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State funding boost for South Coast conservation

The South Coast region has reaped over \$1.1 million in funding from the State Government's latest NRM funding round, allowing conservation groups such as South Coast NRM to continue protecting biodiversity.

South Coast NRM received over \$666,000 in total to deliver five projects in the region, including protecting the Walpole Wilderness and Mt Lindesay from dieback, managing invasive weed species in and around the Porongurups, and controlling dieback and weed species in other priority locations including Wandoo woodlands and Carnaby's Black Cockatoo habitats.

Another six projects were funded in the region including eradicating introduced wattles from the South Coast (\$6,000- South Coast Progress Association Weeding Group), Carnaby's Black Cockatoo recovery (\$250,000- Birds Australia WA), Geekabee Hill Ecolink (\$17,570- Green Skills), preventing the spread of dieback in the Western Fitzgerald Biosphere (\$110,000- Fitzgerald Biosphere Group), and addressing climate change and degradation of the Oyster Harbour Catchment (\$116,000- Oyster Harbour Catchment Group).

South Coast NRM chief executive Rob Edkins said the state funding commitments were a great result for the not-for-profit organisation and its community partners.

"To be able to continue our important work in preventing Phytophthora Dieback and managing invasive weed species is a relief," Mr Edkins said.

"While there is still an enormous amount of work to be done to preserve and protect our natural environment, we are buoyed by our achievements so far and look forward to continuing our close working relationships with the NRM community to achieve our aims."

In future, Mr Edkins said it would be nice for the community to be more involved in the delivery of state NRM funding.

The announcement of the state funding is timely given the delivery of the Australian Government budget this week which revealed it was business as usual for South Coast NRM and the wider sector.

Mr Edkins said according to a budget communiqué, there would be no cuts to South Coast NRM's core funding under the Federal Government's Caring for Our Country program and funding levels would be maintained.

"All the information we've received from the Federal Government gives us confidence that it's business as usual for NRM. It appears the only cuts are within government administration," he explained.

Overall funding for the Caring for our Country program across Australia will increase in the 2010-11 Budget by \$15 million to \$423 million.

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South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. is the leading regional group for natural resource management on the South Coast of Western Australia. As an independent non-profit organisation, we work with the community to improve the environment by preserving and protecting unique plants and animals, managing land and waterways, and sharing knowledge and skills in natural resource management.