

Project Dieback

South-West, Western Australia.



NRM WA
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Phytophthora Dieback caused by *Phytophthora cinnamomi* is WA's single greatest threat to biodiversity, potentially affecting over 2,500 native species, including 40% of our plants, and highly interdependent animals in threatened ecological communities.

Project Dieback

Natural resource management groups, coordinated by South Coast NRM, have successfully overseen integrated Phytophthora Dieback (Dieback) management for the past decade. This has brought together government agencies (Department of Parks and Wildlife) and corporations (Main Roads, Western Power), Universities, Local Government Authorities, community groups, private companies and landholders in a cross-tenure, whole-of-landscape approach that has compelled stakeholders to work collectively.

Priority Protection Area works

Protection works are guided by a State Phytophthora Dieback Management and Investment Framework. Developed using an innovative State-wide prioritisation process, the Framework identifies the 100 most significant but vulnerable biodiverse ecosystems in WA for Dieback management, covering over 1 million hectares. This includes outstanding Dieback free landscape Priority Protection Areas (PPA) including Cape Arid, Lesueur and Fitzgerald PPAs.

“Identifies the 100 most significant but vulnerable biodiverse ecosystems in WA for Dieback management”

Works have been undertaken in 53 of the PPAs using hygiene and access infrastructure, including boot cleaning stations, interpretive signs, gates, fences and remote sensing cameras. In some of the most critical sites, more than 150 km of roads have either been closed, or protected

by covering infested tracks with Dieback free materials forming 'Green Bridges'.

Planning

Planning for the delivery of protection activities is facilitated by technical groups at a local level, involving skills-based Local Area Reference Groups that generate high levels of community engagement and commitment. This is evident from the 2359 volunteers and 55 specialists/groups that have been involved in dieback control over the past 4 years.

“The standardised approach for Dieback management and investment across tenures and collaboration of key stakeholders has provided maximum return on investment.”

Communication Tools

On-ground protection works have been complemented by engagement, communication and structured training activities to upskill sectors at greater risk of spreading the disease. Through a coordinated communications plan, these messages have been reinforced through commercial television and cinema advertising, a strong online presence, and extensive print media coverage.

Dieback and Priority Protection Area information is publically available through an online database (DIDMS), administered by South NRM in collaboration with a private company through a levered cash-contribution. This enables easy reporting and viewing Dieback data, through which there is regularly update scientifically rigorous information free of charge. With 180 active registered users and 69 registered organisation DIDMS is proving to be a popular and versatile tool for planning, communication and study. DIDMS public mapping tool can be viewed at www.dieback.net.au. Click on the 'IT Tools' tab and 'public map' will appear on the drop list.

Investment and collaboration

Over the past 4 years, a \$3M state investment in Dieback has been used to lever a further \$1,880,533, including \$197,683 in cash from partners. Additional secondary financial benefits have been generated by preserving high-value tourism sites, and by reducing ongoing road-maintenance and reserve management costs for local government.

The standardised approach for Dieback management and investment across tenures and collaboration of key stakeholders has provided maximum return on investment for the preservation of the state's unique biodiversity assets and is independently recognised as the best-practice model for disease management.



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