

**FREMANTLE
UNDERWATER
FILM
FESTIVAL**

2015 - 2025

10 Years of underwater stories



10-YEAR REPORT

ANNIVERSARY EDITION

The Fremantle Underwater Film Festival (FUFF) is a not for profit, independent, grassroots social and environmental movement towards better ocean health.

The FUFF is dedicated to making positive change for our blue planet.

We volunteer our time and energy to advocate for ocean health.

We created the FUFF to build a more sustainable world by bringing ocean stories, marine science and the transformational nature of the human-water connection into your life in creative ways.

The Fremantle Underwater Film Festival takes place on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Whadjuk people, their culture and important contributions to Land & Sea Country.

FUFF is screened annually around regional Western Australia, interstate and across the seas. The festival screens two hours of short films in two acts, with an interval in between acts.

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Tania Douthwaite

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*"The Ocean exists as
a fundamental reality of the earth.*

*Through that mirror you can see
the fundamental reality of yourself"*

—Carlos Eyles

Table of Contents

05

Our Vision & Mission

07

About FUFF

09

Our Story So Far

14

Impact

18

Our Strategy

19

Community Engagement

23

What's on the Horizon

27

Message from our Founder

28

Our Supporters & Partners

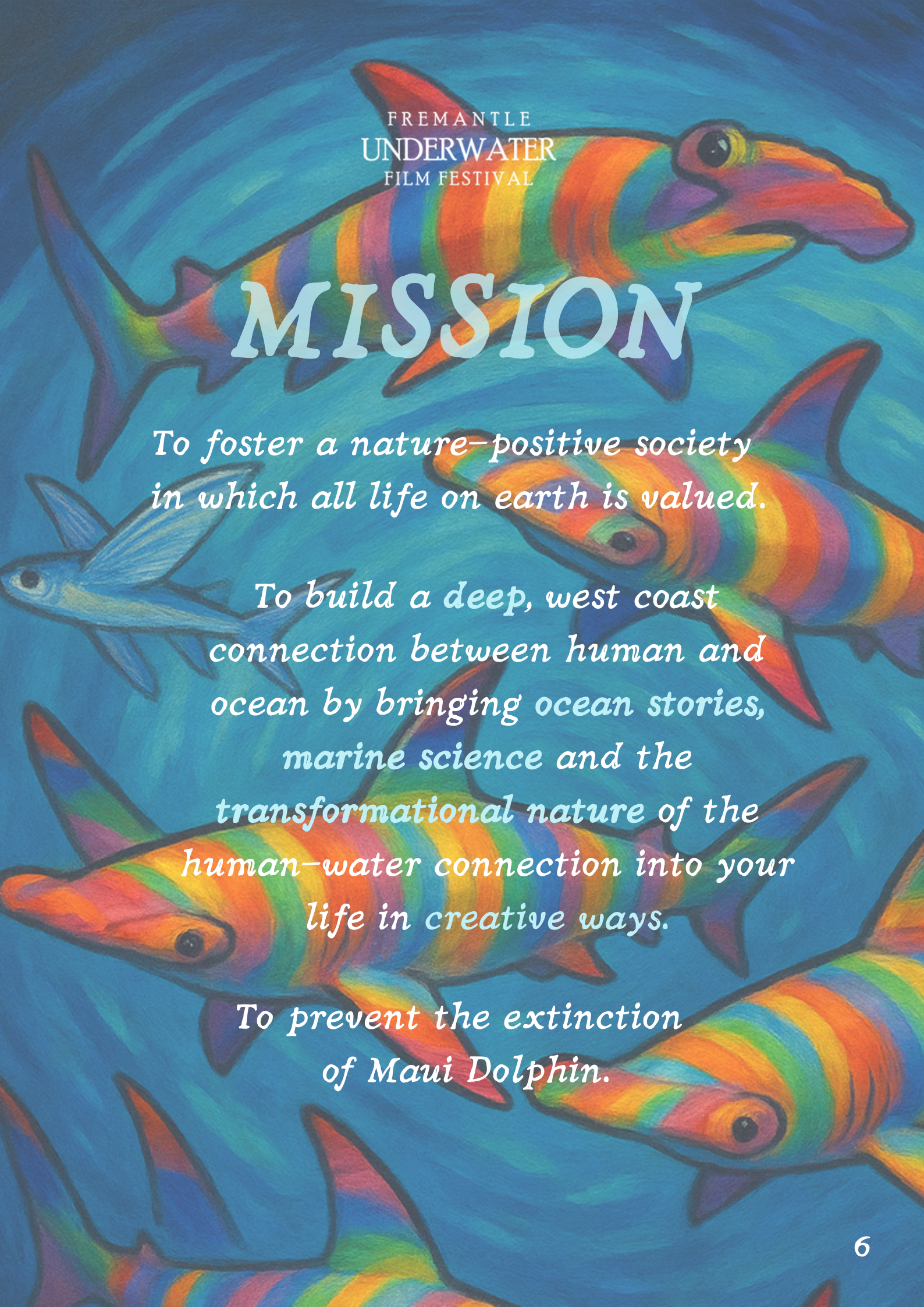


FREMANTLE
UNDERWATER
FILM FESTIVAL



VISION

*Healthy and connected,
west coast oceans and people*



FREMANTLE
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MISSION

*To foster a nature-positive society
in which all life on earth is valued.*

*To build a deep, west coast
connection between human and
ocean by bringing ocean stories,
marine science and the
transformational nature of the
human-water connection into your
life in creative ways.*

*To prevent the extinction
of Maui Dolphin.*

FREMANTLE
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VALUES

*We protect the **wild**, conserve
marine biodiversity, restore
degraded ocean ecosystems,
address direct threats to
biodiversity and work to **reduce**
our footprint on the Earth.*

*We recognize **the need to change**
the way we consume and the way
we produce.*





About

