

MEELUP REGIONAL PARK ANNUAL REPORT 2016 -2017



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Meelup Regional Park Management Committee	3
3. Staffing.....	4
4. Presiding Member’s report.....	4
5. Key Achievements 2016/17	6
5.1. Conservation and Rehabilitation	6
5.1.1. Weed Management	6
5.1.2. Feral Animal Management.....	8
5.1.3. Fire Management.....	8
5.1.4. Dieback Management	8
5.1.5. Implementation of Grant Projects	9
5.1.6. Revegetation Works.....	10
5.1.7. Meelup Beach Tree Audit	11
5.2. Recreation Facilities and Services	12
5.2.1. Trails and Facilities	12
5.2.2. Litter Control	13
5.2.3. Development of Mountain Bike Trails	13
5.2.4. Remediation Works- Zone 6	15
5.2.5. Event Management.....	15
5.3. Community and Stakeholder Engagement	16
5.3.1 Stakeholder Engagement.....	16
5.3.2 Education and Community Engagement Program.....	17
5.3.3 Volunteer Program.....	18
6. Finances	21
6.1. Ten Year Plan, Business Plan	21
6.2. Budget.....	21

1. Introduction

Meelup Regional Park (park) is a Class A reserve over which the City of Busselton (City) has a management order for the purpose is 'Conservation and Recreation'. The park is 577 hectares in area and extends from Dunsborough to Bunker Bay.

Meelup Regional Park is highly valued for its:

- unique natural environment and conservation significance, with significant flora and fauna, a myriad of vegetation types and varied habitats;
- stunning landscapes, including granite outcrops, calm turquoise waters and natural bushland;
- diverse range of recreational opportunities, including bushwalking, wildflower spotting, swimming, surfing and fishing;
- tourism importance; and
- educational and research opportunities.

The vision for the future of the park is to:

Manage the park for conservation and environmental enhancement and allow recreation and other uses of the park to occur to the extent that they do not impair the conservation values of the park.

This Annual Report summarises the activities of the Meelup Regional Park Management Committee (Committee) from July 2016 to June 2017.

2. Meelup Regional Park Management Committee

The Meelup Regional Park Management Committee has been established under the *Local Government Act 1995* by the City Council and the Committee is delegated to adopt plans, policies or documents that relate to management of the Park, other than where those plans, policies or documents require adoption pursuant to a particular statutory power. Committee members are appointed by the City Council.

Meelup Regional Park Management Committee membership for the period July 2016 to June 2017:

Members	Deputy Members
Dr Bob Jarvis (Presiding Member)	Cr Ross Paine
Mr Peter Randerson (Deputy Presiding Member)	Mr Robert Ginbey
Cr John McCallum	Ms Lisa Archer
Cr Terry Best	Ms Arlene Maidment
Mr Albert Haak	
Mrs Shirley Fisher	
Mr Damien Jones	
Mr Tony Smurthwaite	

Note:

- Ms Lisa Archer and Ms Arlene Maidment have vacated the Deputy Member positions during the year.
- Following the Council elections in October 2017, Cr Kelly Hicks and Cr Lyndon Miles have replaced Cr Terry Best and Cr Ross Paine in the member and deputy member roles, respectively.

3. Staffing

The City of Busselton currently employs a Meelup Environment Officer (Ms. Kay Lehman) three days a week (0.6 FTE).

4. Presiding Member's report

It is a real pleasure to be writing this Annual Report, so much progress has been made.

My thanks to my fellow Committee Members and to our City staff: Paul Needham, Greg Simpson and Kay Lehman whose passion for the Park is so evident in their work and support. My thanks also to the Mayor and Councillors, especially John McCallum and Terry Best, who sat on our Committee, for their passion and involvement.

It is heartwarming to see so much improvement happening in the Meelup Regional Park, it is ever more popular with locals and visitors alike.

You will read later in this report of the many and varied projects that have occupied our year and I will mention only a few important ones.

Kay Lehman, our (the City's) Environment Officer, has initiated programs to enhance and preserve the Meelup Beach area with young trees planted and measures to protect the very older ones, including mulching and planting of appropriate natives about them.

