

New drainage system a step towards restoration



No, CALM reserves officer Rod Martyn (left) has not found a cache of free hamburger vouchers. However, he is showing City of Melville environmental programs co-ordinator Mark Street and Anthea Paino the effect of tidal influences at Alfred Cove Nature Reserve. Anthea recently completed her degree in Environmental Management with Edith Cowan University, and is with the City of Melville for work experience. Photo by Verna Costello

by Rod Martyn

THE City of Melville and CALM's Perth District have been working together recently to overcome drainage system problems affecting vegetation at Alfred Cove Nature Reserve.

The Melville Technical Services Division staff reduced the number of stormwater outlet pipes entering Alfred Cove from three to two, then excavated open drains through the mudflats out to the Swan River.

Landfill created at the time the drains were first constructed many years ago was also removed, ensuring that stormwater entering the cove no longer pooled near the shore, which in the past had encouraged invasion by freshwater weeds such as typha orientalis and bamboo.

As a result of the open drains and removal of landfill, these areas are now flushed with salt water during high tide,

killing off the freshwater weeds and encouraging the return of native estuarine vegetation.

Before these works were approved by CALM and the Swan River Trust, an assessment was made to ensure they would not impact on a number of shallow pools on the reserve's mudflats that provide feeding areas for wading birds at high tide.

With an increasing number of native plants now slowly returning, the City of Melville, together with local volunteers and CALM, will continue to monitor the site, remove exotic weeds and rehabilitate the foreshore.

CALM's Perth District staff have already begun seed collection from the reserve's native plants and expect to begin propagation planting of sites at Alfred Cove next year.

