

# Western Shield hits the streets of Fremantle

A GREAT deal of fun was had by all when *Western Shield* hit the streets in the form of a 5 x 3-metre feral cat and a 3 x 3-metre bilby float, as part of the Fremantle Festival's annual parade.

The unique float, with its massive creatures and abundance of eucalypt leaves and gum nuts, looked like a bush island amidst the people, cars and buildings of Fremantle.

Supporting the float were 13 child-sized native animals including a green-bellied frog, a possum, red-backed spider, joey kangaroo, cockatoo, platypus and owl.

To provide the animals with shade, were an adult-sized tree with an uncanny resemblance to CALM Marine Conservation Officer Jenny Cary, and a child-sized tree, not unlike Noel Nannup's daughter Allison.

Buzzing around the float were three drop-dead gorgeous-looking wood fairies and a handful of WA *Naturally* balloon distributors.

The main attractions however, were an adult-sized chuditch, a bilby and two, ferocious-looking foxes, one of

by Mitzi Vance

which looked remarkably like CALM Executive Director Dr Syd Shea.

With more than 1,000 *Western Shield* balloons to hand out, CALM Aboriginal Tourism and Training Officers Noel Nannup and Kevin Hill helped distribute the brightly coloured helium-filled balloons, that had small *Western Shield* information cards tied to them.

It was a long, frantic but fun-filled day for the 25-plus people who volunteered and participated in the parade, from children and adults in costumes to behind-the-scene players like our fabulous and reliable balloon couriers—on foot—yes, well how else could 1,000 balloons be given out?

An indefatigable John Hunter deserves a gong for many hours' work, above the call of duty, as does West Kimberley district manager Allen Grosse, who commissioned Gwen Knox to create the giant cat and bilby. (Gwen also helped decorate the float.)

In the lead-up to the parade,



Wowing the crowd—Ferocious Fox, Basil Bilby and Charlie Chuditch (aka Sandra Chahal, Dorte Hansen and Liz Pickett from The Hills Forest)

which started at 4.00 pm, the children's faces were painted to match their costumes, while the adult volunteers assembled and organised costumes, WA *Naturally* T-shirts and balloons.

All then traipsed down Henry Street from the CALM Fremantle offices to the parade starting point.

As you can guess it was quite a sight and judging by the number of people waving and beeping horns, we were a great hit.

Once the parade started, everyone got into the swing of things, with balloons given out right, left and centre and much waving to be done.

Cat-calls and fox cries were skilfully mimicked and projected by expert driver CALM

Marine Operations Officer George Watson who, in turn with the Executive Director (in disguise), took control of the float's PA system.

Charlie Chuditch and Basil Bilby were chased repeatedly by Ferocious Fox, as they sought to escape among the crowds.

An hour and fifteen minutes later, the parade came to a close, and all *Western Shield* participants climbed aboard the float and headed back, tired, happy and exuberant to the department's Freeo offices.

There, refreshments were enjoyed while everyone regaled each other with their stories of the day.

More than 70,000 people turned out to watch the parade—that means 70,000



Wood fairies Tiffany Aberin and Carolyn Thomson.

people saw the CALM *Western Shield* float, not to mention the 1,000 information cards attached to *Western Shield* balloons.

This, coupled with the fun and enjoyment of all those involved, led to only one conclusion—a day that was a resounding success.



Guess who?



An array of native animals—above: Simon McAll, Katherine Shea, Benjamin Gough, Allison Nannup, Ella Kerr and Hannah McAll.

Right: Benjamin Gough and Sarah Shea hatch a plot, while Ryan Shea has a far-away look in his eye.

Left: The *Western Shield* float team traipsing through the streets of Fremantle to take its place in the parade.

All photos by Ernie McLintock/CALM





*Great fun was had by all when 13 child-sized native animals and 1,000 balloons, together with a 5-metre feral cat and a bilby celebrated Operation Western Shield at the Annual Fremantle Festival. (See page 3 for story and more pictures). Photo by Ernie McLintock.*









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Charlie  
Chuditch





