

Community involvement annual report 2010-11



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This document is available in alternative formats on request.

Front cover

Top left: Volunteer Campground host Patricia Chandler inspecting a Bilby at Peron Research Centre, Francois Peron National Park (photo: Pat and Albert Chandler); **Top right:** Ready for a guided walk during Walk Week at Yanchep National Park (photo: DEC); **Bottom:** Campground hosts workshop at the Western Australian Conservation Science Centre at Kensington (photo: DEC)

Back cover

Top: Bluff Knoll, Stirling Ranges (photo: Jim Skinner/DEC); **Bottom right:** Kangaroo (photo: DEC); **Bottom left:** Western Bower Bird at Karijini National Park (photo: Gordon Cole)

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Community Involvement Coordinator's message

It has been an exciting and positive year of massive change for volunteer programs in the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). Through the Community Involvement Unit (CIU), the Bush Rangers and Keep Australia Beautiful programs, more than 725,000 volunteer hours were contributed to the department in 2010–11.

Twenty-seven new volunteer projects were registered, and overall volunteer registrations continue to grow, with CIU providing training for 721 volunteers.

Trends indicate that the numbers of active volunteers and hours contributed also continue to grow, translating to more than \$15 million in value contributed by DEC volunteers last year.

Major highlights for the year included the Volunteer of the Year awards event being held for the first time at the new Western Australian Conservation Science Centre at Kensington, the running of six Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation courses and advanced topics such as bird necropsy, and the campground host training event in November attended by 132 campground hosts. The Wildcare Helpline was consistently busy seven days a week, with almost 8,000 calls serviced by volunteers.

A volunteer strategy for DEC was also completed which will guide us in our work for the next five years.

The CIU was relocated within DEC's Kensington site, and significant staff changes included Marg Buckland retiring as CIU coordinator after many years of dedicated service.

The CIU has commenced establishment of *Volgistics*, a digital volunteer and project records system, with a successful trial being completed with campground host volunteers in Cape Range National Park. Once fully implemented, *Volgistics* will reduce labour time, postage costs and, most importantly, allow secure web access to all registered volunteers.

Specific programs detailed later in this report highlight the dedication, skills, knowledge and expertise that DEC volunteers contribute.

While DEC provides a range of recreation, environment, and conservation services and facilities, support from volunteers adds value and provides enhanced services, research and overall enjoyment of national parks and the conservation estate.

I hope the detail provided in this report will allow us to share the achievements and success of our collective work, and provide inspiration for future activity.

Thank you especially to family and friends of all DEC volunteers, without whom many hours of volunteer input could not have been achieved.

Hugh Maclean
Community Involvement Coordinator

DEC volunteer projects

Recreation and Trails Unit (RTU)

There were 65 RTU projects in 2010–11, including works on the Munda Biddi Trail, Bibbulmun Track and four-wheel drive projects.

The Munda Biddi Trail—Munda Biddi means ‘path through the forest’ in the Nyoongar Aboriginal language—is a long-distance, off-road touring trail for bicycle enthusiasts and recreational cyclists looking for a safe and enjoyable bush-cycling experience. The trail uses a network of bush-tracks, old railway lines and purpose-built single-track to link cyclists with many towns and forest attractions across south-west WA, and is maintained with the help of volunteers.

Munda Biddi Trail volunteer, Tony Fitzgerald:

“I was first introduced to the Munda Biddi Trail by a friend of mine, Pete Kitto. We did some sections of the trail with our sons some seven years ago when the boys were in their teens. Since then we ride the track with a group of friends on a regular basis.

“A couple of years ago Pete suggested we put something back into the trail we have enjoyed so much. We both put our hands up to be volunteers, and were selected to assist with the bridge-building project at Collie in 2010. Scott Hunter from DEC was the project supervisor, and it was obvious that Scott was both very experienced and knowledgeable on track maintenance and bridge construction. The Collie bridge building experience was great, the company a pleasure to be with, and being out in the bush is always something I find inspiring.



Volunteer Tony Fitzgerald working on the Munda Biddi Trail (photo: MB Trail/DEC)

“Pete and I helped with trail realignment near the North Dandalup hut site, again with Scott as the supervisor. Also, I have helped with signage for the new section between Nannup and Manjimup, assisting Nick Detchon from DEC. As I am semi-retired, it is relatively easy for me to get time away. All the DEC/Munda Biddi volunteer activities I have been involved with have been both enjoyable and rewarding.

“I can recommend Munda Biddi Trail volunteer work, and hope to see the vollies’ number increase.”

Conservation projects

There were 115 projects involving hands-on flora and fauna conservation work such as weeding and planting, translocation of threatened species, and predator control.

Research projects

There were 116 projects involving research, and data collection, storage and analysis. Many hours of detailed work was carried out across the state, including at the WA Herbarium.

Another 90 projects were assisted by volunteers across a variety of roles, including work experience, administration, park management, and one-off projects in the community.

The WA Herbarium

The WA Herbarium benefits significantly from the work of volunteers. Each year, volunteers mount and label thousands of specimens. They also help audit the herbarium collection and keep the reference herbarium running smoothly, enabling technical staff to focus on other work. The WA Herbarium, recently relocated to new facilities and vaults in the WA Conservation Science Centre at DEC's Kensington site, currently holds around 750,000 recorded specimens.



Left: WA Herbarium volunteer, Patricia Wenham mounting plant specimens (photo: DEC)

Below: Volunteers mounting and labelling specimens at the WA Herbarium (photo: DEC)



Bush Rangers WA

Bush Rangers WA is a voluntary, nature-conservation program for young Western Australians, giving secondary school-aged youth the opportunity to take part in personal development training.

The training provides practical life skills, develops leadership, teamwork and initiative, and fosters qualities of community responsibility and service.

Keep Australia Beautiful (KAB) WA

KAB works to change attitudes and behaviours of the community, and strives for a litter-free WA through community awareness and education, and legislation and enforcement strategies.

Key programs include the *Litter Report* scheme, *Adopt-a-Spot*, *Bin Your Butt*, *Clean Schools*, *Clean Beaches* and the *Tidy Towns—Sustainable Communities* awards.



