



## ▶ Message from the Chair

To all our members and their families across our great Noongar Nation.

I'm very honoured to present you with our first newsletter for 2024.

A special thank you to our six Noongar regional corporations and members for your support during the AGM and election processes.

Late 2023 was a heavy time for our First Nations community, as we come to terms with the disheartening result of the Voice to Parliament Referendum in October. It has shown us that as a nation, we still have much work to do towards healing and unity.

As our new Chair, I'm fully committed to a unified Noongar Nation. The empowerment of our Noongar regional corporations is central for this to be achieved.

Finalising the Settlement and getting on with the business of building a forever future for Noongar will not be easy - **but together, we will.**

I encourage all of you to adopt the principles of openness and transparency while ensuring we are well informed, as we work together to carve out our future, strong in our collective power.

I look forward to walking with you all and creating a pathway for our Noongar Rising.

Sincerely,  
Dennis Egginton  
SWALSC Chair

Bunnuru edition  
February  
2024

## About this issue

SWALSC is continuing to work with the six Noongar regional corporations to promote Noongar culture and empower our community, to create better outcomes for our people now, and for generations to come.

One such project is digitising family and cultural records which are held by SWALSC. Our anthropology team is working on this huge task to preserve these historical records. It's extremely important work, and you can learn about it on page three.

Last year we hosted a workshop on Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP), where staff and Cultural Advice Committee members of the regional corporations learnt about the importance of protecting and reserving cultural property including our language, stories, art, and sacred sites. Read more about the workshop on page three.

We held our 2023 Annual General Meeting in November and welcomed our new Directors who were announced at the meeting. They are listed on page two.



## 2023 AGM

The SWALSC AGM was held on 6 November 2023 at the High Wycombe Recreation Centre.

The hybrid meeting was well attended by members in person and online and included robust discussions.

During the lunch break, soulful Noongar musician Lily Gogos performed acoustic original, gospel and blues songs.

A declaration of newly appointed member elected directors was made, with the following people announced as SWALSC Directors:

- Megan Krakouer, Wagyl Kaip Southern Noongar Ward
- Michelle Nelson-Cox, Ballardong Ward
- Dennis Eggington, South West Boojarah Ward
- Greg Narrier, Yued Ward
- Simon Withers, Expert Director
- Debra Fletcher, Expert Director

A by-election is required for Directors of the Gnaala Karla Booja and Whadjuk Wards.

Congratulations and welcome to our new Board of Directors.



Lily Gogos performing at the SWALSC AGM.

## 2023 Annual report

The SWALSC Annual Report 2023 is available on our website.

Learn more about the work SWALSC has been engaged in this year, including the Noongar Regional Corporation implementation and projects to promote Noongar culture, as well as lands, legal, heritage and financial updates.

You can view and download our annual report at [noongar.org.au/annual-reports](https://noongar.org.au/annual-reports). 2023 Annual report

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## Stolen wages apology and class action

The WA Government has agreed to a historic Class Action Settlement for Aboriginal people who were paid little to no wages between 1936 to 1972.

In 2020, Mr Mervyn Street, represented by Shine Lawyers, filed the class action on behalf of Aboriginal Australians who were affected by past wage control legislation.

The State will pay up to \$180.4 million to eligible Aboriginal workers, or their surviving spouses and children.

Premier Roger Cook also issued an apology in Parliament on 28 November 2023. Aboriginal people who lived and worked in WA between 11 December 1936 and 9 June 1972, or people representing a family member who has since passed away, are automatically part of the class action but will need to register to be considered for compensation.

To register, visit the Shine Lawyers website at [shine.com.au/service/class-actions/stolen-wages-class-action](https://shine.com.au/service/class-actions/stolen-wages-class-action).

You can also visit the SWALSC office to pick up a registration form, or call us on 9358 7400 and we'll send one to you by post.



## Digitising over 20 years of Noongar archives

SWALSC has been collecting research and client donated materials in support of the Noongar Native Title for more than 20 years.

SWALSC's project, the Digitisation of Historical Archives, ensures historical hardcopies are preserved, while increasing the efficiency for research.

The success of the Noongar Native Title relied heavily on these archives and were part of an important moment of history. These historical records are now secured at an offsite record holding facility.

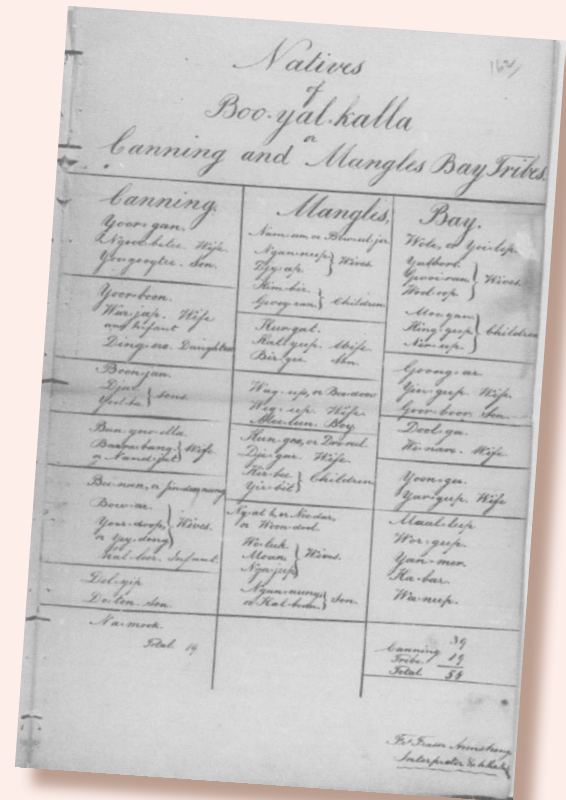
Research Officers Barbara Outhwaite and Adam O'Neil, with the assistance of Anthropologist Britta Kuhlenbeck, have been digitising the large, complex, and varied collection of materials.

