

# MEELUP REGIONAL PARK ANNUAL REPORT 2017 -2018



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## 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 2017 to June 2018.

## 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 2017 to June 2018:

<b>Members</b>	<b>Deputy Members</b>
Dr Bob Jarvis (Presiding Member)	Cr Lyndon Miles
Mr Peter Randerson (Deputy Presiding Member)	Mr Bob Ginbey
Cr John McCallum	
Cr Kelly Hick	
Mr Albert Haak	
Mrs Shirley Fisher	
Mr Damien Jones	
Mr Tony Smurthwaite	

- Deputy member Mr Bob Ginbey passed away in 2018.
- Following the Council elections in October 2017, Cr Kelly Hick and Cr Lyndon Miles 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 25 years since the A Class Meelup Reserve was legislated by State Parliament and timely we reflect on the past and future. We should find some way of recognising the community members whose early efforts united Busselton to demand the protection of this world class area from developers. We should recognise those who later took the responsibility for nurturing the Park to the gem that we have now, building trails, revegetating and maintaining the amenity. We should recognise at every opportunity the heritage we received from the Wadandi people and learn from their practices.

I have great respect and gratitude for the years of careful management by successive management committees, volunteers, councillors and administration staff and contractors and am confident to be able to assure Busselton that the Park is in good hands.

The following annual report detailing the achievements of the last 12 months and the ongoing works will demonstrate the wide scope of activity and depth of understanding that the present administration have for your Park. I recommend that you read it in detail to fully understand the present situation, threats and achievements.

I personally am indebted (and I feel I represent the community) when I thank the many volunteers who participate in caring for the Park. The Management Committee is blessed with very knowledgeable and caring members who have supported the Environment Officer and City team to achieve a remarkable year.

I would like to thank Peter Randerson for his support as Deputy and for his management of the volunteer team. I would like to acknowledge the work of the late Bob Ginbey whose passion for the Park remained to the end.

My personal thanks to Kay Lehman and Greg Simpson from the City for their dedication and expertise throughout the year; and to our Councillors for their enthusiasm and support.

The most exciting development this year was the formation of the Friends of Meelup Inc. You will read from Kerry Grist's report following, of their noble aims and objectives. This group of volunteers will stand beside the Management Committee and City to advise and support in all aspects, and act as a link to the general population. It will give those of the community who would like to associate formally with the Park but have not the time to contribute otherwise, to declare their support and have a means of communicating their ideas.

I am pleased to announce that our new website is up and running and will amaze you, well done Kay. If you would like to be involved in Meelup the website offers contact details.

<http://meeluppark.com/index.php>

I wish you well for the coming year and that you may enjoy your Park as much as I do.

Dr Bob Jarvis  
Presiding Member  
Meelup Regional Park Management Committee



## FRIENDS OF MEELUP REPORT 2018

**Friends of Meelup is here to protect Meelup for the future.** We are an independent group of people, founded in 2018. Our mission is to facilitate the conservation and promotion of Meelup Regional Park whilst encouraging community participation and education that ensures the long-term sustainability of the Park's unique plants, animals and landscape.

We aim to do this by focusing on lifting the profile of the park, seeking greater community engagement, raising funds to enhance the experience of visitors and helping with new research projects to ensure the park's future.

Committee Members are:

Chairperson     Kerry Grist

Vice Chair       Roslyn Hamdorf

Secretary        Kay Lehman

Treasurer        Greg Simpson

Committee        Bob Jarvis, Cate Edwards, Alice Anderson, Elaine Dodd, Victoria Verity, and Janine Gasparri

The Committee has a broad base of skills and knowledge and have worked well together, understanding that by using all of our skills we can get the best results.



*Friends of Meelup- End of Year Catch up at Castle Bay - 2 Dec 2018*

Since our formation in June 2018 we have:

- Created a Logo, a Constitution, Mission Statement and a Bank Account.
- A memorandum of understanding with the City of Busselton has been written but is still waiting to be signed by both parties.
- Become an Incorporated body.
- Assisted with the 25<sup>th</sup> Celebration of the City of Busselton and Community Volunteers coming together to create and manage Meelup Regional Park.
- Engaged with local schools to promote awareness of the park's beauty by holding a photo competition for primary and secondary local schools. The winners were announced at Meelup Beach 25<sup>th</sup> Celebration Picnic.
- Undertaken a Membership Drive at Meelup Beach in October 2018.
- Promoted the value and beauty of Meelup Regional Park through newspaper articles, and Photo Displays in September and October 2018.
- Ensured inclusion on the Meelup Park web site; and are
- Currently negotiating to have a defibrillator installed at Meelup Beach.

