



Gondwana Link  
connecting people... connecting nature

# ***Ecohealth***

Stewardship | Collectivism  
Interconnected Health  
Wisdom | Symbiosis

***Roger Erith***, 20 February 2025

Image - Roger Erith

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## Introduction

In 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) redefined health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being—not merely the absence of disease. This holistic perspective aligns with the Ecohealth approach, which views human and ecosystem health as interconnected components of a complex system. Rooted in a transdisciplinary, multi-stakeholder framework, Ecohealth integrates diverse knowledge systems but remains undertheorized, with opportunities for further development (Dakubo, 2010).

In an era of rapid environmental and social change, caring for the environment is increasingly recognised as a public health intervention, e.g. stewardship not only preserves ecosystems but also cultivates a sense of purpose, achievement and social connection, reinforcing both individual and collective well-being.

## Research objectives

This broadly exploratory research adopts a cross-cultural, mixed-methods approach to examine the relationships between ecological restoration, community engagement and elements of human health and well-being. The study seeks to:

1. Assess the immediate and long-term impacts of ecological restoration on physical, mental, emotional health and social well-being.
2. Engage diverse perspectives, incorporating both Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge systems to ensure a holistic understanding.
3. Invite participants to share lived experiences, providing qualitative insights into personal and collective connections with nature.
4. Explore the reciprocal relationship between human well-being and ecological health, emphasising resilience, stewardship and adaptation.
5. Establish a foundation for future research, advocacy and community-driven initiatives, supporting sustainable ecological and social outcomes.

## Scope and limitations

The online survey was distributed directly to members of five Western Australia-based environmental organisations, including Gondwana Link. Additionally, it was promoted via Facebook, reaching an undefined audience across Australia. This introduced sampling limitations and self-selection bias.

## Research Approach

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining a qualitative/quantitative survey with in-person forums to explore the connections between ecological restoration, community engagement and well-being. By involving a diverse range of participants, it ensures a broad, inclusive understanding of experiences while respecting cultural sensitivities and knowledge systems.

It's envisaged this approach offers groups a survey methodology they can adapt and refine to assess and document ongoing well-being impacts of their work in caring for the environment and community engagement. Gondwana Link is pleased to share this framework and are keen to support the aggregation of results across different groups.

## Diverse Perspectives & Data Collection

Insights were gathered from Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants through an online survey, in-person interviews (Noongar family), and a focus group (Noongar Ranger Group). The mix of structured questions and open-ended responses provides both measurable data and deeper personal narratives.

## Interviews & Yarning Circle

One-on-one interviews with a Noongar family explored intergenerational perspectives on ecological and community priorities. A separate yarning circle with Elders and Rangers provided a culturally appropriate space for open discussion, allowing conversations to flow naturally with guidance from Elders. Topics included ecocultural healing, cultural approaches to stewardship, and levels of involvement in restoration efforts.

## Privacy & Ethical Considerations

Participants were fully briefed on the purpose of the research, their voluntary involvement, and confidentiality measures. They had the right to withdraw, skip questions, and remain anonymous.

It's envisaged this research lays the groundwork for ongoing consultation and collaboration, supporting community-driven environmental initiatives.

## Acknowledgements

This research is supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program.



natural resource  
management program



Gondwana Link also gratefully acknowledges the support of WA Landcare Network, Nature Conservancy Margaret River Region, Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee and Friends of Porongurup. Many thanks to the coordinators of these organisations for helping to communicate this project to their members.



A special thanks to Dr May Carter for initial guidance on survey design.

Thanks again to all the participants who contributed to this research. Your insights and experiences have been foundational, and its hoped will play a role in shaping and refining ongoing research.



## Design – Online Survey

The survey consists of 27 questions, as follows:

### **Demographic and Engagement** (quantitative) – 10 Questions

- Multiple-choice questions determine location, age, gender, ethnicity, and level of engagement in environmental care (Q1–Q10).
- For participant diversity and activity levels.

### **Likert Scale** – 6 Questions

- Five-point scales assess the perceived importance of caring for the environment on emotional, mental, and physical well-being, community connection, and First Nations consultation (Q11–Q14, Q17–Q18).
- For statistical comparisons.

### **Ranking and Selection** – 2 Questions

- Participants select or rank factors influencing their involvement in environmental care and ongoing motivations (Q4, Q15).
- For key drivers and evolving priorities.

### **Open-Ended** (qualitative) – 7 Questions

- Participants could provide written responses on the long-term impacts of environmental engagement on their physical, mental/ emotional health, community, and reality vs. expectations (Q16, Q19–Q24, Q27).
- For exploration of personal experiences.
- NB: see appendix for full responses.

### **Expectation vs. Reality** – 2 Questions

- Participants assessed whether their experiences met, exceeded, or fell below expectations regarding personal concerns and environmental impact (Q25–Q26).
- For perceived effectiveness/ impact.

## Data collection process

### **Online**

The online survey was conducted using Survey Monkey, ensuring participant anonymity and data protection in line with ethical research standards.

The survey link was distributed through targeted email and public channels (Facebook). It was accessible and allowed participants to respond at their convenience, and were permitted to skip questions and still complete the survey.

No identifying information was collected, and responses could not be linked to individual participants.

### **In-person**

The in-person Interviews and yarning circle were informal, semi-structured and culturally appropriate. It followed an organic, participant-led discussion format, with deference to Elders and cultural protocols.

Full audio recordings ensured an accurate account of discussions. Written notes were taken to support real-time documentation and cross-referencing.

Transcripts of the recorded discussions were used for detailed thematic analysis, ensuring that participant voices were accurately represented while maintaining confidentiality.

Unless permission was otherwise given, no identifying information was collected.

## Secondary Research

The study incorporated desk research to contextualise findings within existing academic and policy frameworks, e.g. Smith et al. (2025) which provides empirical evidence that participating in ecosystem restoration enhances mental health, psychosocial resilience, and community cohesion.

## Caring Principles

### Qualitative Analysis – Coding

Five 'Caring Principles' were created and are referenced throughout the report as they provided the framework to theme, systematically code and analyze participants' narratives.

### **Community Collectives (COL)**

Social connection, including community e.g. volunteerism, and/ or family connection points were coded under this principle.

### **Interconnected Health (ICH)**

Lifestyle choices connecting elements of personal health and well-being were coded under this principle.

### **Stewardship (STW)**

Responsibility to apply wisdom, to act and to educate were coded under this principle.

### **Symbiosis (SYM)**

Human 'being' and human activity connected to, and in harmony with nature were coded under this principle.

### **Wisdom (WIS)**

Knowledge gain for humility and guidance were coded under this principle.

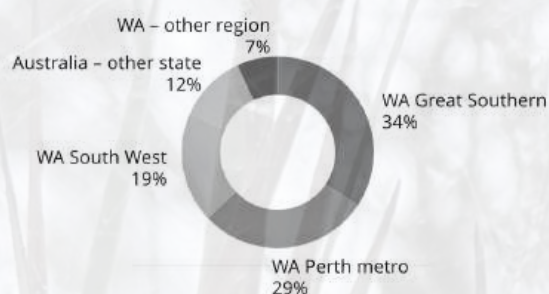


# ***Respondent profile – online***



## Respondent profile

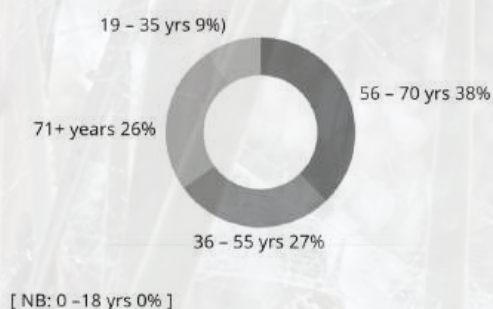
**Figure 1. Residence (189 responses)**



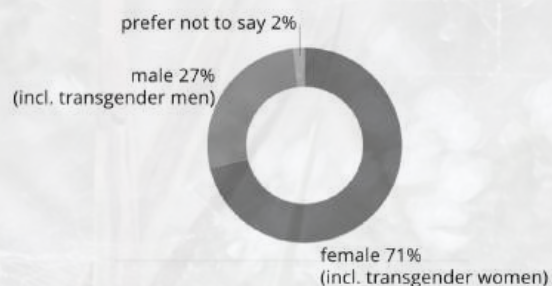
**Figure 2. Ethnicity (166 responses)**



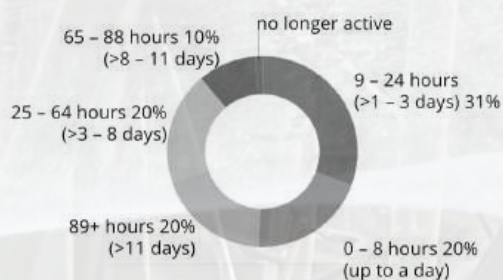
**Figure 3. Age Group (166 responses)**



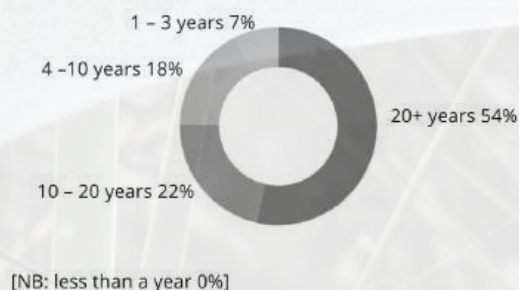
**Figure 4. Gender (160 responses)**



**Figure 5. Hours per month active (162 responses)**



**Figure 6. Years active (166 responses)**





## Perceived Impact of caring for the environment on elements of health & well-being

Figure 7. Mental health (160 responses)

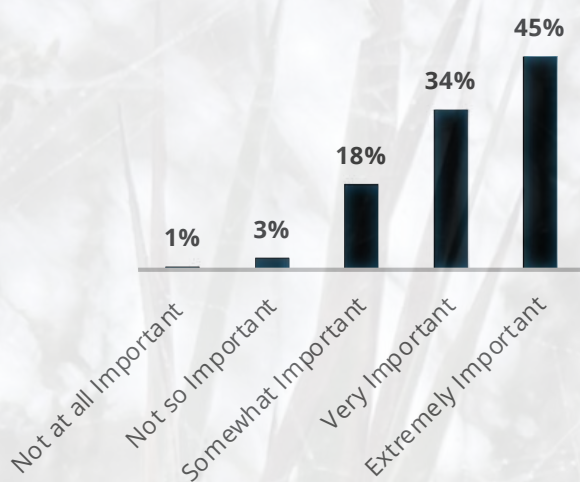


Figure 8. Emotional health (160 responses)

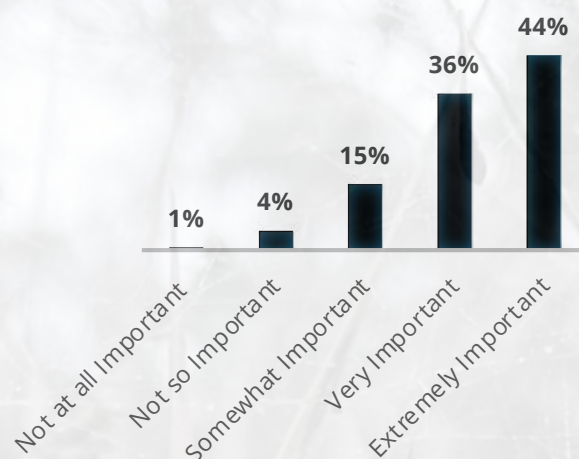


Figure 9. Connection with community (160 responses)

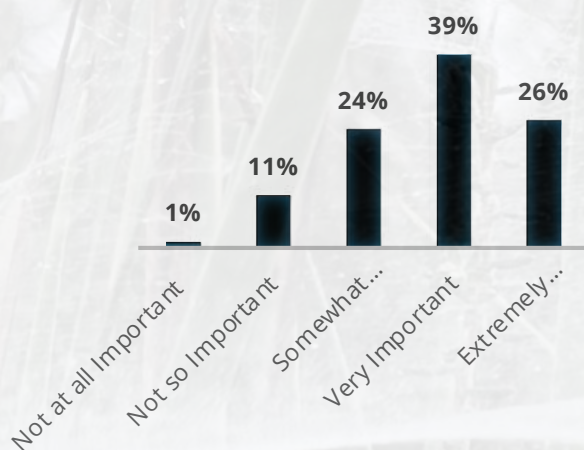
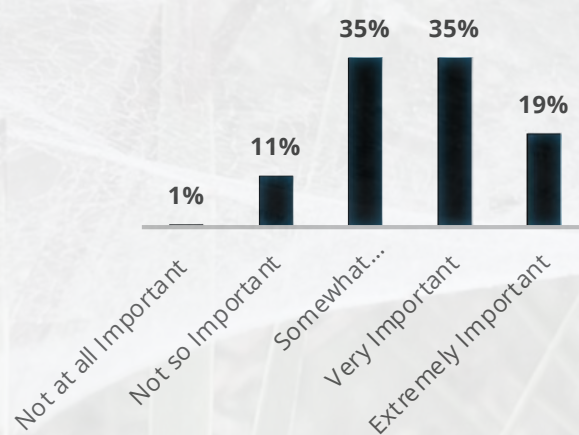


Figure 10. Physical health (160 responses)



The benefits to physical health might be considered less acute, whereas nearly half the respondents consider the impact on mental/ emotional health is extremely important.



# *Why care for the environment ?*



## Why care for the environment?

Many respondents express a deep connection to nature, recognising it as vital for survival.

Many highlight the urgency of conservation to protect wildlife and ecosystems for future generations.

Environmental stewardship is seen as both a personal and communal responsibility, which in turn fosters resilience and a sense of purpose.

There is a strong emphasis on mutual support—caring for the environment means it cares for us in return.

*"A symbiotic relationship with the natural world is fundamental to human health and well-being."  
(Smith et al., 2025)*

*"We only get one chance at making a difference for our planet so **future generations** can enjoy."*

*"We are working to protect and restore **biodiversity**, which is critical to maintaining our local and global ecosystems."*

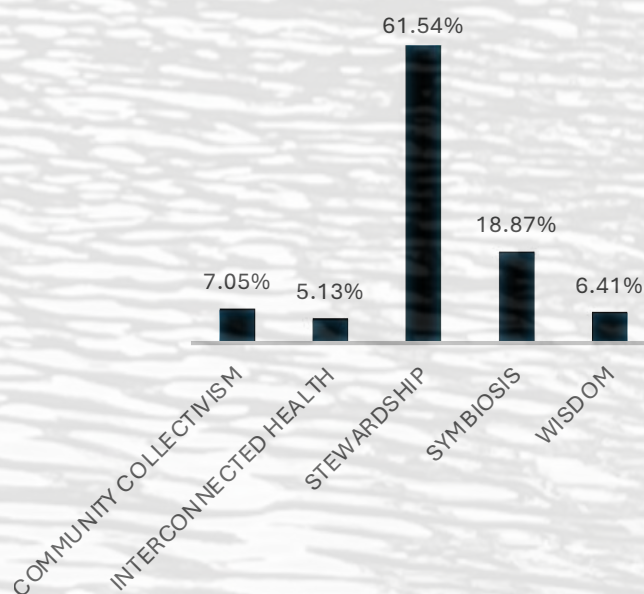
*"Coming from an agricultural context, understanding the interdependence of **natural systems** expands appreciation of the relevance of the other factors listed."*

**Table 1. Why people first got involved**  
(165 respondents – quantitative)

NB: respondents could select more than one.

Motivation factor	% of Respondents
Support nature	79%
Understand nature	55%
Community connection	44%
Overall wellbeing	33%
Improve mental health	16%
Improve emotional health	15%
Improve physical health	13%
All of the above	21%

**Figure 11. Why stay involved?**  
(156 respondents – qualitative, coded)





## Caring for the environment and impact on health and well-being

A holistic view of well-being is presented whereby mental, physical, and environmental health are considered deeply interconnected. The role of community is also emphasised.

Many respondents feel just being in nature provides a sense of purpose, emotional stability, and fulfillment.

Respondents share deep concerns for the state of the environment and express that maintaining physical and mental health is essential for their ability to continue their work caring for the environment.

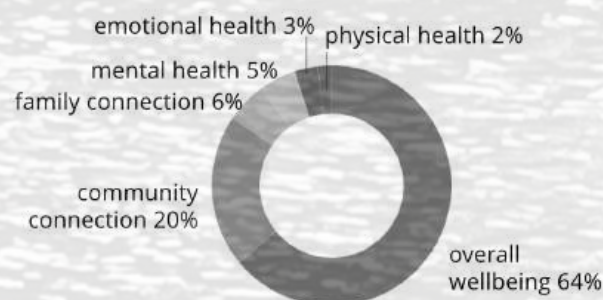
*"Restoration can be a reminder that not all hope is lost, offering tangible actions in the face of ongoing ecosystem decline."  
(Smith et al., 2025)*

*"Being involved in Caring for Country helps me take **responsibility** for my actions and gives me a sense of well-being."*

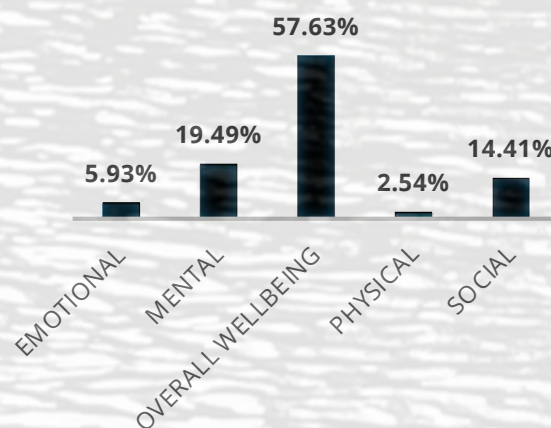
*"Engaging with environmental causes gives me **purpose**, meaning, self-confidence, and a glimmer of hope."*

*"I am happy to meet people, I am **more positive** to get involved in things, and that in turn is keeping the black dog away"*

**Figure 12. Health and well-being impacts (156 respondents – quantitative response)**



**Figure 13. Health and well-being impacts (135 respondents – qualitative responses, coded)**



Written responses reference impacts on mental and emotional health significantly more than on physical health.

References to physical health align with quantitative responses, which might suggest respondents consider emotional and mental health more significant to overall well-being.

NB: Figure 14. (over) represents the coding of these responses relative to the five caring principles.



## Caring for the environment and impact on health and well-being

Responses describing the impacts of caring for the environment on health and well-being are well represented across the five caring principles (exception being wisdom).

Whilst Stewardship is the leading caring principle, those of Interconnected Health, Community Collectivism and Symbiosis present as equally significant.

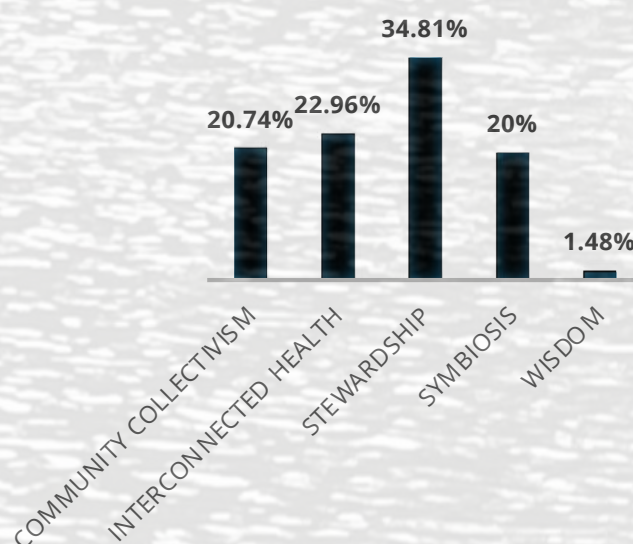
*"The most important social benefits are associated with the process of restoration itself rather than just the end products." (Bremer, 2018)*

*"Psychosocial resilience can be pursued by fostering agency and social cohesion and developing adaptive capacity to thrive in an ever-changing and unpredictable environment." (Smith et al., 2025)*

*"Critical to have **community** on board as it is only by working together can we get the outcome nature requires."*

*"We started with **bushcare**, but it is community and friendship that keeps me going back."*

**Figure 14. Health and well-being impacts coded against the five themes.**  
(135 respondents – qualitative responses, coded)



*"Looking after the environment in a **symbiotic** way as it looks after us."*

*"Wellbeing, connection, health, food supply and security... all **interconnected** and natural assets are vital for our survival."*

*"The most difficult/time consuming activities (mental stress) is **acquiring funds**."*



# *Noongar knowledge and practice*



## Noongar knowledge and practice

Respondents note Caring for Country is a holistic system where humans are custodians, not just inhabitants of the environment.

