



# Conservation News

DEPARTMENT OF  
**Conservation**  
AND LAND MANAGEMENT  
*Conserving the nature of WA*



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AUGUST 2001

## Multi-million dollar visitor centres

WESTERN Australian eco-tourism has been boosted with the opening of two new multi-million dollar visitor centres.

The million-dollar Monkey Mia Visitor Centre and the \$4 million Karijini Visitor Centre were both opened in June.

The centres will enable visitors to enjoy nature and are enormous assets to WA tourism.

Another boost for local tourism has been the opening of the Chawn Mia Lakeview Tearooms at Yanchep National Park as part of an upgrade of the park.

Rod Quartermain from the Department's Park Policy and Tourism Branch, said the new Monkey Mia and Karijini centres would greatly enhance the tourism and ecological experience of visitors.

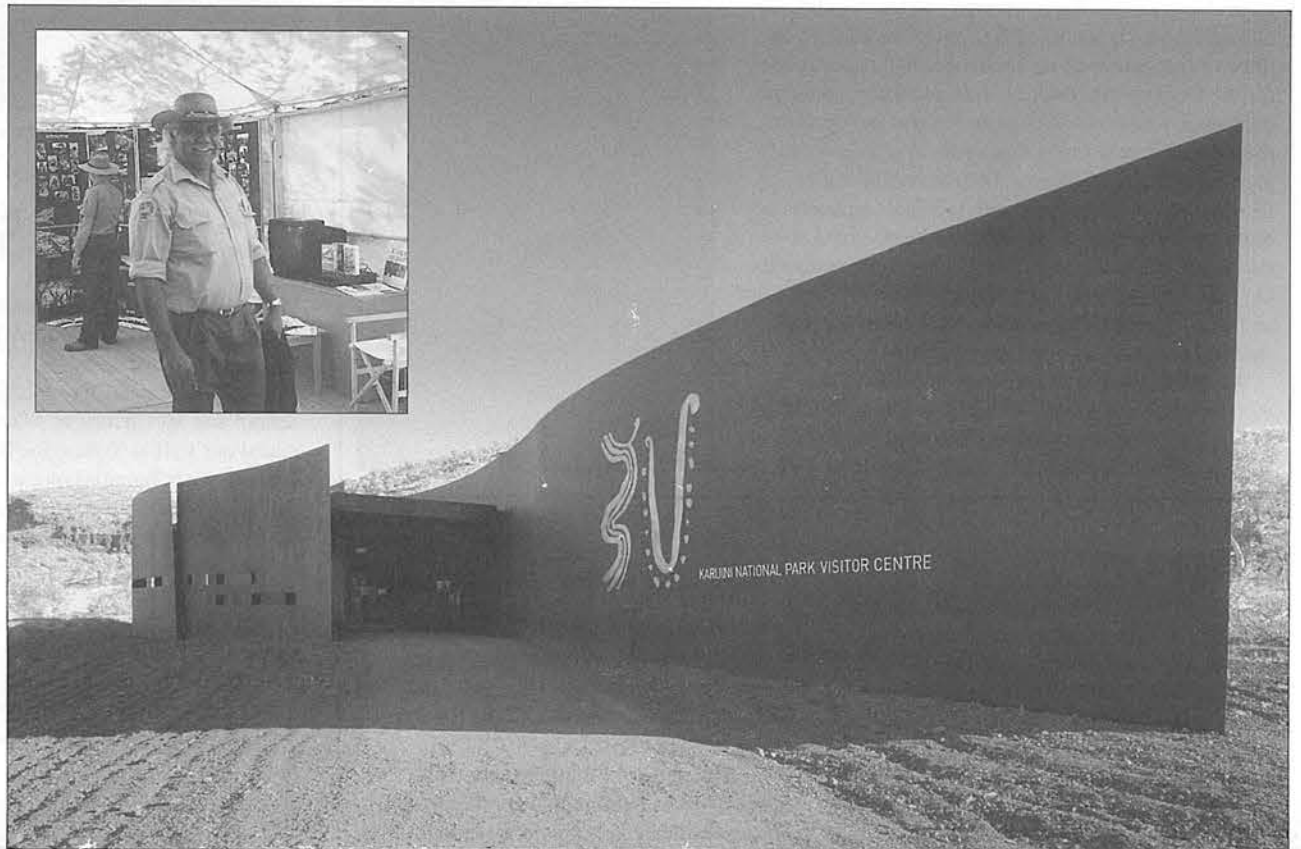
"Visitors are the clear winners with the opening of these wonderful new visitor centres," Rod said.

