

Crown fires investigated

by *LACHLAN McCAW*

Protecting pine plantations from damage or destruction by wildfire is a high priority for CALM's fire managers.

Preparations are under way in the Department for an experimental burning program designed to investigate the behaviour of plantation fires under dry summer conditions.

A specific aim of the study is to examine factors which influence initiation of crown fires. These include surface fire intensity, crown height and density, and foliage moisture content.

As part of the study, experimental fires will be conducted in plots of 22-year-

old *Pinus pinaster* at Iffley block in Manjimup District.

To ensure safety and control during these fires, the site has been chosen within an area programmed for fuel reduction burning this spring.

CALM is undertaking this study in collaboration with Marty Alexander, a visiting fire researcher from Forestry Canada with considerable experience of crown fires in pine forest types.

During August, staff from Fire Research at Manjimup assisted Marty with fuel sampling and assessment of stand characteristics in the study plots.

Fire crews from Manjimup and surrounding districts will join staff from Fire Protection Branch in using training opportunities provided by the project.

Information gained from the study will help improve strategies for plantation protection and allow objective analysis of the impact of silvicultural operations on fire protection.

ape park

placed on the tracks to help with stabilisation, and to provide a source of seed for regrowth.

Bollards were installed at