Many responses also highlight the significance of Noongar peoples' spiritual connection with Country.

Traditional seasonal knowledge, bush foods, and medicinal plants are valued for their contributions to both human and environmental health.

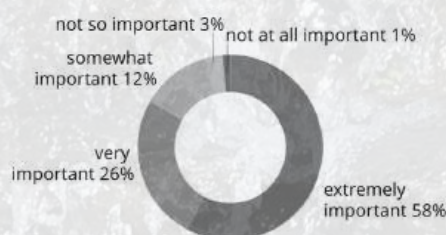
Some respondents expressed concerns about government environmental policies, as well as the need for Indigenous-led conservation practices, e.g. fire management.

*"Humans have a reciprocal responsibility to care for and sustain nature, an idea that has long been recognized in Indigenous cultures but is often overlooked in modern environmental management"*  
(Smith et al., 2025)

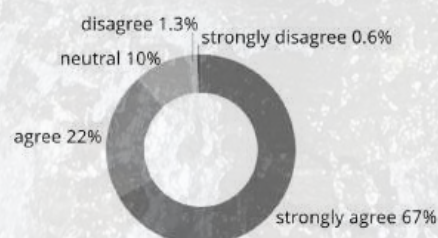
*"Their **long history of caring and working with nature** can only be seen as a gift and true asset if we want to restore our ecosystem function and remain prosperous (not just financial/ business success but in all aspects of one's life and as a society).*

*We need to **respect First Nations knowledge** and combine modern science with their intrinsic wealth of the land, animals and how it all works in symbiosis."*

**Figure 15. Consulting Noongar people for guidance (156 respondents – quantitative)**



**Figure 16. Need for greater understanding of Noongar knowledge and practice. (156 respondents – quantitative)**





## Noongar knowledge and practice (135 qualitative responses coded)

In describing which Noongar knowledges and/ or practices were of most interest, most responses were evenly spread across the caring principles of Symbiosis, Stewardship and Wisdom. Notably, many respondents wished to better understand all, as reflected in some the quotes below.

### SYMBIOSIS

*"Understanding that we (humans) are not separate from country but are part of it. I think this has great potential for supporting health and well-being."*

*"I resonate with the idea that people are one with the land in a reciprocal relationship. Poor environment health equals poor body health."*

*"I interact a lot with First Nations people, and I find it fascinating that every aspect of their health seems to improve when 'on Country'."*

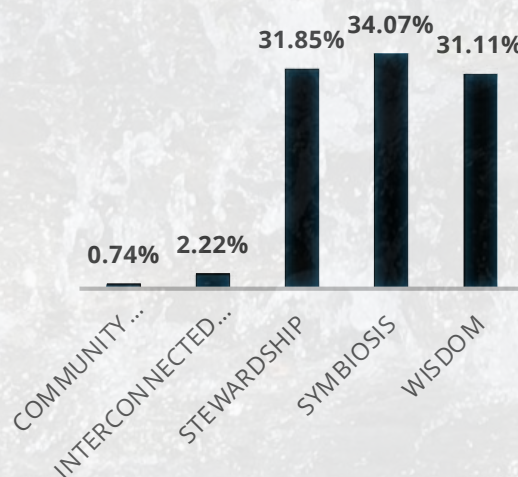
### STEWARDSHIP

*"Caring for boodja is caring for people and self."*

*"The concept of being custodians of the land - we should all strive for that (rather than being consumers of the land)."*

*"Our recent practice of living in or near forests and regular hot burning to 'keep us safe' is killing the understory and fungi. First Nations people know how to burn so that the understory thrives along with all the creatures and organisms."*

Figure 17. Noongar knowledge or practice of most interest. (135 respondents)



### WISDOM

*"First Nations cultural knowledge broadens my understanding of the environment and a connection to First Nations people I never had interaction with growing up in Perth."*

*"Fire management, and cultural practices around sustainability. Keeps a perspective that we are always in relationship with the environment - watching, listening, learning, responding rather than dominating."*

Figure 18. Most repeated active words  
(143 respondents - qualitative responses)





## *Long-term impacts*



## Long-term physical health

(146 responses)

Respondents overwhelmingly recognise the interconnected physical and mental health benefits when caring for the environment.

Many find physical activity in nature beneficial – improving fitness, mobility, and even gut health, while others highlight physical strain as a challenge.

Overall, caring for the environment is perceived as a means to maintain health, find balance, and contribute positively to the world.

*"I believe physical and mental health are one and the same. Being in nature and caring for it improves your **overall health**"*

*"Body movement and **sensory stimulation** must have incredible long-term benefits. Body and mind are one, physical health impacts overall well being."*

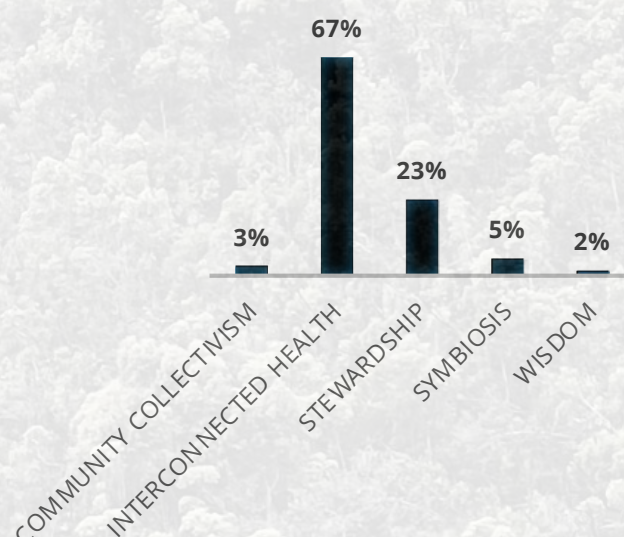
*"Fitter, feel happier, exposure to other natural Biota (soil micro-organisms etc) that promote **healthier gut**."*

*"I am keeping fit to be **able to care** for the environment, not the other way round."*

*"As long as I can climb over a fence, carry 2 x 5 litre water bottles and use a shovel to plant a seedling, my **physical health** will benefit from caring for the environment."*

**Figure 19. Connecting physical health with principles of caring for the environment**

(146 respondents – qualitative responses, coded)



*"Physical work and walking for cardiovascular health etc. coupled with **parasympathetic effects** of real time meditation."*

*"Apart from a bad back every now and then from fencing, and planting/maintaining trees, it **keeps me fit** in the long term (but flogs me in the short term!)."*

*"The release of **happy hormones**, feeling I have really done some good, being an active citizen, and seeing nature firsthand."*

**Figure 20. Most repeated active words**

(146 respondents – qualitative responses)





## Long-term mental/emotional health (145 responses)

Respondents overwhelmingly expressed positive mental and emotional benefits from caring for the environment, citing reduced stress, increased well-being, and a sense of purpose i.e. Stewardship.

Many feel connected to nature, their community, and something larger than themselves. Engaging with nature fosters hope and social connection, counteracting feelings of isolation.

Some acknowledge emotional burdens, including eco-anxiety, frustration with policy and systemic issues, making emotional resilience and community support crucial.

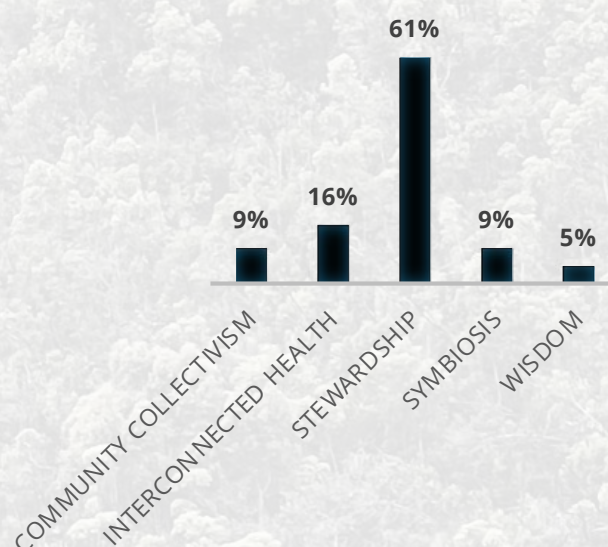
*"Caring for nature gives me purpose and makes me feel that I'm doing something good and **worthwhile**. It gets me out of myself and looking for good things that I can do".*

*"I feel I can make a positive **contribution** to the place where I live. I feel like my life has purpose. I am not socially isolated."*

*"If one doesn't do anything to **counter the destruction** of nature, one feels hopeless (and therefore becomes useless)."*

*"Actively looking after the environment gives you purpose, a sense of being part of something bigger than yourself, and **hope** for our natural world."*

**Figure 21. Connecting mental/ emotional health with principles of caring for the environment**  
(145 respondents – qualitative responses, coded)



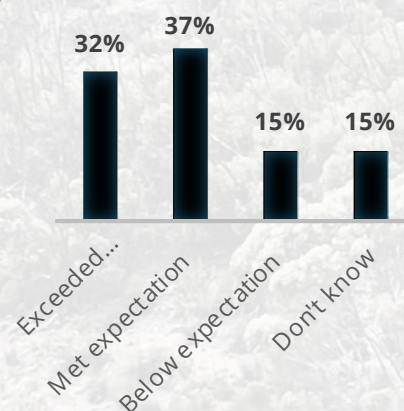
*"Eco-anxiety vs hope & **determination**."*

*"Working with others to preserve what we have left [of our magnificent ecosystems] is the best way to **combat depression**."*

*"Caring for the environment helps me bring **emotional balance** back into my life."*

*"Doing good work and achieving a sense of **accomplishment** is important for my mental health."*

**Figure 22. Perceived impact on the natural environment**  
(150 responses)





## Long-term understanding of nature (143 responses)

Respondents express a deepening understanding of nature, biodiversity, and ecological interconnection, through active participation.

Many highlight increased awareness of environmental cycles, human impact, and the importance of system-wide ecological conservation.

There is a strong theme of lifelong learning, and mentorship to foster individual and community engagement. Many feel a sense of responsibility to protect nature for future generations.

*"Interaction of multiple systems – soil, air water, pollution, people, critters large & small, biodiversity of plants & relationships between all of the above"*

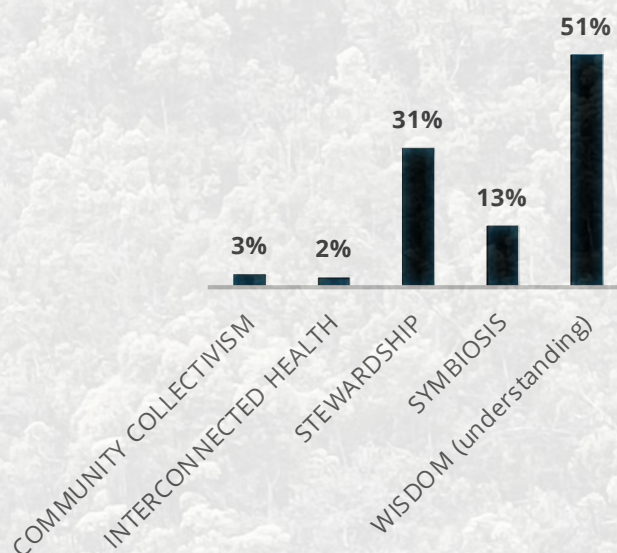
*"I love figuring out how to do environmental restoration better, it is a major motivator for me. It is great to try **new approaches** to problems and see what works, then based on that information, try to improve still further."*

*"Increasing knowledge and understanding of the natural world can only **raise our appreciation** of its beauty, complexity, vulnerability, and importance and inspire us all to actively care for it."*

*"Helps you take a **long-term view**, appreciate the complexities and eco systems"*

*"Destroying nature is easy and cheap; restoring it is **hard and expensive**."*

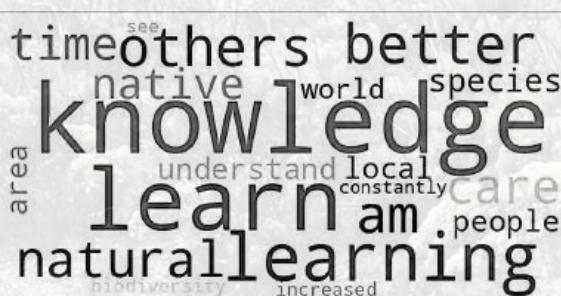
**Figure 23. Connecting understanding of nature with principles of caring for the environment**  
(143 respondents – qualitative responses, coded)



*"The more you **actively interact and listen**, the more you become a part of rather than apart from. We can't care for things we stand apart from."*

*"As you work in natural resource management over time you tend to see how interconnected everything is. This is where **wisdom begins**. Leaving Uni you have lots of knowledge but haven't connected the dots yet. This comes with time. This is why the **Elders are so important**."*

**Figure 24. Most repeated active words**  
(143 respondents – qualitative responses)





## Long-term social health

(143 responses)

The responses highlight a strong sense of community, shared purpose, and emotional fulfillment derived from caring for the environment.

Many participants feel a deep connection with nature and with others who share similar values, fostering a sense of belonging, well-being and intergenerational learning.

*"A community is the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared, and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibilities of each other's lives." Wendell Berry*

*"Participants were often drawn to community-based restoration projects for the opportunity to meet new people and build a sense of community." (Cowie, 2010)*

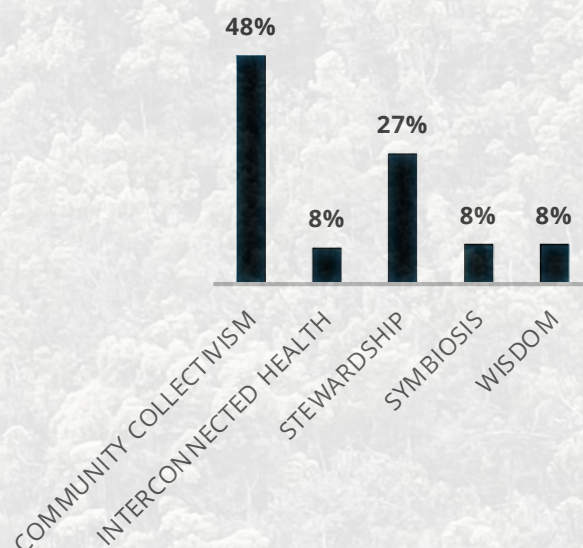
*"A community working together is better connected and therefore more **cohesive**, **interactive** and healthy"*

*"Getting my **children involved** in actively caring for the environment will hopefully give them an understanding of what can be done in the future"*

*"When actively caring for the environment, I am a more balanced person so can be **more present** with family and the community."*

*"You feel better within yourself and try to **treat others better**. Working with other people you learn new ways of existing with them."*

**Figure 25. Connecting understanding of nature with principles of caring for the environment**  
(143 respondents – qualitative responses, coded)



*"A sense of togetherness, of shared purpose. **Setting an example**. The creation of a community identity. One that supports the environment and helps it flourish."*

*"Shared community vision and goals; **cooperation and respect**; cultivating sense of stewardship and purpose."*

*"**Unity** - having a common interest and goal is what makes a community. We are making a difference, so that is a reward for our efforts"*

**Figure 26. Most repeated active words**  
(143 respondents – qualitative responses)





## Further comments

(53 qualitative responses coded)

The unprompted responses highlight people's concern with overall well-being, not any particular element of health.

15% of responses indicated despondency though sentiment was largely neutral. Over a third of the responses were positive/ optimistic.

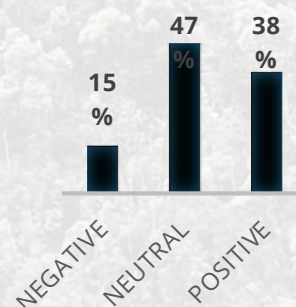
*"It's important that optimism remains grounded in reality, engendering shared hope for conservation action that is balanced with environmental realities." (Smith et al., 2025)*

*"During my life caring for the environment has been part of my natural lifestyle. It's important for those not so fortunate to have the opportunity to get involved, to **become part of a community** and to make new friends working towards a common goal. I'm happy to help **create opportunities** for others to learn about that resilience; physically, mentally and socially. They all work together to make a much stronger community."*

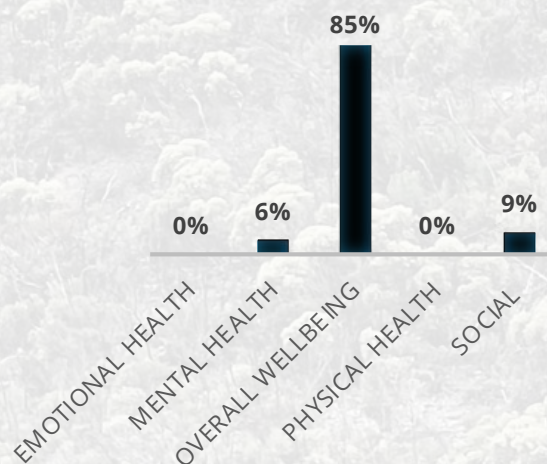
*"Knowing what others are doing in caring for nature is always enlightening & uplifting to the spirit. So much goes on that probably doesn't get talked about enough"*

*"Encouraging lifelong learning about nature and the environment is very important to instil in the younger generations...respect for the earth and improved health and well-being."*

**Figure 27. General sentiment**  
(53 respondents)



**Figure 28. References to elements of health**  
(53 respondents)



*"Being an active part of my community is of great value to me, and doing this in the service of protecting our natural environment is enormously fulfilling, as well as supporting my own physical and emotional well-being."*



## Further comments

(53 qualitative responses coded)

Respondents expressed a deep commitment to environmental stewardship, driven by an intrinsic connection to nature and a recognition of its impact on human well-being.

There is a strong belief in community-driven initiatives, volunteerism, and the need for systemic change.

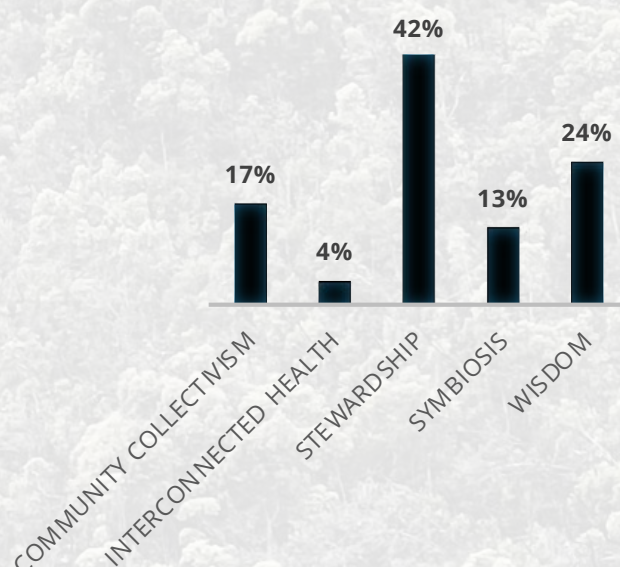
Many expressed frustration with government inaction and inadequate funding for conservation efforts. Some expressed hope this research might increase engagement and action.

*"Environmental activities have diversified so much in recent years, as the movement has **matured and diversified**. The task seems so big in the face of global issues and what can be done locally. But this feeling can be attenuated by the knowledge that **many people, working for purpose**, are making a big difference to how our communities act and feel towards today's environmental challenges.*

*"We largely do it anonymously, using our own money, time, and labour. No one will pat us on the back for being 'good farmers', but **we keep going**."*

*"Our govt and govt agencies really need to get a grip on what caring for our environment looks like. Until they realise we have to **live with natural risk**... our natural areas are going to continue to deteriorate."*

Figure 29. Connecting physical health with principles of caring for the environment (53 respondents)



*"Obstruction by local government administrators is the number one impediment to **community-benefiting** achievements"*

*"The voluntary sector is a most important part of care for our environment, and needs ongoing support, but **not 'corporatization'**."*

*"Thank you! hope to see this survey can become used in research and policy reform to demonstrate the important role caring for environment has **promoting human health**."*



## Caring for Sunnyside

Interviews with three  
generations Caring  
for Country.



## Co-authors

**Uncle Gordon Gray**  
**Aunty Carol Pettersen**  
**Aunty Valerie Swift**  
**Belinda Swift**  
**Shae Flugge**  
**Shevonne Flugge**

## Ethical protocol

Interviewees had the option to remain anonymous and skip any topics or questions. Consent was given to record audio in support of written notes.

## Methodology

The intention of this research element was to gain a multi-generation understanding of the impact on elements of health and well-being from connecting with and Caring for Country; acknowledging Indigenous knowledges as valid ways of knowing.