Around 85 people have already expressed an interest in becoming a Friend of Meelup. Over the course of 2019 we believe we will have a strong membership base, which we will continue to build every year.

I look forward to working with the Committee and engaging with the community to enable us to achieve the purposes and objects as outlined in our Constitution.

Kerry Grist  
Chairperson  
Friend of Meelup Regional Park

## 5. Key Achievements 2017/18

### Meelup Regional Park Programs

- Launch of Friends of Meelup Inc.
- New Meelup RP Website
- Facilities – Carpark upgrades
- Meelup Volunteer program
- Feral animal control
- Weed control
- Firebreak maintenance and control burns
- Dieback management
- Revegetation/Rehabilitation works
- Trail repairs and maintenance
- Community education program
- Litter management
- Event management

### 5.1. Conservation and Rehabilitation

#### 5.1.1. Weed Management

The annual weed control program targets specific weed species and locations including:

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

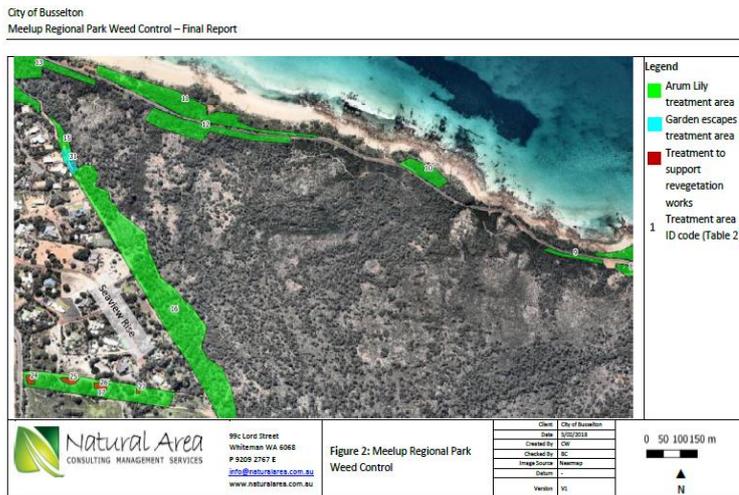
Treatments include works to control the following Weeds of National Significance (WONS) and Declared Plant species including Bridal Creeper, Arum Lily and One leaf Cape tulip.

There has been extensive control work on Arum Lily along the coastal trail and creek lines. Other high priority weeds controlled include Sydney Golden Wattle, Finders Ranges Wattle, Pittosporum, Dolichos Pea, Polygala, Cape Tulip, Double gee, Gladiolus, Fumaria, Fressias and Watsonia.

Two components of the weed control work include the following:

1. Control of aggressive priority environmental weeds capable of invading good quality bushland.
2. Maintenance and support of existing revegetation sites

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:

- Four rounds of fox baiting to allow fox control to be targeted all the year round, using eggs injected with 1080 poison. Secondary visits are undertaken, where any baits that have been taken are replaced, with follow-up visit where any remaining baits are removed from site.
- Fox trapping undertaken twice per year in areas where 1080 use is restricted (on the perimeter areas of the Park).
- Two rounds of rabbit baiting, at appropriate times, hand-laid application using 1080 oats only.
- Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV) (new strain of the Calici virus) to be used once per year when effective and where required.
- Two rounds of feral cat cage trapping is to be undertaken simultaneously with the fox cage trapping to increase efficiency.
- One monitoring round at the completion of the control program comprising monitoring of sand plots and camera traps.



*Use of cameras to monitor feral animal control*

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

### 5.1.3. Fire Management

The Park's fire management is guided by the Fire Management Plan (2013). Fire planning meetings are held on an as needs basis to identify planned burns, and a firebreak inspection is 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. Consultation is undertaken with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) on a regular basis to ensure flora and fauna are protected.