The Fremantle Underwater Film Festival is an independent, grassroots, not-for-profit social and environmental movement for better ocean health.

The annual Fremantle Underwater Film Festival is a celebration of the best underwater and marine-themed cinema from around the world. The films are handpicked to showcase the biodiversity and wonder of our oceans.

Founded in 2015, the Festival has grown from a small community gathering into a premiere event that highlights global and local underwater filmmaking talent, promotes marine conservation, and fosters community engagement around ocean issues.

The official screenings of the festival are held in Fremantle, Western Australia, with additional screenings organised in coastal towns around regional Western Australia, interstate and across the seas.

100% of ticket sales for the show go to direct action for marine biodiversity conservation.





FREMANTLE
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Our Story So Far

FOUNDED IN

2015

FREMANTLE, WA



131

FILMS
SHOWN



143

VOLUNTEERS
ENGAGED



32

SCREENINGS
HELD



12

VENUES
USED



5,480

TOTAL
AUDIENCE



\$104,407

FUNDS
RAISED



10 years at a glance

2015 – 2016

The Fremantle Underwater Film Festival was *born in 2015* at Kidogo Arthouse on Bathers Beach. Founder Tania Douthwaite established a radical model: *100% of ticket sales directly to marine conservation*. The inaugural festival featured 20 films alongside a Kraken Ocean Art exhibition. The event attracted 170 attendees and raised \$5,870 for the critically endangered Maui Dolphin.

FREMANTLE
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2015



In 2016, FUFF made its *first international expansion*, screening at Auckland University in the Maui Dolphin's homeland. Moving to Fremantle's Fibonacci Centre, the festival reached 210 attendees and raised \$5,033, establishing itself as a genuine grassroots force for ocean conservation.





2017 – 2018

2019 – 2020



2017 saw FUFF shift to **feature-length documentaries**, showcasing four films at the Port Beach Garden Bar. Money was raised for projection equipment that enabled FUFF's **first Regional Roadshow** in 2018, with screenings across southwest and northwest Western Australia that reached 1,200 people and raised \$13,503. 2018 also saw the inception of the **Mermantle** mental health programs, planting the seeds for a signature wellbeing initiative.