Dieback (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) infection of our native flora in Meelup Regional Park remains the major threat to this unique and precious Park and the Committee with our EO's lead was able to obtain a significant Grant from Coast West to implement a management plan this year.

Hygiene Stations have now been installed on all significant trails that cross into dieback free areas, and trails in these areas are progressively being sheathed with crushed limestone which inhibits the spread of the fungus. Larger areas were able to be treated with Phosphite in an attempt to slow the progress of the disease.

Fire breaks are also being sheathed with limestone and the Water Corporation were helpful in contributing significantly to this along the western firebreak and wildlife corridor.

On the advice of the Dieback Consultant the Lookout Trail has been closed from Events (some involving hundreds of participants) to protect this beautiful area, and the alternative trail was sheathed in limestone prior to this year's X Adventure Race.

Our Volunteer list has lengthened and Tuesday morning work parties are well attended with up to 15 volunteers regularly enjoying the work and camaraderie. The City has recognised the significant contribution made by Volunteers with a move to set up an incorporated "Friends of Meelup" group well underway as well as providing new equipment and training (motorised hedge trimmers and an auger) for the volunteers. They have built a Shed for storage of the trailer and gear adjacent to the Lions Shed and Men's Shed in Dunsborough. We will be sharing the Shed with other groups and it will provide security for the valuable gear we now have.

My thanks to Peter Randerson who has been standing in for Bob Ginbey as Volunteer Co-Ordinator while Bob is patronising the medicos of the State. The "Vollies" have contributed significantly with weeding being a priority over spring and revegetation over winter with trail pruning whenever needed. The need for rubbish collection has significantly fallen since the city has employed a part time Litter Control Officer, Jenny Clark, from October to May to patrol the Park, advising and collecting.

Thanks to Tony Smurthwaite who has contributed significantly, donating his talents to a very comprehensive analysis of the geology and geomorphology of the Park to assess the occurrence of soil erosion. This will assist in planning drainage measures to control the erosion of tracks and firebreaks.

It is a relief to see the Mountain Bike Trails under construction after so many years in planning, Andrew Spencer-Wright and the Cape Mountain Bikers are to be congratulated for the challenging trails.

It was disappointing to be unable to spend our budgeted Capital Funds on the Pt Picquet Carpark but fortunately the work will be done this year. The new toilet contrasts to the subtlety of the Whale-watching Platform but will be functional well into the future.

This year I hope that our Website revamp will be completed and that you will be able to enjoy and be informed by it.

Dr Bob Jarvis
Presiding Member
Meelup Regional Park Management Committee

5. Key Achievements 2016/17

Meelup Regional Park Programs

- Feral animal control
- Weed control
- Firebreak maintenance and control burns
- Dieback management
- Revegetation/Rehabilitation works
- Facilities e.g. Whale platform, carparks
- Trail repairs and maintenance
- Signage and trail markers
- Community education program
- Meelup Volunteer program
- Litter management
- Community and Aboriginal consultation
- Event Management
- Grant programs

5.1. Conservation and Rehabilitation

5.1.1. Weed Management

An annual weed control program is undertaken in the park, with contractors engaged to undertake the work. Areas targeted in 2016/17 included:

- revegetation sites
- boundaries with private property
- coastal nodes
- zone 6
- firebreaks and trails
- Meelup, Dolugup and Jingarmup Brooks.

Two components of the weed control work include the following:

1. Control of aggressive priority environmental weeds capable of invading good quality bushland.
Work focused on a range of high priority environmental weeds with the potential to invade good condition bushland. The majority of the work targeted the edges of park neighbouring urban or rural properties which often represented sources of priority environmental weeds. Elements of the control program followed infestations deep within the park itself.