He said the centres with their use of technology such as the DolphinCam at the Monkey Mia Visitor Centre brought the facilities into the 21st century.

The new Monkey Mia Visitor Centre, which will host 100,000 visitors a year, is positioned at the edge of the beach overlooking the dolphins and features a 200 seat amphitheatre with shade cloth sails, a fish preparation room for the dolphins' strict feeding program and a beach office for staff.

The DolphinCam operates from the centre and feeds live coverage of visiting dolphins to the Department's website [www.naturebase.net](http://www.naturebase.net)

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Karijini Visitors' Centre is visually stunning. It has already won the Australian Institute of Architects' BHP Colorbond Steel Award. Inset: Karijini's Ranger-in-Charge, Maitland Parker, in the marquee that was the former visitors' centre.



Keiran McNamara.

### Acting Executive Director takes the helm

**KEIRAN McNamara has been appointed as the Department's Acting Executive Director.**

The appointment follows the retirement from the public service of Wally Cox after a career spanning 35 years.

Keiran has been the Department's Director of Nature Conservation since 1992 and for the past 12 months has acted as the Director of Sustainable Forest Management.

He is respected nationally for his experience in policy formulation and advice on conservation.

Keiran is a member of the Australian Biological Diversity

Advisory Committee and a member by invitation of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) Species Survival Commission, Crocodile and Sustainable Use Specialist Groups and Commission on Protected Areas.

He has been with the Department since 1985 and previously worked for the Australian Parks and Wildlife Service in Canberra where one of his roles was as an Australian representative on the International Whaling Commission.

Caris Bailey has been appointed acting Director of Sustainable Forest Management.

## New Gilbert's potoroos discovered but species still endangered

**Australia's most endangered mammal is beginning to breed again in Albany.**

In the last month five new Gilbert's potoroos have been trapped by the Department's Albany Research Scientist, Tony Friend, to add to a colony of less than 30.

Although the news is good, the species remains on the edge of extinction because of foxes.

The Department's captive breeding colony at Two Peoples Bay has

a population of eight but because of ageing and a kidney disorder in the species, the numbers are declining. In spite of the birth of a female in February this year, the mother died from a kidney disorder last month.

Research to find more answers about the potoroos' tenuous existence continues so that the species doesn't join the 11 others which have become extinct since 1914 when foxes arrived in WA.

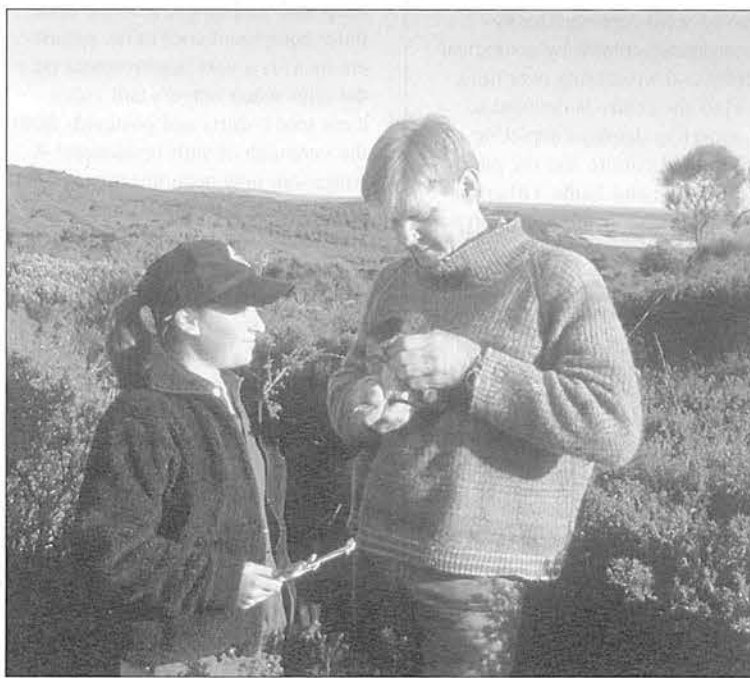
The potoroos were named by nat-

uralist and collector John Gilbert who discovered them near Albany in 1843. The species is a relative of the kangaroo and wallaby and is thought to have been extinct since its last sighting in 1879.