From left: Maureen Maher (KAB), Julia Coggins (DEC), Jodi Rigby (Woodside), Heather Beswick (DEC), Margaret Andrews (VolunteeringWA) (photo: KAB)

Memoranda of understanding

In 2010–2011, DEC continued to maintain a number of significant partnerships formalised through memoranda of understanding (MOUs). A review of MOUs commenced in June 2011, with the primary purpose to confirm the maintenance of best practice relationships with increased benefits for all parties.

One long-term, significant MOU is with the Department of Corrective Services, where prisoners continue to provide a valued contribution to DEC projects, and the community, through the maintenance and construction of trails and facilities including the Bibbulmun Track, the Munda Biddi Trail and the Cape to Cape Track. Prisoners also assist with signage work, construction of picnic tables and benches, weed control, maintenance of firebreaks, and cleaning and repair of campground facilities in many parks and reserves around the state.

The successful partnership between DEC, Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) and Rio Tinto continued during 2010–11. The *Earth Assist* program, delivered to metropolitan as well as rural and remote secondary school students in WA, is conducted under an agreement from the Department of Education, DEC, Rio Tinto and CVA.

The MOU between DEC, Track Care Western Australia and the Western Australian Four-wheel Drive Association continued with further projects to promote the minimal impact use of four-wheel-drive vehicles. The MOU seeks to clarify and maintain the highest standards of cooperation and understanding between all three organisations, and includes a track adoption program. The track and rangelands adoption program has resulted in a number of successful partnership projects across the state.



Earth Assist volunteers at Kaarakin after a hard day's work (photo: CVA/Chris Phillips)

Media and communications

The main communication with volunteers involves regular emails and Australia Post mail-outs, keeping them up to date with news and events. A wider reach is achieved through the use of established networks and associations such as the Wildlife Rehabilitators Consultation Group, Fostering and Assistance for Wildlife Needing Aid, and Kanyana wildlife rehabilitation centre.

Within DEC, volunteers and programs regularly featured in *DECmatters* and *Environment and Conservation News* throughout 2010–11.

Thanks to DEC media releases, various volunteer programs and success stories featured in external media a number of times throughout the year. Examples include:



Helping hands: Zoe and Ari Foster release a swan into the Peel Harvey Estuary on Friday as part of WA Seabird Rescue. Picture: Daniel Wilkins

Black days for swans

VOLUNTEERS are fighting to save WA's emblem – our iconic black swans.

This week, 20 black swans were released back into the wild in a Mandurah estuary, just in time for tomorrow's Foundation Day celebrations.

Despite rain in the past few days, Perth's record dry spell is being blamed for an increase in the number of black swans in need of rescue and rehabilitation.

WA Seabird Rescue president Margaret Lerner said her group of volunteers had already rescued almost 60 black swans this year – a six-year high.

"So far this year we have rescued about 56 black swans," Ms Lerner said. "It hasn't been that high since 2005. It's all to do with the weather and the lack of rainfall. There is no nesting at Forrestdale Lake this year and Bibra Lake has dried up and the other Perth lakes are dry."

The black swan was declared WA's bird emblem in 1973. The numbat and the red and green kangaroo paw are also state emblems.

According to Aboriginal lore, ancestors of the state's Nyongar people believed they were once black swans who later became men.

But it wasn't until Dutch explorers spotted black swans along the banks of the Swan River in the 17th century that the rest of the world found out about them. Previously, Europeans believed all swans were white.

Ms Lerner said birds were suffering from avian botulism, a fatal disease that causes paralysis, as well as battling blue-green algae, a type of bacteria and malnutrition because of the long, dry summer.

Diane Munrowd, from Native ARC, a Bibra Lake volunteer organisation that rehabilitates sick, injured and orphaned native animals, blamed collected

NEWS

Animal carers to be trained by experts

PHOEBE WEARNE

PEOPLE who rescue bobtail lizards from lawnmowers or care for baby birds that fall out of their nests will soon get the chance to take their passion for animals to the next level.

The Department of Environment and Conservation are running a basic wildlife rehabilitation course next month for anyone who wants to join Albany's passionate team of carers in nursing sick and injured wildlife back to health.

DEC regional wildlife officer Jon Pridham said the introductory course was designed for anyone in the community who was interested in volunteering their time at an established wildlife rehabilitation centre.

The course was also a prerequisite for volunteers who wished to become a DEC registered wildlife rehabilitator in the future and care for animals at home.

"Participants get a chance to learn from some of WA's most experienced and knowledgeable experts, including Perth Zoo's veterinary staff and rehabilitators from the State's top centres," Mr Pridham said.

For more information on the course, which will run for two full days on August 21 and 22, contact DEC on 9842 4500.

phoebewe@albanyadvertiser.com



Wildlife rehabilitator Sue Gleave with a bobtail she is nursing back to health.

Above: Raising awareness of the work of volunteer organisations involved in rescuing native black swans (photo: Yasmine Phillips, Sunday Times)

Right: DEC's basic wildlife rehabilitation course - animal carers being trained by experts (photo: Albany Advertiser)

Volunteer of the Year and Outstanding Service awards 2010

The **Volunteer of the Year** awards are presented to volunteers who have shown exceptional dedication in time, expertise, or general application of volunteer tasks within DEC programs.

Outstanding Service awards are presented to volunteers who have provided outstanding service to one or more projects supporting environment and conservation initiatives.

Nominations may be made by individuals, DEC staff, other stakeholder agencies, or member associations or community groups that have benefited from the nominees' efforts. The 2010 awards were staged, for the first time, in the new Conservation Science Centre at DEC's Kensington site, and 18 dedicated volunteers were recognised by the former Environment Minister Donna Faragher and DEC for their outstanding service, dedication and commitment to environment and conservation.



Left: Environment Minister Donna Faragher presenting Margaret Brims with *Volunteer of the Year* award (photo: DEC)

Below: *Volunteer of the Year* award winners Fred and Jean Hort with Donna Faragher (photo: DEC)



Volunteer of the Year 2010 awards went to:

- Margaret Brims, for her identification expertise, enthusiasm and ongoing hard work at the WA Herbarium
- Christine Hollister, for her meticulous work, also at the WA Herbarium
- Fred and Jean Hort, Perth Hills District, for their exceptional work in surveying and monitoring of priority and rare flora populations, and invertebrates.