2019 became a defining year for **community advocacy**. The Ban Plastic Straws campaign gathered 5,000+ signatures, achieving policy changes and venue-wide bans. Four screenings including remote Coral Bay reached 1,400 attendees and raised \$20,278. The Perth College Kindergarten Kids earned the festival's **first standing ovation** for their film "Turtle's Journey". Covid-19 halted 2020 screenings, but saw the launch of the **Mermantle Calendar**, celebrating men's mental health through ocean connection.





2021 – 2022

2021 marked a triumphant return with **dual conservation focus**. The festival spotlighted Western Australia's critically endangered Green Sawfish while allocating \$10,000 to Maui & Hector's Dolphin Defenders. Young community member Joshua Gorm debuted as MC with mentorship, demonstrating FUFF's **commitment to developing future ocean advocates**. The festival raised \$27,898 from 950 attendees.

2022 focused on **strategic partnerships and development**. A formal partnership with City of Fremantle secured the Town Hall venue and a week-long festival format. Mentorship of seventeen-year-old Jaslyn Schipper helped develop the OceanLife Festival concept. A new website was launched and Instagram presence was established. This foundation-building year enabled FUFF's **evolution from film festival into a comprehensive ocean engagement platform**.



2023 – 2024

2023's *OceanLife Festival* transformed FUFF into a week-long celebration at Fremantle Town Hall. The innovative *Blue Yarns* program connected 20 ocean leaders directly with the community through engaging PechaKucha-style presentations and fish bowl discussion sessions. A community-created film competition, Fremantle Chamber Orchestra collaboration, and community workshops exploring ocean health rounded out the programming. With 1,000 attendees and \$18,560 raised, the festival exemplified how ocean engagement can thrive through using multiple creative formats.

2024 brought FUFF to the Fremantle Sailing Club, where the *Mermantle Men choir* made their debut, promoting ocean connection, camaraderie and self-expression through song. *Marion Le Crayon's* new logo refreshed the festival's identity while a silent art auction and second iteration of the community film competition showcased deepening community integration. The 2024 edition raised \$11,765 and confirmed FUFF's evolution into a multifaceted movement fostering wellbeing, creativity, and meaningful action for ocean health.



Impact

Fundraising

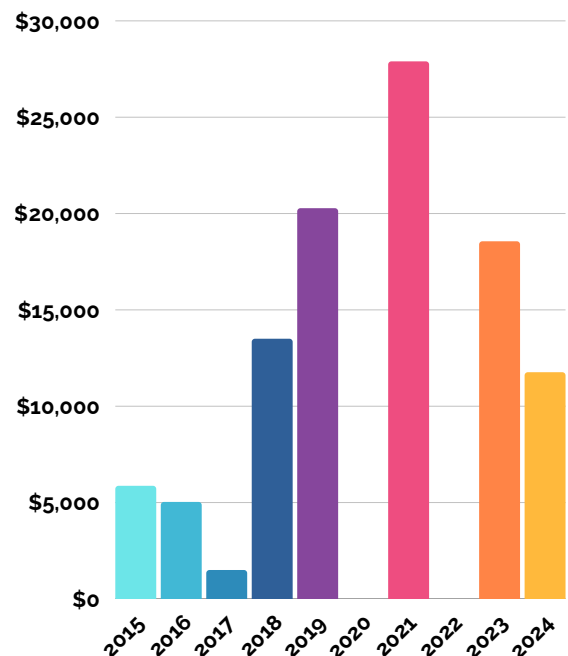
The Fremantle Underwater Film Festival raised a total of \$104,407 for marine conservation between 2015 and 2024.

Since its inception in 2015, all FUFF ticket sale proceeds have been donated to marine conservation initiatives.

*The **Maui & Hector's Dolphin Defenders** are our principal fundraising partner. Our donations support their work on the protection of the critically endangered Maui Dolphin in New Zealand.*

Fewer than 63 adult dolphins remain. Without concerted conservation efforts, this unique dolphin species will go extinct in our lifetimes.

Annual Amount of Funds Raised through Ticket Sales and other fundraising efforts.