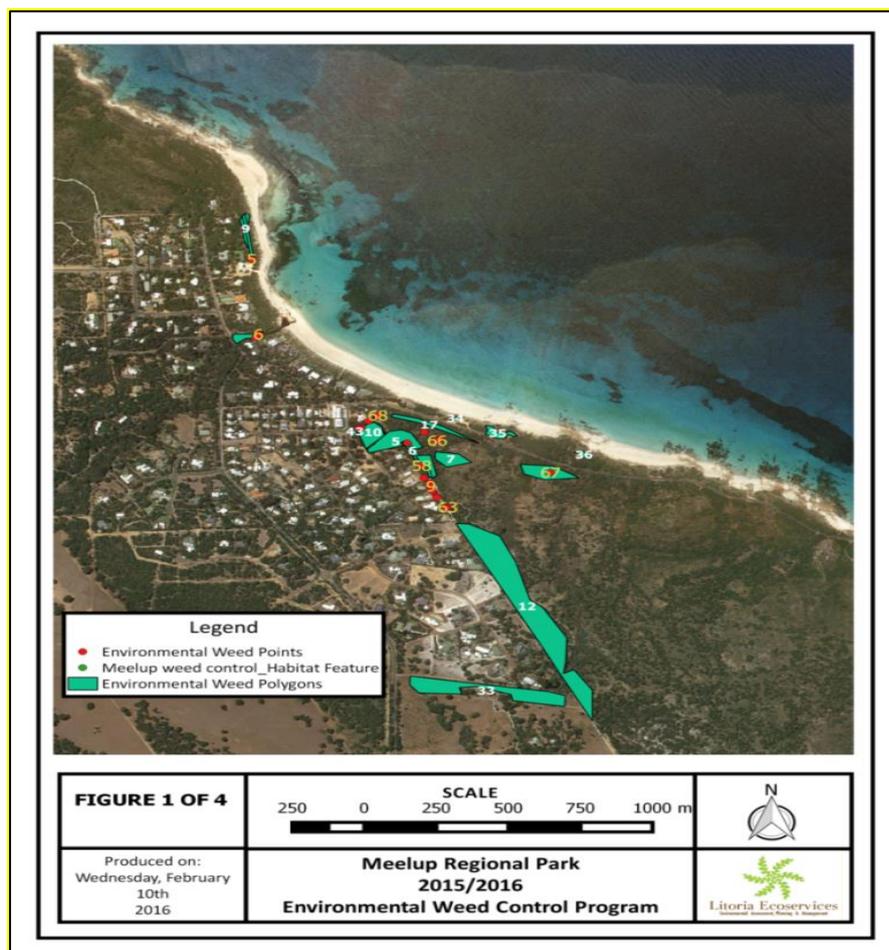
High priority weeds include: Arum Lily, Sydney Golden Wattle, Finders Ranges Wattle, Pittosporum, Dolichos Pea, Polygala, Cape Tulip, Gladiolus, Fressias and Watsonia.
2. Maintenance and support of existing revegetation sites
This component targeted a broad range of weed species including both priority environmental weeds and opportunistic disturbance colonisers at sites previously subject to revegetation planting and bush regeneration works.

The City and the Committee are working with the Residents of Eagle Bay Association (REBA) to control the infestation of Pyp grass (*Ehrharta villosa*) along the beach at Eagle Bay. Areas will be systematically sprayed with other patches manually removed by volunteers in areas of native spinifex grass. Post weed control areas will be revegetated with local native species.



Members of REBA undertaking revegetation works post weed control works

Weed species and weed locations are mapped each year to enable priority weed control work and to gauge the long-term success of the program. Refer to the example map below.



Weed mapping of Meelup Regional Park

5.1.2. Feral Animal Management

An annual feral animal control program is conducted in the Park which comprises:

- three rounds of fox baiting, one in spring and the other in autumn
- one round of rabbit baiting in autumn and use of the Calici virus
- feral cat trapping
- monitoring of each of the above treatments pre-control, during control and post-control, consisting of regularly monitored sand plots and the use of infra-red cameras.

All land holders adjoining the park are notified of the baiting program and all feral animal control is undertaken by licensed feral animal control operators.



Use of cameras for feral animal control

5.1.3. Fire Management

The Park's fire management is guided by the Fire Management Plan (2013). A fire planning meeting is undertaken on an annual basis to identify planned burns, and a firebreak inspection is also undertaken annually to identify any firebreak improvements required to maintain the firebreaks in a safe, trafficable condition. This may include vegetation pruning, grading, and other works as required.

No fuel reduction burns were undertaken within the Park during 2017.