*"In Aboriginal knowledges, the health of people, family, Mob, culture and Country are symbiotic, and involve spiritual, emotional and physical dimensions."* (Biles. B, 2024)

A series of six one-on-one interviews were conducted – recorded and transcribed; structured around open-ended questions:

1. Importance of Caring for Country on elements of health –
2. What does Caring for Country mean to you?
3. Noongar knowledges and practices in Caring for Country–
4. Long term impact on elements of and overall health –
5. Anything you'd like to add?



**Figure 30. Sunnyside Elders (L-R), Aunty Valerie Swift, Aunty Carol Pettersen and Uncle Gordon Gray.**

*"No one else is really doing something like Sunnyside. I think encouraging them, [other families] showing that it's possible and something that will have benefit for each other."*

**Shevonne Flugge**



## Uncle Gordon Gray

### Age group – 71+ years

Uncle Gordon describes how Noongar people understand the land, identifying different types of soil, plants, and wildlife to sustain themselves. This knowledge, passed through generations, has been crucial for survival, especially when food sources are scarce.

Through stories of Elders tracking animals, reading the landscape, and predicting unseasonal rain, Uncle Gordon underscores the importance of listening, learning, and respecting ancestral wisdom.

Sacred trails and stories are discussed in the context of their spiritual and energetic significance and increasingly validated through contemporary scientific exploration.

*"We always regard the land without owning the land. The land is part of us."*

*"If you didn't know where plants grew, or what type of country they grew, you go hungry."*

*"Patchwork burning depended on where that first burn went, then the second one would depend upon which direction the wind was blowing."*

*The importance of that was not only clearing the country for new growth, we always knew that if we went along there in a fortnight or months time, there'd be kangaroos that we could maybe shoot to eat. And that happened every time."*

### ***Symbiosis and guiding energy***

*"These sacred trails actually create energy... the more you walked on it, the stronger it got. And I just say to people, that's a good feeling, not a bad feeling"*

This statement reflects a spiritual and physical connection to ancestral paths and knowledge—the notion ancestors have walked the land, shaping the present and future.

Walking the same pathways as their ancestors fosters a sense of belonging, guidance, and purpose, which contributes to emotional and spiritual well-being.

It reinforces the idea that healing and well-being are not just individual experiences but part of a greater, intergenerational continuum.

This ancestral bond strengthens resilience, offers a source of identity and healing that transcends time.

*"Reverence for nature has allowed Indigenous peoples to become careful custodians of their biophysical environments and taking care to preserve the rich biodiversity of these environments." (Dakubo, 2010)*



## **Aunty Carol Pettersen**

### **Age group – 71+ years**

Aunty Carol emphasises the deep spiritual and cultural connection between people and the natural world, stating *"the natural world starts off with the clouds and the weather, and we just follow the movement."*

Elements like the wind, birds, and trees hold their own spirituality, reinforcing a holistic worldview where everything is interconnected.

Aunty Carol expresses gratitude that Indigenous perspectives are gaining wider recognition and inclusion, stating *"Noongar culture should be integrated into school curriculums to ensure future generations carry forward this knowledge."*

*"We're now seeing people interested in our cultural practices, and we're grateful about it, because you're now part of the family. Everyone is part of the model."*

*"At Sunnyside we've got a facility now that can spread out Noongar culture, so we can take children out, say one day a week. I think that's where change is going to start—with children."*

### ***Symbiosis and mental health***

*"We are part of nature, we're not superior. Spirituality is not material. There is no separation of environment with mental health. Mental health clinics should be out in the bush."*

Instead of confining mental health treatment to clinical settings, Aunty Carol suggests it should be integrated into natural landscapes where individuals can reconnect with the land, culture, and self.

Contemporary research supports this view, showing that time in nature (green space) can lower cortisol levels, reduce anxiety, and improve overall mental health. (Biles, B, 2024; Zhang, Yu, Zhao, Sun, & Vejre, 2020)

Global movements promoting ecotherapy and Indigenous-led health initiatives are reintroducing nature into well-being strategies to create more sustainable, effective mental health approaches. (Dakubo, 2010)

*"Our family's totem is... the 'Yirdah bird' and believe it is the spirit of our grandmother. This spiritual energy helped my mother take care of us."*

*She would call to us with her songs, telling us that it was a good day to go hunting. Mum would stop and listen to what the bird was telling us and then lead us to where the kangaroo could be found for us to hunt or even to where there was a honey tree". (Pettersen, Koorliny, & Publishing, 2023, pp85)*



## **Aunty Valerie Swift**

### **Age group – 71+ years**

Aunty Val highlights the importance of intergenerational knowledge transfer, where stories, ecological awareness, and cultural practices are passed down to future custodians.

Aunty Val stresses the importance of trust and respect in facilitating conversations with Aboriginal communities and families.

Aboriginal and Western worldviews are contrasted, particularly in relation to spirituality and language. Spiritual health is tied to ancestral presence and the natural environment rather than organised religion.

*"You know the difference—if there is a difference—is that the land we are on, we know our ancestors have walked that land.*

*We know that they've walked that pathway to give us a better life. We know that they have walked that journey in peace and harmony, in spiritual blessing."*

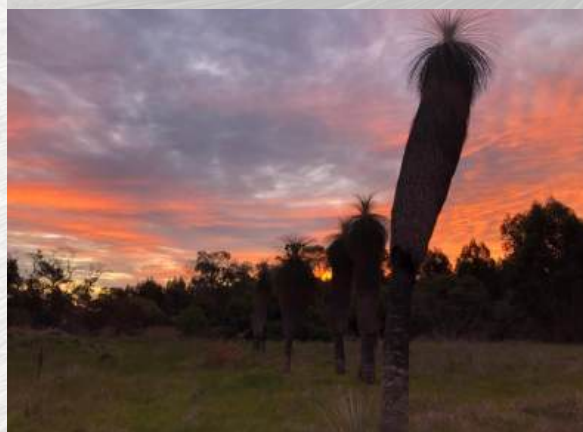
*"Consulting with community and listening to their voice—that's all it's about."*

### ***Symbiosis and healing energy***

*"When I get back on Country, the calm and healing is almost immediate. It is the most amazing form of healing. From a Western view, mindfulness is the closest practice"*

This quote highlights how connection to Country is a source of profound, 'spiritual' healing— intrinsic to Aboriginal identity and well-being. Unlike Western medicine, which often compartmentalises physical and mental health, Noongar healing is a symbiotic experience e.g. the land is considered a source of restoration.

The comparison to mindfulness practices also underscores a key difference, i.e. Western mindfulness is often a learned technique, while Aboriginal healing is innate, an ancestral connection to Country.



**Figure 31. Sunrise at Sunnyside,  
image – Jim Underwood**



## Belinda Swift

**Age group – 36 - 55 years**

Emphasising a profound and sustained relationship with nature as the foundation for well-being, Belinda talked about her concerns related to the disruption to natural ecosystems.

As related to a broad loss of empathy and connection to nature in modern society, Belinda suggested returning to traditional practices can help restore balance. *"Aboriginal people lived off the land for thousands of years... constantly monitored the land, the connection between the sun, plants, oxygen, and animals."*

As it's grounded in a deep reverence for nature's interconnectedness and its role in sustaining both culture and well-being, Belinda also discussed the importance of passing down traditional ecological knowledge.

*"We've lost empathy – that care for other living organisms. More time out on Country and living simply will help."*

*"Ours was a holistic way of living... it wasn't interfered with, and I observed the different patterns of the birds, animals, and trees."*

## Interconnected health – nutrition

*"Being on Country is both mental health and emotional health... it allows us to be a part of it, like growing bush food... it's better for us."*

Belinda encourages mindfulness through connection with the land as an alternative to the 'relaxation' people seek from artificial substances.

Aware of the negative impact of processed foods and refined sugar, Belinda advocates for bush food cultivation as a means of promoting holistic health.

*"A holistic view of health by Indigenous peoples is complemented with sophisticated understanding of traditional medicines and healing practices"* (Dakubo, 2010)

*"We keep moving forward... we incorporate the old with the new so it will never be lost."*



**Figure 32. Belinda Swift, daughter of Aunty Valerie Swift, image – Roger Erith**



## Shae Flugge Age group – 19 - 35 years

Shae described how learning from family members has shaped her sense of responsibility towards Caring for Country. Initially she saw the work as too challenging though now appreciates its value and impact.

Shae advocates for a widespread cultural shift toward environmental responsibility and describes its positive connection with her mental and physical health.

In gaining a broader perspective on life Shae believes she is developing a growing sense of self and overall well-being and wishes more of her age group could find ways to get involved.

*"You're doing it firsthand for yourself. You're seeing all the things firsthand for yourself and makes me want to learn more."*

*"You trust that it's going to work because they're your Elders."*

*"I'm out in an environment where I'm comfortable and I want to work hard, like I really do want to work hard. I want to get as much done in the day's work as I can. And yeah, it definitely does make you feel fitter. It makes you feel like you can do more activities"*

## Stewardship and mental health

*"Passing down knowledge is very important. I'm more aware of what needs to be said and what needs to be passed down, and the real importance of it now."*

Shae notes the significance of ancestral wisdom. She describes how gaining knowledge of the environment and cultural practices motivates her to continue learning and working long days at Sunnyside.

Learned firsthand through engaging with Country and family members, Shae notes why the sense of purpose in Caring for Country benefits her mental and emotional well-being.

Shae believes Caring for Country brings balance and connection, encouraging gratitude, mindfulness, and ultimately a deeper understanding of nature.



**Figure 33. Belinda Swift, seed collecting with daughters Shae and Shevonne Flugge, image – Jim Underwood**



## Shevonne Flugge Age group – 15 - 18 years

Shevonne notes the privilege of receiving knowledge handed down by Elders, with family being the core motivation for her initial involvement in Caring for Country.

Strengthening her connection with Country, Shevonne is driven by a sense of responsibility to gain and pass down knowledge to future generations.

Shevonne sees Sunnyside as a place that could benefit their community in the long term and encourage younger generations to engage with environmental and cultural practices.

The work, though physically demanding, also helps her develop valuable skills that might guide future career choices, particularly in conservation and tourism.

*"I thought I would just come out and do work...  
but then you actually, really get to put your  
mind to it and actually help out."*

*"I feel very connected... through  
family... more than like any  
other place I've been to."*

## Stewardship and emotional health

*"For emotional health, after I've been out here, I feel better when I go back town, I'm not as stressed."*

Shevonne explained understanding the cultural and environmental significance of Caring for Country fosters deeper connections. Further, she believes this also provides a sense of being grounded and having purpose, contributing positively to her mental well-being.

This perspective aligns with the broader theme of healing, whereby returning to traditions and knowledge can be balancing and restorative, directly benefiting emotional well-being e.g. reduced stress.



**Figure 34. Another sunrise at Sunnyside,  
image – Jim Underwood**



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## Caring for Sunnyside

**COMMUNITY COLLECTIVISM** *"Listening and learning, that's the best way that anyone could find anything out."*  
**Uncle Gordon Gray**

**INTERCONNECTED HEALTH** *"Connection to Country... heals your mental health, your emotional health, and your physical health. The closest Western practice to what we do is mindfulness."*  
**Aunty Val Swift**

**STEWARDSHIP** *"Aboriginal people lived off the land for thousands of years... constantly monitored the land, the connection between the sun, plants, oxygen, and animals."* **Belinda Swift**

**SYMBIOSIS** *"We are part of nature, we're not superior. Spirituality is not material. The natural world starts off with the clouds- the weather, and we just follow the movement."* **Aunty Carol Pettersen**

**WISDOM** *"It just makes your perspective on everything change. I wasn't thinking to change my whole mindset and my perspective on things... it's just happened gradually along the way, and I'm grateful for it."*  
**Shae Flugge**

*"I see handed down knowledge as a privilege, and lucky as well."* **Shevonne Flugge**



## Caring for Nowanup

A Yarning Circle with  
the Ranger group



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## Research Approach

An informal hour-long yarning circle with seven members of the Nowanup Ranger group (male and female), that included male and female Elders.

The discussion was informally structured around the following open-ended questions, recorded and transcribed :

1. Importance of Caring for Country on elements of health –
2. What does Caring for Country mean to you?
3. Noongar knowledges and practices in Caring for Country–
4. Long term impact on elements of and overall health –
5. Anything you'd like to add?

Unfortunately, follow-up interviews with individuals have not yet been scheduled due to other commitments.



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## Yarning circle – contextual discussion

The informal discussion included Noongar and non-Indigenous perspectives on land, culture, healing and the challenges faced due to historical and ongoing marginalisation.

Participants discussed the significance of intergenerational learning, lamenting the loss of Elders who were once the primary storytellers and teachers. Ranger programs are seen to reconnect with these traditions.

The programs are delivered on Country, integrating cultural practices into modern frameworks. Fire management, stewardship, and restoration are seen as contributing to both climate resilience and personal well-being.

Further, programs, including camps that divert young people from incarceration to healing on Country were highlighted as successful alternatives, fostering respect, discipline and a sense of belonging.

*"Our evidence shows that participation in cultural camps had an overwhelmingly positive impact on indicators of cultural health. These included an increase in how people rated their: sense of connection to Country, other people (Mob) and Ancestors pride in Aboriginal identity knowledge of cultural stories, foods and medicines." (Biles, B, 2024)*

There was also discussion about the shift from exclusion to inclusion, whereby Noongar people find allies among non-Indigenous Australians who seek to understand and engage with their culture.

Relationships, mutual respect and cultural leadership were discussed regarding the importance of ensuring learning and stewardship are led by Noongar people.

The power of cultural knowledge in addressing modern challenges—such as climate change, fire management, and social justice—was a key takeaway, as well as the need for recognition, respect, and ongoing support for self-determination.

*"If our culture is healthy, by being renewed, practiced, and passed on to the younger generation, then the health of Country and the people also benefit."*  
(Fields, Foster, Biles, & Yashadhana, 2024)



## Country as medicine

A recurring theme of the discussion was the intrinsic connection between people, land and spirituality. The land itself is seen as a source of healing, with activities like sitting in nature, listening to the trees, and engaging in traditional practices described as medicine –

*"Even just sitting and listening to the trees rustling or the breeze and birds chirping, that's medicine."*

Noongar healing traditions draw on the interconnectedness of land, people, and spirit. This contrasts with Western biomedical models that often treat illness in isolation from its broader social, environmental, and spiritual contexts.

## Intergenerational wellbeing

Elders play a crucial role in passing down knowledge, ensuring younger generations restore their sense of belonging and identity. It was noted bush medicine, ceremonies, and traditional diet, promotes overall health.

## Community-centred well-being

The Ranger programs and on-Country healing camps provide ecocultural grounding, emotional resilience, and a sense of responsibility.

At risk youth programs have been successful in breaking cycles of trauma and reducing incarceration.

*"Many people are wanting to reconnect [with Country], and we are seeing the health and healing benefits that come from reconnection." (Fields, Foster, Biles, & Yashadhana, 2024)*



## Conclusion



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## Conclusion

This report highlights the interconnection between ecological restoration (caring for the environment or Caring for Country), well-being, and community engagement. It also establishes shared values and principles among diverse participants.

Thematic analysis of qualitative responses helped create the five ‘caring principles’—community collectivism, interconnected health, stewardship, symbiosis, and wisdom.

Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants recognised the physical, mental, emotional, and social benefits of environmental stewardship.

Indigenous knowledges and practices have long emphasised balance, reciprocity, and custodianship of Country, and this research indicates non-Indigenous perspectives increasingly reflect similar concerns, particularly in response to climate change, biodiversity loss, and the health benefits of symbiosis and nature-based activities.

Many participants described ecological restoration as both an environmental and personal restorative practice, reinforcing the perspective that caring for the environment enhances ‘overall well-being’ – a term respondents used throughout.

This alignment presents opportunities to further integrate diverse knowledge systems and strengthen collaboration in ecological restoration efforts. Recognising these shared values and priorities might inform future policy, community-led initiatives, and sustainable environmental management that support both human and ecological resilience.



## Appendices



## Appendix A – Online participation \_ Membership groups

1. Activate Tree Planting Esperance
2. Albany Bird Group
3. Albany Community Environment Centre
4. Armadale Gosnells Landcare
5. Avon Valley Environmental Society
6. Berry Landcare
7. Bicton Environmental Action Group
8. Blackwood Environment Society
9. Cambridge Coastcare
10. Canning River Residents Environment Protection Association
11. Care For Hedland Environmental Association
12. Chittering Landcare Group
13. Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor
14. Denmark Bird Group
15. Denmark Environment Centre
16. Environmental Research Group Augusta
17. Fire & Biodiversity WA
18. Friends of Big Swamp
19. Friends of Bob Blackburn Flora Reserve
20. Friends of Bold Park Bushland
21. Friends of Cantonment Hill
22. Friends of Clontarf Hill
23. Friends of Coolbinia Bushland
24. Friends of Hillarys and Kallaroo Foreshore
25. Friends of Inglewood Triangle
26. Friends of Jirdarup Bushland
27. Friends of Ken Hurst Park
28. Friends of Kooryunderup Mt Hallowell
29. Friends of Lake Claremont
30. Friends of Lake Gwelup
31. Friends of Nguraren Kalleep Reserve
32. Friends of North Ocean Reef-Iluka Foreshore
- 33. Friends of the Porongurup Range**
34. Friends of Yakamia Forest
35. Gascoyne Catchment Group
36. Geobay Wildlife Rescue
37. Gerroa Environmental Protection Society
- 38. Gondwana Link**
39. Green Skills Inc
40. Greening Australia
41. Growing Illawarra Natives
42. Hands Off Point Peron Inc. Environmental Conservation
43. Healing Hands Wildlife Rehabilitation
44. Hewitts Creek Landcare
45. Illawarra Rainforest
46. Landcare Illawarra
- 47. Landcare WA**
48. Lower Blackwood Land Conservation District Committee
49. Margaret River Regional Environment Centre
50. Meelup Regional Park volunteers
51. Melaleuca Park Bushcare
52. Melon Hill Bushland Group
53. Moore Catchment Council
54. Murdoch Uni. Environmental Science Ass.
- 55. Nature Conservation Margaret River**
56. Nature Reserves Preservation Group Inc.
57. Northam Environmental Hub
58. Oakey Creek Bushcare Group
59. Oyster Harbour Catchment Group
60. Perenjori Hills Sanctuary Working Group
61. Perth NRM
62. Quinns Rocks Environmental Group
63. River Conservation Society York
64. South Tammin
65. Southern Forest Community Landcare
66. Southern Rangelands Pastoral Alliance
67. Southwest Sector of WA Wildflower Society
68. Stream Hill Landcare
69. Susannah Brook Catchment Group
70. South West NRM
71. The Wetlands Centre Nursery Bibra Lake
72. Urban Bushland Council WA
73. Urimbirra
74. WA Forest Alliance
75. WA Seabird Conservation Network,
76. Walpole and Nornalup Forest
77. Wheatbelt NRM
78. William Bay National Park Association
- 79. Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee**
80. Yandarra Bushcare



## Appendix B – Online \_ Question 5 coded responses

Which one of the factors above (listed in question four) is still most important to you, and briefly why – Community Connection (COL); Family Connection (COL); Support Nature (STW); Mental Health (ICH); Emotional Health (ICH); Understand nature (WIS); Physical Health (ICH); Overall Well-being (SYM)	Caring Principle
Supporting the environment is still really important for me as climate change is having such a big impact on natural areas as well as clearing of habitat which is endangering so many species of flora and fauna.	STW
Support nature because I am part of nature , mutual support	STW
Being in nature improves my mental health significantly. I feel connection and purpose caring for environment.	SYM
Caring for environment	STW
Caring for Nature	STW
Support Nature, because nature is essential for survival of humanity	STW
Environmental Stewardship! Looking after the environment in a symbiotic way as it looks after us. In turn, the mental relief you feel after actively contributing to combatting the biodiversity and climate crisis.	SYM
Supporting nature is a critical act as I am part of it, indistinguishable and connected	SYM
Supporting nature to redress the balance of human harm inflicted on it	STW
Supporting nature. So little left. We all need to care for it.	STW
Support healthy Environment	STW
Long term negative impacts if we get it wrong	STW
Support Nature. So important to maintain our forests and nature diversity	STW
Support nature was the most important when I joint action and protest groups when I was 18 in the Netherland. As a biologist/therapist now I would say all of the above are important but what could help all of us nature and humans is to get the connection with nature back:	
Regarding nature as all living creatures as family and working together with nature to find solutions for our environmental problems.	SYM
Nature supports us. It needs saving but mostly it needs to be left alone. We should see ourselves as part of nature not sperate from it.	SYM
Overall well being as it's the closest I feel to the connection of all that is.	SYM
Understanding nature and all the things that make up an ecosystem. I find it all very fascinating	WIS
Caring for nature due to threats associated with loss of biodiversity and impact of recreational activities under the tourism banner	STW
Understanding nature	
Knowing how to improve soil composition, contribute to carbon capture and storage and making my farm more profitable by working with nature	STW
Our family is important, and the land we own is where our food and water comes from. So if I care about my family, I care about what I eat and drink, and the health of that food and water is dependent on the wider landscape our farm is within.	COL
Understand nature - for me this is a strong basis for connection to nature	SYM
Protecting the natural environment for fauna habitat	STW
Support nature. We have an over populated world putting pressure on our natural environment.	STW
Love for the environment	SYM
same, largely focused on organic gardening and farming and developing research and demonstration of polyculture principles.	STW
Caring for nature - so that our children can witness what we have had growing up.	STW
Very concerned about the effects of climate change and what we'll leave for future generations. I love nature and hate the thought of what might happen.	STW
4 pollution	STW
Support nature	
We are a part of nature not apart from it, and when we support nature we support ourselves	SYM
Support nature - this underpins human health in every way	SYM
Supporting nature because nature needs us now more than ever.	STW
Support nature - we are all a part of nature, not apart from. When we support nature, we support ourselves	SYM
Supporting Nature-too few people understand how important it is to protect the bush and the flora and fauna that it supports.	
How very happily all of the other factors come along as one gets involved.	STW
Understand nature. Increasing my awareness and depth of understanding of the natural world processes, seasonal, cyclical, unseen organic, is important for me as an artist and how I live on the earth.	WIS