*Our fundraising efforts have also supported the **Cape Conservation Group** and their initiatives to protect the endangered Green Sawfish in the Exmouth Gulf.*

Media and Partnerships



The film festival celebrates marine life.

Mystery and beauty of the ocean in focus

■ Shannon Smith

The precious nature that lies beneath the ocean will shine in all its glory when the Fremantle Underwater Film Festival comes to Albany this weekend.

In the Albany Town Square, 16 short underwater films by local and international filmmakers, both amateur and professional, will celebrate the diversity of the underwater world.

Director and founder of FUFF, Tania Douthwaite said she was on a mission to shift the paradigm of a human centred world because all life had value.

"The ocean is an unpredictable miracle of life, of community and of mystery," she said.

"I want people to be aware of its fragility and not take its health for granted. We each have a part to play in protecting biodiversity."

The big screen event will tour various locations in WA and include thought provoking and feel good

The ocean is an unpredictable miracle of life, of community and of mystery.

Tania Douthwaite

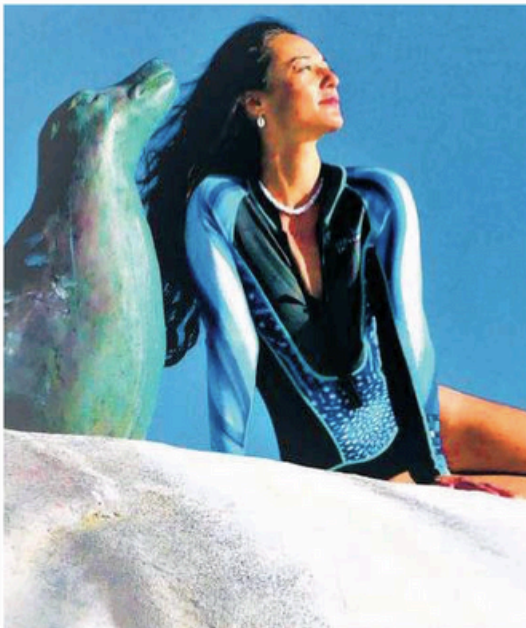
footage. Douthwaite said spreading awareness far and wide would hopefully encourage appreciation at a local level.

"The aim is to gain local perspectives of the FUFF to give it a more authentic WA flavour," she said. "I believe with faith, unity and love we can work together to restore the health of our oceans."

FUFF will take place in the Albany Town Square on Saturday from 5pm-10pm.

Tickets are available online at eventbrite.com.

They are also available on the Fremantle Underwater Film Festival Facebook page.



FUFF encourages a focus on ocean conservation.

The Fremantle Underwater Film Festival has built **strong relationships with local media** over the years to promote the festival, share stories about human connection to the sea, and talk about important ocean conservation efforts. Coverage on local radio and in a range of publications including the Fremantle Herald and Cinema Australia continue to cement the festival in Fremantle's annual cultural calendar.

FUFF thrives through local partnerships with venues, artists, town councils and the diving community. Visual artists from the Kraken Ocean Art Collective to Marion Le Crayon have helped shape the festival's identity. Partnerships with the City of Fremantle and City of Cockburn have enabled growth, and in-kind support from local diving businesses provides sustained support that keeps FUFF connected to its underwater roots.

Media and Partnerships



Partnerships with marine conservation causes such as Maui & Hector's Dolphin Defenders and Cape Conservation Group ensure ticket sales translate directly into on-the-ground conservation action.

Through these diverse collaborations, FUFF operates as a community movement weaving together artists, businesses, venues, media, and conservation organizations into a unified effort for ocean health.