5.1.4. Dieback Management

Dieback (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) management and preventing its spread is a priority of the committee, with the most recent survey identifying that approximately 25% of the park is infested with this devastating disease. As per best practice, a dieback boundary survey is undertaken to monitor its spread every five years and treatment of susceptible vegetation in priority un-infested areas is carried out every three years. Dieback boundary mapping was undertaken in 2017 and included phosphite spraying of buffer areas.



5.1.5. Implementation of Grant Projects

Dieback Management Measures along the Meelup Coastline- CoastWest Grant

The Dieback management measures along the Meelup Coastline project was funded by a Coastwest grant and the outputs of this project included:

- Installation of 7 dieback hygiene stations- boot cleaning
- Green Card training of 15 community environmental volunteers by The Dieback Working Group
- Limestone sheeting of the western firebreak, limestone pad on Sheen Road at fire hydrant, Wildlife corridor trail, Car Rally trail and coastal trail.
- Phosphite treatment of dieback buffer areas
- Media release of the Meelup dieback project.



Meelup Links Project- South West Catchments Council

The Meelup links project was funded by a Southwest Catchment Council grant and the outputs of this project included:

- Weed and pest control
- Revegetation of 1,000 seedlings, mulching
- Native Seed collection
- Direct seeding and fencing
- Set up of Photo- monitoring points to measure revegetation success



Mixing of native seeds to prepare for direct seeding in the Wildlife Corridor



Revegetation Areas- Wildlife corridor

5.1.6. Revegetation Works

Revegetation works within the Park included the planting of 6,200 seedlings in June/July 2017. Seedlings were sourced from the Geographe Community Landcare Nursery using local native seedlings including some seeds collected from within the Park.



Planting areas included the Coastal nodes, Wildlife corridor, Car Rally gravel pit, Meelup Beach and creekline, Zone 6, Bunker Bay beach and Eagle Bay beach. Works were undertaken by contractors and the Meelup volunteers.

5.1.7. Meelup Beach Tree Audit

During the year a tree health and safety assessment was carried out at Meelup Beach to guide long term planning for the retention of tree cover at Meelup Beach. The majority of trees at Meelup consist of mature Marri (*Corymbia calophylla*) and Peppermint (*Agonis flexuosa*).

Since the tree health and safety assessment the following actions have been implemented:

- Removal of dead trees and branches in public areas
- Retention of dead trees away from public areas for fauna habitat;
- Mulching areas under trees
- Application of non-leaching slow release fertilisers.

In addition, the City has undertaken a revegetation project at Meelup Beach including the planting of local native seedlings under mature trees, coastal planting and the installation of mature Peppermint trees.



5.2. Recreation Facilities and Services

5.2.1. Trails and Facilities

Ongoing trail and facilities maintenance has included the following:

- Limestone sheeting of areas including:
 - Rocky Point (40m)
 - Coastal trail- Eagle Bay to Point Piquet (600m) and Hurford Street (150m), Point Piquet (50m)
 - Sheen Road- limestone pad (fire hydrant)
 - Car Rally Trail (1500m)
- New Trail Markers
- Maintenance of bollards, signage, fencing and removal of graffiti
- Construction of Ablution block at Point Piquet carpark
- Planning for the upgrade of the Point Piquet carpark



5.2.2. Litter Control

A litter collection contractor commenced in December 2016 and works over the high peak visitor times focusing efforts in the coastal nodes areas. The contract has just been renewed from October 2017 to May 2018. The contractor averages collecting 6 bags of litter a day. The extra presence in the Park is also an advantage with the contractor reporting on camp fires, dogs, camping and graffiti.



