

Following up on field graduates: Stephen and Darren

AT first glance, the backgrounds of Stephen King and Darren Harvey seem as different as they possibly could be. While Stephen was born and bred in suburban Perth,

Darren spent his formative years among the wheat and sheep of the Lake Grace and Bencubbin areas.

But, somewhere in their respective histories, similar

by Megan Hughes

experiences must have occurred to awaken in each of them a desire to work in the natural environment.

Stephen King began to fulfil his aim by studying towards an Environmental Science degree at Murdoch University.

In the short term, his degree got him no further than a job as a construction labourer.

After this, and a few other odd jobs, Stephen eventually gained a place in the recruit program.

He now works as a dieback interpreter with the Forest Management Branch based at Kelmescott.

Asked what he enjoys most about his current position, Stephen says the knowledge that he is doing his part to protect the jarrah forest from the threat of dieback gives him a great deal of satisfaction.

"I also value highly the fact that I'm allowed to manage my own time and workload," he says.

Important skills

With regard to the skills-based training program, Stephen found that the 14 weeks training gave him a wide range of important skills.

Although he has not yet had the opportunity to apply all the

skills he acquired, he is hopeful that he will be able to make full use of them in future positions.

Darren Harvey spent several years after finishing high school working in mining before pursuing a career in natural resource management.

Completing a degree in Environmental Management at Edith Cowan University led Darren to a series of odd jobs, including casual work as a treemarkers and forest officer at Manjimup.

His casual work at Manjimup led him, in turn, to apply, successfully, for a place in the 1995 recruit intake.

Darren is now based in the Pemberton District where his work primarily involves forest resources, focusing on facility design, coupe demarcation and managing harvesting areas.

He also helps with the district's prescribed burning and fire control programs.

Like Stephen, Darren says the independence to set his own works program, is one of the most important and enjoyable aspects of his job.

Darren also spoke about the importance of "the tolerance and support I received from all the people at the Pemberton District, whenever I made mistakes or didn't know something.

"I found the 14 weeks training both varied and interesting,



Darren Harvey. Photo by Mike Carter

with the majority of what was learnt proving worthwhile when reinforced back at the district level," he said.

Like the other recruits spoken to so far, Darren found it was the social complement of their training that proved the most taxing, with after-hours activities proving a test for

both revellers and quiet types like himself!

"Seriously though, it provided us with an essential opportunity to get to know the other recruits, and to form important contacts within CALM that otherwise would have taken many months, maybe even years to make," he says.



Stephen King. Photo by Mark Graves







Stephen King