A number of these resources have also contributed to the Noongar Genealogical Database, the only one of its kind in Australia.

Digitising historical content ensures the records are preserved, reducing potential damage to hardcopy documents caused by handling or environmental factors. It makes finding documents or files easier and provides more control of access.

SWALSC's aim is not to control the information, but to preserve and conserve it for Noongar people's use, now and into the future.

While meticulously digitising content, the large file sizes proved too much for our desktop scanning machine. An offsite records holdings facility was



engaged and thanks to modern technology, the efficiency of scanning has increased so higher resolution images can be produced, and we have secure file transfers.

To date the team have processed more than 2850 research files which equates to 21 percent of the physical research files and 19 percent of the entire research collection (physical and electronic).

The collection of records that were previously used to devalue or depreciate the Noongar people can now empower our Noongar Nation, providing evidence to support them to gain recognition.

## Protecting cultural property

In October 2023, SWALSC staff, and representatives from the Noongar regional corporations Cultural Advice Committees, attended workshops to learn about the importance of protecting Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP).

The workshop, *True Tracks®: Protecting Culture for Empowered Communities*, was led by Anika Valenti, Senior Associate at Terri Janke and Company.

ICIP includes important cultural property such as language, stories, art, sacred sites, traditional and ecological knowledge, documentation of heritage, and more.

While there is no official legal framework for protecting ICIP – like there is for copyright – Australia is starting to realise its importance and the gaps in our copyright laws in protecting ICIP.

The workshop was invaluable to us as Noongar corporations, and SWALSC will be working to protect Noongar cultural and intellectual property in all its forms.



Senior Associate Anika Valenti delivering an ICIP workshop.



## Noongar Boodja Trust

At our Annual General Meeting (AGM), the Senior Trust Manager at Perpetual Trustees delivered a presentation on the Noongar Boodja Trust (NBT).

The NBT is the trust which holds, maintains, and grows the funds paid to the Noongar people through the South West Native Title Settlement. Perpetual is the Trustee of the NBT.

As laid out in the Settlement, each year for 12 years the State of Western Australia will make payments into the Noongar Boodja Trust, with the aim of growing these funds so that they can sustainably support the Noongar community in an ongoing basis. We are currently in the third year of this process.

The NBT is managed by the Noongar Advisory Company, as well as the Noongar Nominations Committee, Noongar Investment Committee, and the Noongar Relationship Committee.

Find out more about the Noongar Boodja Trust, its committee membership and how it works on their website at [noongarboodjatrust.info](http://noongarboodjatrust.info).

The NBT manages the funds within the Settlement, including:

- Noongar Land Estate: the Trustee works with the six Noongar Regional Corporations to realise the Noongar community's aspirations for boodja during the process for land selection and how the land will be managed.
- Noongar Housing Land Fund: the Noongar Housing Land Fund was established for the general purpose of improving housing outcomes for the Noongar community.
- Noongar Future Fund: The Noongar Future Fund is protected to grow, so that its value increases to an amount where the income sustains the operations of the Regional Corporations, for future Noongar generations.
- Operations Fund: The Operations Fund holds the funds for the Trustee to distribute to the Central Services Corporation and the six Noongar Regional Corporations to fund their operations.

## Connect with your Noongar Regional Corporation

After their first full year of implementation, the Noongar Regional Corporations have held their Annual General Meetings, with some having elected new Directors and Cultural Advice Committee members.

Visit their websites to view or download Annual Reports and apply for membership. You can also follow the regional corporations on Facebook and LinkedIn.

### Find your corporation online

[ballardong.org.au](http://ballardong.org.au)

[gkb.org.au](http://gkb.org.au)

[karrikarrak.org.au](http://karrikarrak.org.au)

[wagylkaip.org.au](http://wagylkaip.org.au)

[whadjuknoongar.org.au](http://whadjuknoongar.org.au)

[yued.org.au](http://yued.org.au)

## Update your contact details

Have your contact information recently changed? Share your new details with us so you don't miss out on important updates.

If you are a member of any of the six Noongar Regional Corporations, you will need to contact them direct to update your details.

Send your updated details to us by email at [membership@noongar.org.au](mailto:membership@noongar.org.au).

## Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities within the regional corporations are listed on our website at [noongar.org.au/vacancies](http://noongar.org.au/vacancies).



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