Outstanding Service awards went to:

- Patricia Angel, WA Herbarium
- Frank Bilki, Perth Observatory
- Michael Filby, Keep Australia Beautiful
- Bernice Greenlees, Wildlife Science Library
- John Hardman, Bibbulmun Track Foundation
- Charmaine Harris, Bibbulmun Track Foundation
- John Morris, Perth Observatory
- Wendy Nelson, Bibbulmun Track Foundation
- Shirley Oliver, Swan River Trust River Guardians
- Leanne Robb, Munda Biddi Trail Foundation
- Brenda and Ashley Tenbroeke, Animal Control Agents group
- Yanchep National Park Volunteer Guides, Christiane Aigner, Kerri-Ann Hudson, Joy Jackson, Suzanne Logue, Brad Walker and Maxine Walker.



Volunteer of the Year winner Christine Hollister with Donna Faragher (photo: DEC)



Yanchep National Park volunteer guides with their *Outstanding Service* award (photo: DEC)



Flowering shrub at Lucky Bay, Cape Le Grand National Park (photo: Penelope Jackson/DEC)

Volunteer Hours Reward Program

As a thank you for all the valuable work that they offer, all DEC volunteers are part of the Volunteer Hours Reward Program, which rewards volunteers for their contribution to the work of DEC during the previous year. The program also contributes to the achievement of key performance indicators by DEC.

The reward system is based on the number of hours logged, and awarded at the end of each financial year:

- one to 49 hours: thank you letter from DEC's Director General
- 50 to 499 hours: 12-month DEC volunteer park pass, including a discount on DEC merchandise
- over 500 hours: DEC volunteer park pass and subscription to *LANDSCOPE* magazine.

CIU staff have recently commenced a review of the volunteer reward program.

The 2010 WA Environment Awards

Western Australians working towards environmental care are acknowledged each year at DEC's WA Environment Awards. In 2010, 44 finalists were announced across 11 categories, covering a broad spectrum of organisations, government agencies, community groups and individuals, all committed to conservation.

A number of CIU partnerships were finalists in several categories including:

- three nominations for CVA/Rio Tinto/Earth Assist in the Biodiversity and Conservation, Environmental Education and Communication, and the Community Achievement categories
- Department of Corrective Services/Repay WA/Work Camps and Section 95 Community Work Programs nominated in the Bush Land and Waterways category.

Environmental Community Grants

In 2010, then Environment Minister Donna Faragher awarded more than \$1.5 million to groups and individuals through the state government's *Environmental Community Grants* program.

The program was introduced in recognition of the enormous contribution community-based organisations make to protecting the state's environment, and conserving the nature of WA.

Grants were awarded in eight categories:

- Biodiversity conservation
- Sustainable catchment management
- Fauna rescue and rehabilitation
- Regional parks
- Bush Forever
- Interpretation and sustainable recreation in natural areas
- Support for major conservation and environment organisations
- Protection of high value areas by landholders on private land.

In total, almost 250 applications were received across all categories, of which 139 projects were funded.

The CIU coordinated the assessment of the *Fauna rescue and rehabilitation* category, with more than \$50,000 allocated to 17 rehabilitation centres and 25 individual fauna rehabilitators.



Pacific black duck with ducklings (photo: Douglas Coughran/DEC)

Healthy Parks Healthy People

Healthy Parks, Healthy People in WA is a DEC initiative to encourage people to get out and enjoy themselves in parks by promoting the physical, mental and social health benefits of spending time in nature. It is part of DEC's charter to protect WA's natural areas while providing sites and activities to help people enjoy the parks and improve their health.

The program remains a significant component of raising community awareness of the health benefits of parks and the broader relevance of the conservation estate to other sectors of society. It also provides focus for public participation and community involvement strategies on DEC-managed lands, and cross-promotional opportunities with non-government health organisations.

- The *Healthy Parks, Healthy People* program, in partnership with the Heart Foundation, continued the Park Walks program until its completion in September 2010.
- DEC supported *Walk Week* in November 2010, with walks being offered in Yanchep National Park. *Walk Week* is a state government initiative to encourage Western Australians to walk more for leisure, transport, health and the environment.
- DEC continued its partnership with Mentally Healthy WA's *Act-Belong-Commit* campaign, and Keep Australia Beautiful's *Adopt-a-Spot* program and *Grow a Healthy Outlook* resource in 2010–11.
- A number of presentations on the *Healthy Parks, Healthy People* program were delivered to a range of community groups in 2010–11.
- With funding assistance from the Department of Health's *Fiona Stanley Hospital* project, planting days with community groups continued in Beeliar Regional Park.
- Collaboration and support of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Centres—Kaarakin at Martin and Native Animal Rescue at Malaga—with grant funds to establish and maintain facilities for the care, protection, and release of Carnaby's cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus latirostris*).
- More than 200 seedlings were supplied and planted at Kaarakin in conjunction with the Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) *Earth Assist* program.
- DEC support provided for guided walks with the Friends of the Spectacles Group, Beeliar Regional Park.
- Stocks of seedlings were purchased for use in regional parks community revegetation programs.

DEC and the *Healthy Parks, Healthy People* initiative is also involved with the implementation of the state government's *Walk WA 2007–2020* strategy prepared by the Physical Activity Taskforce (www.beactive.wa.gov.au).



Healthy Parks, Healthy People participants at Kaarakin (photo: DEC)



Community Involvement Unit

The CIU provides community members in WA with opportunities to support, be involved in, and contribute to, the work of DEC.

The CIU supports DEC volunteers as an integral component of the Western Australian community. Volunteering enriches the community through the delivery of environmental, social, economic and health benefits to individuals, local groups and communities, the state and the nation.

The CIU also communicates with unions and other relevant bodies to ensure that the use of volunteers does not infringe on DEC's commitment to its paid staff.



