

John Forrest NP plays the role of her life as Katta Moornda Park

JOHN FORREST National Park has been invaded, the first casualty being its name which is replaced with 'Katta Moornda National Park'—but only for two days a week.

The 'friendly invaders' wear identity cards, mostly on Channel Seven shirts, and wave cameras and clapperboards about, all with the aim of producing a drama series about a national park.

Senior ranger George Duxbury said that the park's old tea rooms had become a set for the ranger's headquarters, and one of the workshops was the children's clubhouse, while the park itself provided almost all the location requirements in the form of topography and vegetation.

"All indoor scenes are filmed on sets built in the Channel Seven studios," George said.

"This means that, on average, filming in the national park takes place two days each week.

Friendly liaison

"Everyone is very co-operative; producers, directors, actors and Channel 7 staff—all are most considerate and do everything they can to avoid disrupting the daily running of the park.

"The series' writers work closely with CALM staff to ensure the storylines are accurate, even if a little more dramatic than the day-to-day situations faced by 'proper' national park rangers."

The program is a children's drama series—*The Adventures of the Bush Patrol*—and revolves around a gang of kids led by the ranger's children. The kids tackle the wrongdo-

ers in and near the park to ensure that conservation values are protected.

Appealing story

The story has a single mother of two, Maggie Dean, as the senior park ranger of Katta Moornda National Park. Her daughter, 13 year-old Tracey, and son, 9 year-old Ben, live with her in the park ranger's residence.

Assistant ranger Tony Harrison is a close family friend, and father figure for Ben.

Another firm friend of the children is Gully, a local Aboriginal kid, of endearingly cheeky charm.

Veterinary surgeon Kelly Davidson, who specialises in tending sick and injured native animals, features from time to time throughout the series.

Tracey is leader of the Bush Patrol, which tackles a number of issues, from conservation in the face of threats by commercialism, to the melding of traditional Aboriginal ways with modern life.

Maggie Dean is played by Wendy Strehlow, Tracey Dean by Lisa Laird, Ben Dean by Steele Sciberras, Tony Harrison by Rodney Bell, Gully by Kyle Morrison, and Kelly Davidson by Kate Whitbread.

Filming in the park of the first 26 half-hour-episodes started on February 26, with the second series now well under way. The third series is expected to be wrapped up by mid-October.

The first screenings of *Adventures of the Bush Patrol* are expected to hit Perth towards the end of the year.

Don't miss it!



Q: Which one is the real ranger? A: There are two—John Forrest National Park rangers Jean Burchard (left) and Keith Kickett (right). According to Keith, Rodney Bell, (second from right) is totally convincing as assistant ranger Tony Harrison. "In fact," says Keith, "they're all great—I can't wait to see them on TV." Behind Rodney are fellow actors Kate Whitbread and Kyle Morrison.

Photo by Verna Costello



Katta-Moornda stunningly portrayed by John Forrest National Park. Photo by George Duxbury

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"The Adventures of the Bush Patrol"
(at Katta Moornda Park)
alias John Forrest National Park

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(Separate Proof Sheet sent to George to
Duxbury for John Forrest NP records + for actors to
see +
order)



Photos by Verna Costello May 1996