have dug deep excavations which could release acid sulfates from the soil.

Recommendation: No excavations or earthworks should be undertaken around the Inlet without a full understanding of the potential impacts of acid sulfate soils at that particular location.

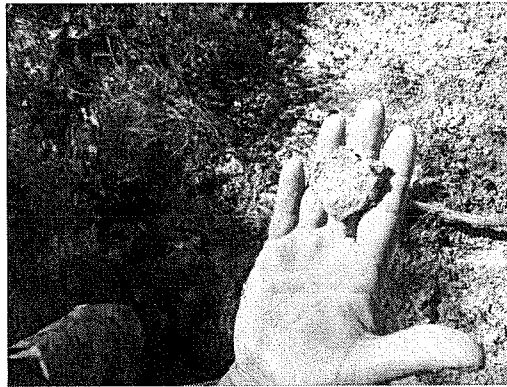


2.5 Concerns about the Springdale Foreshore Development

The proponents of the Springdale residential development, located east of the Denmark River, have put forward a proposal to build a boat ramp, jetty and ablution block at Springdale Beach. The Noongar community are opposed to the installation of any facilities at Springdale beach including the proposed boat ramp and ablution block. The foreshore area at Springdale Beach has ceremonial associations for Noongar people as large amounts of naturally occurring ochre can be found in the vicinity.

The installation of a large residential development so close to the Inlet is itself a concern to the community but of particular concern is the proposed Inlet access that will include vehicle access and car parks. Maintaining the existing vegetation 'buffer zone' between Springdale Beach and the housing development is important for limiting environmental impacts on the Inlet. In the interests of maintaining the cultural and natural integrity of Springdale beach and its surrounds, the Noongar community wish to see the foreshore kept free of cars or any major development.

Recommendation: The Shire of Denmark and relevant management bodies restrict any development or major disturbance at Springdale Beach, including the proposed boat ramp, jetty and ablution block.



2.6 Windfarm Proposal at Wilson Head

Proponents of a windfarm proposal for Denmark are seeking community support and federal government funding for the installation of a windfarm at Wilson Head. The proponents have not yet consulted with the Noongar community about the proposed location for the windfarm.

The Noongar community are, on the whole, opposed to the proposed location of the windfarm. The community feel that the installation of a windfarm at Wilson Head would be destructive to landscape values and that the proposed site is an important part of the cultural landscape. There are known archaeological features around the proposed windfarm site including stone quarrying sites. It should be noted that not all Noongar community members are opposed to the proposed location, however the vast majority are opposed to it.

The community suggest that if it is to go ahead, the windfarm should be placed in a less prominent position, perhaps further inland.

Recommendation: Consider alternative location for proposed Denmark Windfarm

2.7 Maintaining a Vegetation 'Buffer Zone' around the Inlet

Maintaining the health of Wilson Inlet in the face of increased development and population pressure is a core objective for the Noongar community. A key recommendation for addressing this objective is to maintain a vegetation 'buffer zone' around the extent of the Inlet's foreshore. The recommended buffer zone should extend to a minimum of 50 metres above the high water mark.

The community have emphasised the importance of the buffer zone for the maintenance of the Inlet's natural processes and to provide important habitat for the bird and animal species. With much of the catchment already cleared and increasing development and population pressures impacting on the Inlet, a vegetation buffer zone provides an important compromise in maintaining the balance between development and conservation.



It is recognised that some areas of foreshore, particularly within the town of Denmark have already been developed for tourism, recreation or other purposes and realistically will not be reclaimed. The vast majority of Inlet foreshore however, is either still vegetated, or in need of revegetation. It is critical for the health of the Inlet that these areas be maintained.

Of particular importance currently, are two locations on the northern shore of the Inlet. The vegetation buffer at Springdale beach is currently being threatened by developer's plans to build a boat ramp, jetty, car park and ablution block for the new Springdale residential development. With the massive influx of houses and population that will result from the development, the Inlet faces increased threats. Maintaining the vegetation buffer between the development and Springdale beach is vital. Maintaining the vegetation buffer will require a strong stance from the Shire of Denmark and relevant management bodies in restricting the development of Springdale Beach.

A second area of importance is a strip of the northern foreshore situated east of the Sleeman River towards Nonalup Point. The foreshore area in question is enclosed by private land. Cattle are grazing right to the water's edge. Fences extend into the Inlet to past the low water mark and the extent of damage to the foreshore resulting from cattle is considerable. This situation should be considered a high priority for action. Landholders may require financial support to install fencing around the inlet 'buffer', and this should be considered a high funding priority.

Recommendation: Maintain a vegetation 'buffer zone' around the extent of the Wilson Inlet foreshore of minimum 50 metres above high water mark.

Recommendation: Environmental Protection Authority be contacted in regards to implementing the actions listed here.

Action: Shire of Denmark, Environmental Protection Authority and relevant agencies refuse to approve the proposed development of Springdale Beach with installation of car park, boat ramp, jetty and ablution block in the interests of maintaining vegetation buffer.

Action: Support and lobby landholders around the Inlet to maintain vegetation buffer zones at the water's edge.

Action: Shire of Denmark, City of Albany, Department of Water and Wilson Inlet Management Advisory Group work with Environmental Protection Authority towards adopting a policy on maintaining a vegetation buffer zone.

2.8 Poison Point

Poison Point represents a key feature in the Wilson Inlet Cultural Landscape. The granite outcrop above Poison Point contains evidence of Noongar people quarrying dolerite and producing stone tools, as well as a large gnamma hole and important fresh water source. There is an old scar etched into the bark of a tree that is consistent with those used as markers by Noongar people during traditional times. In addition to the archaeological features present at Poison Point, the area is of particular importance to the contemporary Noongar community as a cultural site.