The CIU team—Lorene, Brooke, Hugh, Sonia, Lee (photo: DEC)

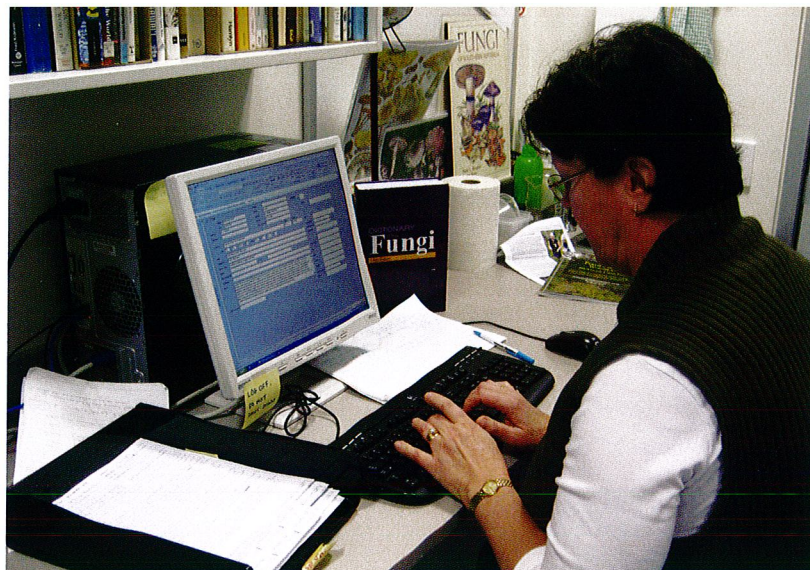
Volunteers are highly valued by DEC because they build communication links and understanding between DEC and the community, and contribute valuable skills and knowledge.

The department:

- provides a broad range of opportunities for the community to be involved in DEC activities
- develops volunteer projects that are sustainable in their own right
- maximises the benefit accrued through efficient use of government resources
- protects and supports the uniqueness of local volunteer projects
- provides access to volunteering opportunities for all ages and abilities
- develops and manages programs that match current community and volunteer demands, and plans dynamically for the future
- provides appropriate training and support for volunteers
- coordinates collaborative marketing, promotion, enrolment and management of DEC volunteers, and delivery of projects
- facilitates strategic government and private sector investment
- ensures value for money
- creates volunteering opportunities for Aboriginal people, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.



Possum being hand fed (photo: Judith Holmes/DEC)



WA Herbarium volunteer Rosemary Gillen entering fungi data (photo: DEC)

Our vision

"A vibrant network of volunteers happy to help care for our natural environment"

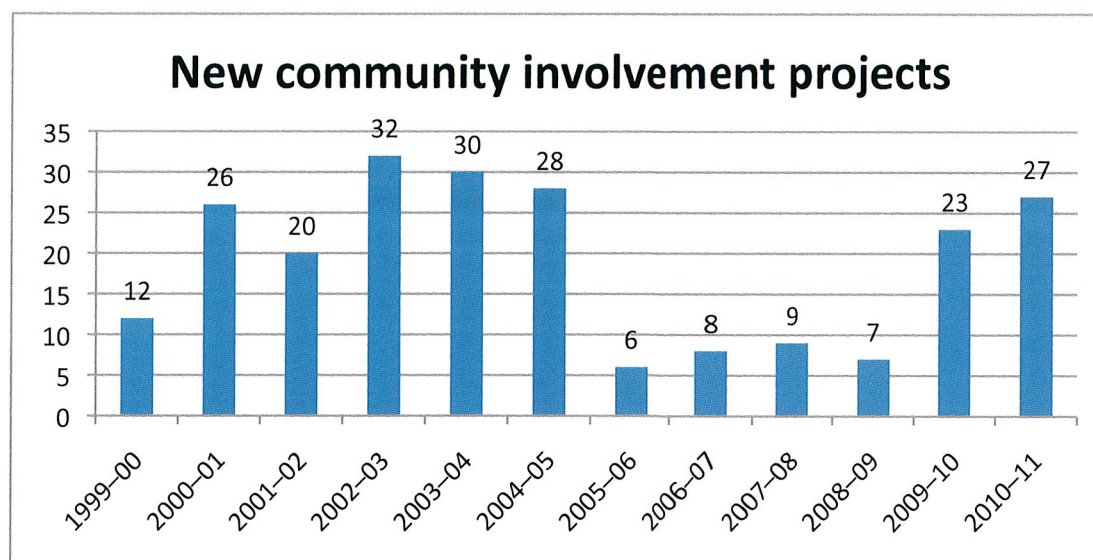
Our objectives:

- Encourage and facilitate voluntary activity that contributes to recreation, nature, conservation and environmental objectives, and which builds community awareness, understanding and support for these objectives.
- Develop volunteer management systems that facilitate engagement of volunteers and volunteer organisations.
- Enhance community support for the protection of native flora and fauna, and the protected areas system in WA.
- Ensure volunteer contributions will provide significant benefit to conserving biodiversity, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and generally supporting eco-education initiatives.

The CIU continues to provide an effective means of enlisting community support, as well as meaningful and interesting opportunities for volunteers to take part in conservation and land management activities.

Across the state 27 new projects were registered with the CIU during 2010–11. Examples of these include:

- development of recovery plans for threatened ecological communities
- West Pilbara Turtle Program
- National Parks Beach Clean Up
- Golden Valley Tree Park
- Friends of Darlington Brook.



