

# Alex Errington - upwardly mobile

NEWS of Alex Errington's recent promotion to Deputy State Ombudsman for Western Australia has been received by his colleagues and friends with mixed feelings.

While pleased for him, they know that he will be very much missed and a great loss to CALM.

## Leadership

As one of the Department's foundation Corporate Executive members, Alex provided significant leadership as Director of the diverse Corporate Services portfolio.

Alex's contribution to shaping the structure of the Department through the direction of human resources and finance management will be where his going will have the first and most noticeable impact.

However, it is in the area of conservation land acquisitions that his efforts have been even more outstanding.

When CALM was formed it had responsibility



Alex Errington.  
Photo by Carolyn Thomson

for the management of 16.4 million hectares of land.

At the time of Alex's resignation, CALM had responsibility for managing 19.7 million hectares of land and 1.1 million hectares of marine areas.

This significant increase and the huge amount of work done by Alex and his staff in resolving many of the management

problems caused by difficult reserve boundaries, enclaves, and the need for amalgamations, etcetera, will stand as a worthy tribute to his many years of commitment to the task.

Alex takes with him the congratulations and warm wishes of his friends and colleagues that he will enjoy equal if not greater success in his new position.



Left to right: Mary McLean of Ninga mia demonstrates how to make a coolamon, an all-purpose carrying dish that can be made in any size. With her are Kathy Trimmer and Jean Butts. Photo by Verna Costello

## Women head for bush and CALM (Mundaring)

CALM Mundaring was the venue and several of its staff the hosts recently to about 80 women who took time out from family and other commitments to participate in Active Expressions Heads for the Bush.

Active Expressions is an annual project organised by the Women's Sport Foundation of WA (Inc).

WSF executive director Yvonne Rate said that its target group was women of all ages and types of occupation and its two-fold aim was to encourage women to pursue a sport or physical activity they enjoyed and to express themselves through creative activities.

### Fitness flow-on

"As with the menfolk and children in her life, benefits gained from a woman's own physical fitness flow on to those around her - in the home and wherever else she works," Yvonne said.

"She tires less easily, becomes ill less frequently and when she does she recovers faster if she's fit.

"Also when she's able to express herself through active activities her mental, emotional and spiritual life is strengthened - she

tends to become emotionally and mentally tougher."

This year, the bush was chosen as a tranquil setting for the activities and as a learning experience in itself.

### Bush tales

For the group travelling by bus from Perth to Mundaring, the day began with a selection of Aboriginal bush stories told by Goldfields-born-and-bred Kathy Trimmer.

Getting in touch with the 'spirit of the forest', the next item on the agenda, was a form of meditation conducted by Cam Armstrong.

### Bliss

For many this was a novel experience, and for those not 'into meditation' it was, as one woman expressed it, 'sheer bliss, anyway, with a whole hour of no-one tugging at me, demanding attention.'

Next came billy tea and Johnny cakes made and served by CALM Mundaring clerical officer Jean Butts, and Ray and Helen Armstrong from the 1st Mundaring Ranger Guides.

Volleyball, easily set up and often played in metropolitan parks and at the beach, proved just as popular in the bush.

Archery seemed a natural for the bush and drew large numbers, as did bush sculpture and design, demonstrated by Nalda Searles and Trudi Pollard, using mostly leaves, grasses, twigs, small branches, resin and other naturally occurring 'bush litter'.

By the end of the day one ambitious woman had produced a sturdy-looking child's chair but most opted for baskets and ornamental pieces for their first efforts.

Journalist Alison Farmer led a group wanting to write about the bush, while photographing it held the interest of others led by professional photographer June Butcher.

It had rained steadily all morning, so mugs of steaming hot soup were enthusiastically downed before a wide range of healthy, energising lunches were devoured, to a background of guitar and vocal numbers soothingly rendered by Liz Rivett.

### A lively forest

The rain then became a 'drownpour' but just as it had not dampened spirits during the morning, it failed to deter some 50 stouthearts who cheerfully took off

'to experience and appreciate the forest as a living entity'.

They were led in separate groups by CALM interpretation officer Lotte Lent and regional ecologist Jenni Alford, with assistance from Amanda Spooner.

They returned soaked to the skin but exhilarated - and ready for more Johnny cakes and scalding hot billy tea.

### Bush tucker

Kathy Trimmer again captivated her listeners as she told of the bush tucker that Goldfields Aboriginal people hunted, gathered and prepared. She also described how her people dealt with sickness and injuries, using the bush as their medicine chest.

Feedback was enthusiastic and positive with 'the bush' an outright winner as far as pleasantly surprising learning experiences were concerned.

Two comments that were overheard were:

"It's so alive and busy and yet it's got this calming effect that you enjoy anything you're doing so much more - I'm definitely going to bring the family out here."

"I feel as if nothing can rattle me ever again!"

## Loops and Z-bends upgraded at Kalbarri

Generations of tourists (and CALM staff) have staggered and tripped along the rough, rugged and rocky paths that lead to two of the most spectacular and popular tourist attractions in WA, The Z-Bend and The Loop in Kalbarri National Park.

However, in the last 12 months CALM's Kalbarri team (rangers Roy Harris, Gerry Deegan and David Burton, assisted by a small team of local youths supported by grants) have completely upgraded the

carparks, picnic areas and the walk trails to the gorges, making the rough and the rugged considerably less so.

Upgrading the paths was tough manual labour, with gravel having to be carted in, formed up and rolled.

Steps were then set in place using local stone and recycled railway sleepers and drainage measures concreted in place.

The result is one good, safe and attractive path where numerous rough and dangerous paths existed before.

Ranger Roy Harris said the team worked right through the heat of summer so they could avoid a clash with peak visitor periods.

"But it was worth it to get such a good result and now all we need is some rain so we can upgrade the roads to the gorges as well," Roy said.

Recently, a contract was let to carry out a major road upgrade in the Park.

If the work is completed this year, Kalbarri will not only be one of our most beautiful parks, but also one of the most user-friendly.



The Kalbarri team, left to right: Roy Harris, Gerry Deegan and Dave Burton on the new path to The Loop. Photo by Alex Errington

## Bug lady in China

HOW would you like to spend your annual leave with over three-and-a-half thousand people talking about bugs?

CALM entomologist Janet Farr did just that recently - in Beijing, China where she and the other 3 600 delegates from all over the world attended the International Entomology Congress.

Janet presented a poster display featuring information on a newly named insect, the *Cardiaspina*

*jerramungae* psyllid, discovered in 1982 on flat-topped yates (*Eucalyptus occidentalis*) along the south coast of Western Australia.

The town of Jerramungup was named from the Aboriginal word meaning 'place of the flat-topped yate' and these were the trees that appeared to be fire-scorched in 1982 but were, in fact, suffering severe crown decline and death caused by the psyllid, later named after Jerramungup.

Janet and technical officer Stephen Dick put together a display on the psyllid, (also mistakenly known as a 'lerp') with photographs and descriptions, which were considered by those taking part in the Congress to be among the more interesting presented.

Following the Beijing week-long Congress, Janet then took off for Tibet to polish off her annual leave experience.

She has since returned to CALM's Science and

Information Division at Manjimup to continue her work which includes finding out which types of native trees are resistant to the ravages of this psyllid.

Such research is vital as native trees are important in combating the increase in salinity of the water table, a problem facing many of our farmers in the South West.

Janet's story, *Lerps, bugs and gum leaves*, appears in the spring issue of *LANDSCOPE*.

