

# Cadets to help natural environment

THE State Government's 'Cadets WA' initiative has been extended to conserving the State's natural environment.

Bush Rangers is a new program developed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) and the Office of Youth Affairs to help create a much greater awareness of the natural environment and how it can be conserved for future generations.

Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes and Youth Minister Mike Board launched the scheme, which is for school students between the ages of 13 and 17, at Matilda Bay Reserve in June.

The overall mission of Bush Rangers is to empower young people to play an active role in conservation and to understand the need for its management.

"Young people are not only becoming more aware of our environment, they are wanting to be actively involved in conserving it," Mrs Edwardes said.

"Bush Rangers will teach our future generations the basic skills needed to make them good environmental citizens."

Mr Board said the program was heavily accented towards practical, hands-on experience in the natural environment rather than lectures in the classroom.

"These practical projects will provide opportunities for teamwork, leadership and personal involvement, and help students gain self-confidence with their fellow Bush Rangers and their peers," he said.

This is in line with other initiatives under the Cadets program which aim to give young people the opportunity to participate in personal development training, particularly training that provides practical life skills, develops leadership, teamwork and initiative, and fosters qualities of community responsibility and service.

In this way, the program will also deliver positive benefits for the local community, as schools will be able to adopt specific projects in consultation with local shires, conservation groups and CALM.

The objectives of Bush Rangers are to:

- Foster a conservation ethic among young Western Australians;
- Develop leadership and teamwork skills as well as the values of duty, loyalty and service to the community, their school and to the Bush Rangers;
- Provide young Western Australians with skills and knowledge;

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Bush Ranger cadets from John Septimus Roe Anglican School joined Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes and Youth Minister Mike Board for the launch of the cadet scheme at Matilda Bay Reserve. Photo by Norm Bailey

# Cadets help environment

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- Support and strengthen the links between schools, the community and CALM activities throughout the State; and -
- Provide the basis for an active commitment to conservation of the natural environment into adult life.

Bush Rangers will undertake a series of training modules covering a wide range of topics such as drill, first aid, risk management, bushcraft and survival, the meaning and the practice of nature conservation, landscape and environmental management, park and reserve management, interpretation of the natural environment and desirable Bush Ranger qualities, and personal growth.

They will also take part in a range of practical conservation projects in conjunction with local councils, CALM district officers and local conservation groups. These projects include monitoring local plants and animals, assisting CALM officers with the *Western Shield*

wildlife recovery initiative, caring for remnant bushland, building walk trails and preparing interpretive material, or even monitoring coastal islands for bird nest sites.

CALM Executive Director Dr Syd Shea said the scheme was already attracting a high degree of interest with three schools beginning Bush Ranger units.

These were John Septimus Roe Anglican School, Duncraig Senior High and John Forrest Senior High.

Dr Shea said CALM community education officers Liz Moore and Bronwyn Goble were preparing the manuals for the units and these would be available in July.

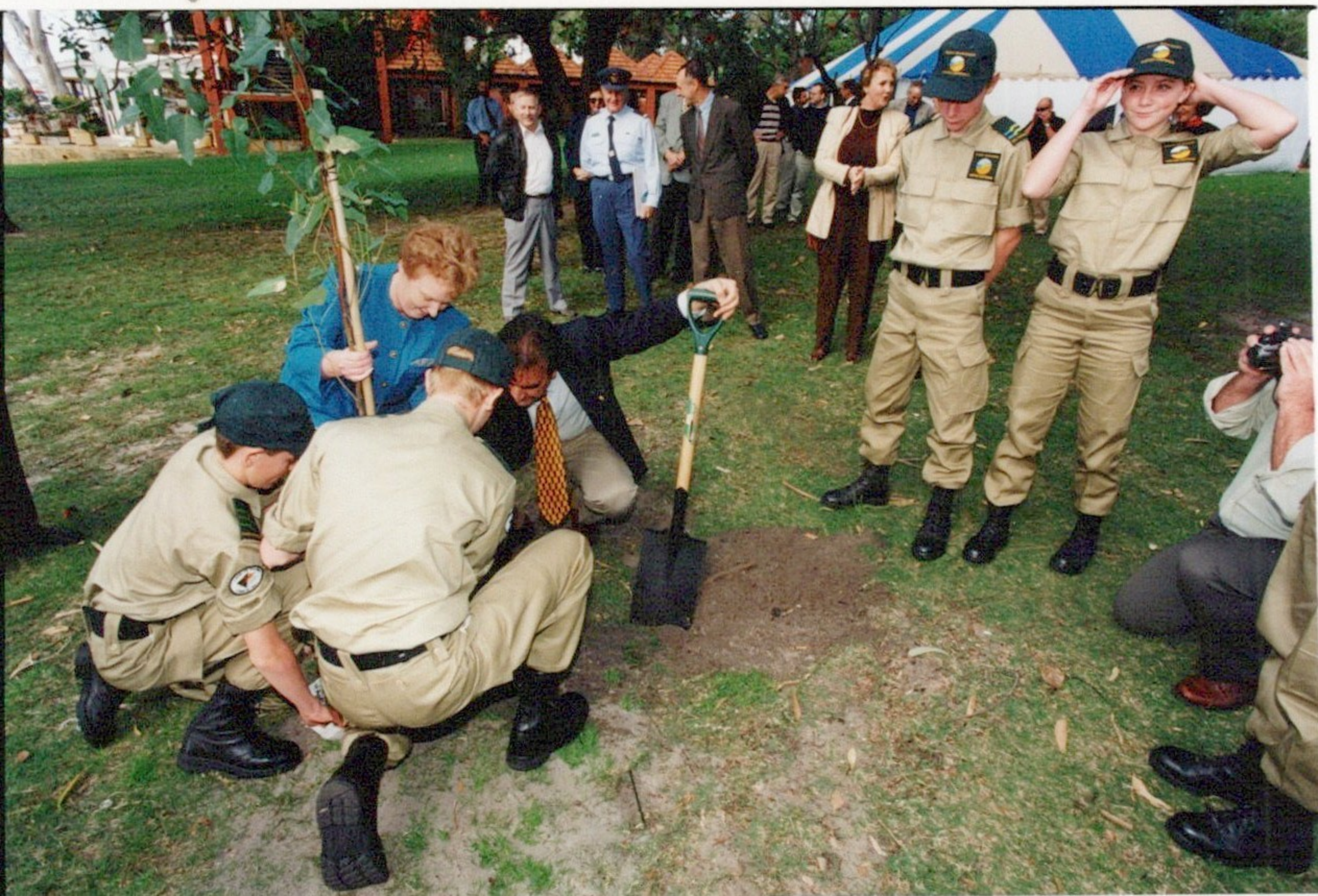
**Note:** Staff members who would like to know more about the the who, what, where, when, why and how the Bush Ranger Program, should contact community education officer Liz Moore (the program's project leader), by phoning (08) 9334 0387 or faxing (08) 9334 0498.





















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