Volunteer participation

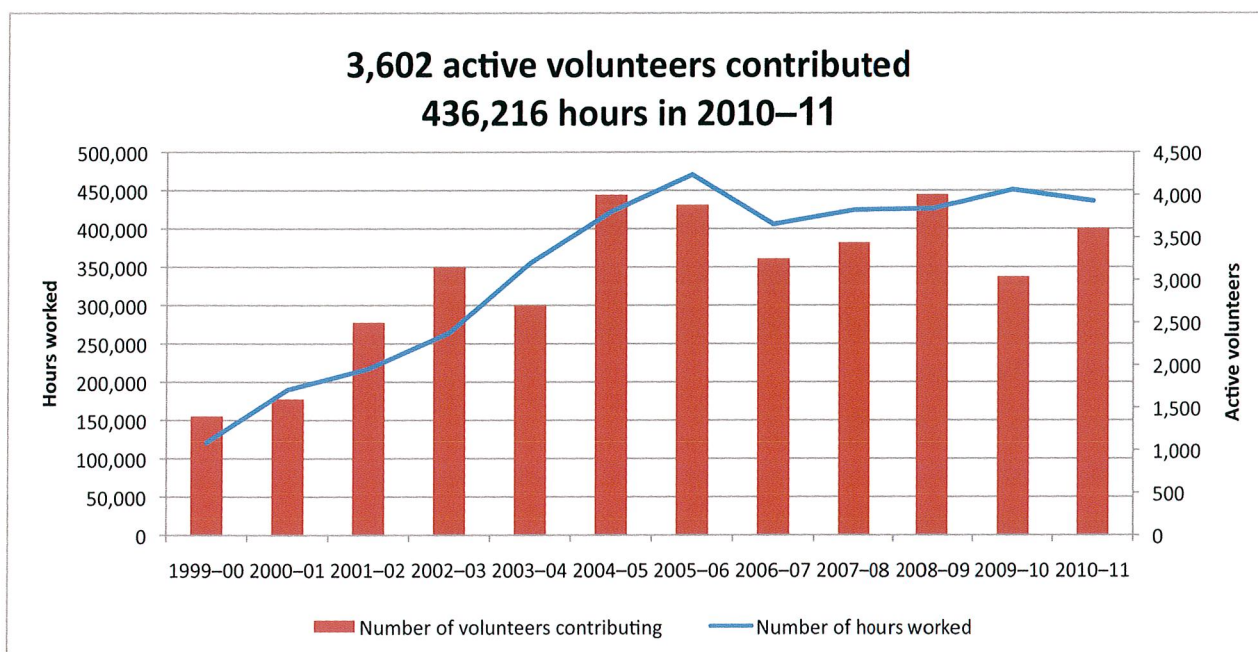
The department has a wide range of programs through which community members can volunteer to help the WA environment. Although many volunteers have particular skills suited to specific DEC programs such as the WA Herbarium, training is given to all volunteers, so no specific skills are necessary to join the community involvement program.

Since the program began in the early 1990s, the number of volunteers registered with DEC and the number of projects in which volunteers are involved has steadily increased. In 2010–11, there were 12,759 volunteers registered with the department, 3,602 of whom actively contributed 436,216 hours of support to various conservation and community projects across WA.

Volunteer recruitment

In 2010–11, the department recruited 1,677 new volunteers, increasing the total number of registered volunteers by 15 per cent from 2009–10. The number of active volunteers increased by 18.5 per cent compared to 2009–10.

The graph below shows the number of active volunteers and the hours they have contributed.



This volunteer contribution was valued at around \$15.12 million in 2010–11. For every DEC employee—around 2,000—there are more than six DEC registered volunteers—over 12,000—contributing their time to caring for WA’s natural areas.

*Since 1999, DEC volunteers have
contributed over four million hours of work*

In 2010–11, the helpline received nearly 8,000 calls

Volunteer programs

The department has overall responsibility of the management of volunteers in the following programs.

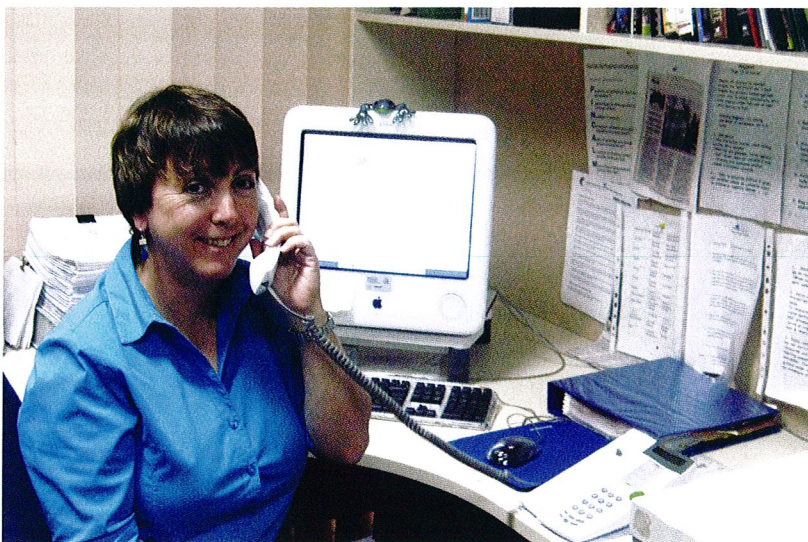
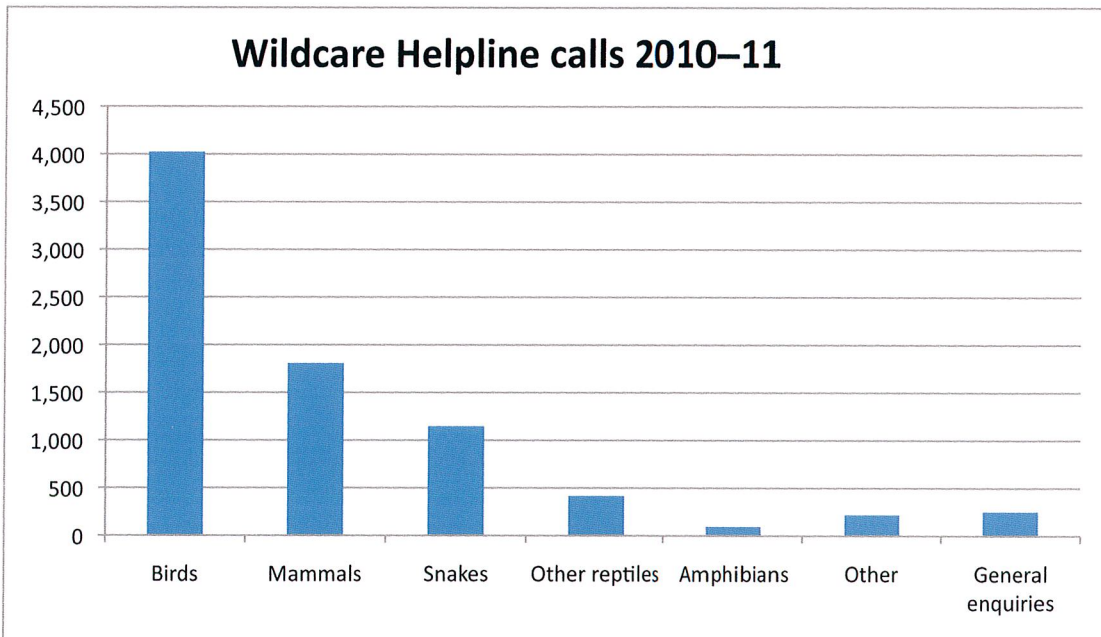
Wildcare Helpline

The Wildcare Helpline (08 9474 9055) is a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week telephone referral service. It is operated by experienced volunteers on behalf of DEC, and is based in the department at DEC's operational headquarters at Kensington, but is also staffed out of hours by home-based volunteers and some wildlife rehabilitation centres.