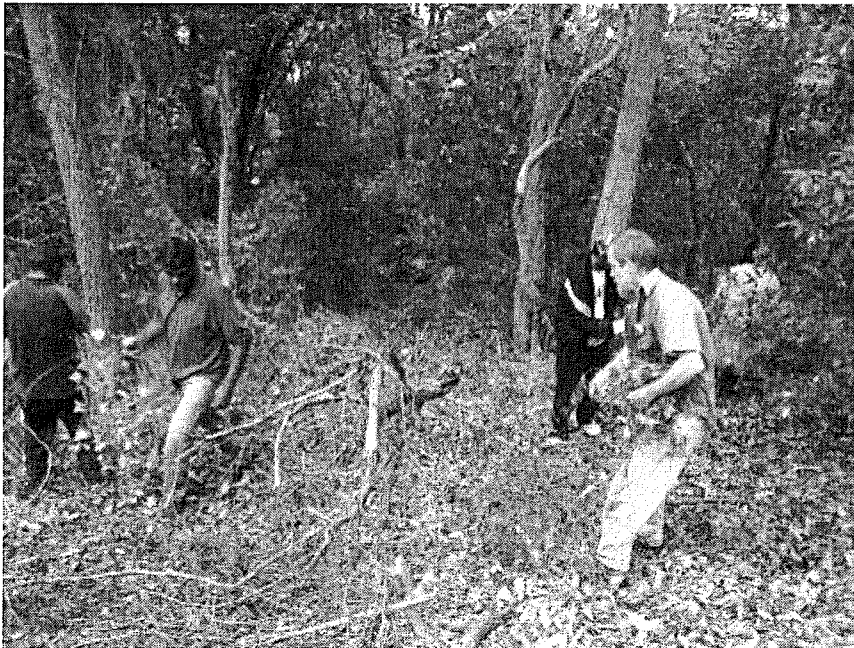
The Poison Point granite outcrop is a registered site in the Department of Indigenous Affairs heritage register under the title Denmark Quarry. A second site is also

registered under the title Inlet Drive Granite Outcrop. Both sites are part of the same complex and are situated within a 300m radius of one another. The sites have been registered separately due to the artificial division created by Inlet Drive.

The Denmark Quarry site file describes the site as “outcropping dolerite dyke through granite showing evidence of low level utilization; number of artefacts 100 plus; cores and flakes”.

The Inlet Drive Granite Outcrop site file describes the site as “numerous dolerite flakes over a granite outcrop; over 500 flakes on site; cores, flakes, blades, small number of quartz flakes, balls of Balga [grass tree] gum; contains holes that may have been used for water”

During fieldwork, members of the Albany Aboriginal Corporation (AAC) Field Crew along with the Denmark Weed Action Group removed a large outbreak of Dolichos pea (and old fencing wire from adjacent the houses on Inlet Crescent. Managing invasive weed species at cultural sites is an important aspect of Noongar caring for country. The AAC Field Crew and Denmark Weed Action Group developed a strong working partnership in managing weeds around the Inlet, particularly at cultural sites.



There is a current proposal to install a boardwalk at Poison Point that would allow elderly and disabled community members to enjoy the Point for recreational use. The Elders have not had a chance to consider the proposal as it was put forward after fieldwork was completed. Wayne Webb of the Pibulmun people said that the proposed location for the boardwalk is situated away from any specific cultural or archaeological features of the area, but this does not ensure Noongar community support for the project.

Poison Point is currently used predominantly by professional fishermen and a private property sign has been placed across the path leading to the Point. Areas of the foreshore are not private property and should be available for community access.

Poison Point and its surrounding granite outcrops should be considered of high cultural and archaeological importance.

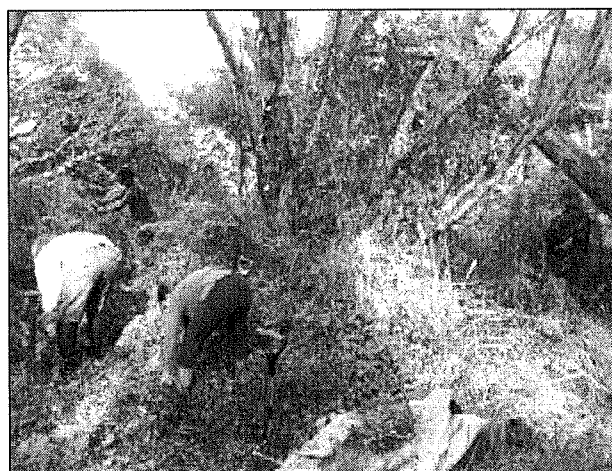
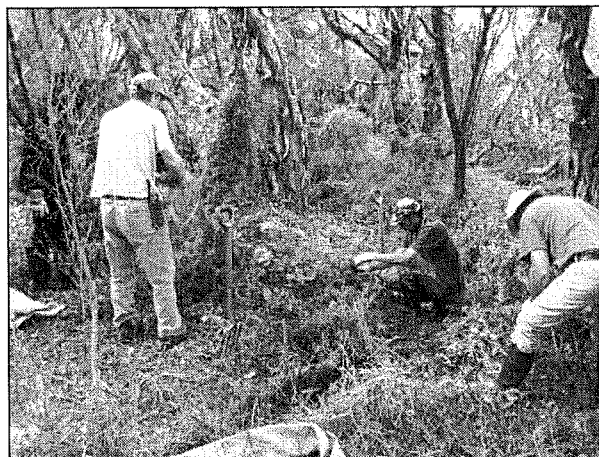
Recommendation: Shire of Denmark and Wilson Inlet Management Advisory Group consider opening foreshore access at Poison Point to the community

Recommendation: The Noongar community offers in-principle support to the idea for installation of a public access boardwalk at Poison Point but in the absence of consultation with all Traditional Owners, full approval cannot be confirmed yet (see text above).

2.9 Poddy Point Burial

A burial is situated in the vicinity of Poddy Point and registered in a closed file with the Department of Indigenous Affairs. Information relating to this site is not available to the public. The area should be considered of high cultural significance.

Members of the Albany Aboriginal Corporation (AAC) Field Crew and the Denmark Weed Action Group worked together on the Foreshore Reserve in an area adjacent to the boat launching site at Poddyshot to remove the highly invasive *Asparagus fern* (*Asparagus scandens*) and Arum lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*). Both groups expressed a strong interest in continuing the excellent working relationship.



2.10 Katelysia Rock Shelter

Katelysia Rock Shelter is situated on Ocean Beach Road, adjacent to the 'Prawn Channel' approximately 2km north of Ocean Beach. Archaeological recording was carried out at the site in 1984 by Charles Dortch and Kate Morse. The site consists of a midden and stone artefacts. Archaeological investigations included digging test pits in the site that obtained dates of between 1600 and 2330 years before present. The site contained fish bones from marine and estuarine species, marine shells, and remains of terrestrial animals and charcoal.

Katelysia Rock Shelter is set back from the road less than 30 metres and is sheltered from the road by a small patch of vegetation directly in front of the rock shelter. While the rock shelter is protected from the road the site is not under threat. Any further encroachment on the rock shelter or the vegetation that protects it will place the site under threat.