It was rediscovered by University of Western Australia students in November 1994 at Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve east of Albany.

Since then, volunteers and scientists have monitored the wild population and established a captive breeding colony where a diet of fruit, vegetables, nuts and meal worms is trialled to ascertain what will give them the best chance of survival.

"The discovery of five new potoroos is great news because it shows the species is breeding again but we still need to know more about its breeding and other factors," Tony said.



Tony Friend and volunteer Cathy Jenkison with a trapped Gilbert's potoroo at Two Peoples Bay.

Department of Conservation and Land Management supports the International Year of the Volunteer





# Working Together

Welcome to *Conservation News*—our new look employee newspaper. It will be distributed monthly, ensuring speedier circulation of news around the Department.

While *CALM News* has served us well over many years, *Conservation News* reflects our new focus and the name our Department will have once the necessary legislative changes have been passed by Parliament.

I commenced as Acting Executive Director on 14 July. My first duty was to officiate at a farewell function at Crawley the previous evening for Dr Wally Cox, the Department's retiring Executive Director.

Wally had an outstanding career in the WA public service over more than 35 years, including nearly 18 as a CEO. We thank him for his period of leadership in our Department, and wish him every success in his new role at Edith Cowan University.

Since taking up the reins I have had the opportunity to visit Merredin, Pingelly and the Gascoyne, meeting with staff and community members. Addressing the Wildlife Officers' conference as well as presenting certificates to staff who have completed our latest Leadership and Organisational Development Program have also provided the opportunity to talk to some of our staff from right around the State. The future continues to present exciting challenges and opportunities for the Department. Priority areas include implementing the Government's old-growth forest policy and preparing the next forest management plan; establishing new parks and reserves, both terrestrial and marine; joint management with indigenous people; a State biodiversity strategy and new biodiversity conservation legislation; our salinity programs; maintaining high standards of management of our parks, forests and wildlife; providing quality experiences for park visitors; and working with the community.

We will be reviewing our Corporate Plan in the months ahead and I look forward to working with all our staff and partners to achieve our conservation objectives.

*Keiran McNamara, Acting Executive Director*



Students from both schools pose at Yorkrakine Rock.

## Good sting for students

**WA schoolchildren have come to the aid of a rare scorpion-like creature and other reptiles in the Wheatbelt.**

Fifty-five students from Tammin Primary School and Mt Claremont's Quintillian School joined our staff at Yorkrakine Rock Nature Reserve (near Tammin) recently to help restore the habitat of the pseudoscorpion, a member of the spider, scorpion, tick and mite family.

They redistributed piles of granite cairns to their original sites.

Other animals such as lizards, frogs and other invertebrate species have also benefited from the newly-created habitat.

The Department's District Wildlife Officer, Matt Dowling, described the day as a success.

"It was great to see the students from the country and city come together and work towards the conservation of not only the pseudoscorpion, but also the Yorkrakine Rock Nature Reserve, and the conservation of remnant vegetation in the Wheatbelt," Matt said.

Other activities on the day included exploring rock pools on the granite outcrop and vegetation surveys.

Matt also discussed with the students the importance of the Yorkrakine Rock Nature Reserve for the conservation of local biodiversity.

The activity was part of an educational program being run in conjunction with the Tammin Alcoa Landcare Education Centre.

### Conservation News August 2001

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### Letters to the editor

To Whom it May Concern

I would just like to make a comment regarding the personnel in charge of the camp that we encountered during the 3 days we were there (21–23 January 2001).

i.e. The ranger, I think his name was Scott. He was extremely helpful and obviously very dedicated and professional.

