

CALMfire gears up for summer



South Coogee Volunteer Steve Powell (second from right) discusses the Thomsons Lake prescribed burning plan with Greg Napier, John McKenzie and Brian Inglis of CALM's Perth District.



CALMfire Manager Rick Sneeuwjagt, Executive Assistant Pam Sapsworth, Executive Director Syd Shea, Brian Inglis from Perth District Derryck Winter and Abe van de Sande with CALMfire's strikingly painted mobile control unit. Brian, Derryck and Abe were among the CALM team involved in Operation Fireshield, a joint fire management exercise with the Fire and Rescue Service, Bush Fires Board and Police held in November at South Guildford.



John Carter (seated left) and Ed Bartosiak from CALM Mundaring and Murray Love, CALM Dwellingup, provided the planning information to the incident control team during Operation Fireshield. CALMfire manager Rick Sneeuwjagt and Executive Director Syd Shea caught up with them during the exercise.

CALM and local volunteer brigades carried out a prescribed burn in the Thomsons Lake Nature Reserve south of Perth this season to help protect native wildlife habitat and an adjoining housing estate from wildfires.

CALMfire's Perth district fire co-ordinator Greg Napier said the reserve narrowly escaped devastation last summer when a wildfire raged through the nearby Harry Waring Reserve.

"Thomsons Lake is one of the major wetlands in the metropolitan area," he said.

"It is listed under the

Ramsar Convention as a wetland of international significance, and a widespread wildfire would be quite devastating for the birdlife and the small native mammals in the reserve.

"As well, there is the new Kogolup housing estate to the north-west of the reserve which could be at risk if a wildfire broke out.

Greg said about 30 hectares of the 540 hectare reserve was burned.

"The prescribed burn generated a fair amount of smoke but the relatively strong winds ensured it was dispersed quickly," he said.

"If we didn't take the opportunity to reduce the fuel hazard in the reserve this season, the chances of an intense bushfire in summer will be increased greatly."

Mr Napier said CALM had carried out extensive feral predator baiting within the reserve. The Department also had erected a nine-kilometre perimeter fence as part of the move to control foxes and cats.

CALM officers recently had reported an increase in sightings of mammals such as possums and quenda (southern brown bandicoots) as a result of the feral predator control.



Taryn Linning of CALM Dwellingup, and university student Kim Brooksbank, who is on work experience with CALM, used CALM's new fire fighters feeding trailer at the Operation Fireshield exercise.



CALMfire's Gary Kravainis, Anna Maru, Max Folks and Branch Manager Rick Sneeuwjagt, staffed CALM's display at the Fire Expo in Perth. A feature of the display was a 'tiger tail'—a grasstree trunk prepared by CALM scientist David Ward. CALM is researching the correlation between 'banding' on the trunk and fire frequency.

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