



WAPC

Western
Australian
Planning
Commission

Western Australian Coastal Awards for Excellence 2025





The Western Australian Coastal Awards for Excellence are proudly coordinated by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage on behalf of the Western Australian Planning Commission's Coastal Zone Management Program and CoastWA.



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Hon John Carey MLA
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Emma Cole
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Joint Foreword

Western Australia's coastline is dynamic and diverse, presenting ongoing challenges for its protection and management.

The 2025 Western Australian Coastal Awards for Excellence honour the exceptional contributions of individuals, community groups, schools, local governments, State agencies, and non-government organisations who are leading the way in safeguarding our coastal environments.

Their efforts span a wide range of initiatives, including:

- volunteer-led programs
- foreshore rehabilitation and revegetation
- managing coastal hazard risks such as erosion
- engaging communities and building capacity in coastal zone management
- research that informs coastal protection
- innovative and sustainable coastal design.

We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who submitted nominations for the 2025 Western Australian Coastal Awards for Excellence, and offer our congratulations to this year's outstanding recipients.

We also acknowledge the Judging Panel for their thoughtful deliberation in selecting this year's winners from a highly competitive field of nominations. The Panel included representatives from the Western Australian Planning Commission, the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, the Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure, the Western Australian Local Government Association, and tertiary education sector.

Finally, we commend the Western Australian community for its continued support of coastal initiatives—whether through active participation or as stewards and users of our unique coastal landscapes.



Award categories

1. Coastal Champion

Awarded to an individual or group for outstanding commitment, leadership, stewardship and contribution to the management and conservation of the Western Australian coast.

2. Coastal Planning and Design

Awarded for an outstanding plan, program, policy, strategy or a coastal development being built form, landscape, heritage or tourism project of outstanding design quality, that demonstrates innovation, sustainability and positively contributes to the long term sustainability of the Western Australian coast.

3. Coastal Management

Awarded for maintaining sustainable use of Western Australian beaches and foreshores, improving coastal environments and natural values and managing risks of coastal hazards, demonstrating management and building resilience to coastal hazards

4. Education, Engagement, Science and Research

Awarded for positively engaging, educating and building capacity of Western Australian communities to increase involvement in coastal zone management activities including innovative applied science or research that assists to protect, conserve and enhance the Western Australian coast.

5. Coastal Adaptation

Awarded for on-ground coastal projects which manage the risks of coastal hazards demonstrating adaptation and building resilience.

1. Coastal Champion

Awarded to an individual or group for outstanding commitment, leadership, stewardship and contribution to the management and conservation of the Western Australian coast.

Kelly Howlett

Care for Hedland Environmental Association Inc



Kelly Howlett has been a visionary leader and tireless grassroots advocate in Port Hedland for more than two decades.

In 2003, at just 26 years old, she founded the *Care For Hedland Environmental Association*. Since then, Kelly has volunteered thousands of hours, secured vital funding, and built strong

partnerships—transforming the organisation from a volunteer-only group into one employing more than 20 staff.

Kelly's flagship achievement is the *Hedland Community Volunteer Turtle Monitoring Program*, which she initiated and has led for more than 20 years. This program protects nesting Flatback turtles through data collection, education, and fox control. Kelly's advocacy also spans turtle-friendly lighting, public education, awareness campaigns, eco-tourism, and policy engagement on coastal developments and erosion protection. She has represented Port Hedland nationally and internationally, sharing insights and inspiring action.

Kelly's work has fostered a culture of environmental stewardship, attracting volunteers from across Australia and beyond. Without her leadership, Port Hedland's turtle population might not exist today. Kelly exemplifies coastal leadership through action, education, and enduring community impact.



Coastal Champion

Special commendation

Craig Wilson

Craig Wilson has dedicated decades to caring for, protecting, and celebrating Western Australia's coast.

As the Perth NRM Coastcare Officer, Craig worked tirelessly with local governments, industry, and community groups across the Perth region to improve dune health, restore habitats, and engage thousands of volunteers.

In retirement, Craig continues to lead by example. He heads *Cockburn Coastcare*, where he is spearheading the restoration of Coogee Beach dunes—an area vulnerable to coastal erosion. His passion is contagious: he inspires volunteers of all ages, mentors emerging coastal leaders, and remains actively involved in strategic coastal management initiatives.

Craig's ethos was captured in the film *Dune Defenders*, where he reflected:

"There's something special about getting a group of community people coming together, especially during the planting days... it's what keeps us going as volunteers."

Craig's legacy is one of leadership, community spirit, and unwavering commitment to coastal conservation.



Coastal Champion

Special commendation

Doris (Marie) MacDonald



Marie Macdonald 3rd from right

Marie has been a passionate advocate for environmental conservation since arriving in Australia more than 50 years ago.

Marie's dedication led her to become an inaugural member—and for more than 18 years, Treasurer—of the Joondalup Coast Care Forum. She is also a long-standing member of both the Urban Bushland Council and Perth Natural Resource Management Inc.