Volunteer help: Their names were Veronica and Ken Sherwood. Again their assistance and knowledge were invaluable and greatly assisted our stay in the park.

Frank Tyson  
Fremantle WA

### Big Brook relay 2001 nominations

**NOMINATIONS are being called for this year's Big Brook Relay.**

The closing date is August 31.

Nominations for the event, planned for 17 November, can be made by email or phone to David Meehan on 9776 1207 or Rod Annear at Pemberton District.



The Monkey Mia Visitors' Centre.

#### From page 1

The new \$4 million centre at the Karijini National Park replaces a marquee used as a temporary visitors' facility.

The design of the centre is distinctive. The building suggests a goanna on the ground seeking shade from the hot sun, while

curved walls represent rocky escarpments created by geological forces and weathering over time.

Half the centre is devoted to interpretive displays depicting Aboriginal culture and the park's native flora and fauna. Other features include a theatre, shop and library.



The Karijini Visitors' Centre.

## Purnululu's visitor centre going strong

By Alex Bowlay

**AFTER braving the prolonged, adventurous though scenic drive along Spring Creek Track into Purnululu National Park, visitors are immensely relieved to see signs of civilisation: particularly the large and welcoming shady building.**

Purnululu Visitors' Centre, now in its second year of operation, is a modified and refurbished ranger's house. The new centre and spacious airconditioned rangers' office (to keep staff and temperamental computer equipment cool in the persistent heat) is a vast improvement on the days when rangers and volunteers sold t-shirts and postcards from the verandah of staff residences! A storeroom now occupies the original office, while a flushing toilet, disabled access ramp, and extra stairways are all new features.

David Start (son of Dr Tony Start, based with the Department in Kununurra) is managing the centre (under the auspices of the East Kimberley District). David's easy-going manner with visitors ensures they are equipped with plenty of information about walks and other places of interest in the area.

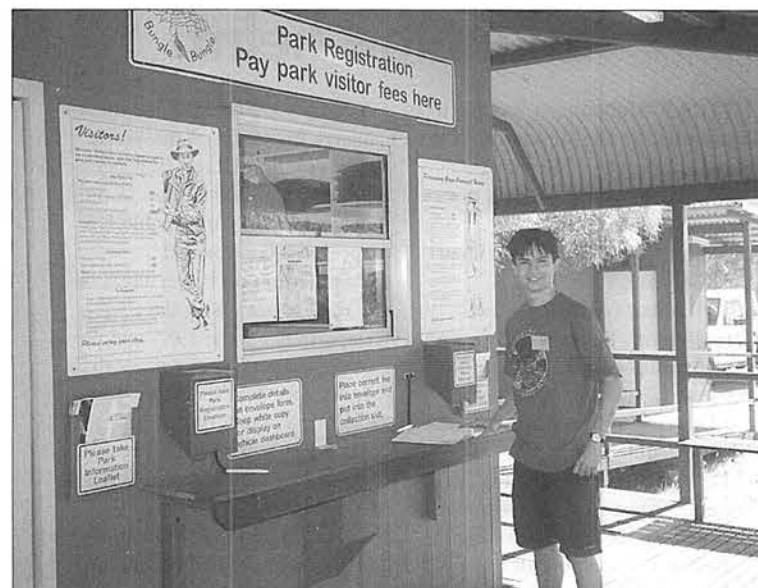
The centre is a large open design featuring an assortment of interpretive material explaining the fascinating and complex geology of the area, as well as a general history. An innovative display designed by previous rangers is the press-button

console that activates a bright red LED on a large satellite image of the area, putting a 'geographical face' to a name. A series of backlit transparencies create a pre-visit impression of the site. Information is available to plan daily itineraries. The centre is a refuge on hotter days, with supplies of icy cold soft drinks and bottled water. Camera film is available, as well as souvenirs and various departmental publications. Unique Donna Brown-designed

Bungles t-shirts are exclusive to the park, and a similar shirt, designed for the Mitchell Plateau, is also available.

A selection of paintings by local landscape artist Nadeen Lovell is on display in the centre, mirroring the colours and contrasts to be found in the surrounding environment.