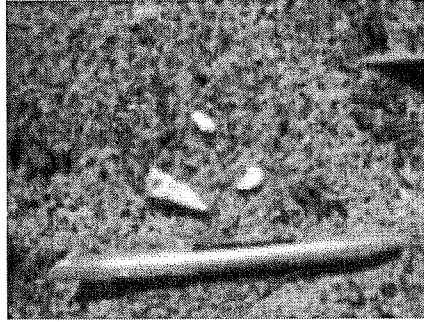
2.11 The Inlet and its Tributaries

Wilson Inlet is fed by its tributaries, the Sleeman River, Hay River, Denmark River, Little River, and the Cuppup Creek and Lake Saide Drain. These tributaries are important aspects of the cultural landscape.

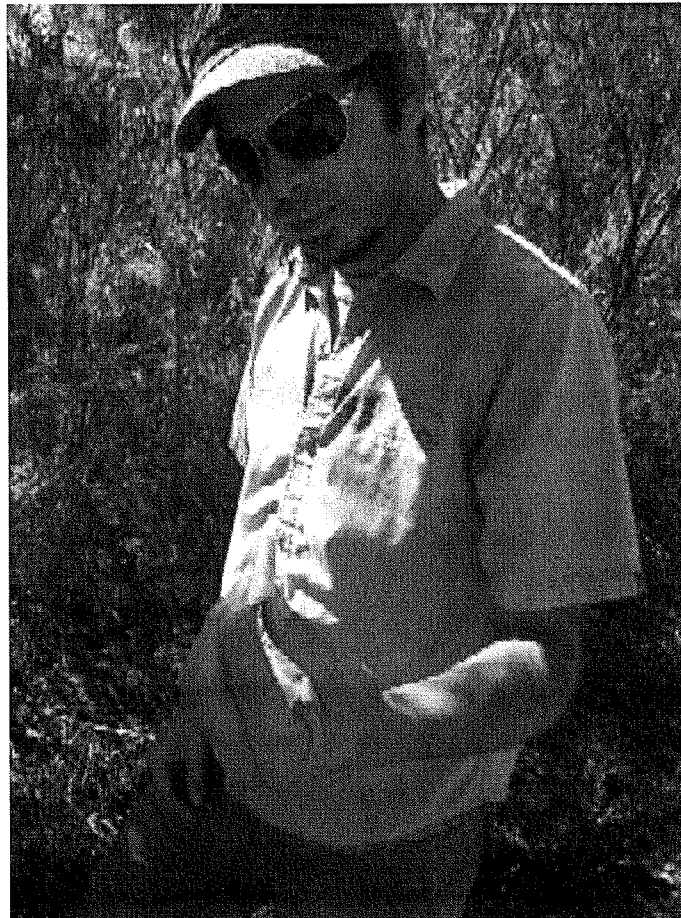
2.11.1 Kurabup (the Hay River)

The Hay River in Noongar language is known as Kurabup, meaning place of the small grey kangaroo (Kur in Noongar language describes what is today referred to as the brushtailed wallaby). The Kur used to be abundant along the edges of the Hay River and Noongar people used to hunt kur as they travelled along beside the Hay River south to Wilson Inlet for the summer months. Kur are no longer present in the area due to changing landscapes resulting from large scale clearing. Kurabup (Hay River) should be considered an important part of the Wilson Inlet cultural landscape.

Surveys conducted during this project identified numerous quartz flakes and flake tools uncovered adjacent to the west bank of the Hay River. It is impossible to gauge how dense the site is, or how far it extends due to thick vegetation and ground cover in the area making ground visibility nearly impossible. Artefacts were uncovered up to 1000 metres north of the rivermouth (Wilson Inlet) and up to 500 metres west of the river. The only visible artefacts appeared in the vehicle and walk tracks where the vegetation has been disturbed. Less than 40 artefacts were uncovered in total and all were made from quartz.



Thick forest vegetation dominates the northern foreshore areas up until around 800 metres west of the Hay River mouth where the vegetation shifts to low dense woodland. It is notable that no artefacts were identified along the northern shore of the Inlet between the Denmark and Hay Rivers except close the Hay River. This may be the result of a survey bias caused by a lack of visibility in the dense forested areas. It appears more likely however that Noongar people favoured the low dense woodland close to the Hay River which would have been easier to move through and more suitable for hunting. The only way to effectively survey the northern foreshore areas and gain a better understanding of artefact distribution would be to do so after a bushfire.



The initial archaeological finds at the mouth of the river support ethnographic accounts of the Hay River forming an important area for cultural activities including hunting kur.

No survey was carried out between the Sleeman and Hay Rivers due to a lack of access.

2.11.2 The Denmark River

The Denmark River is a registered Site on the Department of Indigenous Affairs heritage register. The site file states that:

“Elders Identified the Denmark River as a site of spiritual and cultural significance. The river was attributed with mythological significance and the Elders also acknowledged the waterway as a past and present resource for Aboriginal people. Requests were made by the Elders for the Denmark River to be recorded with DIA and be afforded protection granted under the Aboriginal Heritage Act.”

Another registered site, the Denmark River Midden provides archaeological evidence of the resources utilized by Noongar people. The shell midden is situated 5m from the riverbank approximately 1500m upstream from the mouth on the east side of the River and contains shell that displays “clear evidence of burning”.

The Denmark River represents a very important part of the Wilson Inlet eco-cultural landscape and holds deep cultural associations for Noongar people. Any proposals for development at the mouth of the river, especially those that require dredging or land reclamation are strongly opposed by the Noongar community.

Recommendation: Any development proposed for the mouth of the Denmark River, especially those that require dredging or land reclamation, are **strongly opposed** by the Noongar community.

2.11.3 Damming the Catchment

Continued damming within the Wilson Inlet catchment is exacerbating the problems associated with low water levels in the Inlet. This may appear an obvious statement but a massive dam is currently being constructed on private land within the Little River catchment. The dam is adjacent to the South West Highway approximately 5km west of Denmark town. With record low water levels in the Inlet, large scale dams such as this one are a cause for serious concern.

The Noongar community are strongly opposed to the Little River catchment dam and warn of serious consequences for Wilson Inlet if such disruptions to its tributaries continue to be allowed. A recommendation of this report is for Wilson Inlet Management Advisory Group, Department of Water and the Shire of Denmark to assess possibilities for stopping the Little River Dam.

Recommendation: Wilson Inlet Management Advisory Group, Department of Water, Shire of Denmark work with the Environmental Protection Authority to assess possibilities for stopping the Little River Dam.

Recommendation: Wilson Inlet Management Advisory Group, Department of Water, City of Albany, Shire of Plantagenet, Shire of Denmark and Environmental Protection Authority assess possibilities for improved management of damming within the Wilson Inlet catchment.