## Appendix B – Online \_ Question 5 coded responses

Which one of the factors above (listed in question four) is still most important to you, and briefly why – Community Connection (COL); Family Connection (COL); Support Nature (STW); Mental Health (ICH); Emotional Health (ICH); Understand nature (WIS); Physical Health (ICH); Overall Well-being (SYM)	Caring Principle
I came to Australia in 1988 as a migrant and wanted to immerse myself in nature in order to understand it, as its beauty was unfamiliar. I then saw opportunity to get involved with my local bushland area and saw how much help was needed there. I've been there ever since.	STW
Support nature	STW
Support nature.	STW
We need to look after what little nature we have, particularly in urban areas	STW
Support nature - someone has to do it !	STW
Put back for nature that is in dire need of it	STW
Caring for a well loved ( over loved) natural area	STW
Giving back to nature	STW
Support nature. We are all dependent on our nature and must look after it	SYM
Support nature	STW
Supporting and learning about nature is most important to me, but volunteering has led me to discover all of the other benefits listed	STW
Support nature because people need access to nature for health and well being	SYM
Community - creating community sustains bushcare and provides enjoyment	COL
Preservation of biodiversity of the remanent native bushland on private property.	STW
Supporting nature. I am motivated by finding ways to improve the natural environment and to pass on my knowledge to young people. That improves my mental health and theirs.	ICH
Support nature.....for all the myriad benefits a healthy and resilient environment provides.	SYM
Support Nature ( biodiversity)	STW
Support nature - its essential that we support nature in order to slow extinction rates	STW
Support nature - because by supporting nature we are working to protect and restore biodiversity - which is critical to maintain our local and global ecosystems.	STW
Support Nature-too many threats against our natural world	STW
Support nature. Because if we don't we will loose it	STW
Caring for the environment. We only get one chance at making a difference to our planet so future generations can enjoy.	STW
Giving back to community - bushland is adjacent to my daughters future primary school	STW
Caring for bushland	STW
As a newcomer to Perth its helped me learn about the local flora and fauna	WIS
Community	COL
Support nature- if we don't look after Mother Earth, we'll all be impacted on multiple fronts - wellbeing, connection, health, food supply and security. It's all interconnected and natural assets are vital for our survival.	SYM
Can't differentiate - all are equally important	
Support nature	STW
Support nature. Concerned on future stresses to the environment - from climate and people	STW
Areas of nature are becoming more important as we increase urban density - We need to be able to sit in nature.	STW
Support nature - contribute to the collective effort to protect and restore our 'natural environment'. This in bound up with a sense of place, personal ethics and wanting some agency when dominant social and political norms ignore the situation we are in.	STW
Overall well-being - by contributing to healthy natural surrounds, I feel better about myself as it gives me purpose and a sense of inner health.	ICH
Understand Nature - although it is probably less about understanding nature and more about appreciating and being in awe of nature. There more we can appreciate nature the more we want to care for her. We don't need to understand everything to care. I like to celebrate nature as magical sometimes and drop the scientist lens. Here is to keeping the magic!	WIS
Love to see the improvement in bushland quality	STW
support nature	STW
overall wellbeing. Connecting with nature and those who are like minded and actively supporting our natural environment	
supports my overall wellbeing	ICH



## Appendix B – Online \_ Question 5 coded responses

Which one of the factors above (listed in question four) is still most important to you, and briefly why – Community Connection (COL); Family Connection (COL); Support Nature (STW); Mental Health (ICH); Emotional Health (ICH); Understand nature (WIS); Physical Health (ICH); Overall Well-being (SYM)	Caring Principle
That's too hard to answer because it changes from moment to moment depending upon the news of what people in power are doing, news of the weather, etc	
Support nature is still the most important. With continued development, continuing threat factors it is important that the environment has a voice and is not left behind or totally destroyed. Its easy to see how things happen as no talk between local government, state government and federal government. The siloed approached means things get approved that should not and have detrimental impacts to our environment.	STW
Supporting nature, mental and physical health, citizen science (understand nature)	
Support Nature, it needs all the help we can provide.	STW
Understand nature.	
Because we're interconnected and depend on it.	SYM
The community connection. I'm finding the act - belong - commit of being part of a local group very good for my mental health and makes me feel like I'm doing my part of making my suburb a better place. It's also great making and maintaining new friends.	COL
All	
Improving the condition of the landscape	STW
Support Nature - all aspects of our natural environment needs our support	STW
Supporting nature. Bushland areas are dwindling and the little patch I care for is very special to have over 100 species of native plant vegetation just 4km from the CBD. We hand weed, spray in areas of lesser value and plant appropriate reveg species. All to support biodiversity.	STW
Community Connection - volunteering makes me feel good and doing it through landcare activities connects me with people with similar values and interests	COL
Supporting nature. It underpins our existence, so it makes sense to look after it in any way possible.	STW
I think giving back to the community and lifestyle that I cherish	COL
Support nature and community connection because the ongoing impact of human behaviours, causing climate change, actively destroys our land. Additionally community only thrives when the environment thrives. Caring for both is vital	SYM
Support nature, as I have the privilege of curating a patch of regenerating rainforest on our 5 acre rural block, and have had that opportunity over the last 22 years	STW
Understand nature	
It is a never ending learning experience.	WIS
Nature needs as many informed people to stand up and be active.	STW
I want to support nature to thrive.	STW
Support nature. The natural environment is one of the most important pillars of our future, but it is under constant pressure from development & our current life style.	STW
Support nature. Concerns over the health of the Avon River and remaining bushland in the Wheatbelt, in particular the Shire of York	STW
They all are, because they are all interrelated. But without good mental health, I can't fully access/focus on any of the others. And likewise, whatever I do needs to be supportive of my mental health. e.g. caring for and about the environment can either be good or bad for my mental health, depending on circumstances. Also, engaging with community can be beneficial or detrimental.	ICH
Caring for country, because we are a part of nature, not apart from it, and without care we destroy the things essential for our own existence.	SYM
supporting nature because the government neglects it.	STW
Support nature as without us undertaking repair and management who else will do it?	STW
Support Nature. To Develop Horticultural methods to be able to introduce more biodiversity into revegetation and domestic Parks and Gardens	STW
Community connection, Support nature, Improve well being	COL
Coming from an agricultural context, understanding the interdependence of natural systems expands appreciation of relevance of other factors listed.	SYM
Understanding nature - important for worldview, fulfilling curiosity, respecting the miracle of life, and giving purpose to life in our troubling times	WIS
Understand nature	WIS
Overall wellbeing	ICH
Support nature - situation esp. re global warming is deteriorating, the need to intervene is growing	STW
Care for environment.	STW
Support nature	STW
Understanding and supporting nature - it is so threatened and vulnerable to the destruction caused by humans, I want to do my part to improve/care for as much as I can	STW



## Appendix B – Online \_ Question 5 coded responses

Which one of the factors above (listed in question four) is still most important to you, and briefly why – Community Connection (COL); Family Connection (COL); Support Nature (STW); Mental Health (ICH); Emotional Health (ICH); Understand nature (WIS); Physical Health (ICH); Overall Well-being (SYM)	Caring Principle
Caring for Environment and community connectivity	COL
Support nature as it supports all we do and might do	SYM
Support Nature - climate change	STW
None of them quite say it. Most important is that I have a strong relationship with the natural environment because we human can only exist in relation to the rest of the seen and unseen physical world. This realization of the obvious has transformed my life personally, socially and politically.	SYM
I am actively doing environmental weeding. It feels good and is satisfying to see the bush coming back and regenerate. Some years back now, I developed severe depression and anxiety doing bushcare helps me to feel better. But seeing the overall picture what is happening with. Linate change and the pressure from mines to start mining down here- destroying more bush brings my depression and anxiety out again.	ICH
protect nature	STW
Support nature - I have always to the best of my capacity been involved in this in whatever way I can	STW
Personally actively involved in soil regeneration as healthy soils are the basis to everything.	STW
Overall well being - being involved in green projects helps my overall physical, spiritual, mental and community well being	ICH
Nature and community	COL
Looking after the environment to ensure we pass on something beautiful and healthy to the next generations.	STW
understand and support nature (which is at risk)	STW
Understanding where I live and how to support this environment	STW
I am very concerned about climate change and the impact it will have on wildlife, I want to help mitigate this in any way I can.	STW
Support Nature because it needs help!	STW
Supporting nature. Ongoing development means that nature will continue struggling.	STW
If we don't support nature it won't support us. It is the pinnacle	SYM
Supporting nature as it seems very few people are interested	STW
Get to know nature better - part of my work and studies as well	WIS
Supporting Nature. Human impacts directly and indirectly have long lasting effects on wildlife and ecological habitats. I truly value our natural environments and I want to protect it for future generations.	STW
Conserving nature	STW
Supporting nature, to preserve what we have left and to repair damage from over-visitation, clearing, weeds etc	STW
Support Nature - so much of our ecosystems and biodiversity have been lost and I want to do my part to rebuild it	STW
Feeling hope for the future	ICH
Support Nature~ I own a property with lot of natural Karri/ Karri forest and believe these ecosystems are precious and must be preserved at all costs	STW
Flora and fauna conservation - we have responsibility as stewards of this land to care for it	STW
Protecting and enhancing/helping bush spaces.	STW
Support nature.	STW
We love on the banks of the Margaret River and have a responsibility to maintain and cherish it.	STW
Supporting nature, because it has few advocates and the need is urgent.	STW
Understand Nature because understanding how nature works is vital to living in harmony with our natural world	SYM
Supporting nature as it is fragile and experiencing so much stress.	STW
Support Nature - I am committed to reduce our footprint and this is one tangible way	STW
Understand Nature	WIS
Wellbeing in the future - what about the grandkids?	STW
To understand and support nature, because I'm naturally curious about nature and it feels necessary to know as much as I can to help protect and support it	STW
Enjoy making local area a better place	STW
Community connection	COL



## Appendix B – Online \_ Question 5 coded responses

Which one of the factors above (listed in question four) is still most important to you, and briefly why – Community Connection (COL); Family Connection (COL); Support Nature (STW); Mental Health (ICH); Emotional Health (ICH); Understand nature (WIS); Physical Health (ICH); Overall Wellbeing (SYM)	Caring Principle
Support Nature- the area we look after is managed by LGA which does not have enough physical and financial resources to manage its 100+ natural areas. If volunteers don't lend a hand we will lose biodiversity.	STW
Understand nature	STW
I see this as the only way to be able to properly care for it	STW
support nature	STW
Support nature because it's under increasing threat and critical to all else.	SYM
Support nature	STW
Equally, understand nature, & overall well-being	SYM
I think that humans evolved to understand nature, to support it, that is when we feel our best. Connected in a state of harmony.	SYM
Support nature - because it needs our help to withstand our impact	STW
Support Nature - because we love it & we are hugely concerned about the plight of our fabulous natural world for its (1) intrinsic values (2) embracing & living with the natural environment	STW
Support nature - I love creating habitat for wildlife	STW
The health of the environment, we have platypus living in our creek, I want them to thrive.	STW
I am an immigrant and grew up on my ancestors' Country. I understand myself to be part of Nature, not separate. Always have done.	SYM
Community connection is still most important to me, particularly as I have come to see the plants around me as part of that community.	SYM
They are all connected. Our natural environment is the lifeblood of the planet. Nothing can successfully thrive without it.	SYM
Understand nature because it helps in my work as a tour guide	WIS
Community connection, because I feel engaged with others doing work that I care about and that makes me feel a sense of pleasure and usefulness.	COL
Supporting nature because it is fragile, life-affirming, and under constant threat from local challenges and global climate change	STW
Supporting nature - because as we care for the land, it cares for us.	SYM
TO RETAIN LOCAL FLORA AND KEEP OUT WEEDS ETC. ALL TO KEEP NATIVE FAUNA SAFE	STW
Understanding Nature. Humans have lost their connection with the more-than-human world. As a consequence, there is government and corporate pillage of nature, to the detriment of all of life on Earth.	SYM
Support nature	STW
support Nature-By not looking after the environment we live in we are damaging our own well being	SYM



## Appendix C – Online \_ Question 16 coded responses

Briefly, why is the factor you selected above (question 15) most important to you?: Community Connection; Family Connection; Mental Health; Emotional Health; Physical Health; Overall Well-being	Caring Principles
My emotional health governs all other aspects of my health. If I am emotionally 'healthy' then I am connected with my community and family, I am more resilient mentally, I develop and actively nurture my physical health and my overall well-being is improved.	ICH
I feel I contribute and counteract the very poor support, protection and appreciation of the environment by most of the population, especially of our political and business leaders.	STW
overall well-being of my own health, as well as community, family and environment	COL
The work undertaken requires physical exertion that is not extreme, the results over a 20 year period are very obvious and rewarding, the people in the group share a common goal and are very sociable. The most difficult/time consuming activities ( mental stress) is acquiring funds to engage contractors and accounting for expenditure.	STW
When my well-being is good I can contribute in so many more ways.	ICH
we selfishly destroy the planet with the risk for me of becoming depressed	COL
If unwell, unable to assist	ICH
Because it strengthens community support for the bushland	COL
helps me feel empowered so I don't focus on worries	STW
Caring for the environment addresses all aspects of me - relationships, mental, spiritual, physical health, connection to the past, present and future, reparation for my consumption through my life, reparation for the actions of my ancestors, and using the power I have in actions to influence those with systemic organisational power.	STW
Overall wellbeing is important and ensures that I can continue to operate and work at my best.	ICH
If your mental, emotional and physical health is good, you enjoy a (in my view) better life and can help people more	ICH
Because it's a general state of wellness.	
Best way to connect with others	COL
I value good family relationships and support the most.	COL
I've been volunteering in landcare for so long, it's part of what I do and how I relate to my community	STW
There is no point in identifying only one factor, when all of these are important! Overall well-being encompasses that.	ICH
Like a previous answer.....its important to give back to the community and lifestyle I cherish and preserve it for future generations	STW
My lived experience of the benefits of being in nature, connecting with trees as part of the process of being fully alive in the present moment, knowing that my carbon dioxide is being taken in by the trees amongst which I live, and their oxygen is adding to my life, I becoming part of them, they part of me.	SYM
Maintaining intellectual and physical engagement as a lifelong activity to be useful to community.	STW
It's the way I'm wired. If I'm not physically healthy it will impact on my whole life and emotional wellbeing	ICH
Working with like minded people on environmental restoration gives me hope that we can all make difference.	STW
As an environmental volunteer I have contact with a wide range of individuals & community groups which helps keep me engaged with what is happening in my local community.	STW
Feeling that I am useful and making a difference to improving the local environment	STW
Because my mental health is what I struggle with the most in day to day life, the environment has always been my passion, and engaging with environmental causes helps give me purpose, a sense of agency, meaning, self confidence, and a glimmer of hope in an area which matters deeply to me.	STW
Because being involved in caring for country, either actively as part of organisations or groups or in my private life making decisions with sustainability as a high consideration factor helps me to take responsibility for my actions and it all gives me a sense of good well being.	STW
Survey needs some work. It is very difficult to pick one of these as most important. A ranking question or pick top 3 would have been better.	
Critical to have community on board as it is only by working together can we get the outcome nature requires	STW
Healthy environment equals happy healthy family and community	SYM
Caring for the environment provides all of the about benefits and therefore has an impact on your overall well being.	STW
Responses to previous questions require to be nuanced rather than tick box so overall well being seemed most appropriate.	
Feeling that my family members and I share values on caring for the environment and our shared future	STW
It's a way of life, makes you feel good, we live on a property so are always working on it, also run tours which mean we are always educating others (not included in hours question above but probably should have).	
Community could be included here if you are referencing our customers.	STW
I'm just better able to ride out the ups and downs of life if I'm maintaining connection with my local local bushland and coastal settings	SYM
Nature is life, we are nature, denying this is soul destroying (which is why people need to compensate with consumerism and status symbols .. v sad)	SYM
Meet like minded people	COL



## Appendix C – Online \_ Question 16 coded responses

Briefly, why is the factor you selected above (question 15) most important to you?: Community Connection; Family Connection; Mental Health; Emotional Health; Physical Health; Overall Well-being	Caring Principles
The natural environment is why I chose to live in the SW. I strongly believe our overall well being comes from being connected to and looking after the nature on planet earth	SYM
It gives me a sense of purpose	STW
I'm doing what I have always been doing since being retired.	
Care for the land and you care for yourself	SYM
Because it encompasses all the others	
Overall well being... can't have mental health without physical health	ICH
Doing what I can to support the environment in challenging times supports my overall well being. Knowing I'm doing something in the face of environmental decline is important.	STW
Environment work is a great way to meet like minded individuals in a positive setting that opens up connection	COL
Because the activity is the main reason to live	STW
Watching the toddlers watch birds is a wonderful experience (4 grandkids 3 and under)	SYM
As I've had times in my life where my overall health has had negative impacts I aim to support it as much as possible	ICH
Want to live longer & lead by example	STW
Like to meet and connect with like minded people to feel less isolated	COL
It's a little bit of all the others for me. They all contribute to overall well-being, when my wellbeing is better all the other factors improve in return.	ICH
Probably as it is the one I think about, whilst I am cognisant of others such as emotional & mental health	
Overall well-being is most important as it encompasses everything in a holistic way - being healthy, connected to a healthy landscape is important	SYM
Being in nature crosses all areas: mental, emotional and physical well being. I cannot imagine myself divorced from nature. I would be so much poorer without it.	SYM
If I know that the I am contributing to caring for the environment I feel a sense of emotional wellbeing.	STW
natural spaces are a place where you can connect with your local community	COL
good well being means you can help nature better	STW
Pass on appreciation of nature to the next generation	STW
Family is a core unit of society and outwards from there with expanding connections	COL
Connection with community improves emotional health and well-being	COL
Because overall well being also includes the spiritual dimension and connection to country that the survey has so far not mentioned which are both also very important to me	SYM
Spending time in nature is my preferred way to distract myself from life stressors	SYM
community protects country when governments won't	STW
We started with bushcare but it is community and friendship that keeps me going back	COL
Should be included in the above question - connection to nature, thereby reframing human is interdependent upon nature.	SYM
It embraces all of the other descriptors. Some are stronger than others, but all are important. E.g. I have some connection with my family through my environmental work, but I wish we did more in the environment together.	COL
Caring for, restoring and protecting the environment is absolutely critical to the health of all beings.	STW
We are part of our environment and nature. We can't be happy and healthy if our environment isn't. I get a lot of joy seeing revegetation growing and birds and animals returning due to my efforts	STW
Need to be mentally stable to be your best for others	COL
It feels good to be doing something positive to protect and restore the beautiful natural assets we have.	STW
It provides all of the factors listed	
I need the socialisation and people	COL
Sense of achievement and giving back to the community	STW
Love being with nature	SYM
I am from interstate so this was a way to connect with my local community while at the same time contributing towards caring for our precious native plants and wildlife	STW
Balance is important	ICH
because it combines all the other factors	
A holistic, multi-faceted approach.	STW
Overall wellbeing involves all the criteria above combined	
My physical and mental health are most important to me, because they affect everything else: community, family etc	ICH
I have lived where I am for a while. I want to be involved in my community and a shared effort is needed for positive change. Caring for nature nearby is how I seek to contribute and maintain local connections.	COL