For more than 25 years, Marie has provided leadership to Mullaloo Community Inc (formerly Mullaloo Beach Community Group Inc) through her outstanding service as Treasurer. During her time on the City of Joondalup Council, Marie championed the care and conservation of the coastal strip.

2. Coastal Planning and Design

Awarded for an outstanding plan, program, policy, strategy or a coastal development being built form, landscape, heritage or tourism project of outstanding design quality, that demonstrates innovation, sustainability and positively contributes to the long term sustainability of the Western Australian coast.

Melville Beach Road Bioengineering City of Melville

Melville Beach Road Foreshore Works is a comprehensive coastal restoration project along the Swan River, completed in September 2025. The initiative integrates multiple sustainable coastal management techniques, including:

- **Innovative erosion control** using brush log walls and rock toe protection
- **Extensive native vegetation restoration**, achieving high plant survival rates
- **Improved community access** through limestone stairs and natural ramps designed with universal accessibility features

Key achievements include:

- Strong environmental management throughout construction
- Robust material reuse programs
- Rigorous safeguards to protect Swan River water quality
- Establishment of self-sustaining native plant communities

The project showcases technical excellence through advanced planning, multi-agency coordination, and adaptive management protocols. It delivers measurable environmental, social, and economic benefits.

This initiative exemplifies best practice in coastal restoration by balancing ecosystem health, community needs, heritage protection, and long-term sustainability—setting a benchmark for future coastal management projects across Western Australia.



Coastal Planning and Design

Special commendation

Southern Ocean Surf Reef

City of Albany and Bluecoast Consulting Engineers

Southern Ocean Surf Reef (SOSR) at Binalup/ Middleton Beach in Albany is a vibrant recreational and community hub. For more than 35 years, local groups advocated for a safe, consistent surf break near the city centre—accessible to surfers of all abilities and reachable by public transport.

Delivered by the City of Albany in partnership with BlueCoast Consulting Engineers, and supported by federal and state funding, the project brings a long-held community vision to life. The reef's design was informed by extensive numerical, physical, and conceptual modelling, optimising its location, footprint, and structure to balance wave quality, user safety, coastal protection, and environmental outcomes—while keeping costs efficient.

Now operational, the reef provides reliable surf conditions, enhances marine ecology, and strengthens Albany's reputation as a premier surfing destination. It boosts tourism, supports the local economy, and creates opportunities for younger generations to engage with the coast, fostering community connection, stewardship, and a lasting regional legacy.



3. Coastal Management

Awarded for maintaining sustainable use of Western Australian beaches and foreshores, improving coastal environments and natural values and managing risks of coastal hazards, demonstrating management and building resilience to coastal hazards.

C.Y. O'Connor Beach Engineered Fringing Reef City of Cockburn

Wave energy at a high-risk erosion hotspot has been reduced by 20 per cent thanks to the engineered fringing reef at C.Y. O'Connor Beach, North Coogee—the first of its kind in Western Australia.

This 270 module reef was designed to mimic natural systems by attenuating wave energy and creating marine habitat. It forms part of a two-stage trial led by the City of Cockburn, the University of Western Australia (UWA) Oceans Institute, and MMA Offshore. Research from UWA confirms a 10 per cent reduction in wave height and a significant increase in biodiversity, with fish species doubling within a year of stage one's installation in 2022.

Now a thriving underwater habitat located 100 metres offshore, the reef has become a popular snorkelling site, supporting fish, seaweed, mussels, and macroalgae.

Faced with intolerable erosion risks identified in its Coastal Adaptation Plan, the City of Cockburn chose innovation over retreat – demonstrating leadership in addressing climate-driven shoreline loss while creating a unique recreational and ecological asset for Perth.



Coastal Management

Special commendation

Midwest Coastal Recreational Track Management Master Plan

Shires of Dandaragan, Coorow and Gingin



The Coastal Recreational Track Management Master Plan developed by the Shires of Coorow, Dandaragan, and Gingin aims to reduce the impact of 4WDs on sensitive coastal environments while retaining recreational beach driving. The plan protects

the conservation and cultural values of coastal reserves through a coordinated, cross-regional approach to a widespread coastal management issue in Western Australia.

Key initiatives include educational pamphlets, signage at approved tracks, and cameras to monitor vehicle activity—supporting both community awareness and responsible access.



Road & marine safety rules apply

Vehicles not permitted on vegetation

Stay on establish tracks

Shared use area, take care of others

You bring it in, you take it out

Reduce Tyre Pressure

The following diagram illustrates the effect of reducing tyre pressures on the size of the footprint of tyres.

15psi	20psi	30psi	40psi

The bigger the footprint, the better the floatation on soft sand which prevents bogging.

PROTECT OUR COAST

Licensed Drivers and Road Registered Vehicles Only!

natural resources management program | GINGIN | SHIRE OF COOROW

4. Education, Engagement, Science and Research Award

Awarded for positively engaging, educating and building capacity of Western Australian communities to increase involvement in coastal zone management activities including innovative applied science or research that assists to protect, conserve and enhance the Western Australian coast.