2.12 The Fish Traps of Wilson Inlet

Due to high water levels in the Inlet during fieldwork, no assessment of the numerous Wilson Inlet fish traps could be conducted in this project. There is however, information on the fish traps held with Department of Indigenous Affairs and key aspects of the available information have been compiled below. For additional information about how the traps were used, see Section 2.3.

2.12.1 Young's Lake (Menamup) Fish Trap

The Young's Lake Fish Trap was registered in 1978 by Jerry Benson, a local non-Aboriginal resident. Extracts from his written account of the traps are as follows:

"A stake device in a circle not completely closed at the entrance to Young's Lake from Lake Sadie, has been known to exist for more than 50 years by my brother Charles. It was pointed out to him by Lou and Fred Smith who had known of it much earlier, they told him it was a device used by local Aborigines to spear mullet."

"The area, before it was closed by the Department of Agriculture with flood gates above the fishing device, was a breeding ground for mullet, which made an annual migration from Wilson Inlet into the upper reaches above Young's Lake to spawn."

"From the shape of the device there would be little obstruction upstream, but fish would tend to congregate in the staked area when returning after their spawning run. From the appearance of the stakes in their present condition, small mullet possibly less than 150mm could escape. The device could then be used to spear larger fish which had, for instance been collected overnight"

"Further to the matter of fishing with this particular device, Charlie, my brother, also informs me that a method he calls brush sieving was used to force fish into the trap. Several old identities, including the Smiths, who remembered the Aboriginal fishing adaptations in the area described to him a method whereby a half circle of people pushing tree branches in front of them, forced schools of fish into the Young's Lake device, as well as at the stone traps at Jack's Island and onto the Hay River sand banks; on these banks fish could be made to enter channels and depressions where they could easily be speared."

It is interesting to note that prior to the installation of flood gates into Young's Lake, the area was a spawning ground for mullet. Noongar people used the trap to catch adult mullet, as they returned downstream after spawning, thus ensuring sustainable fishing practices.

The present condition of the Young's Lake Fish Trap is unknown due to its deep submersion under the water.

2.12.2 The Fish Traps at Jack's Island

The fish traps are situated on the west side of Wilson Inlet about halfway between the township and Ocean Beach, near Jack's Island.

The site was registered in 1973 in response to a letter sent to the Western Australian Museum from a local non-Aboriginal Denmark resident Mr West.

The letter explains:

"The rocks of which they consist are very similar to those at Oyster Harbour [a salt water Inlet situated in Albany approximately 60km east of Wilson Inlet] and the vegetation of the shores is similar, rushes, paper barks, but with karri and yate instead of marri. To high tide mark the beach is much rockier than Oyster Harbour, and it appeared to me that some of the traps seem to be of very recent construction though some seem to be original. It is evident that white men have moved many of the stones and this is not surprising since the entire shores of that side of the inlet has been subdivided into holiday homes, the titles of which extend generally to within a chain or two of high water mark."

Warwick Dix of the Western Australian Museum in January 1974 confirmed that the site was indeed stone fish traps of Aboriginal origin.

2.12.3 Marbalup Fish Traps

More stone fish traps exist on the south eastern side of the Inlet close to Nonalup Point. The traps were observed and documented by Charles Dortch of the Western Australian museum in 1988.

He states:

"The site is a complex set of stone alignments closely resembling the Oyster Harbour fish traps. They are located on the foreshore mud flats at the SE end of Wilson Inlet. Nearly always wholly or partly submerged, the fish traps were exposed during the low water levels in Wilson Inlet at the end of the 1987-88 summer."

2.13 Nonalup, Menamup, Lake Saide and Koirchekup Hill

The small inlet, extending out of the main body of Wilson Inlet at Nonalup Point is known in Noongar language as Nonalup. There is a small land bridge at the east end of Nonalup that gives way to Menamup Inlet (see map on previous page). Menamup Inlet is currently separated from the main Inlet by an artificial floodgate. South of Menamup Inlet is Lake Saide, east of which sits Koirchekup Hill.

2.13.1 Nonalup

Nonalup (means place of highly venomous snakes) is an area of high cultural and archaeological significance. The banks of the inlet are littered with small granite boulders displaying stone carved grooves numbering in their thousands. The grooves are carved in roughly uniform straight lines all less than 80mm wide and up to 400mm long. The depth of the grooves varies from 10mm to as much as 90mm. It appears the grooves must have been formed in the process of grinding or sharpening implements of some kind. Some questions have been asked as to whether the grooves may be of natural formation however due to the highly unusual nature of the formations and no explanation as to how they might have formed through natural geological processes, we must assume they are of cultural origin unless proven otherwise.

Traditional Owners suggest the grooves were created sharpening stone axe heads in the granite, which is certainly consistent with the resulting markings. What is most notable about the “grinding grooves” is the sheer number of them. If we are to consider the amount of time it might take to grind a 50mm groove into granite rock by hand, and how many people hours it would take to create thousands upon thousands of them, we start to get a picture of significant numbers of people returning to undertake this activity over a very long period of time.



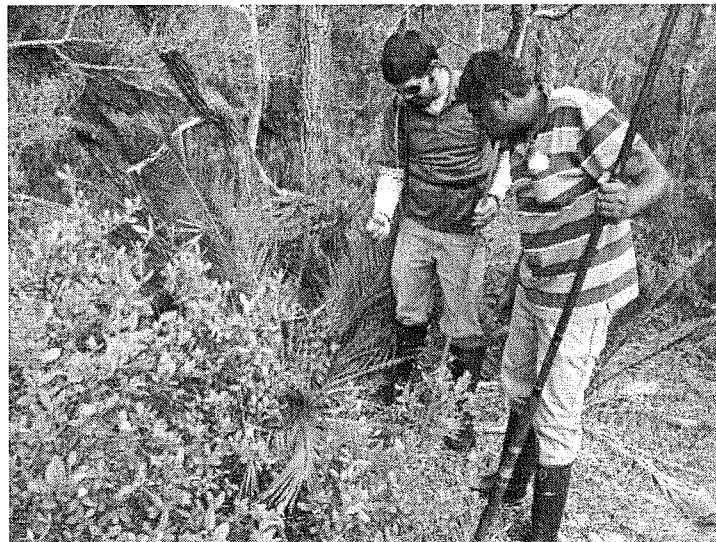
In contrast to suggestions that Wilson Inlet was only visited sporadically by Noongar people travelling in small groups, the “grinding grooves” at Nonalup paint a picture of

a location repeatedly targeted for a specific activity which had to have been conducted for many thousands of person hours to create the archaeological signature we see today. People travelled to this location repeatedly to undertake the same sharpening activity, displaying a long held continuity of cultural practice and geographical association.