The visitor centre is a well-organised communications hub for the park also, featuring HF and UHF radios, fax and telephone as well as EFTPOS and E-mail facilities. Departmental staff can be contacted on the centre's e-mail address: calm-purn@wn.com.au.



David Start, Purnululu Visitors' Centre Manager.



## Promoting forest management

**PROMOTING sustainable forest management is something Jo Wallace plans to do.**

Jo, a Project Officer with the Forest Management Branch recently attended a three-day media communications workshop in Canberra and now plans to put her new knowledge to work.

She was nominated to attend the workshop, held at the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra, by the Institute of Foresters' of Australia (IFA), and was sponsored to attend by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry—Australia (AFFA).

The workshop was part of an AFFA project aimed at raising public awareness of sustainable forest management.

Jo said the workshop covered a range of issues from public speaking to conflict resolution and how to effectively use the media.

She described the workshop as "excellent": "The community has shown a lot of interest in forestry and the environment and we need to provide more information on land management to address this interest."

"The workshop was an opportunity to discuss how to communicate sustainable forest management to the public and gain training in communication skills."

"I'm grateful I had the opportunity to improve my public speaking, because it's something I've tried to avoid in the past."

# Farewell and thank you

**FORTY-ONE staff accepted offers of voluntary severance at the end of June.**

Functions were held across the State to celebrate 972 years of service accompanied by plenty of toasts and old stories (mostly unprintable!).

The average of almost 24 years of service showed ours was a better place than most to have a rewarding and interesting career.

For some people, the decision to take voluntary severance was not easy but each of them left knowing that they had made an outstanding contribution to the Department.

Former Executive Director, Dr Wally Cox, told guests at a function at Kensington that the challenge was for the rest of the organisation to pick up where the others had left off.

"I'd like to say a very, very sincere thank you to each and every person who's leaving with the hope that they've had happy careers and will have a happy future," he said.

Jim Williamson was the man with the most, clocking up 41 years of service, starting as an Assistant Divisional Forest Officer in Dwellingup in 1959 and ending his career—after numerous promotions—as the Planning and Visitor Services Manager.

Those who left us were:  
**CORPORATE SERVICES:** Rod Properjohn (39 years) and Bevan Kerr (31 years).

**NATURE CONSERVATION:** Frank Batini (38 years), Paul Connolly (five years), Rita Mellican (16 years) and Adrienne North (18 years).

**REGIONAL SERVICES:** Bernie Haberley (27 years), Roger Markham (12 years) Pat Cleary (25 years), Marilyn Ramsay (22 years), Jim Wilson (11 years), Charlie Broadbent (36 years), Dave Bottrill (30 years), Wendy Rose (17 years), Lisa Proctor (five years), Anne Watts (six years), Viona Cleggett (10 years), Debbie Italiano



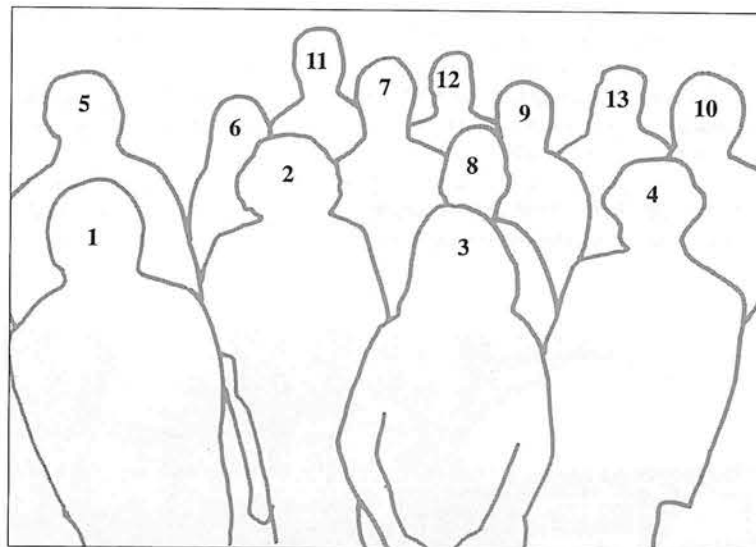
(23 years), Chris Portlock (25 years), John Evans (39 years), Karen Parke (10 years), Janine East (10 years), Peta Clark (nine years), Harry Hercock (23 years), Leon Silvester (35 years), Allana Edwards (19 years) and Dough Myers (25 years).

