

Auntie Carol Petterson

The Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee (WICC) Board realised that we needed to better recognise and involve our local Nyungar community. We wanted to be more collaborative and let them tell their own stories. We approached Vernice Gillies (local Mineng Elder) and Wayne Webb (Pibbulman Wadandi Elder) for their permission to utilise the Nyungar Calendar to guide our newsletter publication. Each newsletter would feature a different Elder who would speak on that season, their observations, culture, and recommendations how we can better look after our natural environments.

Our objective was to let local Elders tell their own stories. We approach Elders with relevant knowledge in the focus topic of each newsletter. For example, with 'Birak' (December/January) we approached Auntie Carol Petterson as she has excellent knowledge of our local shorebirds. With the arrival of our migratory birds and a push to establish a local shorebird sanctuary on our inlet, we featured Carol's messages about conservation and treading lightly to provide a Nyungar perspective.

All interviews are recorded and uploaded to our website. This audio recording is linked to our electronic newsletter so people can have a listen to the stories in their entirety, as we always need to edit the interviews down to fit into our newsletters.

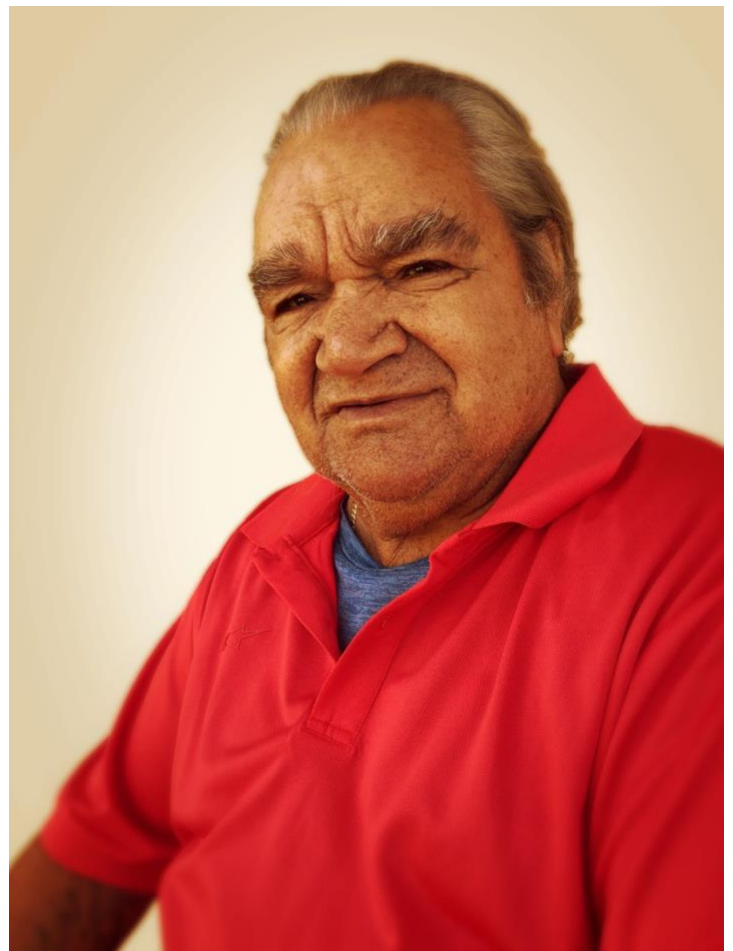
Sharing the Nyungar Calendar

Nyungar elders telling their stories

“Applying Nyungar culture to agriculture is helping farmers adapt to climate change”

By Shaun Ossinger, Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee

Basing our communications around the six Nyungar seasons not only raised awareness of Nyungar culture, but also made huge sense from a farming perspective. Nyungar seasons are not set dates like our European ones. They start and end based on what is observed in nature. This has had huge application for agriculture and is helping farmers to adapt to our changing climate.



Aden Eades

We knew that many of our local Elders would be hesitant to share their stories unless they were following on the heels of other highly regarded Elders. Following good social science practices, we started with the most influential Aboriginal Elders to launch the first couple of newsletters. This encourage others to come forward and share. One lesson we learnt is to be flexible and allow sufficient time. Many of our Elders predate the tech revolution so don't expect quick turn arounds on communications. Best to sit down somewhere quiet with a cuppa and establish trust and just listen.

To view the full Nyungar calendar editions of Wilson Inlet Catchment Council's Newsletter and hear the Elders stories visit <https://www.wicc.org.au/wicc-news.html>

For further information contact Shaun Ossinger, Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee info@wicc.org.au or 0401 291 457.



Vernice Gillies



Wayne Webb