2.13.2 Menamup

Menamup means place of edible bush chille in Noongar language (species name not known). Vegetation in the important strip of land between Menamup and Nonalup is abundant with zamia palms. There are also numerous granite features, including a tall narrow cave created between two large boulders, granite outcrops containing lizard traps and gnamma holes and unique natural granite formations of varying sizes.



The gnamma holes and lizard traps at Menamup are clearly related to the grinding grooves of Nonalup by obvious proximity as well as to the Young's Lake fish trap which is situated within Menamup Inlet. The Marbalup fish traps are also within close

proximity. This area was utilized in resource procurement and for the preparation of specific stone implements. No stone tools were found in the area which may be due to poor ground visibility in the thick vegetation or support the idea that this area was used for gathering specific resources and preparing specific implements which were then taken elsewhere.



2.13.3 Koirchekup Hill and Lake Sadie

Koirchekup Hill is a ceremonial place restricted to men only. The hill is registered in a closed file with the Department of Indigenous Affairs. Information relating to this site is not available to the public. The area should be considered of high cultural significance. Koirchekup Hill is a reserve managed by the City of Albany who are doing a good job in working to control weeds in the precinct which was previously used as a rubbish dump.

The Albany Aboriginal Corporation Field Crew conducted three days of maintenance work at Koirchekup Hill as part of the Wilson Inlet project. Under the guidance of Elders Kelvin Penny, Stanley Loo and Bill Woods Snr, the crew conducted weed control, thorough site assessments and rubbish clean-up. General site maintenance such as this is important in maintaining the environmental condition of sites and maintaining cultural practices; caring for country, caring for culture.

Burials are also known to exist in this area. Young's Siding Burial is a registered site in the Department of Indigenous Affairs Heritage Register. The burial is located in the vicinity of UTM location 544640mE/6123646mN.

Lake Saide sits below Koichekup to the west. The lake and hill are directly related to Menamup and Nonalup as interrelated natural features. The cultural elements of these four natural features are interrelated, including the Marbalup stone fish traps and the Young's Lake stick fish trap. Together these landscape features present a focal point of cultural activities. The archaeological features suggest that this area was the most active part of the cultural system that existed at Wilson Inlet.

In future the Noongar community wish to be involved with any actions affecting the Nonalup/Lake Saide system, including decisions relating to the flood gates and

drainage system in place at Lake Saide and Menamup. It is the responsibility of the City of Albany, Department of Water and other government bodies dealing with this area to involve the Noongar community in actions affecting it

Recommendation: In future the Noongar community wish to be involved with any actions affecting the Menamup/Lake Saide system, including decisions relating to the flood gates and drainage system. It is the responsibility of the City of Albany and government bodies to involve the community in regards to this area in the future. There are no specific actions relating to the drainage system recommended at this point.

Recommendation: Noongar men to be engaged in any decisions relating to Koirchekup Hill, managed by the City of Albany.

Recommendation: General maintenance work may need to be carried out around the Menamup-Nonalup area with regard to natural and cultural features. Currently there is a bridal creeper outbreak present within the land bridge area between Nonalup and Menamup Inlet. It requires the spread of "rust" treatment which could not be undertaken during the early winter months when this project was conducted due to unfavourable weather conditions. It is recommended that this action be undertaken by Denmark Weed Action Group in collaboration with Albany Aboriginal Corporation.

Action: Undertake "rust" treatment of Bridal Creeper outbreak at Menamup Inlet close to the floodgates.

2.14 Rare Flora, Invasive Weeds and a Cultural Site

As part of the weed management program conducted collaboratively between Denmark Weed Action Group and Albany Aboriginal Corporation, a site assessment was conducted on the foreshore in Denmark town at the end of Roberts Road (site entry point at UTM location 533141mE/6129184mN). The foreshore area in question is closely bordered by private residences but access can be gained at the end of Roberts Road only.

Denmark Weed Action Group have been monitoring the site for some time and working towards gaining control over an extensive outbreak of asparagus scandon, an environmental weed prevalent in the Denmark area. The infestation is very large and efforts to control it have been unsuccessful so far.

The site is also home to a priority 1 rare flora species *seleria radicans*. The plant is thriving in this location. The *seleria radicans* is growing separately from the asparagus scandon but the invasive species is beginning to threaten the habitat of the *seleria*.

On a granite outcrop that protrudes into the inlet immediately adjacent to the *seleria radicans* site, cultural features exist in the form of lizard traps.



A proposal has been developed between the Denmark Weed Action Group and Albany Aboriginal Corporation to gain control over the asparagus scandon outbreak. The groups wish to obtain funding for a collaborative project that aims to use controlled fire in order to initially kill the weed and then continue to maintain its regrowth through hand weeding and ongoing monitoring/maintenance.

The project will require careful planning, ideal weather conditions, cooperation from local residents and the support of the local fire brigade. The project will satisfy a number of targets through maintain the health of a site on the inlet with priority 1 endangered flora, high priority invasive weed species and cultural/archaeological features.

Jerry Narkle of Restoring Connections Project is seen as a key individual for the successful implementation of this project, with a keen knowledge of controlled burning techniques. The burn will not affect the seleria radicans as it is situated on lower swampy ground with very little fuel for fire.



Recommendation: Funding required for collaborative weed management project to be conducted by Denmark Weed Action Group and Albany Aboriginal Corporation. The project will involve controlled burning of a massive weed infestation followed up with ongoing monitoring/maintenance. Values at the site that this project seeks to promote include a priority 1 flora species and a cultural site.

2.15 Destructive land-use on the northern foreshore

Along the Denmark to Hay River Heritage Trail which follows the path of the old railway line, in a section east of Rudyard Beach, approximately half way between Rudyard and the Hay River, professional fishermen have inflicted serious damage on the foreshore and attempted to claim the area as private property. The foreshore is for public access and should not be restricted to the community.

The damage has resulted from earthworks aimed at turning the site into a boat launching, mooring and loading facility. Fishermen have excavated a deep trench/canal in the foreshore to hold boats, in the process felling very old malaleucas and risking exposure of acid sulfate soils. Furthermore, a natural fresh watercourse running into a deep soak has been completely redirected through major earthworks in order to provide vehicle access to the site. There is rubbish left around the area and invasive weed outbreaks are present specifically at this site. Tasmanian Blackwood trees, Acacia Melanoxylon, and ink weed (*Phytolacca octandra*) are all invasive weed species present at the site.