**SCIENCE DIVISION:** Dave Ward (31 years), Michael Yung (23 years), Francis Tay (14 years), Mike Churches (25 years), Mick Dillon (35 years) and Kate Didlock (14 years).

**STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS:** Verna Costello (22 years), June Ellis (17 years) and Wendy Searle (24 years).

**CORPORATE EXECUTIVE:** Greg Heberle (32 years)

**PARKS AND RECREATION:** Jim Williamson (41 years), Marjorie Jackson (seven years), Raelene Hick (15 years) and Richard Hammond (15 years).



*Pictured at the Kensington farewell ceremony were: 1 Francis Tay, 2 Verna Costello, 3 Rita Mellican, 4 Marjorie Jackson, 5 Dave Ward, 6 Raelene Hick, 7 Rod Properjohn, 8 Bevan Kerr, 9 Jim Williamson, 10 Frank Batini, 11 Greg Heberle, 12 Richard Hammond and 13 Roger Markham.*

Photograph by Ernie McLintock

## US scholarship for Nicole

**BASKETBALLER and assets officer Nicole Ireland has just started an eight-month paid athletic basketball scholarship in the USA.**

Twenty-six-year-old Nicole, from the Department's Financial Services Branch, left Perth on 12 August to attend Okaloosa-Walton College in Florida.

She will travel the US competing in the women's American College League basketball competition.

The scholarship will enable Nicole to play top-level women's basketball and to further her studies in accounting and business management.

## Goldfields pastoralists join conservation cause

**PASTORALISTS north of Coolgardie have given part of their property to the conservation cause.**

Tim and Megan Funstone's decision to let part of Credo Station be managed by the Department took five years of negotiation.

In June an agreement between the Department and the couple was signed to preserve part of the Rowles Lagoon wetland on their property.

More than 200 hectares of wetland that forms part of the Rowles Lagoon wetland will be fenced.

"It's a win-win situation," Tim Funstone said. "The land used to be a holding paddock for sheep before shearing but because it is the start of the Rowles Lagoon network, it has been fenced."

The Funstones' land adjoins the Rowles Lagoon Conservation Park and is important to the conservation of the native plants and ani-

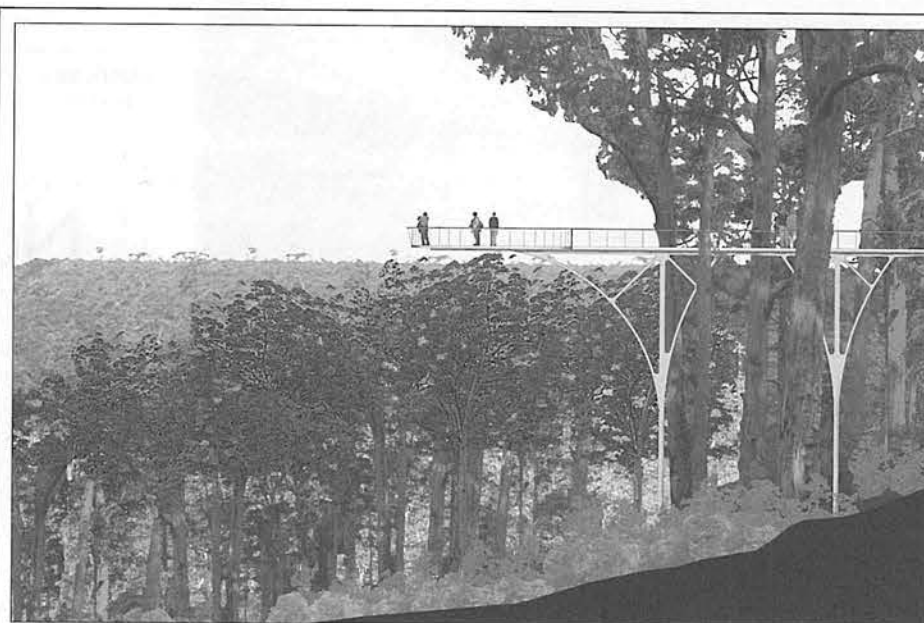
mals in the area. The land will remain part of the pastoral lease but will be managed for the conservation of the wetlands and adjacent areas.

