SHELTERBELT PROJECT GETS FUNDS

By RICHARD MOORE

THE agroforestry research project, coordinated from the research station at Busselton, has had $140,000 approved from the National Soil Conservation Program for a three-year research project at Esperance.

The funds will greatly expand CALM's involvement with the Department of Agriculture and farmers to develop farming systems with trees to reduce land degradation on the South Coast.

The South Coastal region of WA is recognised as an environment prone to severe wind erosion and threatened with a potentially serious salinity problem.

Trees are likely to be a key component in land care for this region.

Trees can slow wind thereby preventing erosion, help to control salinity by increasing water use, provide shelter for crops and stock, and they can provide returns from products such as timber.

This project aims to develop and demonstrate a management system using trees on farms (mainly shelterbelts) which will prevent wind erosion and control salinity.

Three steps have been identified which must be taken to bring about widespread implementation of shelterbelts:

- collect regional data on shelter effects;
- adapt management practices;
- hold field days etc, to disseminate information.

The new funds enable a project officer plus an assistant to be employed full time.

David Bicknell, who has been involved in CALM Department of Agriculture agroforestry trials near Manjimup and who has studied shelterbelts in New Zealand, has been seconded to CALM for the project.