This kind of destructive land-use practice presents a serious concern in management of the natural health of Wilson Inlet. There are many conflicting economic pressures affecting the inlet and there is no suggestion here that none should be allowed to

continue operating. However, there needs to be some compromises made by fishermen and other parties holding economic interests, with view to sustainability and the health of the inlet. Redirecting a natural freshwater source and excavating the foreshore is an inappropriate abuse of the privileges that Wilson Inlet provides.

There is a strong need for the Shire of Denmark, Wilson Inlet Management Advisory Group and the Department of Water to work towards better management of this situation. Professional interests do not entitle individuals to inflict major disturbances on the inlet. It is a recommendation that the relevant authorities work with the individuals responsible to ensure that such environmental impacts are not extended and to develop an understanding that inflicting such impacts is not acceptable to the broader community.

Recommendation: Shire of Denmark, Wilson Inlet Management Advisory Group and the Department of Water work with Environmental Protection Authority to make an assessment of the destructive land-use practices in place at the makeshift fishing launch area and develop solutions to prohibit further damage



2.16 The Nullaki Peninsula

The Nullaki Peninsula, an extensive sand dune system on the southern side of Wilson Inlet, has been extensively surveyed for heritage values by Brad Good and Associates in 2005 (Goode, 2005). The ethnographic and archaeological surveys yielded no finds of archaeological or cultural significance.

During fieldwork for this project, one small shell midden was noted within the Nullaki area eroding out of the Bibbulman Track which winds along the southern foreshore of

the inlet. The midden consists of cockle shells, covering a visible surface area of less than 2 square metres. The midden is reportedly in close proximity to another undocumented fish trap built from sticks. The fish trap could not be located due to high water levels. The site is in no immediate danger.

Site location: 536125mE/6126850mN (zone 50)

PART 3: COMMUNITY CULTURAL MANAGEMENT

3.1 Cultural Connections at Wilson Inlet

Wilson Inlet spans across two distinct cultural zones in Noongar country. Denmark itself and the western part of Wilson Inlet are generally considered to be part of the Pibulmun country that stretches west and north to Busselton. The eastern end of Wilson Inlet is generally considered to be part of Menang country which incorporates Albany and surrounding districts. As such, Wilson Inlet can be considered an area of cultural interaction during traditional times and this still holds true today.

During the early colonial period Noongar populations living around the Inlet were decimated by European diseases and early colonial conflict. Few Noongar people have returned to live in the area since this time but cultural ties to the area still exist for the Pibulmun and Menang people. Archaeological signatures and natural features comprise the eco-cultural landscape and the interactions of contemporary Custodians form the basis for a living cultural landscape at Wilson Inlet.

Caring for country forms an important element in maintaining and reclaiming Noongar cultural connections to Wilson Inlet and its surrounds. This project forms a basis for ongoing Noongar community engagement in caring for Wilson Inlet and sustaining cultural custodianship into the future.

The Denmark Weed Action Group members hope to continue and further their links with the local Noongar community through a collaborative effort of onsite weed eradication works. This will involve prior consultation and consideration of Noongar heritage places and values.

3.2 Setting Up a Noongar Community Initiative at Wilson Inlet

In setting up a Noongar Community Initiative at Wilson Inlet it was necessary to take the background information provided in Section 3.1 into account and consult broadly with custodians from the Pibulmun and Menang people. We worked towards developing a project that could engage appropriate representation of Traditional Owners from both cultural groups and remain effective and practical. The process undertaken does not represent the only solution, but proved effective and was broadly supported by the Noongar communities of the Menang and Pibulmun. A description of the process is detailed below to offer an example for future community engagement in caring for country and managing Wilson Inlet.

The Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation provides a reference group of Elders and family representatives for heritage matters in Menang country, specifically within the City of Albany local government area. The Reference Group was engaged for this project through Chairperson Vernice Gilles to provide representation of Menang Elders. A roster system was drawn up by Vernice to include Elders from the ten family groups, with two Elders or family representatives attending each day of fieldwork. On this basis, Menang engagement can be outsourced to the Albany Heritage Reference Group for project work at Wilson Inlet and its surrounds. Reference Group Chairperson Vernice Gilles can be contacted via the Department of Indigenous Affairs in Albany.

The Albany Aboriginal Corporation employs a team of qualified Noongar people to conduct archaeological work and environmental conservation throughout the region. The Field Crew was engaged on a professional basis to undertake the fieldwork in

this project, which included both archaeological and environmental conservation. Through this process local Noongar people are professionally engaged in caring for country and culture, and an important community organisation maintains economic viability. The Field Crew work on a variety of projects across a large region and are regularly engaged by organisations such as Greening Australia, Australian Bush Heritage, Gondwana Link, South Coast NRM, and Department of Indigenous Affairs.

All administration for the field crew is taken care of by Albany Aboriginal Corporation and the Field Crew can be engaged in project work for a negotiated sum that includes, wages and superannuation for employees, administration and book keeping, and additional costs as required such as crew transport. Through this process project labour can effectively be outsourced to the Albany Aboriginal Corporation and Traditional Owners be engaged professionally. Albany Aboriginal Corporation can be contacted through Chairperson Graeme Miniter at Southern Aboriginal Corporation, Aberdeen Street Albany, or through Eugene Eades at Greening Australia, or via the Department of Indigenous Affairs office in Albany.

Representation of the Pibulmun people is conducted through Wayne Webb, an archaeologist and Traditional Owner based in Walpole. Wayne is endowed with custodial responsibilities for Pibulmun country and represents the Elders and family groups of the Pibulmun and Wadandi people. Wayne Webb was appointed Field Director of this project for his custodial responsibilities and archaeological experience and in so doing provided representation of the Pibulmun people. Wayne is a key stakeholder for Wilson Inlet and has a considerable knowledge of cultural and natural features around the Inlet and its catchment. Wayne can be contacted via Department of Indigenous Affairs in Albany.

3.3 Partnerships and Shared Management

The Noongar community are actively engaged with the Wilson Inlet eco-cultural landscape. This project offered a mechanism for that community engagement to be integrated with current and future management of the Inlet. Through management planning, on-ground project work, consultation, and integration with key stakeholders, the Noongar community can develop a more active and integrated role in the management of Wilson Inlet. This will require an active and ongoing commitment from all stakeholders and members of the Noongar community to make this collaboration work for better management of the Inlet.

WIMAG and the Albany Heritage Reference Group; There are opportunities for the Wilson Inlet Management Advisory Group and the Albany Heritage Reference Group to work more closely on issues pertaining to management of Wilson Inlet. This will require correspondence between the two groups and a willingness for each group to engage the other on relevant matters for management. Wayne Webb is also now involved with WIMAG as a representative from the Pibulmun- Wardandi community.