**MAUI AND HECTOR'S
DOLPHIN
DEFENDERS**





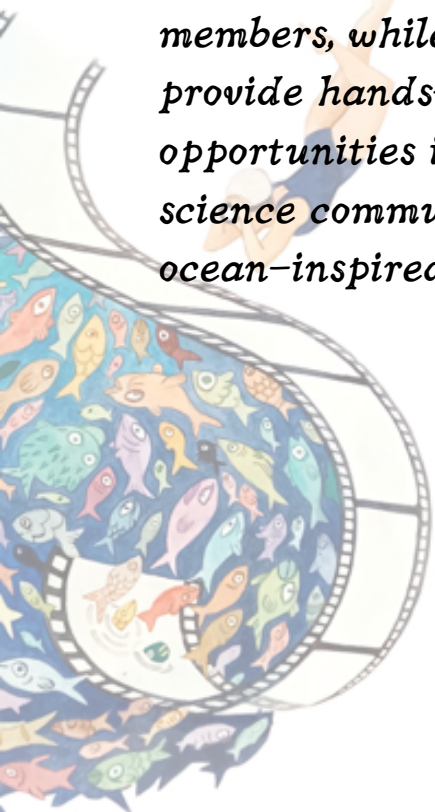
Audience Engagement

FUFF has cultivated deep audience engagement through **diverse creative programming** that extends beyond passive film viewing.

Interactive formats like the Blue Yarns initiative **create meaningful dialogue** between ocean experts and community members, while workshops provide hands-on learning opportunities in marine science communication and ocean-inspired art creation.

Community film competitions have empowered local storytellers to share their ocean experiences, with winners receiving recognition and support for their continued creative work.

These engagement strategies **transform audiences from spectators into active participants** in ocean advocacy, building a community that doesn't just watch ocean stories but lives them.





Conservation Impact

FUFF's conservation impact extends from fundraising into *direct environmental action and advocacy*. The festival's commitment to zero single-use plastics at all events demonstrates that large-scale community gatherings can operate sustainably.

This *values-in-action approach* inspired the successful 2019 Ban Plastic Straws campaign, which gathered 5,000+ signatures and achieved policy changes in Fremantle. Several beach cleanups organized by FUFF and its partners have removed marine debris from Western Australia's coastline while educating participants about plastic pollution's impact on ocean ecosystems.

Every screening, cleanup, and advocacy campaign *strengthens the connection between human communities and the ocean ecosystems on which all life depends.*





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Our Strategy

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STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

VISION

A world in which human and ocean are deeply connected, harmonious and healthy

THEORY OF CHANGE

If we connect people with the underwater world through storytelling and community engagement, then they will take meaningful action for ocean conservation.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

INSPIRE CONNECTION THROUGH STORYTELLING

- Curate underwater films
- Showcase filmmakers
- Share personal stories
- Educate about oceans

BUILD COMMUNITY CAPACITY

- Educational outreach
- Advocacy campaigns
- Citizen science
- Nurture leadership

FOSTER WELLBEING THROUGH CONNECTION

- Mermantle Project
- Feel Alive Freedive
- Youth Programs
- Nautical heritage

DRIVE CONSERVATION ACTION

- Conservation funding
- Support endangered species conservation
- Beach cleanups

OUTCOME: A CONNECTED COMMUNITY DRIVING OCEAN CONSERVATION

ENABLING STRATEGIES

BUILD SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

AMPLIFY IMPACT THROUGH COLLABORATION



*Beyond the Screens: Creating Ocean Impact
Through Community Engagement*

Community Engagement

More than Film

While film screenings remain at the heart of the Fremantle Underwater Film Festival, our commitment to ocean conservation extends far beyond the theater walls.

Through community-driven initiatives, advocacy campaigns, creative projects, and collaborative partnerships, we actively translate the inspiration from our films into meaningful action for our underwater world.





Ocean Advocacy and Cleanups

The festival has successfully mobilized community action through targeted advocacy campaigns, including a petition that gathered over 5,000 signatures to ban disposable plastic straws in Fremantle.

This community-led initiative resulted in positive changes to plastic waste management and advocacy policies to protect marine wildlife.

*Complementing this policy work, **the festival and its partners organizes beach cleanups along Western Australia's coastline**, directly removing marine debris while educating participants about the impact of plastic pollution on ocean ecosystems.*



Blue Yarns Initiative



This innovative community engagement program connected 20 local marine conservation leaders, including marine scientists, artists and activists directly with the Fremantle community during the FUFF's 2023 Ocean Life Festival.