A fuel reduction burn was undertaken within the Park in an area adjoining the Eagle Bay townsite during 2018.

### 5.1.4. Dieback Management

Dieback (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) management and preventing its spread continues to be a high priority of the committee. Approximately 25% of the park is infested and dieback can impact 40% of native vegetation species.

In accordance with 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. The Meelup volunteer were involved in tagging the dieback boundaries throughout the Park.



Recent dieback management measures include:

- The installation of 7 boot cleaning hygiene stations throughout the Park where walkers are entering dieback free areas.
- Meelup volunteers tagging the dieback boundary throughout the Park.
- Community awareness on dieback management in the Park

### 5.1.5 Revegetation Works

Revegetation works involved planting 4,600 seedlings during the winter of 2018. Revegetation areas included infilling degraded coastal zone areas, improving vegetation linkages in the wildlife corridor, planting in the car rally gravel pit and extensive plantings in the former waste site in Zone 6. Works has also included erosion control using coir logs and jute matting.



## 5.2. Recreation Facilities and Services

### 5.2.1. Trails and Facilities

Trail work installing limestone sheeting undertaken in April/May 2018 included:

- Western firebreak- Meelup Brook section and north of the Wildlife Corridor to Eagle Bay
- Coastal trail- section between Point Piquet and Eagle Bay
- Culvert installed in the wildlife corridor.
- Upgrade of car rally trail including improved drainage control at the old gravel pit.



Facilities upgrades have included formalising and bitumizing several carpark areas including:

- Point Piquet carpark and overflow carpark
- Gannet Rock carpark



A preliminary concept design has been developed for a Moon Viewing Platform at the northern end of Meelup Beach and will be progressed in 2019.

Other maintenance works include:

- Granite steps completed at the Point Piquet carpark
- Concrete sealed and seating oiled at the Whale Platform
- Additional gate installed at the Park entry opposite Endicoot Loop
- New gate installed by Water Corporation on Sheen Road
- Installation of the Gannet Rock carpark sign
- Maintenance of bollards and fencing



*Installation of the Point Picquet Whale Sign*

### **5.2.2. Litter Control**

A litter collection contractor commenced in October 2017 and worked over the high peak visitor times focusing efforts in the coastal nodes areas. The contract continued through to May 2018 to include the salmon fishing season. The contractor collects an average of 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:

- Completion of the construction of the Brown Street trail network which consists of several downhill trails as well as a cross country network.
- Trails 11 and 12 have also been constructed linking the Brown Street network to the Dunsborough District Country Club (DDCC).
- Cape Mountain Bikers secured further funding and propose to construct three (3) additional link trails from the Brown Street trail network to the DDCC.



*New trails and map showing the Zone 6 Mountain Bike Zone Network*

#### 5.2.4. Rehabilitation of the former tip site

The planning and onsite works for the remediation of the former waste disposal site within Zone 6 has continued through 2018 including the installation of soil cover, geofabric on slopes, mulch and revegetation works.



#### 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.

Events held in the Park in 2017/2018 included the Meelup Beach Leavers Day, Cape to Cape Mountain Bike event, Enduro Bike Race, Margaret River Gourmet Escape Gourmet Beach Barbeque at Castle Bay and the X-Adventure Race.

The Meelup Environment Officer works with events staff and liaises with the Committee to manage and mitigate impacts on the environment in the Park.