Recommendation: Wilson Inlet Management Advisory Group and the Albany Heritage Reference Group maintain correspondence and a working relationship on matters pertaining to the cultural heritage of Wilson Inlet

Albany Aboriginal Corporation Field Crew: The Noongar field crew employed on a permanent basis with Albany Aboriginal Corporation are qualified in conservation and

land management and available to carry out on-ground work around the Inlet at any time. Having built a strong working relationship with the Denmark Weed Action Group and Green Skills, the crew are eager to gain further employment in project work around the Inlet with these groups or others. This practical and professional engagement of Noongar people is the most effective approach to maintaining Noongar involvement in managing Wilson Inlet.

Recommendation: The Albany Aboriginal Corporation Field Crew continue to be engaged professionally in on-ground works around Wilson Inlet

Department of Water: DoW has jointly commissioned this report to gain Noongar perspectives into future management planning for the Inlet. This is an important step forward in building strong working relationships with the community and presents opportunities to go further with joint management activities. Continued involvement of the Noongar community is important. Professional engagement of the Albany Aboriginal Corporation Field Crew on DoW projects around the Inlet is a good way to maintain engagement whilst carrying out project work. Continued consultation with the Albany Heritage Reference Group and Wayne Webb is also important for maintaining effective collaborative management.

Recommendation: Department of Water build on the achievements of this project in actively working with the Noongar community to implement recommendations and actions from this report and further actions as they arise

Department of Indigenous Affairs and South Coast NRM: DIA and SCNRM have the opportunity to continue investing in community NRM and heritage projects around Wilson Inlet and its catchment. A similar process to that used during this project may be employed on an ongoing basis.

Recommendation: DIA and SCNRM continue supporting community NRM and heritage projects around Wilson Inlet and its catchment.

City of Albany and the Shire of Denmark: The two local government authorities have responsibilities in working to ensure that cultural heritage and environmental values are maintained within a healthy balance alongside pressures imposed through conflicting land uses. In particular a careful balance must be sought between development and conservation. To effectively achieve this recommendation the local government authorities need to maintain a working relationship with the Noongar community

Recommendation: City of Albany and Shire of Denmark maintain working relationships with the Noongar community to ensure that cultural heritage and environmental values are maintained in a healthy balance with conflicting land uses and development.

Green Skills Denmark: The team at Green Skills in Denmark have developed a good working partnership with the Noongar community. There are opportunities now to sustain and develop that relationship further through collaborative projects around Wilson Inlet involving Albany Aboriginal Corporation, Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation and Wayne Webb.

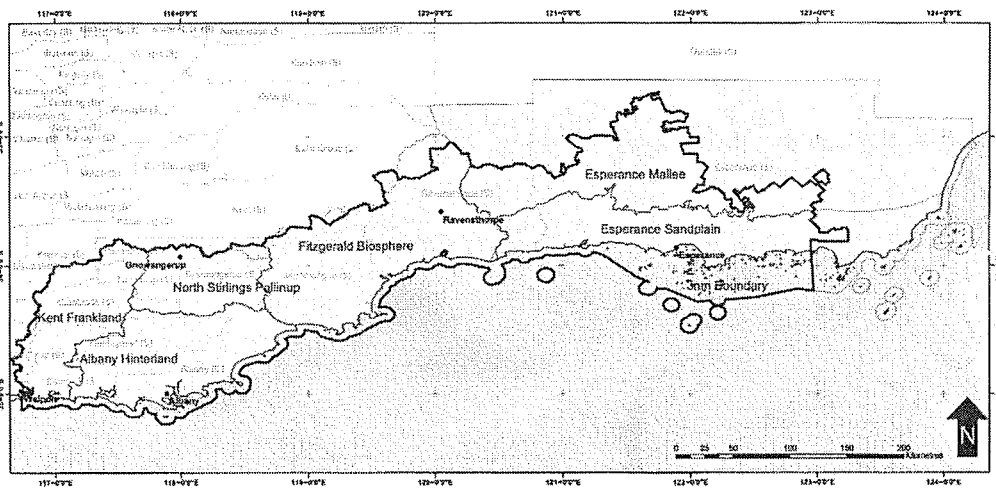
Recommendation: Green Skills, Albany Aboriginal Coporation, Albany Heritage Reference Group and Pibulmun community build upon existing partnerships in conducting further projects around Wilson Inlet.

REFERENCES

Evans, Haigh and Schur. 2001. *Jewel of the Rainbow Coast: Wilson Inlet*. Green Skills Inc.

Goode, Brad. 2005. *Ethnographic Survey of the Nullaki Wilderness and Garden of Eden Estates, Nullaki Peninsula Denmark Western Australia*.

Appendix 1: Map of South Coast Region



Map 1 - South Coast Region

Legend
 [Solid line] South Coast Boundary (under bilateral agreements)
 [Dashed line] Local Government Boundaries
 [Dotted line] Proposed South Coast Boundary

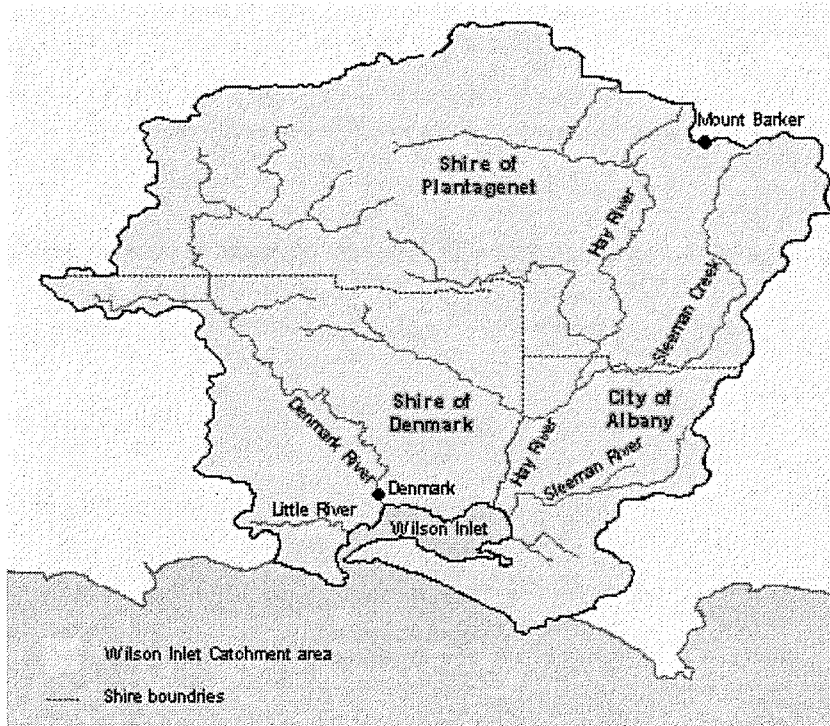
Data
 South Coast NPWS Region extends to the 3 km marine boundary.
 Local governments advise that the topoglyphs were used to extract agricultural catchment from A/Stats (Copyright, Australian Bureau of Statistics).