The initiative created opportunities for these leaders to present their work and ongoing conservation actions to local residents, fostering awareness, knowledge-sharing, and community involvement.



*Blue Yarns continues to serve as a vital **bridge between scientific expertise and community action**, empowering residents to get involved in local conservation initiatives and building networks for collaboration on marine protection.*



The Mermantle Project

The Mermantle Project, launched in 2020 during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, aims to support men's mental health, wellness, and positive self-expression through the power of ocean connection.

The 2021 Mermantle Calendar featured artistic photography celebrating men's personal relationship with the sea, using visual storytelling to highlight this intimate bond and explore the healing potential of engaging with the underwater world.



*Formed in 2024, **The Mermantle Men** is a choir that brings men together through the singing of nautical-themed songs, celebrating camaraderie and oceanic culture. The choir made its debut performance at the 2024 Fremantle Underwater Film Festival, embodying the project's mission to build camaraderie and emotional well-being through collective creative expression.*



What's On The Horizon?

*Charting New Waters:
Expanding Our Impact for Ocean Conservation*

As we celebrate our tenth anniversary, the Fremantle Underwater Film Festival is excited to dive deeper into our mission with **ambitious new initiatives** that build on our foundation of storytelling and community engagement.

These innovative projects will expand our impact, create new opportunities for meaningful ocean connection, and address critical conservation needs while continuing to center the voices and experiences of those who share our passion for the underwater world.

'Worlds Largest Windchime' Project

This innovative initiative aims to **celebrate Fremantle's nautical heritage** through a creative installation honoring the sardine - an iconic fish and sustainable industry in the region - alongside the famous "Freo Doctor" wind that brings cool relief on hot summer afternoons.

This project will not only create a unique cultural landmark in collaboration with local artists, but also serve as a community touchpoint that **ties together the common experience of living in Fremantle** while highlighting sustainable fishing practices.



Youth Ocean Leadership Program

Building on the festival's commitment to **fostering youth engagement**, this program will develop the next generation of ocean advocates through story-telling initiatives, freediving safety education, and leadership training in marine conservation communication.

The program will empower young people to create their own ocean-inspired art, organize community conservation actions, and develop skills to effectively communicate ocean conservation messages, ensuring the sustainability of ocean advocacy for future generations.

Scalloped Hammerhead Conservation

The festival plans to launch a dedicated project focused on the **endangered scalloped hammerheads** that school in the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park during certain times of the year.

This initiative will increase local recognition of this critical conservation issue while promoting marine citizen science.

Activities include support for a mobile application for community monitoring, educational workshops about shark conservation, and advocacy efforts to strengthen protection measures for these magnificent but vulnerable creatures.

Expanding Regional Outreach

To broaden impact beyond Fremantle, the festival plans to develop a comprehensive **regional outreach program** bringing underwater film screenings, marine conservation workshops, and community engagement activities to rural and remote areas of Western Australia.

This initiative will connect inland communities with ocean conservation issues, bringing the underwater world to those who may have limited access to marine environments while building a broader constituency for ocean protection across the state.



Message from our Founder

Reflecting on a decade of the Fremantle Underwater Film Festival, I'm reminded of our original purpose - bringing ocean stories and science to our community through creative storytelling. What began as a small gathering has raised over \$60,000 for marine conservation and connected thousands with our underwater world.

The power of visual storytelling to inspire action continues to amaze me. From our successful campaign to ban plastic straws in Fremantle to the Mermantle Project supporting men's wellbeing through ocean connection, FUFF has grown beyond film screenings into a movement for change.



Despite the challenges facing our oceans, I remain hopeful because I've witnessed our community's response when engaged through powerful stories. Every beach cleanup, every conversation connecting scientists with residents, every choir performance strengthens our collective voice for the ocean.

As we enter our next decade, we're committed to fostering ocean literacy and building community capacity for conservation. Thank you for being part of our journey - the festival couldn't exist without your support. I invite you to continue diving with us beneath the surface, where the real stories of hope await.

Tania Douthwaite
Founder and Creative Director

Supporters and Partners



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*We thank you for your
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festival*



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