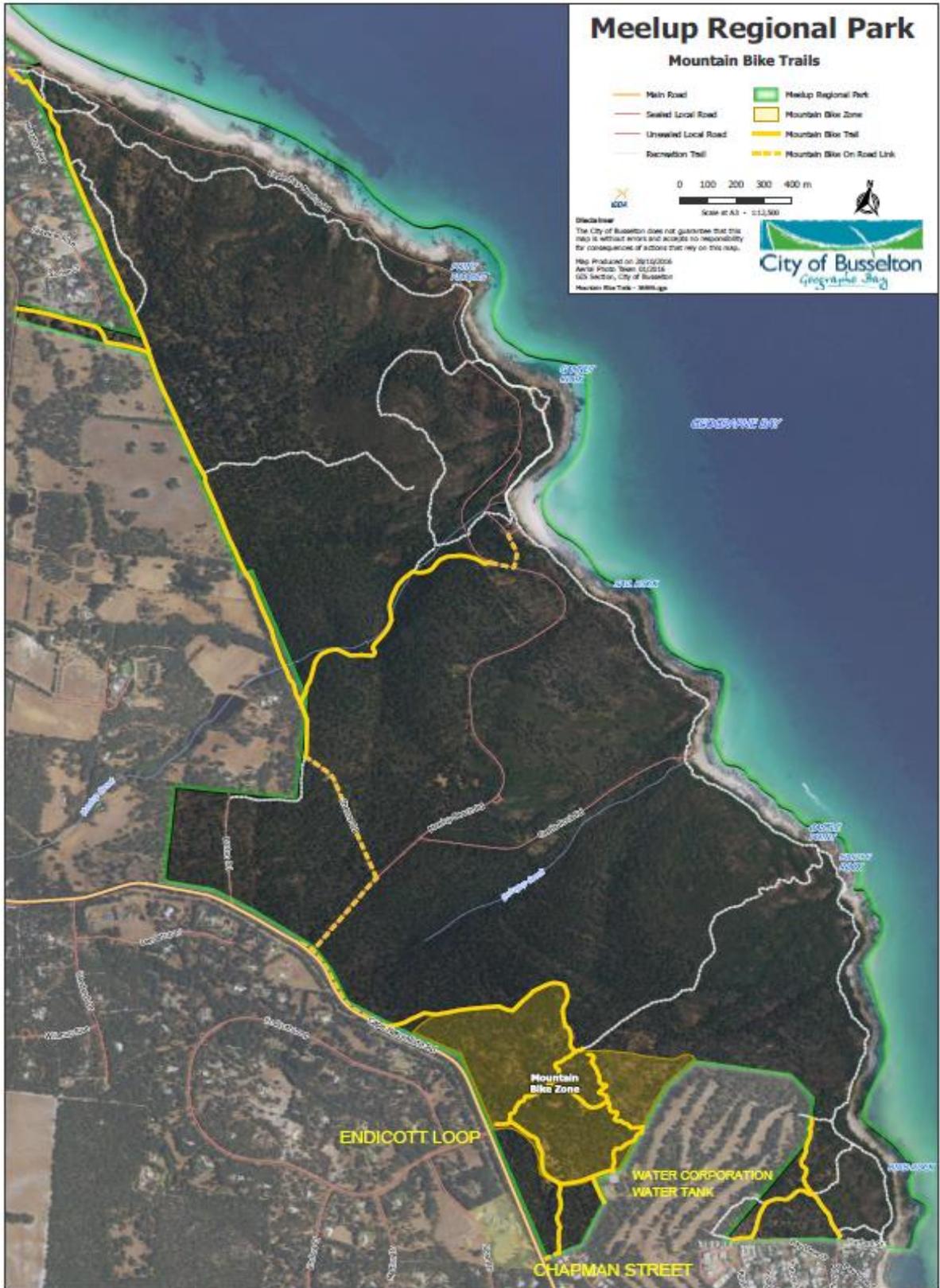
5.2.3. Development of Mountain Bike Trails

During the year the Mountain Bike Trail Working Group continued to progress the development of the mountain bike trails within Meelup Regional Park management zone 6.

Outcomes have included the following:

- Council determination to allow Mountain Bike use within Meelup Regional Park management zone 6 and some designated trails within Meelup Regional Park.
- License Agreement between the City and Cape Mountain Bikers to formalize arrangement for the construction and use of mountain bike trails within zone 6
- Alignment of mountain bike trail development and former waste site remediation works being undertaken within Zone 6
- Cape Mountain Bikers engaging a professional trail builder to construct stage 1 of the mountain bike trail network.
- Construction of stage 1 comprising the Brown Street trail network.
- Closure and rehabilitation of some former trails in high conservation areas.