The Funstones were the second pastoralists in WA to sign such an agreement which allows the Department manage land with important conservation values that lies outside the reserve system.

The Department encourages other pastoralists whose leases have high conservation values to allow the land to be managed for conservation.

The Department's staff work closely with the Funstones to ensure the area remains in good condition, helping with fencing, removing straying stock and road maintenance.

Phil Spencer, the Goldfields' Regional Operations Officer, said the liaison between the Department and the Funstones was working well.



*Donaldson and Warn Architects' impression of the Donnelly Valley Sky Jetty.*

## Sky jetty tourist attraction

**PLANS for a Sky Jetty above the forest floor in the Donnelly Valley are moving towards fruition.**

The State Government recently agreed to contribute \$1 million towards the project and called on the Commonwealth to contribute the remaining \$1 million.

The project is expected to boost tourism in the South-West region and has the potential to rival the Tree Top Walk in the Walpole Wilderness Area.

The proposed jetty will enable visitors to

enjoy a gradual walk through the base of trees to the upper limbs and forest canopy, finally arriving at a spectacular view of the Donnelly Valley.

The Sky Jetty would be constructed to have minimal impact on the site, with intrusion into the forest extremely low and few points of contact with the ground needed.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management has volunteered to manage the overall Sky Jetty project.



## Conservation briefs

### Name new parks

Names are being sought for six new national parks in the south-west. Anyone can submit a name so send in your ideas. Entry forms are at our local offices or on the Conservation Commission of Western Australia's web site <http://www.conservation.wa.gov.au>

### Fellowship Applications

The Joseph William Gottstein Memorial Trust is inviting applications for a Fellowship at the World Forest Institute in Portland, Oregon, USA. Fellowships are awarded to help people associated with forest industries enhance their experience, education and training. Applications should be forwarded to Dr A.F.A. Wallis, Secretary, J.W.Gottstein Memorial Trust Fund, Private Bag 10, Clayton South, VIC 3169 before the September 14 closing date. For more information phone (03) 9545 2209, fax (08) 9545 2223 or email [gottstein.trust@ffp.csiro.au](mailto:gottstein.trust@ffp.csiro.au)

### CBSG meeting at Rottnest

Scientists and technical staff involved in captive breeding programs may be interested in attending the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group's (CBSG) annual meeting at Rottnest in October.

This year's meeting is being hosted by Perth Zoo from October 19-21.

For registration details and accommodation arrangements contact Merri Blakemore on 9474 0339, fax 9368 1878 or email [merri.blakemore@perthzoo.wa.gov.au](mailto:merri.blakemore@perthzoo.wa.gov.au)

# Black flanked rock wallabies released

by Bob Hudson & Marianne Lewis

**AFTER nearly 50 years' absence, the black flanked rock wallaby may once again be seen bounding up and down the steep rocky gorges of the Avon Valley.**

Last May 37 black flanked rock wallabies (*Petrogale lateralis lateralis*) were released at two sites in the Avon Valley National Park, and another 10 were released in the Australian Wildlife Conservancy's Paruna Sanctuary, adjacent to the National Park. Land for Wildlife members and Toodyay Naturalist Club members participated in the relocation release in the National Park, guided by Western Shield zoologists Peter Mawson and Peter Orell, and Avon Valley National Park Ranger Jim Maher.

Fauna translocation projects do not happen on a whim but only after a lengthy period of careful planning and preparation. The black flanked rock wallaby translocation has been in the planning since October 2000 when suitable release sites had been identified within Avon Valley National Park and at Paruna. This led to careful development of the translocation proposal, followed by acceptance. The Department appreciates the assistance from the Copley family and the Australian Wildlife Conservancy in making the translocation possible. The translocated rock wallabies were taken from a growing population at Mt Caroline Nature Reserve, south-west of Kellerberrin, where they have found refuge from extensive land clearing that has destroyed much of their former habitat, and survived predation by foxes through our Western Shield fox baiting program.