## Appendix C – Online \_ Question 16 coded responses

Briefly, why is the factor you selected above (question 15) most important to you?: Community Connection; Family Connection; Mental Health; Emotional Health; Physical Health; Overall Well-being	Caring Principles
Overall well-being encompasses all the others	ICH
Love and connection	COL
Clean food, exercise, union with natural processes	ICH
Captures all of the factors - all the factors come together to support wellbeing	ICH
logic	WIS
Beng part of a community that is caring for our local environment enables me to feel like I'm helping create a better place for all	STW
If I don't have good mental health, the rest doesn't matter	ICH
Because it underpins all of the rest of the options.	
Feeling part of the place I live and contributing to a creating/maintaining a healthier environment for everyone	STW
I feel fairly balanced in my mental and physical health, and I enjoy being with others who feel the same way I feel about the condition of the environment and supporting conservation, so it is an important factor outside my working life and a great way to combine socializing with conservation outcomes!	STW
All the other factors listed in the question contribute to overall well being. They are all important but I don't have a burgeoning need to satisfy one o those factors over the reasons I choose for being involved in the environment in the ways that I am.	STW
We have a large family with whom we have frequent contact.	
Influencing them to become knowledgeable about and active in environmental protection is one of my most important commitments..	STW
Overall well-being is wholistic and all-encompassing	ICH
WITH OUT CONNECTION TO OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY WHAT WOULD BECOME OF MY MENTAL HEALTH?	COL
I live alone on a conservation property. I view my purpose as being the best custodian I can be - so I need to remain as well as possible - physically, emotionally, cognitively, spiritually.	ICH
Humans and the environment are totally connected. If we look after environment we are looking after ourselves and visa versa	SYM
The more I live with nature the more important it becomes and it is so calming.	SYM
I find being involved in my local community beneficial for my own mental well being	COL
Without physical health you will struggle	ICH
Staying mentally and physically healthy	ICH
Because it's 'All of the Above'	ICH
If I feel overall happy my joints don't hurt, I am happy to meet people, I am more positive to get involved in things, that in turn is keeping the black dog away	COL
connect with community	COL
Nature and natural surroundings are a key factor to my well-being	SYM
I don't think any of the other factors can stand alone	ICH
It is holistically encompassing the other values and connections	ICH
Survival	WIS
Over all well being includes everything. Being part of a community helps me feel part of something which in turn supports my mental and emotional health	COL
that the community step up when asked to protect this extraordinary shared fragile land	COL
Caring for the environment has many many aspects	
Because the human beings are part of nature and be in nature helps to remain connected to Country	SYM
Mind, body and soul	ICH
It's all important, as we know, all things are connected, protect the air, water and the biosphere will survive, hopefully with us in it.	SYM
It is hard to pick one reason	
It's all connected. The mental, emotional, connection and community.... One impacts the other so ultimately it's my overall wellbeing. Working and contributing to the health of the environment makes me happy, I feel as though I'm creating positive impact through care. And the environments health directly impacts me and my community. If I could financially care for wildlife and do environmental work full time I would.	SYM
Physical and emotional well being from contributing to conservation and being amongst nature	STW
Working in the Park as I do connects me to nature, to family memories and to the community who also work to care for the environment.	SYM
Gardening and actively caring for the environment has so many benefits and for the individual is best summed up as overall wellbeing	STW
I was born in nature and it nourishes me	SYM
the old Indigenous wisdom says;	
Healthy Country <=> Healthy People	SYM



## Appendix C – Online \_ Question 16 coded responses

Briefly, why is the factor you selected above (question 15) most important to you?: Community Connection; Family Connection; Mental Health; Emotional Health; Physical Health; Overall Well-being	Caring Principles
To survive the rapid changes in society and impending effects of both human activity on the environment and human populations I need to engage positively with nature by caring for and enjoying being in it.	STW
When you work with nature you can bask in the glory	STW
Having a good overall well-being is so important to living a fulfilling life	ICH
Connection with natural environment (not listed)	
Caring for plant and animal kin nourishes my being	SYM
Building the community, connection, hope	COL
Coming from a holistic point of view	SYM
I think that the first 5 options can be summarised by the 'overall wellbeing' option. Community connection, physical and emotional health etc.	ICH
Absence from nature or inaction towards supporting it, even just observing it in some form, creates a feeling of deep unease that can become un-wellness, even illness.	SYM
Taking some control helps to counter feelings of grief for the environment	STW
Overall well-being means good physical, emotional and mental health	ICH
Without good physical health and mental health you don't have much	ICH
The importance of doing what I can despite limited mobility	STW
Connecting with community with all the things I do is mostly in nature and about nature.	
And this community has a positive effect on my overall wellbeing	COL
I do not have overall well-being at present because the present WA State Government is not very conscious of the need for strong laws to protect nature.	STW
It brings my existence into context, completely valid & accepted.	SYM
My family and I are very close. We have been through some tough times.	COL
Community connection is most important as it supports well being but also supports the environment. At times caring for the environment can be confrontation and disappointing so the community connection and support mitigates against despondency	COL
Getting outdoors and immersing myself in the environment contributes to improving my mental health and general well being as part of a wholistic approach to better health	ICH
Without your health what have you got	ICH
Farming on a family farm is physically, intellectually, and emotionally demanding. Farming well helps overall wellbeing, as it encompasses the other tick boxes presented.	STW
Seeing Natural environment destruction and the devastating consequences for fauna is traumatic	STW
Connection with community because it brings like minded people together to share ideas, find new friends and generally appreciate that there are people out there who care like you do	COL
I volunteer with like minded people, sharing knowledge and learning about bush care.	STW
Because it links all the others. In reality they can't be separated. That's Colonial thinking.	
For me personally I see connection with community around shared values as the only way to live on this Country. As I grow and learn, I've got past trying to do everything myself, or trying to 'bend others to my will' in environmental conservation and remediation work, and just more 'go with' whoever puts themselves in my path. It's amazing who's out there and willing to chip in and learn.	STW
Overall wellbeing translates to caring for all of the above and more.	STW
I love being out in nature: it restores me	ICH
A sense of connection underpins all the other factors - mental health, in particular, and overall well being	SYM



## Appendix D – Online \_ Question 19 coded responses

As related to caring for the environment, or 'Caring -for-Country', which First Nations cultural knowledge or practice do you find most interesting, and how does it intersect with health?	Caring Principle
Difficult to say as caring for country is such a wholistic approach. Each aspect is dependent on other aspects. Here in WA - fire management is something I'm interested to see change in regard to current government policy and practises.	STW SYM
Respect	
Unsure	
Never take more than you need and always share.	SYM
Being on country	SYM
Shaping the landscape with cool burns.	STW
Cultural land management and the connection between self and country, healthy country means healthy community and self	SYM
Sustainable behaviour	STW
Not familiar with cultural knowledge that intersects with health	
Not sure ....most of it is common sense	
a lot of it looks like made up nonsense	
unsure	
Their ecological knowledge coming forth from totem system that made you family ( deep connection) with some bird plant animal.	
Also how they stored and accessed their from 1000's of years collected and revised knowledge.	WIS
Cultural burning so that I don't have to stress about the way dbca does prescribed burning which is decimating our forests. I would like to know more about First Nations relationship with beaches. Vehicles should not be on beaches in my opinion.	STW
Songlines, due to the level of intimacy of bringing the outer world to the inner world.	SYM
Walking gently on the earth by only using the resources you need. Always leave something for others, don't take more than you need.	SYM
Interconnectedness of the environment and also the relational approach that weaves community into any caring for Country activity.	SYM
I tend to be fascinated by Indigenous folks historical ability to survive so long eating the limited number of plants and animals available to them. Unfortunately, practically no one alive today has documented this local knowledge to a sufficiently useful extent to support our present communities. I find local knowledge from experience and trial/error critically important, but I don't differentiate between what genetic background that 'local' is from. :)	WIS
Understanding that we (humans) are not separate from country but are part of it. I think this has great potential for supporting health and wellbeing	SYM
Sustainable burning practices	STW
Burning of country	STW
How First Nations people lived in the landscape	SYM
Remnant knowledge fragmented, largely lost ,rarely relevant to current economic & environmental state ; so of little use except the generalized spirit of 'connecting with nature . We are no longer hunter gatherers...	WIS
Cool burns	STW
The concept of being custodians of the land - we should all strive for that (rather than being consumers of the land)	STW
The 'cultural burning' conducted near my premises made the fire risk worse	STW
Connection to place and connection to specific plants and animals (totems) and acceptance of responsibility for caring for individual totems as art of caring for country	STW
Menang culture as it represents the area I live in	WIS
totems as I believe having that personal connection with a plant or animal is a beautiful spiritual thing that our modern society is missing	
Country apart of self - finding a totem and individuals being responsible for caring for particular plant and animal	STW
I admire their respect for country and how they can be so at peace when they are out on their country, just being there. Yes, when we're in the bush we too can be comfortable, but they have a history of being there, a history of knowledge and a completely different aspect of ownership...to be able to give them access to what country we are taking care of- for them and others, future generations-that is very satisfying.	SYM
I think that First Nations knowledge about fire practices are very important. I think that the holistic view that many first Nations people hold of the interconnectedness of all living and non living things is of extreme importance. It is likely to intersect with emotional well being. When caring for Country can't be enacted it is likely to intersect with the opposite effect.	SYM



## Appendix D – Online \_ Question 19 coded responses

As related to caring for the environment, or 'Caring -for-Country', which First Nations cultural knowledge or practice do you find most interesting, and how does it intersect with health?	Caring Principle
How they managed bushland and used species for health and food.	WIS
This question is HUGE. I'm interested in them all and they all intersect with health.	WIS
Traditional burning methods as a way of managing vegetation to benefit wildlife. Health intersection comes from the mental health benefits of being able to see and interact with healthy wildlife populations, and physical health benefits of reduced impacts of bushfire	WIS
cool burns	STW
The use and stories around place and vegetation	WIS
Bush food and bush medicine traditional use of plants. From my years from living in the Kimberley the unbroken connection with country.	WIS
I know little about First Nations cultural knowledge or practice and how it relates to caring for the environment. I've seen videos of cultural burning, but have no idea how that apparently small scale cool burn could be used to manage the forests, reserves and remnant bush. I recognise there's lots I don't know about First Nations cultural knowledge or practice and how it relates to caring for country. I don't really know where to start.	WIS
The use of fire as a regenerative tool. The inherent spiritual connection to country and the responsibility for caring for your place and all things in that place.	SYM
Heal the land heal the people- we can't do it without TEK.	WIS
walking lightly on Country; cool burns	STW
Cultural burning - prescribed burning is not working in a warming climate (and resource poor agencies that are conducting it) and is causing too much flora and fauna damage - which I am personally finding very distressing,	STW
working with the environment, not against it. not overtaking, so there is enough reminding. keeping a natural balance. this all links with physical, mental and spiritual well-being	SYM
Their respect for the natural environment and seeing ourselves as part of it, not next to it! Without our natural environment we have nothing.	SYM
Deep connection to the land, flora & fauna	SYM
Prescribed burns as carried out by first nations, crop rotation and circular economy.	STW
First nation cultural knowledge broadens my understanding of the environment and a connection to first nation people I never had interaction with growing up in Perth. It helps overall health in my wellbeing	WIS
First Nation people have cared for Country for thousands of years and respect it. In less than 250 years white man has destroyed vast swathes of land, and wiped out much of our unique wildlife . First Nation people love their special part of the land we know as Australia, and find peace there. I love having the opportunity to be in the bush and to learn how to see it through their eyes	WIS
Their long history of caring and working with nature can only be seen as a gift and true asset for paving the way forward if we want to restore our ecosystem function and remain prosperous (not just financial/business success but in all aspects of one's life and as a society). We need to respect First Nations knowledge and combine modern science with their intrinsic wealth of the land, animals and how it all works in symbiosis.	STW
Unsure	
source of knowledge - has been practiced longer than any introduced belief	WIS
Deep connection to Country	SYM
Caring for country includes understanding stories and histories of the area. Treating the natural environment with an informed respect, just makes sense, and getting out onto country keeps me healthy physically and emotionally.	STW
I need to learn more about First Nations cultural knowledge and practice in my area. Use of fire is a contentious and important practice I am interested in. With climate changes, heightened risk of fire impacting people and nature and potential ecological damage from 'Western' approaches to fire management especially in fragmented landscapes this is a field for dialogue, learning and research. Air pollution is a significant aspect on health impacts.	STW
The Natural Lore which places people as the "carers of everything"	STW
Caring for boodja is caring for people and self	SYM
The role of all elements of the natural environment	WIS
our group is only looking after foreshore reserves and there is very little, if any information, to indicate First Nations cultural knowledge or practices were applied to looking after these areas as against bushland.	WIS
Connection	SYM
burning practices	
our current departmental practice destroys the health of the environment and of humans	STW
Very hard to find any Noongar with environmental knowledge	WIS
Understanding of the entire ecosystem and how human health relies on a healthy ecosystem	SYM
Two-Way Science approaches in schools and the complexity of Indigenous seasonal calendars	WIS
Spiritual connection to Country	SYM



## Appendix D – Online \_ Question 19 coded responses

As related to caring for the environment, or 'Caring -for-Country', which First Nations cultural knowledge or practice do you find most interesting, and how does it intersect with health?	Caring Principle
Bush Tucker and medical plants	ICH
Fire management, cultural practices around sustainability. Keeps a perspective that we are always in relationship with the environment - watching, listening, learning, responding rather than dominating.	SYM
I don't know	
history of the area	WIS
Knowledge and wisdom passed on to ensure Country or area is cared for , this practice ensures health of individual , community and Country. (Caring for local area) - this is a difficult question to give a short answer	STW
Ranger programs, connecting to Elders, Cultural art and environment programs etc	WIS
Spirit of mother earth	SYM
I find it all fascinating as these were the people who were able to live so well with nature for so long. There has to be so much that can be learned from it	SYM
forest burning practices	STW
Seasonal patterns gives you a broader outlook to what's happening weather wise	WIS
All of it, their knowledge is so valuable and we should respect their experience and learn from whatever they might be willing to share. Especially in terms of fire.	WIS
The interconnection with nature and the intricate ancient knowledge of Country. Caring for Country brings health.	SYM
Ancient knowledge and land management. Also social advancement. Yes important for society's health and my health.	
The first people here, the aboriginals, cared for country and it cared for them. Our recent practice of living in or near forests and regular hot burning to "keep us safe" is killing the understory and fungi. First Nations people knew how to burn so that the understory thrived along with all the creatures and organisms.	WIS
Knowledge of local flora and fauna and their traditional uses	WIS
Knowledge of insects & also traditional gardening practices	WIS
Understanding and trusting that if we care for Country, then Country will care for us.	SYM
Wadandi culture and the Noongar seasons, improves overall health when communities are connected with nature	SYM
sustainable land management practices	STW
Fire reduction/ mitigation practices ( e.g. mosaic burning)/ sustainable living on the land/ caretaking practices	STW
The connection between country and health is explored greater than in western society	SYM
Respect for the land, waterways and ocean, burning the bush, taking time to consider.	WIS
Walking softly on country. It's a 2 way thing	SYM
Low material needs and strong family bonds, two things becoming rare in modern capitalist societies	COL
Fire practice... extreme fires cause extreme mental and physical problems	WIS
First nations observations of their environment and connection to it which influenced how they utilised or worked with the environment. It is connected to health as if country is sick the people are sick and through caring for country we can boost our health.	SYM
All of it!	
The need to walk on country	SYM
Ways of thinking about the natural world beyond exploitation, nestling back into proportion with our surrounds	SYM
I resonate with the idea that people are one with the land in a reciprocal relationship. Poor environment health equals poor body health.	SYM
Cool burning	STW
Cultural knowledge about plants and significance of natural areas	WIS
It's holistic. There isn't just one particular practice I find more or most interesting.	WIS
Understanding connection to country.	
Using our 'white honky' attachment to our 1/4 acre, our views etc.... And asking others to impinge & thus empathise with the dispossessed	WIS
Healthy country = healthy people	SYM
Their awareness of nature's cues. We're learning more through the sharing of the Noongar calendar. It makes so much sense.	
Understanding fire practices the right way. We've got it wrong but we're entrenched in western practices.	WIS
The practical knowledge of how to care and old practices. for thriving and fire management also	STW
Cultural burning, connection to country through dreamtime stories, the use of the landscape and environment for survival and spirituality.	WIS
stories passed down on interacting with different plants and animals, understanding nature on a different non western level	WIS
Fire management	STW
Observation of surrounding nature	
Minimal impact philosophy	
Cultural burning	STW
Interaction with their environment. Burning practices. Food gathering and culture.	SYM



## Appendix D – Online \_ Question 19 coded responses

As related to caring for the environment, or 'Caring -for-Country', which First Nations cultural knowledge or practice do you find most interesting, and how does it intersect with health?	Caring Principle
I love the stories and how things were and comparing to how things are now. I love and incredibly value the connection of ancient rock art of sea turtles and the linkage and work we do with sea turtles today. I love that connection and linkage of First Nations to today.	WIS
Noongar culture	WIS
First nation's people have incredible connection to country, we could all learn from this. Being on country heals most	SYM
I love their deep connection to country - we have much to learn, and a way to go in conserving their knowledge/language for future generations.	
I love the cues they take from nature.	SYM
The way they remember the location of landmarks, how to live off the land without ruining it (including their way of burning), and the retaining of knowledge through many generations	WIS
Being considered part of Country, rather than separate from it.	
This concept firmly places each individual within a natural context, with responsibilities and obligations, while also providing support, mentoring and a sense of belonging.	
This ideology/world view has a strong resonance with my beliefs	STW
The use of fire for regen	STW
It seems that for our Aboriginal peoples, the element of being "on country" is the most important - particularly for their overall well-being.	SYM
Connection with country, as an invitation to be grounded in Nature.	SYM
Storytelling that leads to on ground activity to repair the environment and will contribute to physical and mental health.	STW
Their cool temperature burning practices	STW
Fire stick burning and managing ecosystems to reduce pests.	STW
Cultural burning. This not only provides an opportunity to share knowledge, but also gives people a deeper understanding of culture & strengthens cultural ties to country which is important for many peoples mental wellbeing.	STW
Cultural burning. Gives all participants a sense of belonging and pride in caring for country, especially through the development of Noongar Ranger schemes.	STW
I would say I know very little about specific knowledge or practices. But I find my own lifelong connection to and experience with the natural environment an important part of my overall health. So I would like to see more First Nations peoples be able to develop their own connections with the environment and engage in "caring for Country" practices (or be interested in doing so) and experience the same sort of benefits.	STW
I am most interested in how first nations people's travelled throughout the landscape seasonally and how they marked, understood the changing seasons and weather patterns. How these might be different or changing today.	WIS
Whoa! very complex question. It does not follow directly from the previous that ask about environment work and First Nations. Also assumes the connection between environment work and health has already been made (isn't this the purpose of the survey?). e.g., Someone who rates their environment work as not strongly related to health may find this question puzzling. What if you find it interesting but not 'intersecting' with your own health?	
Bush medicine	WIS
their knowledge being brought forward from ancestry and the satisfaction of being heard and accepted	WIS
Connection to totems and the responsibilities to care for them as a fundamental part of your being. Looking after country and country will look after you.	STW
Powers of observation and 'connecting the dots' to conclude interconnectedness of natural systems.	WIS
Cultural burning - ecosystems that are burnt with the old ways are less likely to carry extensive wildfires, which threaten wildlife and human health	STW
Firestick farming - burning practices - also how early settlers built on traditional meeting places (usually cleared, open spaces near water, sometimes with edible plants nearby.).	
Re health, burning practices at the right time of year.	STW
Cultural burning, bush tucker	WIS
The knowledge that humans are not separate or above nature - but are part of it	SYM
Intergenerational caring for country. This gives a sense of purpose beyond our lifetime.	STW
I love to know how the First Nations people cared for specific areas and in what ways. We hear a lot about fire practices but this is not the only part to it - I would love to know more about how they hunted, collected seed and navigated without getting lost.	WIS
Cultural burning. I see the benefits to the bush, helping care for country, makes me feel good.	STW
I am on Dharawal Country, and Country holds Knowledge. So Dharawal cultural Knowledge is the Knowledge for this Country. I do t understand how anyone could be caring for Country in their own place and think they could shop around for whatever First Nations Knowledge is most "interesting". Maybe I didn't understand the question.	
Traditional ways of living on and with Country are very interesting to me, such as knowing local landscapes intimately, having a deep spiritual connection to Country that is reflected in engagement with Country, listening to Country in everything we do. Cultural burning (including non-burning of some Country as appropriate) as part of managing Country is also of huge interest to me, and has a major potential intersection with human health because (a) it can help reduce fire risk and (b) is less environmentally damaging than massive planned (and subsequent) unplanned 'hazard reduction' burns that burn huge areas using high-carbon-emissions methods.	STW
Walking country- slowly, watching.	WIS
I interact a lot with First Nations people and I find it fascinating that every aspect of their health seems to improve when 'on country'.	SYM
I appreciate learning about our interdependence with the natural world from my aboriginal friends and seeing myself as part of that is grounding and reassuring.	SYM