5.2.4. Remediation Works- Zone 6

The planning and onsite works for the remediation of the former waste disposal site within Zone 6 was undertaken through 2017. Planning has involved site investigations and approvals including:

- Detailed Site Investigation report
- Sampling Analysis Quality Plan
- Asbestos Management Plan
- Site specific Safety and Health plan for the remediation of Zone 6

Site works have involved upgrading the crossover access/entry to the small carpark area opposite the Cape Naturaliste Road and Endicott Loop intersection to enable the importation of soil to the site for the remediation works. The former waste disposal site is being prepared for revegetation in 2018.



5.2.5. Event Management

Meelup Regional Park is increasingly utilised as an events destination in the City of Busselton, and it is important for this to be balanced appropriately with the conservation purpose of the park. All event organisers are required to submit an event management plan and post event report to ensure suitable management of the event to minimise environmental impacts and conflicts with other park users.

Events held in the park in 2017 included the Meelup Beach Leavers Day, Cape to Cape Mountain Bike event, Margaret River Gourmet Escape Gourmet Beach Barbeque at Castle Bay and the X-Adventure Race.



Leavers at Meelup Beach



Gourmet Escape at Castle Rock beach 2017

5.3. Community and Stakeholder Engagement

5.3.1 Stakeholder Engagement

The City and Committee regularly engages with a range of stakeholders on projects, including:

- Government agencies, particularly DBCA and DFES, who are frequently involved with park management, mainly pertaining to conservation significant flora/fauna and fire.
- Consultation with DBCA on the Ngari Marine Park and signage in the Park.
- The South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council.
- Consultation with Dunsborough Police, Department of Transport, DBCA and City ranger staff on events including Australia Day and Meelup Leavers.

Partnership Project with Water Corporation

Through consultation with Water Corporation, to incorporate best practice dieback management measures in accessing their infrastructure in the Park, a partnership project developed. This included providing Western Power staff with information on dieback mapping in the Park and measures their staff should use when accessing the Park. Water Corporation funded and managed the installation of 1.1 kilometres of limestone sheeting through the wildlife corridor and along the western boundary of the Park to the tank site.



Media photo of completed limestone sheeting works by Water Corporation



Limestone sheeting works at the corner of the Wildlife Corridor and Western firebreak

5.3.2 Education and Community Engagement Program

The 2017 Education and Community Engagement Program have included:

- Communication and networking with the Meelup volunteers on environmental events and training opportunities.
- Volunteer training events including, GreenCard Dieback training, Chemical Handling Course, Weed Workshop and Weed Identification Workshop.
- Bay Ok Day- Dunsborough Primary School- Black Cockatoo and Dieback Education
- Bird Survey Walks with Christine Wilder- BirdLife Australia
- Wildflower Walks- Wildflower Society and local botanists
- Busselton High School- Bunker Bay planting, Beach Cleanup.
- Media- local paper and City Facebook

5.3.3 Volunteer Program

The Meelup volunteers are an active and very capable team lead by Committee deputy member Mr. Peter Randerson. Currently there are 107 Meelup volunteers involved in projects in the Park.

The Meelup volunteers meet each week for 1.5- 2hour sessions to undertake wide range of work in the Park including weeding, pruning, beach and trail clean-ups, planting, removing tree guards, building rock gabions and rubbish collection as well environmental education programmes and working with school groups.

In addition to this work, volunteers also undertake work on the Meelup Regional Park Management Committee, sub-committees, Citizen Science projects, education of volunteers and working with school groups.

Citizen Science Program

Citizen science programs provide a diverse experience for participants and encourage environmental volunteers to undertake specific work using their individual experience and skills. Projects have included:

- Soil Erosion and Trail Maintenance Project
- Meelup Mallee monitoring with DBCA staff
- Annual Black Cockatoo Count
- Cockatoo Hollow Monitoring
- Weed mapping
- Tangorua Blue beach clean-up days
- Rare Orchid Surveys

The Soil Erosion and Trail Maintenance Project led by Committee member Tony Smuthwaite who has mapped the environmental geology and geomorphology of the Park to assess the occurrence of soil erosion in the Park. By examining the relationships between geology, topography, drainage and erosion, and using site-specific mapping an assessment can be made of the effectiveness of drainage measures to control the erosion of tracks and firebreaks. The outcomes of this project will provide the City and the MRPMC detailed information to use for trail maintenance in the park for years to come.

