

# Media Release

6 August 2024

## **Turtle nesting season preparations underway with Turtle Tracker training set down for 4 September**

As we move toward the warmer weather of Djilba and Kambarang, female Southwestern Snake-Necked Turtles (*Chelodina oblonga*) will venture ashore from Cockburn's lakes and wetlands in search of a safe place to lay their eggs.

Following winter rains, September to November is nesting season for the Yaakan or Booyi as the turtle is called in the Nyungar language, and the Cockburn community is again preparing to give the reptile a helping hand.

Female turtles are at their most vulnerable when they leave the water during nesting season, with the biggest threats predation by birds, feral animals and pet cats and dogs, plus vehicle strike as they cross roads and paths in search of soft soil to lay their eggs.

Each year the City of Cockburn's Sustainability and Climate Change team prepares to recruit, train and lead volunteer Turtle Tracker crews in partnership with the Save Our Snake-necked Turtles (SOSNT) program.

An information and education session for people interested in becoming Turtle Trackers will be held from 6pm on Wednesday 4 September at The Wetlands Centre Cockburn. Book your place via the City's [website](#).

The session will start at 6pm with an information talk followed by a short 30-minute break. People who want to volunteer to be a Turtle Tracker can elect to stay for specialised training until 8.30pm.

Turtle Tracker volunteers track nesting female turtles during the peak season from September to November at Bibra Lake and Manning Lake, with more locations added as trained volunteer trackers become available.

They log information about turtle sightings and behaviour and help protect nesting females on the move and their nests, playing a key role in saving a species challenged



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by adapting to the urban environment, habitat loss and climate change.

City of Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett said the City's efforts to conserve the snake-necked turtle reflected its leadership in the sustainable environmental management of its local natural areas and resources.

"Our City acknowledges the shared responsibility of conserving biodiversity and that is why our partnerships with the community and a range of organisations are so vital."

City of Cockburn Acting Head of Sustainability and Environment Rory Garven said the City was working hard to expand knowledge of the turtle to safeguard its survival in local wetlands and further afield.

"Our City has been a steadfast and leading supporter of collaborative efforts to save the region's endemic turtle for many years," Mr Garven said.

"We are doing all we can to educate our community to inspire them to join us.

"The City works hard to restore turtle habitat through ongoing weed management and revegetation. Areas of native vegetation reduces exposure to predators when turtles leave the lake to nest.

"We undertake population surveys at the City's wetlands, and provide funding available to residents in rural zones for land restoration and feral animal control as part of the Landowner Biodiversity Conservation Program.

"The contributions provided by Turtle Trackers are vital as we work as a team to save our local turtles. We encourage interested people to come along to the information session to learn about how they can get involved."

## ABOUT TURTLE TRACKERS:

The City's Sustainability and Climate Change team was instrumental in helping establish SOSNT in partnership with Murdoch University and its Harry Butler Institute, WA Wildlife and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

SOSNT was established following a successful three-year Turtle Tracker pilot project established in partnership with the City and Murdoch University's Harry Butler Institute between 2018-2021.



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The pilot program's creator Dr Anthony Santoro was a Murdoch University PhD student completing research in the City, including Bibra Lake.

The successful pilot program attracted a Lotterywest grant provided to the Perth South West Metropolitan Alliance in 2022, enabling the creation of SOSNT and its subsequent expansion into 20 local governments in Perth and the southwest of WA.

Find out more at the SOSNT [website](#) including how you can become a SOSNT citizen scientist by logging turtle sightings on the TurtleSat app.

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For more information contact:  
Media and Communications Officer  
City of Cockburn  
T: 08 9411 3551  
E: [media@cockburn.wa.gov.au](mailto:media@cockburn.wa.gov.au)