## Appendix D – Online \_ Question 19 coded responses

As related to caring for the environment, or 'Caring -for-Country', which First Nations cultural knowledge or practice do you find most interesting, and how does it intersect with health?	Caring Principle
The ability of First Nations people to understand, protect, and survive in a country as large and challenging as Australia is impressive. The ability to use fire wisely, for example, is instructive. Their natural diet protected them from diabetes mellitus from which many of them now suffer after adopting Western dietary practices.	SYM
Use of elements in nature for medicinal purposes	ICH
WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT BUSH FOODS AND MEDICINE	ICH
The development of a consciousness of all Nature as sentient and offering the possibility of relationship with the more-than-human world.	SYM
Caring for country, First Nations ways of doing it.	STW
bush lore, natural and sustainable food source for us and critters they all work in harmony.	SYM
Respect for the land and environment	SYM
Kinship; to people, to land, to animals, to cosmology	SYM



## Appendix E – Online \_ Question 20 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your physical health when actively caring for the environment ?	Caring Principle
Impacts on health are both positive and negative. Witnessing regeneration is good, seeing environmental destruction resulting from Mining in particular is distressing.	WIS
Healthy body healthy mind	ICH
You can look and see the impact, overall sense of agency, learning, sharing. Making a difference and HOPE.	STW
More strong, mentally and physically.	ICH
Reduced tension, reduced stress overall, sense of empowerment in taking action when there is some much pressure on the environment.	STW
Nil	
cannot isolate one aspect some is positive some negative	ICH
Contributes to my health	ICH
There are so many negative issues affecting nature just now I feel overwhelmed as to where to start and just need to try and focus on a couple of things to cope. The stress may cause lack of physical energy	ICH
Maintaining a positive more high level of energy frequency.	ICH
Less stressed and hopefully a bit fitter than I was	ICH
Positive effect as it gets me out in the environment, walking, weeding, meditating or dreaming. Overall essential to human health	ICH
Vastly improved health outcomes I would expect	ICH
zero	
Apart from a bad back every now and then from fencing, and planting/maintaining trees, it keeps me fit in the long term (but flogs me in the short term).	ICH
Stress reduction and better fitness	ICH
Mental health, physical work and caring for the environment extend our quality of life and extend our life span.	ICH
Increased fitness flexibility and mobility	ICH
Improve health and well being	ICH
DUH... exercise enhances health , good work enhances mental state (under the mistaken belief that it will make a difference)	ICH
Depends if it's seeing the devastating effects of prescribed burns it's distressing. If it's being in nature and a healthy environment it's positive.	STW
Reduces stress, gets you outdoors in the fresh air and has you use your body in different ways - all adding to improved health, well-being and flexibility	ICH
clean air	
I spend more time outdoors, I walk more and enjoy having a purpose in being more active	STW
It helps directly by being physically active but also supports my mental desire to stay active	ICH
I believe physical and mental health are one and the same. Being around nature and caring for it improves your overall health and happiness. I find it difficult to differentiate between the two because when my mental health is poor, physical follows and vice-versa. I also believe that much of the illness being experienced by modern society is due to nature deficit.	ICH
I spend more time outdoors and am more physically active	ICH
I haven't really spent much time considering the impact of my conservation activities have upon my health. I was brought up to care by parents who wanted me to have opportunities to learn and appreciate nature. I guess those who have never had that guidance don't know what they are missing. For those up us who grew up with it we continue, all our life, to make time for caring for the environment.	STW
Extremely positive, body movement and sensory stimulation must have incredible long term benefits. Body Mind are one, physical health impacts overall well being	ICH
Walking in the bush and climbing the local hills, studying the fauna and flora found in abundance in the Great Southern Region, and being involved with a large group of knowledgeable and active people with similar interests is physically beneficial.	COL
Improved overall fitness; lower stress levels	ICH
COULD ONLY BE POSITIVE	ICH
Relating to the more-than-human world brings a sense of well-being and contentment that inevitably impacts human well-being in all areas.	SYM
Creates a feeling of general well being as well as being out in nature and active.	ICH
You start to understand the bigger picture. I find nature is very calming and I have experienced some amazing experiences.	WIS



## Appendix E – Online \_ Question 20 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your physical health when actively caring for the environment ?	Caring Principle
Using your body actively without thinking about it, balance, heavy lifting and movement which support long term strength.	ICH
Stress and burnout. There is so much to be done we tend to sacrifice ourselves	STW
I am able to move better, I don't gain as much weight, and in fact loose weight.	ICH
Physical well-being, longevity	ICH
I am keeping fit to be able to care for the environment, not the other way round	STW
Positive. Walking with mild exertion and movement has many health benefits	ICH
wear and tear on joints	ICH
keeps me active within what is possible for my medical conditions	ICH
It can be negative when you strain a muscle or walk too far, but in the overall picture it is a positive thing. You usually get over it, and it makes you more resilient. You also build up muscle, which is lost as you get older. Trying to avoid inorganic sprays and chemicals is a must, but in horticulture and agriculture it's hard to avoid unless you work at it.	ICH
Empowerment, hopefulness, balance, strength, learning, connection	ICH
Keeps me moving.	ICH
I am more health, balanced and my wellbeing is better	ICH
Being physical on country help mind and body and undertaking works on country helps to provide purpose for many	ICH
Being outdoors and moving are a great benefit!	ICH
It keeps me active and builds the step count. It's got to be positive.	ICH
Fitter, feel happier, exposure to other natural Biota (soil micro-organisms etc) that promote healthier gut health	ICH
The release of happy hormones, feeling I have really done some good being an active citizen, feeling physically exerted, observing nature firsthand while being in the bush e.g. seeing a flock of forest cockatoos chewing on banksia cones, or rainbow bee eaters land in trees right next to me, seeing Blue banded bees foraging around me - that all makes me very happy.	SYM
Probably a "bad back" from planting seedlings and pulling weeds!!	STW
healthy planet = healthy people	SYM
Enhanced sense of well being and connection	
I believe there is also a spiritual dimension to the benefit, perhaps through a connection with wildlife.	SYM
A sense of being useful which improves mental health while physical activity maintains physical health and mobility.	ICH
Good. I'm comforted by the local forests and the knowledge I have gained from them.	SYM
Being out doors alone is good. A couple of hours of weeding, bending, digging and carrying is what my body needs.	ICH
Maintaining a healthy weight and general body fitness	ICH
It will help to maintain a good level of physical health.	STW
Increase in general fitness level, increased strength, lower stress levels.	ICH
By keeping you active it improves and maintains physical fitness.	ICH
Similar to other kinds of physical exercise.	STW
Keeps you fit	STW
Having support from others so as to be able to continue. both physically and mentally	ICH
Provides regular cardiovascular exercise and strength training that keeps us and fitter and more flexible as we age. Gets us out in the fresh air betting clean air keeping us well.	ICH
Improved fitness, aching muscles!	ICH
Physical fitness, calming, manual dexterity, curiosity and open mindedness, stimulation of senses such as smell, touch, sight, hearing and taste, improved mental clarity and creativity	ICH
100% benefits- usually a more active lifestyle.	ICH
Positive	
Being active, with hands in the soil is always a good thing	ICH
Overall I believe it gives me purpose in life, knowing I am contributing to the health of our environment.	STW
Only good things - fitness, fresh air, generally keeping active	ICH
Positive for multiple connected reasons	ICH
It does keep me fit and agile, though bushwalking more than environmental restoration as I do a lot of micro-weeding which is pretty sedentary.	ICH
I can see how my capacity to observe, learn, listen and breathe is enhanced. Even as I age, my body is benefiting from the physical work involved in bushcare activities, constant planting of selected flora, both in gardens and in bushland.	
I can work through physical discomfort and pain by simply slowing down.	ICH
My arthritis doesn't like the long trash walks any more!	STW
Being physically active is important in ageing well, and doing this in the company of others is an added support to mental health.	ICH



## Appendix E – Online \_ Question 20 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your physical health when actively caring for the environment ?	Caring Principle
Positive but will become more so as I age	ICH
Maintaining mobility	ICH
All positive - mostly I think & write rather than pull boneseed. I regard this as caring. Place-making rather than rearranging nature.	STW
Caring for the environment for me means actively being in the environment, bush regeneration, gardening etc which keeps me physically active which is great for my body	ICH
Good	
Stay physically active as I age	ICH
Often ignore own health as we focus on caring for nature... and the groups we are part of	COL
I work in bush regeneration so it's physically demanding doing 40hrs work week. Long term it might be worst impact on my physical health. Ie muscle injuries /burnout. As a volunteer, it much more easy on the body , and good physical work	STW
Bushcare involves so many activities, building strength, aerobic, maintaining flexibility. Fresh air - there's nothing like being outdoors and able to breathe fresh air.	ICH
Longevity, sense of purpose, connection to a greater being, leaving a legacy, providing life for the future and caring for species both fauna and flora for future generations.	STW
Keeps me physically active.	STW
being physically active through pulling out weeds is a good way to stay fit	STW
improves physical health	STW
Improved	
Maintains mobility, balance as we age	ICH
Keeps you active when younger than me	STW
I've been caring for the environment, for bushland and preparing native plants all my adult life and now, at 70, I'm very healthy and fit.	STW
Gives you a reason to get outdoors and be physically active	STW
feel useful	STW
Improvement in physical health and wellbeing. As I write this I am listening to the Carnaby cockatoos that are feeding on the banksia's and pine trees on my property- this is a blessing of wealth, health and wellbeing .	SYM
Stress management as well as strength	ICH
The physical activity gives me exercise. Being in my 70s, I'm at the 'use it or lose it' stage of life when it comes to exercising. This seems like a good way to 'use it.'	ICH
I have a sense of responsibility to the natural world and to those who will inherit what we leave behind. I want my children and grandchildren to know that many of us have worked to care for our place. My physical health is quite good for my age and I put that down to being physically active in landcare and restoring nature on our farm.	ICH
Hugely beneficial	
Unfortunately, being the age I am I find that the work I do in the local bushland is actually affecting my physical health adversely. But I still enjoy it.	STW
physical fitness, exposure to elements, vitamin D, stretching	ICH
Less pollution. i.e. healthier environment = healthier people.	SYM
Increased strength and mobility	ICH
It keeps me fit and mobile	ICH
Longer life, less mental problems and deflecting loneliness.	ICH
Physical health from weeding and walking	STW
It keeps me active in mind and body. To be close to nature and away from the distractions of daily life, brings a sense of peace	ICH
Exercise and company	ICH
less aggressive, more consistent exercise	ICH
Neutral as you could gain those benefits in other ways	
Physically active for fieldwork and guided walks. Exercise may be incidental to the task but being purposeful gives me a reason to do it.	STW
Outdoors time is beneficial	
mobility is maintained; fresh air and movement keep me alert;	ICH
Provides perspective so de-stresses, good breath with vital and alive oxygen and other beneficial things such as microbes. Its so much easier to be active when in nature	ICH
As long as I can climb over a fence using a ladder, can carry 2 x 5 litre water bottles and use a shovel to plant a seedling, my physical health will benefit from caring for the environment.	ICH



## Appendix E – Online \_ Question 20 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your physical health when actively caring for the environment ?	Caring Principle
Entirely positive. State of environment is so poor that any work helps to feel some good things can happen.	STW
Overall beneficial to maintain my engagement with community	COL
Staying active and outdoors	ICH
It keeps me more agile and walking in the bush helps my body balance	ICH
Exercising without having to plan for it.	STW
happiness	
When I am caring for the environment I feel energised.	STW
Better	
increased level of fitness,	ICH
Long-lived	ICH
Being out in nature is good for your soul and gardening and walking amongst it all can be good cardio. The social component of the busy bees which get organised are good for mental well being as well as getting things done. Being part of something is important	COL
belief that caring for environment not only positive for environment but also for physical health	STW
Exercise and well being	ICH
Keeps me physically fitter and allows me to feel peace with the fact that although the climate is changing, I am doing what I can to help support the nature around me	STW
It keeps you active.	ICH
Fitness for life	ICH
General movement, bending, lifting, standing are all good for balance, strength and mobility	ICH
More physically active to better fitness	ICH
Actively caring for the environment keeps me physically active and connected to a wide community. It motivates me to keep active and engaged as I age!	ICH
Less disease, physical fitness and flexibility, less obesity.	ICH
improved fitness. Better mood also translates into better physical health	ICH
Overall sense of well being	ICH
Mobility and strength is practiced, but I need more active exercise to feel really healthy.	ICH
Improves - except for ant bites haha	ICH
Physical work and walking for cardiovascular health etc. coupled with parasympathetic effects of real time meditation	ICH
Probably back pain and worn out joints!	ICH
Physical mobility	ICH



## Appendix F – Online \_ Question 21 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your mental and/ or emotional health when actively caring for the environment ? CONNECTION BETWEEN STW AND MENTAL HEALTH - ACTIVITY. TEMPERED WITH KNOWLEDGE		Caring Principle
A reduction in feelings of disempowerment.		STW
Peace and quiet		ICH
Community and making a difference. That regeneration is happening because we as a community are doing this. It's wholistic and addictive.		COL
One feels a sense of pride and accomplishment when looking after or caring for a certain piece of bush.		STW
As above, the physical, mental, social and emotional are all connected and reducing stress and tension and increasing 'feel good' chemicals by helping the environment means much better mental/emotional health.		ICH
Neutral, the distress and contribution are in balance		ICH
I am sure it contributes		ICH
Some feeling of hopelessness is causing guilt feelings and sadness.		STW
Feeling more whole, clear and free to express myself.		ICH
A sense of belonging, connection to the land and community. Peace of mind, calmness away from the busyness of life.		ICH
Unless in conflict with policy direction positive. However there is an emotional burden on advocating for the environment that is not always helped by being in the environment. It is something of a balancing act.		ICH
It's great to see plants and trees grow and improve natural systems (which is in contrast to human infrastructure that degrades over time).		STW
Stress reduction, sense of connection, it's the place I'd rather be		COL
I feel a lot better overall when I'm contributing doing my bit for humanity.		STW
Enhances hopefulness		STW
Improve mental and emotional health		STW
Making a positive contribution = feel good factor, it gives hope that we can make a difference, gives you perspective and reminds you the world is still an amazing place despite the news		STW
positivity		STW
I feel I can make a positive contribution to the place where I live. I feel like my life has purpose. I am not socially isolated.		COL
Feeling like I am contributing to positive change in our natural environment is crucial to my mental/emotional health		STW
Similar to the above, I feel you improve overall health by working in the natural environment.		ICH
I feel like I am making a positive contribution and have a purpose. I am less socially isolated.		COL
As mentioned before, I enjoy being with those who are likeminded about conservation and the environment so we, as a group, create a comfortable social community that often is active outside of conservation concerns.		
Being active in the community is very fulfilling.		COL
Answered above but additionally, a sense doing something that is positive and responsive in the environment helps overcoming the alienation from the environment that I sometimes feel living in the city and the overwhelming feeling of despair concerning the human abuse of planetary resources and all the things that we humans do that are contributing to environmental crisis		SYM
I was Chair of a medical organization called Doctors for the Environment Australia for several years and remain an active member. The health consequences of climate change and related global and local challenges were the foci of the organization. Being prepared to become more aware of the problems and more active in trying to influence political action is far better emotionally, mentally, and socially than passively accepting that such threats are beyond the ability of individuals to influence. Being involved at the local level is also vitally important.		STW
Lower stress; greater sense of personal integration		ICH
ALSO WOULD ONLY BE POSITIVE		STW
Same as above, it creates a general sense of well being and accomplishment		STW
You understand how we are all connected to nature. I find it so peaceful.		SYM
As above		
Again, beneficial		
Feeling of accomplishment and purpose in life		STW
Helps me keep perspective on what's happening in my life and the world.		ICH
As it has been very hot I have not been active in the bush. I long to go be able to go out again. Unfortunately this also is restricted as I need to buy and upkeep my chainsaw/ chain and buy chemicals and backpack sprayers and hand spray bottles.		STW
happiness		ICH
I think if I were retired it would be easier to become more active but I could see great benefits for mental and emotional well-being when caring for our environment		STW



## Appendix F – Online \_ Question 21 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your mental and/ or emotional health when actively caring for the environment ? CONNECTION BETWEEN STW AND MENTAL HEALTH - ACTIVITY. TEMPERED WITH KNOWLEDGE	Caring Principle
Connection with others and sense of community overcomes isolation. Being in nature lifts my mood	COL
Your Q has highlighted concerns that our health can/ will be neglected as we focus/ campaign for the environment	STW
Good and bad. If you have good support it can be good for your mental health. But sometimes it can feel there is too much to do and become overwhelming at times , i.e. too many weeds, climate change, pollution, people that don't care etc. This can create negative mental health	STW
I hope to maintain a healthy outlook on life if I am able to continue in my capacity as a Bushcare volunteer. Being able to make a difference - no matter how small.	STW
Bring a sense of well-being and emotional satisfaction.	STW
always feel better when you're outside in the bush, and it's really satisfying to see the place improve through your actions	STW
Being outdoors and contributing to community and environment are very important	STW
From being in the environment or being part of a team. Both help ground you and have positive long term benefits.	COL
More relaxed, feeling connected to places I've volunteered/visited, understanding deeper connection/history of places and people involved, opportunities to learn and share knowledge	WIS
The same as above, feeling happy and appreciating my natural surroundings helps my mental wellbeing. I feel like I am doing good work to support my local nature	STW
Such activities can only be positive for mental and/or emotional health.	STW
caring and contributing will always have a positive result on mental health	STW
A sense of well being, a capacity to collaborate with ageing and an ability to practise mindfulness	ICH
Feeling useful and having a goal to continue on.	STW
Definitely improved until poor planning decisions are made by any level of government. BS wins the day way too often these days.	STW
I connect with other people and feel productive.	COL
Mental calmness, a sense of self worth	STW
Help maintain a good level of mental health.	STW
Mixed results. It has historically been very negative (especially in paid roles) due to the many toxic systems/organisations/ workplaces and insurmountable obstacles, leading to a sense of hopelessness, worthlessness, and defeat.	
However, if able to maintain healthy boundaries and manage realistic expectations, I expect that it can be positive, by giving a sense of purpose, empowerment, and achievement, whilst also building skills and creating community connections.	STW
It has a huge effect on mental and emotional well-being. You are making improvements for other living things, watching plants grow and thrive. Being a part of a like minded community. It can take the focus away from your own problems and give you a better perspective.	STW
I'm not sure, probably mostly positive. However, watching the impact of climate change and being aware of future impacts is something I increasingly reflect on while caring - not sure this is a good thing in the long term.	STW
Outstanding as it links you to your spiritual connection with nature	SYM
Aggravated stress on seeing the damage continuing and species loss and being called to continue	WIS
Being connected to nature is calming, relieves stress and allows mindfulness essential to a healthy mind. Caring for nature also gives us purpose and connection to like minded people which promotes good mental and emotional well being. Act, belong, commit fits perfectly with caring for the environment.	SYM
Don't have time to psychoanalyst but sense of satisfaction with achieving harmonious connection (when plants, animals thrive).	SYM
Sense of life satisfaction and connection to a broader non human community, offering new perspectives on change and growth, having a quiet place to divert focus of an overactive mind, expressing love and gratitude to the earth	SYM
100% makes you feel good, benefiting nature and improving for future generations.	STW
Positive	
If one doesn't do anything to counter the destruction of nature one feels hopeless (and therefore becomes useless)	STW
I feel like I'm contributing to a better society and not just turning a blind eye. It's important knowing I'm doing the right thing that's for the benefit of everyone.	STW
Definitely improving whilst actively working in the bush.	STW
Also good things - the environment helps us to look away from screens and slow down to take a second to appreciate our surroundings	SYM
I feel calmer, less stressed, more connected to the people and places around me, and more like I'm an effective part of something much larger and more important. I'm sure this in turn has beneficial impacts on my physical health.	STW
Caring for the environment helps me bring emotional balance back into my life.	STW
Still happier doing it, though.	STW



