

# Revived roadsides awards

**ROADSIDE Conservation Awards, partly sponsored by CALM, were presented at the recent Local Government Week Conference to Mullewa Shire, Aboriginal trainees representing Hamersley Iron, and Main Roads WA.**

The awards are an initiative of the Roadside Conservation Committee, chaired by John Blyth, a scientific advisor in CALM's WA Threatened Species and Communities Unit.

CALM's full-time executive officer on the Committee is David Lamont, who, John claims, carries out the lion's share of the work.

The Roadside Conservation Awards are presented to Western Australian individuals, groups or organisations who have made practical achievements in the sympathetic management, restoration or revegetation of the rail or roadside environment.

There are three categories: local government roads; State government roads; and gravel pit rehabilitation.

Entries were judged by a panel selected by the Roadside Conservation Committee, and chaired by John Blyth.

Main Roads WA, Greening Western Australia and local government were also represented on the panel.

Because of its responsibilities under the WA Wildlife Conservation Act, CALM was made lead agency for the newly established Roadside Conservation Committee in 1985; the aim being to promote the conservation and restoration of rail and roadside vegetation.

Environment Minister Kevin Minson, who presented the awards, said that roadside vegetation was vitally important - it provided an example of the State's floral heritage - and was one of the features that tourists came to Western Australia to see.

"Many endangered species are found only on road verges and grow nowhere else, he said."

"During the last decade, community and government awareness of the importance of roadside reserves has increased dramatically."

Mullewa Shire won the category for local government roads. The Shire helped conserve and rehabilitate roadside vegetation by encouraging landowners to voluntarily set back new fence lines by at least five metres, and by planting native vegetation along Shire roads.

This was done within an overall set of guidelines developed by the Council for managing all road reserves within the Shire.

Mr Minson said this was

a model he would like to see followed by other local government authorities within WA.

Hamersley Iron won an award for its landform rehabilitation on the 386-km Dampier-Paraburdoo rail/road corridor.

Mr Minson said that this was a large and ambitious project and was especially significant because local Aboriginal people were employed and trained to carry out the work.

"A number of these workers flew down from Karratha to accept the award," he said.

"The work, begun in 1992, involved re-establishing landforms and encouraging the original plants and animals on old pits, construction camps and roadside windrows along the corridor."

Mr Minson said the corridor ran through rugged Pilbara terrain from Dampier, through Millstream-Chichester National Park, rising to 742 metres at Mt Tom Price and then to Paraburdoo.

"Eighty km have been

completed so far and the countryside is now returning to its natural state," he said.

The Bunbury division of Main Roads WA won the State Government roads category, for revegetating the South West Highway between Yornup and Palgarup.

"They used direct seeding to establish an understory beneath existing blackbutt stands. This linked stands of vegetation together and helped improve the habitat for local wildlife," Mr Minson said.

"This work also helped to enhance the landscape along what is an important tourist route."

John and David are especially pleased with the range of initiatives recognised by the awards this year.

"With winners of the three categories representing local government, industry and State government, it's clear that there's an increasing acceptance of the roadside values promoted by both CALM and the Committee," they said.



*Left to right, Photographed with Environment Minister Kevin Minson, third from left, are Wayne Stevens, Rex Parker, Stuart Robertson, Terrence Mills and Michael Hyland after the 1994 Roadside Conservation Awards ceremony.*

Photo by Greg Wood