DEC relies on members of the public to report sick, injured or orphaned wildlife, and the helpline service provides advice and finds care for injured animals.

DEC-registered volunteer rehabilitators across WA then assist with the recovery of injured animals and release them back into their natural habitat.

During 2010–11, almost 8,000 calls were received by the helpline. The graph below shows a breakdown of Wildcare Helpline enquiries received in 2010–11.



Wildcare Helpline volunteer
Tanya Marwood
(photo Judith Holmes/DEC)

Wildlife rehabilitation

Wildlife rehabilitation volunteers are community members who support native animal welfare and, through DEC wildlife training courses, learn how to care for injured, diseased or abandoned animals until they recover and can be released back into their natural environment. They are committed to keeping injured native animals alive, dedicating many hours to this often challenging work.

There are 1,800 wildlife rehabilitator volunteers throughout WA, with seven major centres in the Perth area receiving more than 10,000 admissions annually.



Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Rehabilitation Centre's Bill Dewhurst (photo: Carolyn Thomson-Dans/DEC)



Orphaned joey (photo: Judith Holmes/DEC)

At Native Arc in Bibra Lake, around 70 volunteers cover morning and evening shifts every day, seven days a week. They receive around 1,000 admissions a year, brought in by the public, rangers or wildlife officers, referred by vets or the Wildcare Helpline.

Volunteer Q & A

Treatment supervisor and training coordinator volunteer Pauline Mealor's typically busy day involves the medicating and monitoring of injured animals, and ensuring correct housing and diet.

For new admissions, injuries are assessed and treatment plans are devised such as fluids or medication, or a vet visit arranged if necessary. Pauline also mentors other volunteers and gives phone advice when needed. At the end of the day, food is prepared, supplies are checked for the following day, and food, water dishes and towels are cleaned.

How and why did you become a volunteer?

For the love of wildlife and the need to preserve it for generations to come.

What do you like about being a volunteer?

The privilege of assisting sick, injured and orphaned animals to recover and return to the wild again—the people I work with, their eager and caring attitude to help, and the fun!

And dislike?

The sight of an animal too seriously injured to be helped.

What has been your greatest achievement or proudest moment in 2010?

Just being part of a great, hard working team with vision that's enabling Native Arc to grow from strength to strength to achieve the dream of a new state-of-the-art centre.

What have you gained from being a volunteer?

I've learnt to appreciate all that others have to give in whatever way they can. I have gained friendships with people from all age groups.



Black cockatoos at Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Rehabilitation Centre
(photo: Carolyn Thomson-Dans/DEC)

Wildlife Rehabilitators' Consultation Group (WRCG)

WRCG provides input into native wildlife rehabilitation standards, training and practice, in particular reviewing the *Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation in WA* and associated matters to ensure that:

- a cross-government and community-coordinated approach is taken to native wildlife rehabilitation standards, procedures, guidelines and services
- timely and appropriate advice is provided to government
- the desired outcomes, strategies, and tasks within the minimum standards are progressed in a structured and cohesive manner, ensuring maximum benefit to all stakeholders, and consistency with government policy
- management of native wildlife rehabilitation by volunteers is consistent with government expectations and standards.

The *Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation in WA* has become the definitive resource for wildlife rehabilitators. It outlines the minimum standards for the welfare of native animals in all stages of the wildlife rehabilitation process. The publication continues to assist in returning native animals into the wild. The WRCG meets regularly to discuss relevant issues, and is currently reviewing the minimum standards.



Wildlife Rehabilitators' Consultation Group 2011 (photo: Hugh Maclean/DEC)



Blue-tongue lizard (photo: Judith Homes/DEC)

Reptile removers

In 2010–11 there were 199 people registered as DEC volunteer reptile removers, responding to 1,665 calls via the Wildcare Helpline to remove dangerous, nuisance or injured reptiles from callers' homes and gardens throughout WA.

Animal control agents

Unfortunately, accidents do occur, and occasionally a kangaroo, emu or other large animal cannot be saved. In many cases, such as when they have been hit by a car, the kindest thing for the animal is euthanasia. For this difficult task, DEC has a network of registered volunteer animal control agents licensed to use appropriate firearms to ensure the task is carried out humanely and efficiently.

In 2010–11, agents responded to 603 calls from across WA. The 64 volunteers contributed over 930 hours, covering 32,330 kilometres to ensure these animals did not suffer unnecessarily.

In addition, CIU has contact with:

- 54 veterinary centres with registered interest and willingness to accept injured native wildlife
- eight specialist raptor groups
- 58 seabird rescue volunteers.

*"We live, breathe and care for
Burnerbinmah station everyday."*

Don and Rhonda Anderson
HCOs and caretakers of Burnerbinmah Station
Shire of Yalgoo

Honorary CALM officers

Honorary CALM (Conservation and Land Management) officers (HCOs) have assisted DEC since 1981. They make an extremely valuable contribution to conserving DEC-managed estate, and are specially selected for their personal qualities of integrity, self-motivation and commitment to DEC's mission, values and principles.

Currently, there are 30 HCOs operating across WA, and they may be the only DEC representatives that park visitors meet when visiting a natural area, particularly in remote regions. HCOs are especially acknowledged for their dedication and commitment in watching over DEC parks, which ultimately benefits all Western Australians.



From left: HCOs Don Anderson, Ray Harris, Otto Schaechtele, Jeremy Perks (photo: DEC)

The following are examples of the variety of work and encounters faced by HCOs during 2010–11:

- general maintenance
- collecting of rare flora specimens
- engaging with visitors, and teaching about conservation and Indigenous culture
- eradication of feral goats
- large-scale rubbish and litter removal
- reports of dangerous driving, such as passengers on vehicle roofs
- motorcycling in camping areas
- fence line inspections
- dieback recognition and prevention
- illegal pig shooting
- illegal camping and fires, including summer bushfire alerts
- assistance in prosecutions due to public injuring native wildlife
- mapping and GPS of four-wheel-drive tracks
- windmill maintenance.