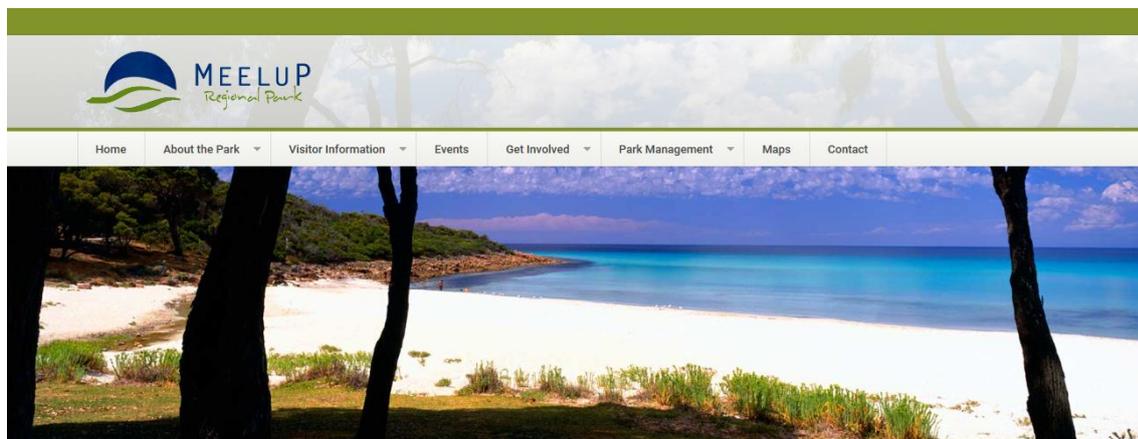
*Leavers at Meelup Beach*

## 5.3. Community and Stakeholder Engagement

### 5.3.1. Meelup Regional Park Website Update

The website has been comprehensively updated to be user friendly and provide information for visitors to the Park including:

- Visitor Information- Walk and Bike Trails including downloadable maps, swimming, snorkelling, surfing, whale watching, fishing and boating, facilities in the Park
- Information about the Park- History and Culture, Geology, Biodiversity, Waterways and Threats
- Events
- How to Get Involved- Meelup volunteers, Friends of Meelup Inc.
- Park Management- Programs, Committee, Publications
- Checkout the new website: meeluppark.com



#### Meelup - 'place of moon rising'

The Wadandi people (Salt Water People) are the Aboriginal custodians of the area, and named Meelup 'place of the moon rising' because the full moon appears to rise out of the sea on a few days of the year.



Western Pygmy Possum



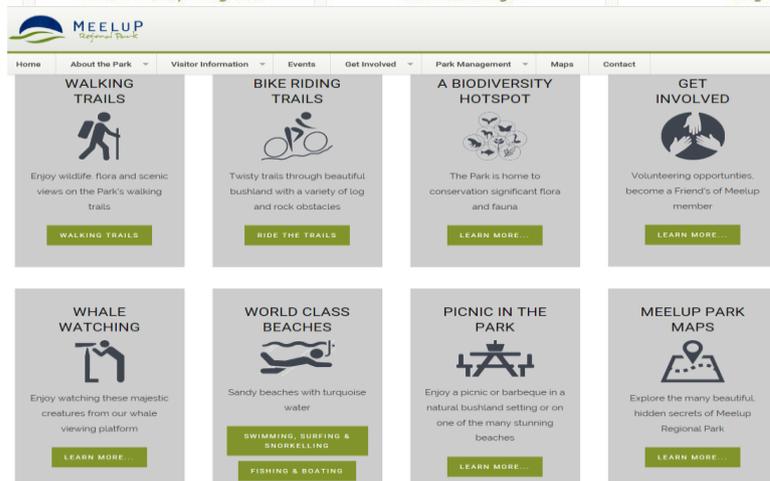
Western Grey Kangaroo



Bearded Dragon



Dugite



### 5.3.2. Meelup Volunteer Program

The Meelup volunteers meet each week for 1.5- 2hour sessions to undertake wide range of work in the Park including trail pruning, bird surveys, weed mapping and control, flora surveys, trail maintenance, vegetation monitoring, revegetation and community engagement.

Citizen science projects undertaken by the volunteers have included BirdLife's Annual Cocky Count and hollow monitoring and monitoring of a Declared Rare Flora orchid population. The orchid project in partnership with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions involved surveying the population of the threatened orchid in the Park. DBCA are working with the WA Botanic Gardens at King's Park to collect seed to propagation in an effort to protect the species from extinction.



Volunteer training provided has included:

- Volunteer Safety and Skills Sharing Session
- Weed mapping training
- Dieback treatment demonstration
- Weed identification
- BirdLife Citizen Science workshop
- Environmental Skills Workshop
- Tree decline workshop



### 5.3.3. 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 DBCA is currently producing a sign plan to educate visitors about the proposed zoning scheme for the Ngari Capes Marine Park. The signage plan includes areas within Meelup Regional Park (MRP) between Castle Rock beach and Eagle Bay. MRP is an important site for signage as the Eagle Bay Sanctuary Zone is located offshore from Meelup Regional Park.
- The South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council.
- Consultation with Dunsborough Police, Department of Transport, DBCA and City ranger staff on events including Boxing Day, Australia Day and Meelup Leavers.
- Neighbouring landholders are notified of feral animal control in the Park and developing an approach to engage neighbouring rural landholders on coordinated weed and feral animal control.
- Undulup Association- information session on their Ranger Program and Cultural Awareness Training.
- Presentation to Busselton Margaret River Tourist Association on the facilities, trails and environmental significance of the Park and the comprehensive information on the new Meelup Regional Parl website.