Land for Wildlife members and Toodyay Naturalist Club members will be playing an important role in assisting Western Shield to monitor the success of the rock wallaby

release in the Avon Valley. Observation sites have been established where the community can watch for sightings of the rock wallabies, complete an observation record sheet, and send it to the Department.

Western Shield has already released 83 tamar wallabies into the Avon Valley with plans

in place to release smaller marsupials such as the woylie and quenda in the near future. It shouldn't be long before we see the Avon Valley resembling something of its former self. It might even look something like that experienced by John Gilbert in 1842 when he observed and collected the type specimen of the black flanked rock wallaby, which renowned naturalist John Gould later used to describe the species.



Peter Orell helps Gillian Joyner release a black flanked rock wallaby, while Jim Maher looks in the bag for the next one to go.

## New boardwalk for Vasse-Wonnerup

by Jeremy Spencer

**JUST to the north of Busselton lies a wetland system that attracts visitors from all over the globe who flock there in their thousands to enjoy the serenity of the waterway and surrounding marshes.**

The visitors are migratory birds and they use the Vasse-Wonnerup wetlands as an integral part of their life cycle, which has resulted in the wetlands being listed under the Ramsar convention, which protects the area as an area of international significance.

It can be a truly unique experi-

ence to witness these birds, especially in early summer when their numbers are the highest, but it can prove very difficult to get anywhere near without disturbing them or getting very wet. The Department has recognised this problem and has constructed a bird hide and boardwalk that takes human visitors out over the water into the heart of the birds' habitat while remaining hidden from sight.

George Laws and Lindsay Belotti, from the Department, completed the project with help from high school student Matthew McLeod. The result is an easy walk through open Tuart forest then on to the boardwalk which leads to the original bird hide that has been revamped.

It is accessible for everyone and can accommodate wheelchairs from the hide to the car park, which is accessed from Layman road north of the Tuart tourist drive and Wonnerup House.



George Laws is pictured at the Malbup bird hide in the wetlands.

## Narrogin wins tourism award

**THE Department's Narrogin District office and Science Division has won a local tourism award.**

The office won the award in the Education and Training Section of the Heartlands Tourism Association Awards for its Dryandra Woodland Ecology Course.

The two-day course, which is a collaborative effort

between staff from across the Department, is suitable for anyone interested in the natural world and the environment. It outlines the flora, fauna and landforms of Dryandra Woodland and the Aboriginal and European cultural heritage of the area.

For details about the next ecology course from 16-18 November contact Clare Anthony on 9881 9207.

## Gnangara cleanup a big success

**PICTURE this—500 car bodies, 2000 tyres, 60 tonnes of asbestos and loads of household rubbish.**

That was the result of Operation Cleanup—a two-day exercise—at the Gnangara Park, north of Wanneroo.

The \$60,000 cleanup was part of a campaign to return the 90,000 hectare Gnangara Park to its natural state.

The cleanup was a joint activity between this Department, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Water Corporation, the City of Wanneroo, Police Department and City of Swan, the City of Wanneroo and the Police Department.

District Operations Officer, Clayton Sanders, said the cleanup had been a huge success.

He hopes that \$80,000 of gates and fencing, along with regular patrols by agencies, will decrease the dumping of rubbish and cars and the number of fires.

"Our next phase is the installation of signs. We have 50 anti-pollution signs which will be erected around the park over the next few weeks."

The signs were produced in conjunction with the Water Corporation, City of Wanneroo, Police Department and City of Swan to remind people not to pollute the Gnangara Mound.



Wanneroo Member of Parliament Di Guise (left) congratulates (from second left) Police Superintendent Jim Migro, Adrian Palmer and Samantha Crack (WRC), Dennis Darvel (Motor Trade Association), Detective Sergeant Herman Van Ravenstein, Peter Johns (DEP), Dan Seketa (Motorcycle Enduro Club), Ken Raine (DEP), Sergeant Ken Markham (Wanneroo Police), Clayton Sanders from our Perth District, and District Manager Alan Sands.