Crossing Pool at Millstream in Millstream Chichester National Park (photo: Christine Bourke/John Lee/DEC)

Campground hosting

The appeal of camping in some of WA's most spectacular natural environments has made DEC's volunteer campground host program one of its most popular and successful. Since it was launched in 1991, hundreds of people, from all walks of life, have taken part.

These volunteers play a very important role as the first point of contact for visitors to DEC national parks. Their duties are varied and include collecting fees and visitor statistics, providing advice and information, monitoring site usage, cleaning facilities, transporting water and firewood, and helping DEC staff with maintenance. Before taking up a position at any of the sites across the state, DEC campground hosts are trained in fire awareness, first aid and Aboriginal cultural protocol.

In 2010–11, the program continued to attract volunteers, with 41 new hosts joining, making a total of 448 registered campground hosts across the state. In the same period, 162 hosts (in 257 placements) provided 108,830 hours of service to field staff in national parks, visitor centres and other protected areas throughout WA.

"It is always humbling to receive the park pass. Just being allowed to belong is reward enough."

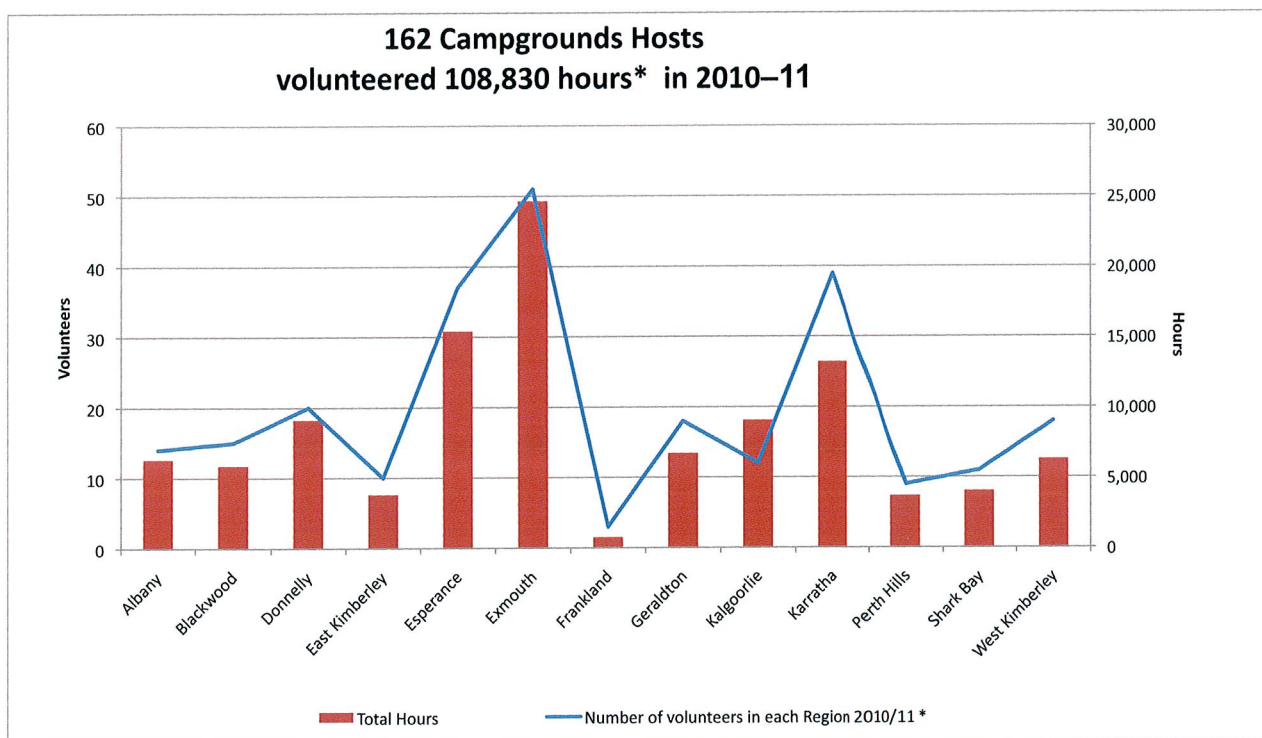
DEC Volunteer Ruby Johnson



Campground hosts Don and Mary at Bottle Bay
(photo: D & M Coley/DEC)



Weano Gorge in Karijini National Park
(photo: Jeanette Calver/ DEC)



*Any given volunteer campground host may be responsible for more than one placement during 2010–11.

Volunteer training

During 2010–11, the CIU continued to provide training programs to DEC volunteers with support from specialist services in DEC and external agencies. Seven hundred and twenty-one people attended training in various locations including Perth, Busselton, Bunbury, and video-link training to Albany and Broome. A DVD was also developed to support the induction and training of Wildcare Helpline volunteers.

Two hundred and twenty-nine participants attended five metropolitan courses in basic wildlife rehabilitation. Traditionally held over weekends, the first of these courses held mid-week was run in May 2010, and attracted 39 participants, 23 from the mining sector.

Two regional courses were also held, with 58 participants attending in Albany, and 52 in Busselton.

Advanced wildlife rehabilitation topics were also very popular:

- 39 people attended the *Disease of reptiles* course in September 2010, presented by Perth Zoo vet Dr Karen Payne
- 31 people learned how to carry out avian post-mortems at the *Necropsy on birds* course in April 2011, presented by Perth Zoo vet Dr Katja Geschke
- Dr Geschke returned in June 2011 to present a course on *Fluid therapy in birds, mammals and reptiles*, which 39 volunteers attended.



Volunteers at *Necropsy on birds* training day
(photo: Judith Holmes/DEC)

The *Campground Host* workshop in November 2010 was attended by 131 returning and new hosts, with a further 27 new hosts attending the March 2011 course. These two-day training courses cover a variety of subjects to help hosts in their duties at DEC campgrounds, such as cultural awareness, personal well-being, camp site planning and safe work practices, and include presentations from a number of DEC staff.