## Appendix F – Online \_ Question 21 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your mental and/ or emotional health when actively caring for the environment ? CONNECTION BETWEEN STW AND MENTAL HEALTH - ACTIVITY. TEMPERED WITH KNOWLEDGE	Caring Principle
improves mental health, pulls you out of a bad mood	STW
Improved	
A sense of hope	
Nature is a teacher	
Nature is astoundingly resilient	WIS
Enjoyment of observing and learning about the variety in nature - flora species, birds especially. Providing and maintaining a bird bath and native plant species in my garden is a real pleasure to watch the birds and insects coming in and using it for food and water.	SYM
Over the years, witnessing the gradual destruction of magnificent ecosystems in many parts of WA often leaves me feeling very sad and sometimes quite depressed. Working with others to preserve what we have left is the best way to combat this.	STW
gives you a reason to be active even during periods of low mood/motivation	STW
it's better to work for environmental protection rather than despairing	STW
Deep connection to oneself through deep connection with all Living Beings.	SYM
Creates purpose, weeding is very meditative	ICH
Caring for nature gives me purpose and makes me feel that I'm doing something good and worthwhile. It gets me out of myself and looking for good things that I can do. that makes me feel good.	STW
Definitely positive feeling about on-ground work - I love being in bushland or on the coast. However, there is continually many environmental battles that are lost as we lose canopy, and whole tracts of bushland to development and forests to mining. The weakening of our environmental laws at a state level and the failure of the Federal government to improve Federal laws is depressing. I spend way too much time writing submissions and emails to decision makers which are almost almost ignored. Community groups like ours find it virtually impossible to engage with decision makers - whereas business leaders get plenty of access and attention.	STW
sleeping well knowing that I've done something meaningful	STW
feel good from looking at healthy environment	ICH
Eco anxiety vs hope & determination	STW
It boosts my mood, makes me feel hopeful for the future.	STW
Feeling part of the community and giving back	STW
Positive impacts on mental and emotional health in feeling you can make a difference.	STW
Being out in the bush, hearing the birds, observing the wildlife and the flowers is a joy. Working with like minded people, I made friends and enjoy the social interaction. Physically, it keeps me active.	ICH
Exercise	STW
calmer, more accepting	STW
Gives meaning	STW
Social interaction and involvement in a collective effort for public good aids mental wellness. Being in nature contributes to wellbeing (connection, perspective, thinking time).	COL
It feels as if my life has contributed something important to the planet and humanity	STW
Doing good work and achieving a sense of accomplishment is important for my mental health.	STW
Provides perspective so de-stresses	WIS
As long as I am able to see changes for the better as a result of the work I do, caring for the environment will have a positive impact. However if I don't see younger volunteers replacing our aging group I fear the work we have done will be reversed and this will dishearten me.	STW
Continued degradation and lack of respect for nature erodes my emotional health which as mentioned before, governs all other aspects of my health	
Thoughts like is my impact even counting for anything?	STW
I am able to counteract (all) my negative thoughts about the destruction of the environment, buy myself and others, and the what I see as the continuing, and increasingly rapid, decline in amount and health of the natural environment.	STW
Improved mental and emotional well-being	STW
I hopefully stay half sane	STW
Positive. Provides community connection, a sense of purpose, immersion in nature	COL
depression when seeing the lack of Govt support and damage caused by prescribed burning	STW
I'm a more positive, empowered person who can contribute to the future wellbeing of our planet	STW
Working with people helps. Sometimes you disagree with some, but that's human nature and you have to find ways to mediate and get along with them, even if you have opposing views. Immersing yourself in nature I am sure takes stress from the mind and body	COL
Empowerment, joy, wonder, spiritual nourishment, peace	ICH
It increases my understanding of the natural world and my appreciation of it, I don't need to focus on myself.	STW
Keeps me balanced, stable and able to perform at my best	STW
Helps with sense of purpose and doing the right thing for the environment	STW



## Appendix F – Online \_ Question 21 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your mental and/ or emotional health when actively caring for the environment ? CONNECTION BETWEEN STW AND MENTAL HEALTH - ACTIVITY. TEMPERED WITH KNOWLEDGE	Caring Principle
We are all part of the same system and our emotional and physical health are all linked so everyone and everything benefits when we care about any part of the system	SYM
increased sense of resilience	WIS
Peace of mind	STW
belief that caring for environment also positive for sense of well being	STW
Overall good physical and mental good health	ICH
See above	
Be in Country keeps you connected not only physically but also spiritually; therefore, you can only feel happy.	ICH
Less anxiety and worry	STW
Connection to earth, more grounded	SYM
More peaceful and content	ICH
Actively caring for the environment keeps me learning, active and connected to a wide community. It motivates me to keep learning and socially engaged as I age!	COL
Actively looking after the environment gives you purpose, a sense of being part of something bigger than yourself, and hope for our natural world.	STW
sense of hope and connection with country	SYM
As above- mentally, physically and emotionally I feel better when actively connected to the natural environment	STW
Feel good a lot of the time but some frustrations also.	STW
Improves	STW
Calm, serenity, increased regards for others.	STW
Living in harmony with our environment releases good endorphins	ICH
Being in nature is calming and help clear the mind and focus on what's important.	STW
This is vital and such an important aspect of the work	STW
Given the environment is under threat on every spatial scale the condition of the environment is a source of anxiety and leads to constant awareness of loss. Not necessarily good for your emotional and mental health.	WIS
All positive	STW
Positivity at contributing to make something better	STW

## Appendix G – Online \_ Question 22 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your understanding of nature when actively caring for the environment ?	Caring Principle
Greater understanding of impacts of decisions ( both personal and political).	WIS
Sense of belonging through caring	COL
Rehabilitate of us and Boodjar	SYM
You learn so much more about where you live and the creatures of all sizes who inhabit this landscape with us.	WIS
Deepening the understanding of the relationship between humans, animals and all of the natural world can only happen when we actively interact with, in a caring manner, our natural environment.	SYM
Positive to gain understanding	WIS
Start to question Govt dept decisions in managing parks etc	STW
It improves my knowledge and understanding	WIS
I am not sure that all the surveying and monitoring is too invasive.	WIS
It's need to express, expand & interlink itself.	WIS
Knowing how important it is to look after what we have. To keep the biodiversity that is essential to sustain the ecosystem and all that rely on it.	SYM
Deepened understanding of biodiversity in general and also understanding of human systems and human nature - the good and not so good.	WIS
Long term impacts on my understanding of nature is an unusual question to ask! This would be valid for people how have cared for the environment for a 'long time'. One thing I have learned over decades is repairing nature is incredibly hard and expensive. Destroying it can be easy and cheap. Farmers are forced to do both. We have no choice without a change in how we do things.	WIS
Learning from others, seeing how nature changes	WIS
I'm connected 24/7 being a farmer. And hopefully will leave my property better than when I found it.	STW
Greater awareness and appreciation for	WIS
Life long environmental care	STW
That my activities follow principles and practices of intact natural systems.	SYM
Helps you take a long term view, appreciate the complexities and eco systems	WIS
education	WIS
I learn more when I'm with people who know more than me.	
I learn new ways of seeing and enjoy looking at nature through different perspectives	WIS
It continues to improve and increase my understanding	WIS
As you work in natural resource management over time you tend to see how interconnected everything is. This is where wisdom begins. Leaving Uni you have lots of their and knowledge but have not connected the dots yet. This comes with time. This is why the Elders are so important.	SYM
I learn more every time I spend time with people who know more than me	COL
Both of my parents were teachers, and I have found I never tire of learning! As I get older I feel sorry for fight to protect the environment the future generations are going to have and am sorry that we, as humans, my own generation who can make a difference, are so ignorant.	STW
Life changing	WIS
Increasing knowledge and understanding of the natural world can only raise our appreciation of its beauty, complexity, vulnerability, and importance and inspire us all to actively care for it.	WIS
Increased ability to dwell with nature rather than to see nature and humanity in competition	SYM
COULD ONLY IMPROVE OUR UNDERSTANDING	WIS
An increased awareness of the interconnectedness of all life.	
I am constantly noticing and learning - and the simple joy of seeing various creatures and critters going about their lives brings comfort and delight and also models a way for humans to live fully.	SYM
Increase my knowledge and connection to nature	WIS
Connection with like-minded people. Friendships made	COL
Working = growth in understanding = rewarding feelings	STW
Always willing to learn	WIS
Insight into inter-relationship in nature	SYM
Slows me down. Encourages observation and curiosity as well as action.	STW
I can see how the bush is coming back, or in some areas at least the weeds are kept in check and not spreading further. Native animal and plant species can come back.	STW
more knowledge for protecting nature	WIS



## Appendix G – Online \_ Question 22 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your understanding of nature when actively caring for the environment ?	Caring Principle
I'm learning more about my local environment when I'm active in the bush - observing plants and animals understand it more	WIS
Improved understanding, empathy for nature	WIS
Interaction of multiple systems- soil, air water, pollution, people, critters large & small, biodiversity of plants & relationships between all of the above	WIS
Makes me feel better and increases my understanding and experience of nature. Also I can share my knowledge with others and encourage them to care for their bushland and plant local native species for wildlife - e.g. for Carnaby's Cockatoo, and other native bird species.	SYM
Encourage others to grow local native species.	
Encourage others to hand weed with a local friends group so that native species can flourish. Removing grassy weeds also reduces fire risk.	STW
I believe that compared to most white Australians, I have a very good knowledge and understanding of nature. But I know that we understand only a small fraction about the natural world. (1st)	WIS
Caring for environ gives you a chance to see things that you would not be able to see/learn otherwise e.g. being able to leave walking trails and get in amongst the bushland itself	WIS
become more connected with additional knowledge	WIS
Open the way for others, I want to develop a therapeutic nature base healing practice on country - however I still have a mortgage to service so looking at how I can do this. I want to set up a legacy for future generations that the native bushland is never cleared. Further I am working collaboratively with a Noongar Wadjuk cultural healer together with other bicultural allied health practitioners all of whom share this vision.	ICH
I've changed from a bushcare to an advocate for Bushland and even taking on some activist actions	STW
I love figuring out how to do environmental restoration better, it is a major motivator for me. It is great to try new approaches to problems and see what works, then based on that information, try to improve still further.	STW
I am constantly learning and am constantly amazed and delighted in the natural world, it is just so astounding and precious.	WIS
Increases daily	WIS
I'm amazed at the resilience of nature but also coming to realise how easily it can be destroyed - e.g. the death of so many trees in the summer of 2023/24. I am coming to believe that we are close to many environmental tipping points.	WIS
every day you learn	WIS
how everything is related	SYM
Greatly increased and expanded	WIS
I learn more about it and how vital it is to preserve what we have left.	WIS
Continuous learning and able to mentor others.	STW
Actively caring brings a greater understanding of different types of environments and one's own connection to it. A feeling of one with nature	SYM
I learn something new every time, thanks to my fellow worker's knowledge. I am becoming aware of how we must preserve the bushland remnants around our city, as well as in rural areas	STW
Passion	ICH
More understanding of interrelationships such as symbiosis	SYM
Observation and engagement in nature is key to understanding	WIS
Contact with nature e.g. flora survey, litter collection, means time to observe, consider and learn. Builds knowledge over time e.g. birds in area, when plants flowering. Also aids contemplation; what was the area like before, how has it changed, what should we manage towards?	WIS
We learn more as we participate. lifelong learning.	
Understanding of ecology is important - and should be taught as a specific subject in schools.	WIS
My understanding of nature deepens. I feel a great sense of connection to the planet and consolation from the problems of the world.	WIS
When we understand and observe nature, we align with Natural Lore, which is essential to happy healthy life	SYM
After 20+ years of working the same area I have a good understanding of the biodiversity and various plant communities. However with the drying and heating of the climate the long term impacts are unpredictable other than to assume the decrease in survival rates for seedlings as experienced in recent years will continue.	STW
My understanding grows daily but the complexities of caring for nature have become harder	STW
Increased knowledge and care	WIS
greater connection a desire to encourage others to connect	COL
Very beneficial. Constantly learning new facts about the environment and how to care for it	STW
Amazement at the diversity & complexity at how ecosystems function i.e. enhanced commitment	WIS
As you work in it you learn so much. Sometimes with citizen science you are adding new knowledge and certainly adding to your own knowledge. Nature and biodiversity is being changed by humans perhaps as never before	WIS
Learning about interconnected relations. It is forgiving and resilient and complex	SYM

## Appendix G – Online \_ Question 22 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your understanding of nature when actively caring for the environment ?	Caring Principle
Increased knowledge of the fauna and flora of the bush land we look after.	STW
You can be better with your efforts and not have any unintended consequences	STW
As the climate is changing we are constantly learning to adapt as well	WIS
The more you are involved, the more you understand and the better your ability to help support our environment	STW
Better knowledge to retain and share.	STW
The more I learn about aspects of nature the better I understand the world around me and how I interact with it, or not	WIS
Appreciation factor is huge. I get to witness firsthand how amazing nature is	WIS
Actively caring for the environment helps keep me "in tune" with nature, keeps me up to speed with plant identification, etc.	STW
learning how we are totally dependent on each other	SYM
Significant. Knowing the names and identity of locally indigenous native species allows me to recognise them when I am out and about, or in our forest-garden, and see them as friends. This part of recognising the impact of our work.	STW
Awe and a great enthusiasm to learn more. Contributes to lifelong learning and an continuously active mind.	WIS
Once you know you can't unknow. Now I know I can not be any other way than being involved.	WIS
I am always learning more about the complexity and interconnections of our natural world.	WIS
Hopefully I can continue to effective ways of carrying for the environment & be able to pass this on to others.	STW
Constantly learning how the environment works and the importance of environmental ecology to human health	WIS
A much more extensive and deeper understanding of the specific species and ecosystems in the local area, and the pressures they are experiencing. An ability to then educate others about this.	STW
You learn so much more about the components of your local environment and how they are connected when taking part of activities within it.	SYM
Definitely a deeper understanding. Working close to nature over time provides an opportunity to understand temporal changes.	WIS
Always learning and helps in decision making for environment and also helps to educate others who join in	STW
It will never be the same again regardless of how much is done but to keep on doing it to give a buffer to those area yet undisturbed	STW
Our understanding of how nature works, thrives and our human impact on nature is greatly increased by actively caring for nature. Increasing knowledge is an important part of good landcare community engagement.	STW
Converting Explorer into Disciple	WIS
Understanding the importance of conservation for humans, the earth, and our climate; changing my behaviours to better align with my values that are informed by nature understanding; sharing knowledge with friends and family on nature, such as shared interests in birds, fish, gardening, growing food, etc.	STW
100% learning and sharing knowledge.	STW
Positive	WIS
it reinforces the understanding of the cycles of life	WIS
Overall more knowledgeable and able to share that with my child and others.	STW
Constantly learning new things.	WIS
The more we learn about our surrounding environment, the more we can protect and conserve in a specific way to suit the area	STW
We are part of nature	SYM
Enormous. So much more than just reading books or scientific papers. I've been in the same place for nearly two decades now and know the seasons and their variability, the patterns of local flora and fauna and some of their interactions much much better now. My understanding is also suffused with awe and respect for the greater whole comprised of the many species, populations and ecological communities that surround me. I've really enjoyed learning to 'read' landscapes, such as soil substrates, or patterns of natural vegetation recovery, over the years and look forward to learning much more.	WIS
It continues to train my ever enquiring mind and provides me with companionship with those who feel likewise. And it encourages me to enjoy physical exercise.	ICH
More in depth knowledge through observation.	WIS
The understanding of nature is deepened by actively being involved with ecological restoration projects and makes me advocate strongly for protection of biodiversity in my local area and more generally.	STW



## Appendix G – Online \_ Question 22 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your understanding of nature when actively caring for the environment ?	Caring Principle
You cannot care for the environment or nature without understanding the importance of climate change and how the long term effects. I actively plant trees, seedlings wherever I am in my environment and have for more than 30 years. If we all did this, it is one small benefit to a large problem. If I could say one thing to anyone who loves their environment. Care for and plant trees. (Sometimes /often this is relocating native seedlings to areas where they can thrive) this provides for wildlife and people/ planet	STW
The more you actively interact and listen the more you become a part of rather than a part from. We can't care for things we stand apart from.	SYM
Sense of holistic awareness of my place in the cosmos. While mostly positive, it also makes me realise our environment and humanity's precarious position	WIS
Seeing more and doing more makes you understand that small things can make a difference	STW
creates an awareness of nature's cycles	WIS
Supports the native plants and animals to survive	STW
Every I am out in nature I learn something new and exciting.	WIS
Understanding nature is an ongoing process and we, as human beings, won't comprehend nature in whole.	WIS
Cementing knowledge	WIS
If everyone cared we would all be living in a healthier environment instead of teetering on the edge of disaster.	WIS
Improving mental capacity	ICH
Better insight and connection to nature	WIS
My understanding of nature is growing and enabling me to share with and engage others as I am able to be more effective in working with nature.	STW
The more I learn as I care for the environment in my area the more I notice in other areas, and I can share that knowledge with friends and family and pass knowledge onto my children.	STW
Lots! It spurs my interest so I identify plants and birds and learn about the whole ecosystem	WIS
The more I work in nature the more I appreciate and understand deep ecology and how ecosystems sustain themselves	WIS
I learn something every day or week. Today I learned that a "Kangaroo Apple" Solanum linnaeanum is a toxic Declared plant. Our endemic species is Solanum symonii.	WIS
Improves	WIS
Much increased understanding	WIS
Peace	WIS
Keenly observing nature and understanding the complexities and interconnectedness help in motivation to do more.	STW
Massively improved - it directly increases understanding and prompts other opportunities and interests	WIS
Making better decisions	WIS
Learning with head, hands & hearts together	WIS
Feeling a sense of connection to the environment around you.	SYM
Pass knowledge down	STW
Helps me feel less powerless in face of global heating and erosion of democracy by oligarchs	STW
1) Can be comprehensive because of the sharing of info etc 2) Can focus on the 'saving' and neglect need to keep up with changing understanding of our diff natural environments	STW
Making better choices, and sharing knowledge with others of what worked in the past, how to improve environmental restoration	STW
I feel we can all make a positive contribution in some way towards securing a better life for all those that can't speak for themselves. Protecting, maintaining and restoring biodiversity. What we have is unique.	STW
I can share this knowledge with other people and encourage people to care for the environment.	STW

## Appendix H – Online \_ Question 23 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your community and/ or family when actively caring for the environment ?	Caring Principle
Community and family are better informed and more involved with on the ground and other activities ( e.g. activism).	STW
Connection smiling, chatting, trading tips	COL
Possibility and hope.	WIS
A sense of togetherness, of shared purpose. The creation of a community identity. One that supports the environment and helps it flourish.	COL
Positive bonding, undertaking a meaningful task as a group builds a sense of belonging and purpose and connection.	COL
Helps to bring the community together	COL
Constant protesting and negative thoughts are not healthy	WIS
A grounding reference point to relate to each through.	COL
A sense of well being and giving back	STW
Helping to preserve the environment for future generations of beings and building awareness into younger generations.	STW
From decades of experience we are financially worse off, by far. By caring for the environment we are emotionally better off, despite less well off in dollar terms. Physical health wise, we are streets in front - only because buying fresh food from the supermarket is now too expensive, so we grow our own food (much better flavour and healthier).	WIS
Doing something meaningful together	COL
We all feel better and my community could thrive when we are doing the right thing by caring for our environment.	SYM
Future ecosystem services	STW
Good food, healthy surrounds, sense of well being	ICH
Brings diverse people together	COL
We learn to share, care and collaborate more	COL
For a proportion of the community they realise that caring for the environment is crucial to their long term health, as do my family	ICH
It is a unifying thing at the community level to cooperatively care for the environment. Nothing binds a community better than a community tree planting day.	COL
We all learn to care, share and collaborate	COL
We have a great mob here who socially and physically love to bog in and have a go. We enjoy working together.	STW
If the goal of caring for the environment is to preserve or raise awareness of the importance of preservation, and the precariousness of nature, then caring is a sustainable practice with legacy	STW
Community and family involvement in caring for the environment does have a demonstrable impact on them as well as practical benefits arising from that involvement.	COL
Greater sense of community spirit and solidarity	COL
HELPS BRING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER	COL
Greater awareness of how humans are part of a web of life - every part of which is essential to survival. I have a daughter who has been involved with forest protection for over 30 years - her children grew up with that involvement and have a deep awareness of how all life is related. (1st connect)	SYM
Great for community, brings community together, gives a good focus	COL
Bring community and family together	COL
Community bonding	COL
Protecting the land for future generations	STW
Unknown	
we learn about working together and caring for each other.	COL
There is a common bond in the community. People are more receptive of accepting that we need to change our behaviour in regards to recycling, renewable energy, more aware how fragile the environment is, how easy we can destroy it. An urgency and dissatisfaction with government to be more of an accelerant to do more for the environment. A disbelief that the environment- natural resources are still harvested instead of the government doing more that we recycle more. That we still lose our jarrah Forrest to aluminium .	STW
good community relationships	COL
As above, I feel I am doing what I can , although I can't be an active member of my group often, I support when I can. The long term benefits are a ripple effect when caring for your environment. I truly believe, and this is another First Nation's belief, when you care for your environment, it cares for you. It is a living thing after all	SYM