Rising Tides: Imagining Coastal Resilience UWA

UWA Oceans Institute

The UWA Oceans Institute research project, *Rising Tides: Imagining Coastal Resilience*, brings together design, community art, and science to reimagine a thriving future coastline.

Led by a multidisciplinary team of researchers and educators in social science, landscape architecture, and coastal engineering, the project developed an innovative approach to envisioning future coastlines at two rapidly changing sites: the Cockburn-Fremantle coast in Perth, and Binalup / Middleton Bay in Albany.

Future visions were created by landscape architecture students and staff from the UWA School of Design, drawing on local community values expressed through artworks, engagement activities, and yarning with elders. These design concepts, along with community artworks and stories, were curated into large public exhibitions at each location.

The exhibitions provided a space for communities to come together and explore diverse, creative, and hopeful place-based futures for coastal areas that hold deep significance for both people and nature.



Education, Engagement, Science and Research

Special commendation

Drone Monitoring of Vulnerable Coastal Areas

Peron Naturalise Partnership, Winjan Aboriginal Corporation, Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure, Main Roads WA

The Peron Naturaliste Partnership, Winjan Aboriginal Corporation, Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure, and Main Roads are collaborating to monitor vulnerable coastal areas using drone technology.

This unique partnership has developed and adopted an innovative method to capture high-resolution imagery and digital surface data, tracking seasonal changes across 20 sites between Cape Peron and Cape Naturaliste.

Designed for long-term sustainability, the program requires minimal resources and external support. It fills a critical gap in existing coastal monitoring efforts by generating essential data that was previously unavailable. Importantly, it also builds the capacity of traditional owners and local coastal decision-makers.

The data collected is helping to identify sediment volume changes and shoreline responses to extreme weather events and sea level rise—providing vital insights to support more informed and resilient coastal planning and management.



5. Coastal Adaptation

Awarded for on-ground coastal projects which manage the risks of coastal hazards demonstrating adaptation and building resilience.

Busselton Storm Surge Risk Mitigation City of Busselton

North-facing Geographe Bay in the City of Busselton is highly vulnerable to coastal flooding, with storm surges frequently exceeding one metre and overtopping dunes.

Residential areas less than three metres above sea level face increasing risk, compounded by sea level rise. In response, an integrated strategy has been developed to enhance coastal resilience through data, modelling, and on-ground works.

Key components include:

- **Busselton Wave & Tide Network** for real-time monitoring
- **Onshore and offshore surveys** by MNG Survey using water-penetrating Green Lidar—winner of the 2023 Geospatial Excellence Award for Technical Innovation
- **Storm surge modelling** across 35 km of coastline, validated against historical events such as Tropical Cyclone Alby and ex-Tropical Cyclone Manga, to produce flood maps for emergency services

Resilience measures feature 3,000 metres of **nature-based coastal protection** (Dune Resilience Project) and 2,300 metres of **coastal levees**, seamlessly integrated into the landscape by refurbishing and raising the foreshore cycle path. Together, these elements form a robust, multi-faceted approach to protecting Busselton's coastline now and into the future.



Coastal Adaptation

Special commendation

Bandy Creek Maintenance Dredging and Castletown Beach Nourishment

Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure, Maritime
Constructions, BMT and Shire of Esperance

In 2025, the Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure carried out maintenance dredging at Bandy Creek Boat Harbour to restore safe navigation.



Approximately 55,000 m³ of sand was dredged and beneficially reused by pumping it through a newly constructed three kilometre pipeline to nourish Castletown Beach in Esperance. The beach nourishment began in early April and was completed by early July 2025.

The project presented significant challenges, including the long pumping distance and the need for careful environmental management due to nearby offshore seagrass meadows. Despite these complexities, the team successfully placed material both on the beach and in the nearshore zone, improving recreational amenity and providing vital protection for coastal assets and homes vulnerable to erosion.

The permanent pipeline proved to be a valuable investment, enabling future nourishment campaigns with greater efficiency and reduced environmental impact.



Thank you to all nominations in 2025:

- Kelly Howlett
- Craig Wilson
- Busselton Jetty Environment Foundation
- Rockingham Beach Clean Ups
- The Esky Library: Reducing Polystyrene Packaging on Christmas Island
- Green S a Force for the Coast
- Margaret River Coastal Champions
- Doris (Marie) MacDonald
- Aus Waves Project
- Southern Ocean Surf Reef – Albany
- Melville Beach Road Bioengineering
- C.Y. O'Connor Beach Engineered Fringing Reef
- Angela Rossen
- Cooke Point Shared Footpath Project
- Midwest Coastal Recreational Track Management Master Plan
- Rising Tides: Imagining Coastal Resilience
- Classroom to Coast Videos
- Undalup Association
- Drone Monitoring of Vulnerable Coastal Areas
- Hedland Volunteer Flatback Turtle Monitoring Program
- Saint Georges Beach Rehabilitation Project
- Bandy Creek Maintenance Dredging and Castletown Beach Nourishment
- Busselton Storm Surge Risk Mitigation