Thirty-five volunteers were given fire awareness training in March 2011, providing them with a basic understanding of fire and fire management techniques, and personal safety in a fire situation. Completion of this course provides the participants with a nationally recognised fire awareness certificate.

A two-day first aid training course was delivered on two occasions, providing a further 32 volunteers the knowledge and skills to conduct first aid in an emergency. This is also a nationally recognised certificate which helps to increase the safety of visitors and volunteers at DEC-managed sites.

Other major groups, such as CVA, the Department of Corrective Services and four-wheel-drive clubs, continued to work closely with DEC field staff to provide training opportunities, as well as to rehabilitate and enhance the natural environment. In particular, the CVA's *Earth Assist* project, sponsored by Rio Tinto and supported by DEC and the Department of Education, has demonstrated a remarkable collaborative effort, especially beneficial to young people.



Earth Assist volunteers planting at Kaarakin
(photo: CVA/Kaarakin)



Pelicans overhead
(photo: Gordon Cole)

Looking ahead

The *DEC Volunteer Strategy 2011–2016* aims to increase the number of volunteers and volunteer hours 30 per cent above 2010 levels by 2016. It also aims to increase the number of hours worked per volunteer by 30 per cent above the long-term average of 114 hours per volunteer, while increasing the economic value of volunteer contributions by 30 per cent above 2010 levels by 2016.

As part of the strategy, the CIU is looking forward and developing new methods of communication with its volunteers, while re-establishing and updating old methods. This includes a review of its newsletters and email, and consideration of e-newsletters and the use of social media to engage with wider audiences.

Volunteer database upgrade (*Volgistics*)

To make recruiting and registering easier for both DEC and volunteers, DEC is introducing an online volunteer management system, *Volgistics*. This will enable the CIU to communicate more efficiently with volunteers and advertise various projects, while allowing volunteers full access to their own details and the ability to enter their hours electronically, find current projects requiring volunteers, and keep up to date with DEC news.

Volgistics is accessible from anywhere with an internet connection via the main DEC website. *Volgistics* is completely secure, incorporating the same security and privacy protections used by online banking services, enabling volunteers to access their details using a unique password.

From 1 July 2011, all new volunteer registrations have been registered onto *Volgistics*, and all active volunteers are currently being entered into the program. Once all active volunteer records have been transferred, the current database will provide only historical data.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Community involvement volunteer hours

Year	Registered volunteers	New projects	Volunteers actively contributing	Total hours
1999–00	3,800	12	1,400	121,000
2000–01	4,499	26	1,600	190,000
2001–02	5,683	20	2,500	217,000
2002–03	5,160	32	3,150	264,000
2003–04	6,100	30	2,700	355,000
2004–05	7,600	28	4,000	422,000
2005–06	8,230	6	3,882	470,600
2006–07	9,726	8	3,250	406,000
2007–08	7,784	9	3,439	424,500
2008–09	9,558	7	4,004	426,200
2009–10	11,082	23	3,038	451,040
2010–11	12,759	27	3,602	436,216

Appendix 2: Volunteer campgrounds host hours in 2010–11

Project title	Volunteers in each region*	Total hours
Albany	14	6,316.50
Blackwood	15	5,856.00
Donnelly	20	9,126.00
East Kimberley	10	3,796.00
Esperance	37	15,401.00
Exmouth	51	24,642.40
Frankland	3	752.00
Geraldton	18	6,712.00
Kalgoorlie	12	9,049.00
Karratha	39	13,197.00
Perth Hills	9	3,674.00
Shark Bay	11	4,022.00
West Kimberley	18	6,286.00
		108,829.90

* A volunteer campground host may be responsible for more than one placement during 2010–11

For example, Mr Smith may total xx hours across four placements:

- July at Karijini
- August at Cape Range
- December in Esperance
- February in Albany

Appendix 3: Community involvement volunteer hours 1999–2011

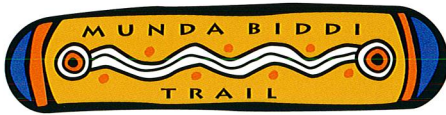
Year	Registered volunteers	New projects	Volunteers actively contributing	Total hours	Hours per (active) volunteer
1999–00	3,800	12	1,400	121,000	86
2000–01	4,499	26	1,600	190,000	119
2001–02	5,683	20	2,500	217,000	87
2002–03	5,160	32	3,150	264,000	84
2003–04	6,100	30	2,700	355,000	131
2004–05	7,600	28	4,000	422,000	106
2005–06	8,230	6	3,882	470,600	121
2006–07	9,726	8	3,250	406,000	125
2007–08	7,784	9	3,439	424,500	123
2008–09	9,558	7	4,004	426,200	106
2009–10	11,082	23	3,038	451,040	148
2010–11	12,759	27	3,602	436,216	121

Appendix 4: Calls to Wildcare Helpline 2002–11

	2002 –03	2003 –04	2004 –05	2005 –06	2006 –07	2007 –08	2008 –09	2009 –10	2010 –11
Birds	1,884	3,216	3,078	3,128	2,841	4,843	5,698	5,441	4,025
Mammals	272	582	643	1,065	1,053	1,395	1,849	1,941	1,809
Snakes	423	771	725	932	905	1,473	1,197	1,418	1,148
Other reptiles	163	302	310	295	359	458	518	521	417
Amphibians			47	66	60	86	97	35	95
Other	79	138	90	75	261	488	474	201	221
General enquiries			190	127	210	262	383	357	253
Total	2,821	5,009	5,083	5,688	5,689	9,005	10,216	9,914	7,968

Acknowledgments/references

CIU Partners:



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Corrective Services**



Some of this report contains information taken from *LANDSCOPE* Spring 2010

Thanks to all staff, volunteers and others who helped and advised in putting together this publication.

Value of volunteer hours—\$15,126,868—was calculated by averaging the value of volunteers as equivalent to a Level 2.1 CSA (including overheads) @ \$34.76 per hour, and multiplying by the number of volunteer hours for 2010–11 (436, 216).

For more information

Visit www.dec.wa.gov.au

If you are interested in volunteering in any CIU projects, please contact:

Email: community.involvement@dec.wa.gov.au

Phone: (08) 9334 0279

Mail: Community Involvement Unit
Locked Bag 104
Bentley Delivery Centre
WA 6983