## Appendix H – Online \_ Question 23 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your community and/ or family when actively caring for the environment ?	Caring Principle
A sense of well being, home making, fulfilment, integration, underlying joy	ICH
Understanding	WIS
Hopefully encouraging more people to actively look after the environment and pass on something healthy and beautiful to future generations	STW
focus on outdoor activities and the awareness subtle (or dramatic as may be the case) changes in the environment	WIS
Maintenance of these environments shows a healthy and wise community	STW
There are huge benefits to my community - for example I set up a Community Repair CoOp and an online space for people to share local ways we can help our nature.	COL
I guess, it leaves a legacy and an example for the younger generation.	STW
Next generation, showing the way for family.	STW
We might survive, climate change is putting huge pressure on available water and ability to grow food, the impact of stripping vast forested tracts of land is irreversible it seems. The insatiable need to build and expand into such a dry and fragile continent doesn't look like slowing anytime soon.	WIS
Increased community spirit	COL
More ownership of managing issues when invested in caring for country	STW
Caring for the environment connects me to my daughter, who is a landscape architect, and to many in the community who also care about the environment.	COL
Getting my children involved in actively caring for the environment will hopefully give them an understanding of what can be done in the future	STW
We live in a small bush community where lots of people share the same interest. Great for community building.	COL
Commitment to caring for the environment is a shared value that brings us together for the common good	COL
Hopefully the community will benefit like me. They will learn and care for our country.	STW
Greater social cohesion	COL
Builds knowledge, care and respect	COL
Connection with other like minded people who become friends	COL
When actively caring for the environment I am a more balanced person so can be more present with family and the community.	STW
This definitely strengthens community and is an important connector for a significant portion of our local community	COL
Increases social capital and resilience	COL
Wonderful for the littlest people who feel powerless much of the time but feel they can make a difference if a birdie gets hurt.	STW
Potentially binding	COL
Positive	
Connecting with others improves social networks	COL
Ultimately, I am neglecting my partner, fam, friends etc. i.e. I am choosing to put my time & energy into our natural environment.	
I also acknowledge & give HUGE shout out to my partner Grecian and all other fam, friends, neighbours, colleagues etc of US ALL who support our efforts. Without heir support & understanding we all would not be able to do what we do.	COL
building social bonds with other like-minded members helps you feel like your not alone and empowers you to take action	STW
Unity - having a common interest and goal is what makes a community. People who live in an area for a long time can see change for the better in our local patch. We are making a difference, so that is a reward for our efforts.	COL
Physical health improvements.	ICH
positive connection for community	COL
they understand it more	WIS
Closer community groups, chance to foster smaller communities in touch with the environment on which we're dependant	COL
I'm a calmer person able to see things in perspective. Unsure about community impact - some see the work & care we do -others are "blind" to the natural environment & continue to use & abuse with gay abandon!	ICH

## Appendix H – Online \_ Question 23 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your community and/ or family when actively caring for the environment ?	Caring Principle
Enjoyment of nature and well being is increased.	
Increased canopy cover helps reduce the heat island effect.	SYM
I don't know. I can only hope that we can make a positive difference for future generations	STW
provides an outlet to meet and connect with others, especially other like-minded people	COL
Better connected	COL
It is necessary for our survival as a human species, the disconnection of human and nature and the short term extractive mentality of profits over nature is a criminal act. We need to take care of country for the survival of the human species.	SYM
A happier person	ICH
I like passing on to children and young people the knowledge that I've gained, particularly if I can find a way for them to work at scale so that they can achieve outcomes much bigger than they imagined. I want to build in them the confidence to tackle large scale environmental problems.	STW
I think it builds a sense of stewardship, and that we have greater understanding of our impacts on nature and understanding what we can and need to do to restore and conserve the natural world.	STW
Some members of the community definitely bond when caring for the environment - but it's a minority of the population. Many people couldn't care less - or will only get involved when they are directly threatened by a situation (e.g. housing development next to them).	COL
improved mental health and breathable air, urban cooling	SYM
better environment for everyone to enjoy and benefit from	SYM
Influencing others to care for the environment	STW
It makes community happy knowing people are actively looking after their local bushland.	STW
Their involvement	STL
I find some surprised at my enthusiasm but feel a positive feedback that it is a good thing to do and needs to be done. Hopefully some will become involved when they can.	STW
The area I volunteer in, is attached to a school. Students help revegetate by planting native plants each year. They also use the area for learning about First Nation history. Hopefully it will instil in them a respect for our unique flora and fauna	WIS
less community friction	COL
Builds community around meaning	COL
Build awareness of and appreciation for nature, support for conservation. Social connections for personal and community resilience. Can provide people with a sense of purpose and place - a touchstone amidst personal and social change.	COL
Intergenerational equity for my children to life a healthy life on Mother Earth.	COL
When we work together with family and community, our relationships deepen and our connection to country deepens.	COL
Unfortunately the majority of the community don't appreciate the gains made ( weed removal, dune stabilisation, biodiversity increase etc) and its unlikely this will change.	STW
Strengthening of relationships over this common connection	COL
Showing what can be done	STW
greater connection, improved well-being, improvement of environmental regeneration	COL
maybe I can inspire others	COL
Positive. Creates a sense of cohesion and supports the work of local government. Also increases awareness and involvement in other issues or projects that affect the local environment	STW
helps them begin to understand nature	WIS
I'm a more caring, responsible, contributing citizen	ICH
Anger management must be a positive as you feel better within yourself and try to treat others better. Because of working with other people you learn new ways of existing with them, unlike feeling isolated	COL
Inter-generational learning, resilience, empowerment	COL
Everyone can enjoy it.	COL
Better connection, understanding, better respect, makes people understand what they have, the pressures and threats and helps them to value and love what we have and helps them to become ambassadors and help us to protect what we have	WIS
A community working together is better connected and therefore more cohesive and interactive/ healthy	COL
Being part of community is HUGE!	COL
My family get to see me setting an example on how to help the community by volunteering. The community also see the same.	COL



## Appendix H – Online \_ Question 23 coded responses

Briefly, what do you think are long-term impacts on your community and/ or family when actively caring for the environment ?	Caring Principle
People feel like they can engage in environmental activities in any way that is meaningful to them - there are a large number of ways folk can contribute meaningfully to the environment, in a way that works for them, without feeling like they need to do everything. It's a big job and we can work together to achieve a lot together, in many different but important ways.	
Long term, this provides the chance to engage in different ways, build diverse skills and support each other to be involved where and when people are comfortable.	COL
Everyone benefits. If my mental and physical wellbeing is good then everyone around me benefits from that	ICH
Such activities help to bring people together through a common cause and to build shared understanding and acceptance of responsibilities toward the environment.	COL
activities of this nature will always strengthen and bring a community together	COL
Builds community and "social capital".	
Check Wendell Berry's definition of "community" to see what I mean.	COL
Setting an example. Encouraging their curiosity and desire to support nature.	STW
I take others on environmental walks to inform them of what we have and what's at risk.	STW
We all need natural areas for recreation, fresh air and sometimes just appreciation of beauty.	SYM
It is important to leave a healthy environment for future generations.	STW
Essential for physical and mental health and a feeling of belonging to a community that cares for the long term health of the local environment as well as the whole planet!	SYM
I am able to develop personal connections within the community that I wouldn't otherwise have, reducing my own isolation. And likewise, I can give others opportunities to feel connected to their community by helping them or encouraging them to engage in the same/similar activities. It also creates a better physical environment for my community. And gives them hope that change for the better is possible, and that there's people who care. It also encourages people to engage in more pro-social behaviour in general.	COL
Many of my friends and family have not been interested in actively caring for the environment.	COL
A natural asset is maintained for them because government agencies do little. It is good for younger family members to have environmental stewardship modelled to them.	STW
A sense of belonging and caring which links everyone	COL
gaining a better understanding and eventually love of our land to be able to care for it as a part of their daily actions	WIS
Actively caring for the environment brings communities together and nurtures a common purpose and networking function. Community caring for place is very powerful.	COL
Connectedness, growth, resilience, pride, satisfaction	ICH
Shared community vision and goals; cooperation and respect; cultivating sense of stewardship and purpose	STW
I feel you start a trend that can only get stronger.	STW
All positive	
Cleaner air, more birds and wildlife, green spaces - all of which are needed for good health	SYM
Stronger bonds and relationships. A sense of shared purpose.	COL
I am a happier person so good to be around.	ICH
Its a great way of meeting like minded people and getting involved in a group of people outside of your friends and family	COL
Human community is part of nature. We thrive together or not at all	SYM
Apart from my husband worrying I'm 'doing too much' they've been very beneficial. I've made many close friends, many professional type relationships and connections, established groups that reach more people over time, and helped change local conversations about gardening, landscaping, natural areas management and environmental repair more generally.	COL
I like me to believe that I can impart some enthusiasm to appreciate the environment by talking with them and by accompanying them on bush adventures.	STW
Hopefully improvements become self perpetuating	COL
I think standing up for caring for country and being active in local projects models these values and activities to others. My grandchildren for example are great supporters of Nannas for Native Forests, of whom I am one. (its connect)	STW

## Appendix I – Online \_ Question 27 coded responses

Your contribution is appreciated – before you hit 'done' is there anything else you'd like to add? *profanities not appreciated!	Caring Principle	Polarity
My life's worth	STW	NEU
Thank you for this piece of research, it is critical more people understand that to be well we have to care for the environment around us, it has to be well also.	SYM	POS
I have difficulties answering all those questions. Is actively caring for the environment only in workgroups or can it also be making people aware of issues in just a simple conversation? And in dealing with waste and consciously buying local and/or organic / used food/clothes/ things? And transport. Etc...		
Which I have been doing everywhere I was/am on this beautiful planet...I might see it more as an attitude	WIS	NEU
If any other species was in plague proportions, doing so much damage to nature on which they depend, as are humans there would be an eradication programme. I am serious.	STW	NEG
To reject nature is to reject ourselves. To care for nature is to love ourselves. (I've remembered this from another's wisdom for sure :D)	SYM	POS
I appreciate all the good work that environmental agencies do. I only wish it was backed up and recognised more by governments and all politicians	STW	NEU
Families of any background who have a long history of caring for the environment understand what they are doing - and that it will be a hard slog. We saw our parents and grandparents do it, all with no real direct financial gains to be had. We know it's a 'mugs game', but we care because it is what is right. We understand it only takes one generation to wipe out a lifetimes work, but we do it anyway.		
We largely do it anonymously and we largely use our own money, time, and labour. We know no one will pat us on the back being 'good farmers'. But we keep going - ignoring all the armchair critics who have little experience, seemingly just wanting low-quality low-cost calories to arrive like magic. We're lucky to be outside in nature 99% of the day finding out how the world really works! :)	WIS	NEU
I think lots of research needs to be done into the OVERALL cost to the environment of EV transport and alternative power generation compared to dare I say nuclear energy.	WIS	NEU
Ecosystem health is long extant as a guiding principle, using medical models to view human - environment interactions. nothing new	SYM	NEU
I am encouraged by the younger people I meet who are actively caring for, and about, country. If they continue to be able to lead, nature's future is n good hands	STW	POS
Our govt and govt agencies really need to get a grip on what caring for our environment looks like. Until they realise we have to live with natural risk and limit their interaction with it to control and/or exploitation our natural areas are going to continue to deteriorate	STW	NEG
Sometimes it feels like two steps forward, one step back and it would be easy to be discouraged without support of like-minded people with enthusiasm and energy.	COL	POS
During my life caring for the environment has been part of my natural lifestyle. Only in the last decade has there been more of an awareness on my part as to how important it is for others who are not so fortunate to have an opportunity to get involved, to become part of a comm unity and to make new friends working towards a common goal. I'm happy to help create opportunities for others to learn about that resilience; physically, mentally and socially. They all work together to make a much stronger community.	STW	POS
Perhaps the global challenges of climate change to human health and the survival of major ecosystems like coral reefs and multiple other vulnerable and threatened species could have been included in the survey. However, I do appreciate the more focused scope of the survey.	WIS	NEU
THANKS FOR THE OPPORTUNITY		
Until we all recognise the interconnectedness of all life on Earth, humanity will have an impact on the natural world that will have bring about thousands of extinctions and alter this beautiful planet irrevocably. All for money. It's a tragedy beyond my comprehension.	SYM	NEG
In caring for the environment we care for ourselves and our communities. It goes hand in hand.	SYM	NEU
We have to protect what we have left for our own well being.	SYM	NEU
Climate change is real. Local actions are a critical pathway forward.		
When I suggested in 2004 to the friends of the Porongurup to go back to our roots and restart a weeding group, I was told that if I would take it up and lead people would come. And they did!!		
To start and lead a volunteer weeding group was a long term time, financial and mental commitment, which should not be underestimated.	STW	NEU
please stop cutting down native forests		
Thank you for all those who love and care for our environment	COL	POS
Thanks		
Thank you		
Any effort to support our beautiful environment is a help...well done to you all !	STW	POS
Creates life work balance	ICH	POS
Becoming actively involved in working in a regional park has changed my life in ways I never imagined. And I truly feel that I can make a difference.	WIS	POS



## Appendix I – Online \_ Question 27 coded responses

<b>Your contribution is appreciated – before you hit 'done' is there anything else you'd like to add?</b> <b>*Profanities not appreciated!</b>	<b>Caring Principle</b>	<b>Polarity</b>
Would love to see more people putting in native gardens and welcoming native animals, birds and pollinators into their gardens.	STW	NEU
Gondwana Link is an amazing organization and it's success inspires me and fills me with hope.	STW	POS
We are now living in an age where everything hangs in the balance- highlighting the need for action	STW	NEU
Listen with ears and hearts to the sounds of nature	SYM	NEU
Thanks for asking!		
Less mowing employees & more bushcare employees		
Interesting that you asked about gender and age but but not cultural background or class. I find many bush regen groups full of lovely people but mostly Anglo Saxon and middle class.		
Gr8 survey. Made me stop & think. Xx		
Thank you! hope to see this survey can become used in research and policy reform to demonstrate the important role caring for environment has promoting human health	WIS	POS
Like many, I hope to make a difference.	STW	POS
I would love more consultation with our first nations people but this to be at an affordable rate. If requiring consultation it is generally far too expensive and therefore people don't/ orgs/NFP do not do it or engage FN people.		
I own 5 acres in the south and would love it a government funder org provided FN people for education the caring of the land and animals. This native bush unfenced.	COL	NEU
Knowing what others are doing in this caring for nature is always enlightening & up lifting to the spirit. So much goes on that probably doesn't get talked about enough	COL	POS
We need to get more community folk in touch with nature AND learning about their local native species and growing them. Especially growing food for Carnaby's and other native birds etc - called by a group as 'Garden Wilding'.		
MUCH MORE government funding for nature conservation is needed. Protection of endangered TECs and species, and restoration and revegetation of TECs is needed. Especially in the endangered Banksia Woodlands of the SCP TEC; and especially in the critically endangered Wheatbelt Woodlands.		
Also control of invasive species needs MUCH MORE government funding - especially for cat control, as well as for invasive weeds.		
Prescribed burning on the Swan Coastal Plain must be stopped.	STW	NEU
I answered don't know to previous few questions because I've never not actively cared for the environment. I'm also a member of many different environment related community groups but active in about 3. Close connection to the environment for me goes beyond some of the concepts you are asking people to choose between. It involves love, compassion, passion, kindness and deep connection.	WIS	NEU
WA governments never do the right thing when it comes to protecting our environment. Future generations will weep at the stupidity	WIS	NEG
I hope more people wake up to the importance of our connection with nature and this is inclusive of growing your own food. Simple things walking bare footed, feeling the sun on your skin, getting dirt on your hands, listening to the leaves rustles while watching the honey eaters interact does not cost anything - we are conditioned to believe and consume other things that do not support our wellbeing.	WIS	NEU
For Qs 25 & 26. I went into the activities without many expectations about what I was going to achieve, I just wanted to do positive things. I gradually became aware of how big the issues are and how little impact I was having on them, hence my answers of below expectations for both questions. I hope the kids I come into contact with will remember the experiences later in life and be motivated to become involved in ecosystem restoration.	STW	NEG
Thank you, best of luck in leveraging significantly more support for the urgent, critical task of 'caring for country'.	STW	POS
We must preserve what little of nature we have left.	STW	NEU
Thank you		
Obstruction by local government administrators is number one impediment to community benefiting achievements	WIS	NEG
Re Q26 I see that helping sustain the community of life around us needs more that on ground work by volunteers. There are many pressures on 'nature' that come from our economic, political and social ways of thinking. Systemic changes to reorient our shared values and stories and so change how society relates to 'the natural environment' are fundamental to addressing the 'poly crisis' we are in. So my 'don't know' answer above reflects my sense that the current path society is on cannot be sustained.	WIS	NEG
Climate change is already having a big impact on the environment and biodiversity. How do we plan for an unknown future?	STW	NEU
Thanks for asking the questions and proving the space for myself and others to reflect.		
Need to promote the efforts, results and benefits of volunteering	COL	POS
For all the good work and the active people responding to this survey, the destructive industries and the government that support them do us all a natural injustice.	WIS	NEG
Thanks to all involved in caring for the environment		
Love your work - thank you!		
Environmental activities have diversified so much in recent years, as the movement has matured and diversified. And the task seems so big in the face of global issues and what can be done locally. But this feeling can be attenuated by the knowledge that many people, working for purpose, are making a big difference to how our community act and feel towards today's environmental challenges.		
Celebrating stories, sharing challenges and expecting more from our governments and financial leaders (voting with our money as well as at the ballot box) can help our community address environmental challenges better together in the future.	COL	POS

## Appendix I – Online \_ Question 27 coded responses

Your contribution is appreciated – before you hit 'done' is there anything else you'd like to add? *profanities not appreciated!	Caring Principle	Polarity
Parks Victoria commissioned an excellent literature review, reported as The Health Benefits of Contact with Nature. There is much good work on Therapeutic Forest and Healing Gardens. The annual value of voluntary contributions to care of the environment has been assessed to be greater than the value of the mining industry. I had the honour and privilege to have had my contribution to Landcare recognised in 2024 as part an Order of Australia membership award. The voluntary sector is a most important part of care for our environment, and needs ongoing support, but not corporatisation.. Thank you for seeking wide community into your research	COL	POS
Encouraging Lifelong learning about nature and the environment is very important to instil in the younger generations if we hope for improvement in respect for the earth and improved health and wellbeing. Clearly something needs to be done about companies buying reports which are grossly inaccurate or inadequate. Fines and losses of licenses should be issued to those who set out to mislead.	STW	NEU
The wording of the questions was somewhat unclear. Hard to understand what exactly was being asked and how the questions differed from previous similar questions. But glad to see this survey being done.		
Q24-problematic to pick one of those things as most important. The one I picked: 'nature's resilience' doesn't make much sense. I picked it in lieu of "nature for its own sake" rather than my health/family etc. Even if a person finds their caring work has a big impact on their mental health, I'm not sure they would necessarily put this as "most important". I would say I'm doing the work because it has to be done, other things are side benefits. Hence I don't think you've picked the best way to capture what you are after. Unsolicited advice for next time: produce a shorter survey after longer pilot testing.	STW	NEU
Thanks for your commitment to caring for our natural environment Continued education to enable more of general public to understand what Landmark programmes etc are all about and how important they are to their own lifestyle and family health.	ICH	NEU
Connection with nature and successful small economies in regional areas	COL	NEU
Thank you for what you guys do. Very inspiring Thank you for your good work (:		
I volunteer in several ways, President of a Plants Society, administrator of many native plant groups on FB, and volunteer at a Council BushCare, and Landcare group, each week. Many others do multiple environmental tasks. I love to help the environment.	COL	POS
I've been caring for what Westerners call "the environment" all my life so the above questions don't make sense. Thanks for doing this survey and I really look forward to reading the results of the research!!!! We could really do with it round here where government funding for environmental care is declining or mal-invested (looking at you carbon and biodiversity offsets) and grant funding for environmental care is also largely declining (though with a few bright spots).	STW	NEU
Nature is a work of art and never ending beauty. That is what often attracts us to caring for it. Learning about how it works often begins there.	STW	POS
Keep up your great work!	WIS	POS
Being an active part of my community is of great value to me, and doing this in the service of protecting our natural environment is enormously fulfilling, as well as supporting my own physical and emotional wellbeing.	ICH	POS



## Appendix J – References

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