### 5.3.4. Education and Community Engagement Program

The Education and Community Engagement Program has included:

- Launch of the Friends of Meelup Inc. and the 25th Anniversary Celebration of Meelup Regional Park including a Welcome to Country and Cultural Walk with Pibulmun/Wadandi Cultural Custodians.
- Meelup Beach Community planting Day- to give the wider local community an opportunity to be involved in Parks activities and foster a sense of community stewardship of the Park.
- Bay Ok Day- Dunsborough Primary School- Black Cockatoo and Dieback Education
- Bird Survey Walks - BirdLife Australia
- Tangoroo Blue Marine Debris Beach Clean-up- 12.2 kg of litter collected over 3 hours
- Wildflower Walks- with local botanists
- Busselton High School and Undulup Association- planting in the wildlife corridor
- Media- local paper and City Facebook



*Launch of the Friends of Meelup Inc. and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Meelup Regional Park*



*Community Wildflower Walk*

## **6. Finances 2017-18**

### **6.1. Ten Year Plan, Business Plan**

The committee implements a 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 Long Term 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 2017/18 financial summary for Meelup Regional Park is provided in Table 1.

The financial summary indicates a revenue variance to the 2017/18 annual budget. This revenue variance was mostly due to the completion of the grant funded Biodiversity and Linkages project to improve habitat connectivity within Meelup Regional Park earlier than anticipated, with the grant funds for this project received during the previous financial year.

The financial summary also indicates an operating expenditure variance to the 2017/18 annual budget of \$13,269. This variance is mainly attributed to account 3186 Recreation Reserves Maintenance, account 3260 Consultancy, the 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 under account C0044 Meelup Coastal Nodes, with this surplus carried forwarded and incorporated into the 2018/2019 Budget.

Table 1: 2017/2018 Financial Summary

<b>Natural Account</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Total Actual</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>Revenue</b>			
1239 - Operating Grants & Subsidies-Other	(22,950)	(2,949)	(20,001)
1520 - Reimbursement - Sundry	(1,500)	(600)	(900)
1629 - Other Income	(6,680)	(1,414)	(5,266)
<b>Revenue subtotal</b>	<b>(31,130)</b>	<b>(4,963)</b>	<b>(26,167)</b>
<b>Operating Expenditure</b>			
3123 - Room Hire Costs	490	261	229
3186 - Recreation Reserves Maintenance	172,270	164,920	7,350
3212 - Printing	1,000	0	1,000
3215 - Other Administration/Office Expenses	0	50	(50)
3219 - Courier & Freight Services	0	0	0
3260 - Consultancy	5,000	4,896	104
3280 - Contractors (Inc Contract Staff)	78,000	74,855	3,145
3386 - Pest & Weed Control	25,720	24,924	796
3401 - Seminars & Staff Training (not Council)	210	0	210
3498 - Purchase of Materials	110	0	110
3520 - Office Telephones & Faxes	80	169	(89)
3522 - Mobile Phones	240	411	(171)
3575 - Public Liability Insurance	446	443	3
3640 - Donations, Contributions & Subsidies	3,000	624	2,376
3661 - Website Hosting	400	128	272
3664 - Catering	300	461	(161)
6100 - Plant Charge Allocation	250	123	127
7723 - Exp Offset Acc - Plant & Equipment	0	1,981	(1,981)
<b>Operating Expenditure subtotal</b>	<b>287,516</b>	<b>274,247</b>	<b>13,269</b>
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>			
C0044 - Meelup Coastal Nodes - Carpark upgrade	237,764	138,503	95,466
C3014 - Meelup Park - Fire Access Trail	20,000	19,769	231
<b>Capital expenditure subtotal</b>	<b>257,764</b>	<b>158,272</b>	<b>95,697</b>