

*How did you come to be involved in NRM?*

Our involvement in NRM is a result of an awareness of land use impacts, first in the northern wheatbelt, and then in Denmark and the south coast. This awareness has been driven by our keen interest in the natural environment, its intricacies and an appreciation of the biodiversity of south west Australia. We have been actively involved in the voluntary conservation movement for many years. Katrina received a Churchill Fellowship in 1988 to further her study in recording and painting fungi and later co-authored a text book on fungi of Southern Australia, which was published by the University of Western Australia Press in 1998.

*What are your biggest achievements in NRM?*

For more than three decades, Katrina has been studying and documenting macrofungi, organising workshops, two conferences and an international symposium in Denmark. Through her work, she hopes to empower people in a closer observation of the workings of the natural environment – particularly the more cryptic organisms (such as fungi), the roles of which are not well enough understood.

I gain satisfaction in being part of the movement on the South Coast that gets things done. This has involved getting community organisations established and active and ensuring that all groups have a culture of good governance embedded in their operations.

*Who or what inspires you?*

We are inspired by the endlessly fascinating natural world around us and also by the dedication of the many people who volunteer their time and effort towards the promotion of conservation and the understanding and appreciation of nature.

*What do you hope to achieve in the next five years?*

Katrina intends continuing her research into the fungi in the South Coast NRM Region and finding time to publish the results of some of this research, including descriptions of new species she has found. Although the Karri and Tingle forests in the south west of the region are recognised by mycologists as hotspots for fungal diversity, they have never been systematically studied and Katrina hopes to focus her research in this area, while at the same time forming a fungal study group in order to pass on the knowledge of fungi she has acquired.

*What are the biggest challenges facing the South Coast environment and how can these be met?*

The biggest challenges facing the South Coast environment are reasonably well known. Just one area is the increasing degradation of vegetation – particularly the defoliation of eucalypt trees under attack by invertebrates, due to loss of habitat of their avian predators and exacerbated by the stress of continuing dry seasons. We feel that an all-encompassing approach is urgently needed in order to address the problems faced by the general decline in the natural environment, with collaboration between disciplines (which must include all the biota) and long-term rather than short term research.