Acknowledgements
 Local Government boundaries supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

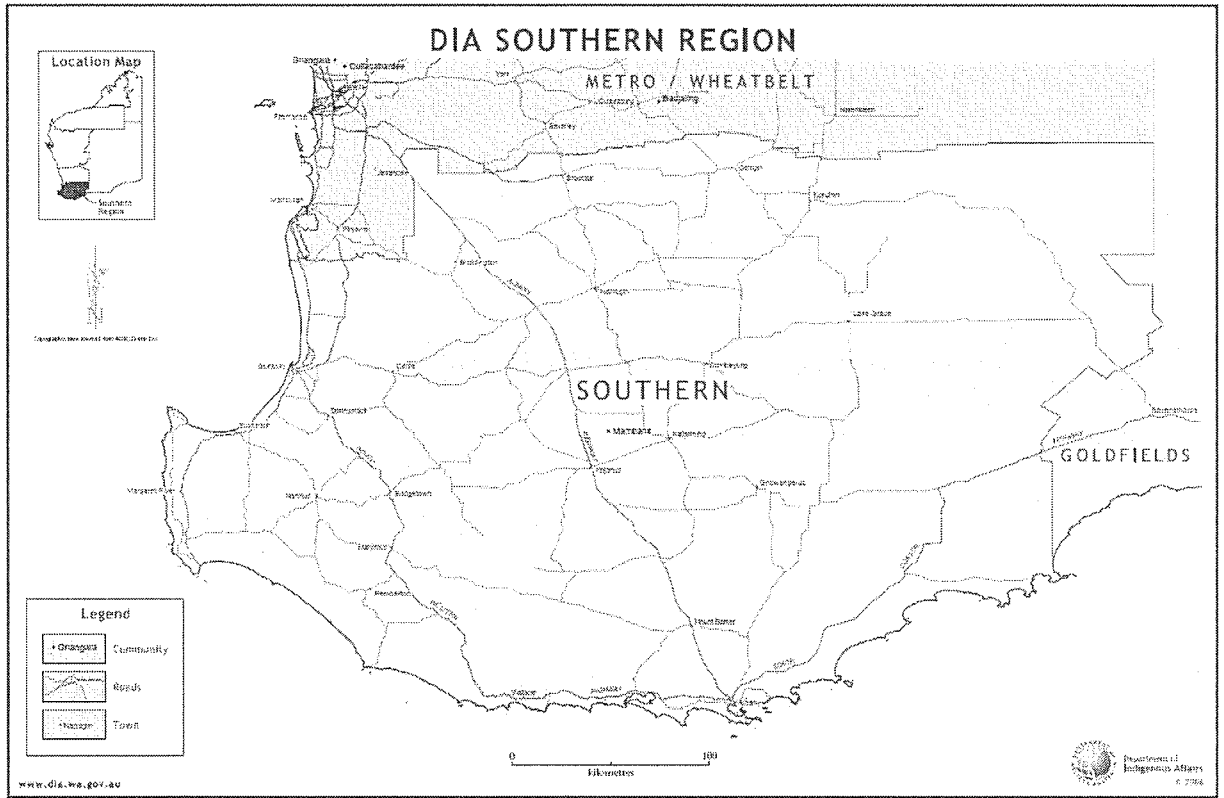
References
 Proposition: None
 Datum: Geometric Datum of Australia 1994

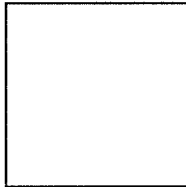
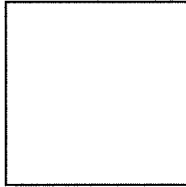
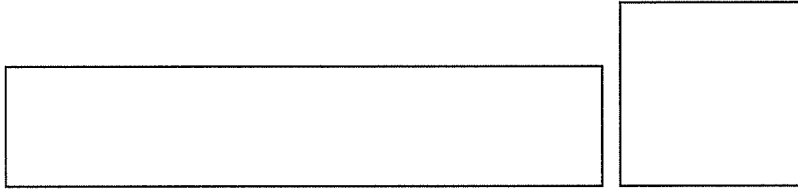
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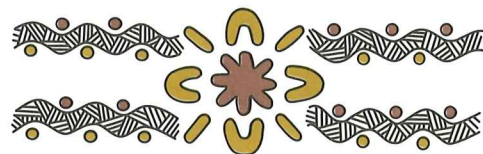
Appendix 2: Map of Wilson Inlet Catchment and LGAs



Appendix 3: Map of South West Western Australia







ENQUIRIES: Graham Townley 98423000

OUR REF: S1112

YOUR REF:

Ms Yvette Curuso
Shire of Denmark
PO Box 183
Denmark WA 6333

<i>Shire of Denmark</i>	
14 OCT 2008	
REMIO	
DATE	LPH
FILE REF	
COUNCILLORS	
CEO	
DIR of FINANCE	
DIR of PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DIR of INFRASTRUCTURE	
DIR of COMMUNITY	
OTHER	

Dear Ms Yvette Curuso

WILSON INLET CULTURAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2008

I have enclosed a copy of the Wilson Inlet Cultural Management Plan 2008 prepared by Mr Myles Mitchell for the South Coast Heritage Restoration project.

The report is a significant step in protecting the Inlet's cultural and natural heritage values and includes recommendations that may be incorporated in the draft Wilson Inlet Foreshore Management Plan.

As Regional Heritage Officer in the Department's Albany office, I will be working with local stakeholders to implement a number of heritage and natural resource management recommendations in the Cultural Management Plan this year. A key strategy for this project is to progress on-ground site restoration work with local Noongar custodians, including weed eradication and revegetation activities. I will also be working with Noongar stakeholders to foster community input into the Wilson Inlet Foreshore management and planning process in 2008/2009.

Thank you for your support and I look forward to meeting with you and discussing the project in more detail with local stakeholders in the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely


Dr Graham Townley
REGIONAL HERITAGE OFFICER
13/10/2008