

# A forest affair

Story and photos by David Gough

**AROUND 750 adults and children converged on Fred Jacoby Park near Mundaring in mid-April to experience *A Forest Affair*.**

The weather was excellent - clear skies and not too hot - and a wide range of activities including log-hauling and fire-suppression demonstrations, chainsaw sculpturing, and several craft and educational displays were well received by all who attended.

Some took advantage of the barbecue facilities in the park, while others availed themselves of the free bush 'cuisine' on offer - johnny cakes and billy tea.

*A Forest Affair* is just one of 16 activities in the Department of Conservation and Land Management's *Go Bush* program, which in turn is one of many school holiday activities organised by CALM throughout the State.

At present, activities are run at Yanchep National Park, Mundaring and Serpentine National Park with additional programs in the South West being aimed jointly at school children and holidaying visitors.

The *Go Bush* program was piloted in October 1990 and almost all of the 10 activities tried sold out. The second program was expanded to 16 separate activities in April 1991.

## Enthusiastic support

The program received enthusiastic support from local groups and people, many of whom participated as leaders. These included the Mundaring Historical Society, the Eastern Hills Wildflower Society, local artist Judy Kotai and CALM volunteers.

The activities included a night-time spotlighting tour of Kalamunda National Park, breakfast with the birds, animal tracking, drawing and sketching, and campfire stories and song. The night-time activities were the first to be sold out, followed by the animal tracking activity *Forests Alive*.

One activity - *Forest Caretakers* - was designed especially for children aged 9-12 years old to give them an understanding of both ecological concepts and the need to keep the planet healthy.

All of the activities were aimed at providing families with a fun way of learning about their natural environment rather than sitting at home reading books or watching TV documentaries. First-hand experience helps us to appreciate our natural surroundings, and the questions asked and feedback given helps CALM improve its park and forest management techniques.

Feedback from participants in this most recent *Go Bush* program was encouraging, and many participants wanted more activities more often.

The Mundaring office received many letters of praise and some with constructive suggestions for future activities.

These possibilities will be investigated with the extension of the program as a major part of future changes to recreation, interpretation and education in the Mundaring forest area.



Top: Helen Forrester (volunteer at Watunga NP), George Duxbury (Senior Ranger for Mundaring District) and Gill Duxbury preparing johnny cakes.



Left: James Dimer from Huntingdale and Travis Narkle from Marble Bar looking at the Dieback Display at A Forest Affair.

Below: Barry Rhodes, Storeman at CALM's Mundaring Office, demonstrates the art of billy tea making.

Below left: CALM's Brian Selkirk has been creating chainsaw sculptures for four years. He demonstrated this unusual art to an enthusiastic audience.

Below right: Acting District Manager Bill Adams raised a few dollars more by auctioning Brian Selkirk's masterpieces.



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