Volunteer Shed

A shed for the storage of a trailer, equipment and tools to assist environmental volunteers has been constructed adjacent to the Lions Shed and Men's Shed, Dunsborough Lakes Drive. The location of the shed provides opportunities for environmental volunteers to work collaboratively with the Dunsborough Lions Club and Men's Shed volunteers. A recent project involved Men's Shed members building Western Ringtail Possums boxes for installation within Meelup Regional Park.



Friends of Meelup

The City is currently consulting with the Meelup volunteers on formalising a 'Friends of Meelup Regional Park' with the objectives:

- To provide an effective body through which community members can be engaged to participate in projects to protect the environment and biodiversity values within the Meelup Regional Park.
- Projects undertaken will be in line with the Meelup Regional Park Management Plan and the City of Busselton's strategic planning.
- Actively promote the Parks conservation and recreational values and as an iconic destination.
- Accessing grant programs and other funding sources.
- Establishing a charitable trust to enable tax deductible donations

6. Finances

6.1. Ten Year Plan, Business Plan

The committee implements wide range of projects in any given financial year and in addition to large one-off and capital projects, the park requires ongoing operational maintenance.

The City's Ten Year Financial Plan incorporates provision for those activities within Meelup Regional Park that require ongoing funding, as well as short, medium and longer-term projects that will require funds for coordination and implementation in the future. Meelup Regional Park also has a Business Plan which details the committee's activities and management of the park in line with the city's Corporate Business Plan.

6.2. Budget

A 2016/17 financial summary for Meelup Regional Park is provided in Table 1.

The financial summary indicates an operating grant revenue variance of \$9,223 to the 2016/17 annual budget. This increased revenue was mostly due to the receipt of additional grant funds for a Biodiversity and Linkages project to improve habitat connectivity within Meelup Regional Park.

The financial summary also indicates an operating expenditure variance to the 2016/17 annual budget of \$105,228. This variance is mainly attributed to account 3186 Recreation Reserves Maintenance, account 3260 Consultancy, deferred remediation works associated within the former waste disposal site Contactors account 3280, and account 3640 – Donations for the purpose of establishing a 'Friends of Meelup' group, which is being undertaken in-house.

The capital expenditure variance to the 2016/17 annual budget is mostly due to deferred works with account C0044 Meelup Coastal Nodes – Point Picquet carpark upgrade.

Table 1: 2016/2017 Financial Summary

Natural Account	Annual Budget	Total Actual	Variance
Revenue			
1239 - Operating Grants & Subsidies-Other	(47,590)	(56,813)	9,223
1509 - Reimbursement - Insurance Recovered	0	(694)	694
1520 - Reimbursement - Sundry	(1,070)	(1,540)	470
1629 - Other Income	(6,500)	(6,023)	(477)
Revenue subtotal	(55,160)	(65,070)	
Operating Expenditure			
3123 - Room Hire Costs	480	273	207
3186 - Recreation Reserves Maintenance	186,770	177,933	8,837
3212 - Printing	2,110	2,466	(356)
3219 - Courier & Freight Services	0	85	(85)
3260 - Consultancy	5,000	0	5,000
3280 - Contractors (Inc Contract Staff)	100,000	15,092	84,908
3386 - Pest & Weed Control	25,340	21,636	3,704
3401 - Seminars & Staff Training (not Council)	200	4	196
3498 - Purchase of Materials	0	100	(100)
3520 - Office Telephones & Faxes	0	126	(126)
3522 - Mobile Phones	240	301	(61)
3575 - Public Liability Insurance	510	466	44
3640 - Donations, Contributions & Subsidies	4,500	40	4,460
3661 - Website Hosting	570	375	195
3664 - Catering	290	759	(469)
6100 - Plant Charge Allocation	110	1,236	(1,126)
Operating Expenditure subtotal	326,120	220,892	
Capital Expenditure			
B9601 - Meelup Shed	10,000	10,949	(949)
C0044 - Meelup Coastal Nodes - Carpark upgrade	108,110	3,793	104,317
C3014 - Meelup Park - Fire Access Trail	20,000	20,840	(840)
C3127 - Whale Viewing Platform - Point Picquet	19,526	19,526	0
C3156 - Meelup Capital Works - Unallocated	40,000	38,924	1,076
Capital expenditure subtotal	197,636	94,032	