

## MONKEY MIA DOLPHINS KEEP UP TRADITION

Three more dolphins are to be introduced gradually into Monkey Mia's dolphin feeding program over the next five years. The aim is to ensure the safety of the animals, while continuing to provide visitors for generations to come with the experience of hand-feeding the world-famous Monkey Mia dolphins.

Bottlenose dolphins began coming to Monkey Mia's shores for food in the 1960s when fisherfolk began feeding the animals after returning with their catch. Since then, increasing numbers of visitors have come from far and wide to see the dolphins at what is now one of Western Australia's most popular and best known tourist spots.

Seven dolphins regularly visit the beach and three of the adult females—Nikki, Puck and Surprise—are currently hand fed under the supervision of district staff. It is also likely that up to three more calves will be born to the beach dolphin group in the next few months, taking the number of beach dolphins up to 10.

The feeding regime is carefully regulated so that the dolphins do not become overly reliant on people. The animals are hand fed with no more than two kilograms of fish per day—about a third of their daily requirement. These limitations encourage them to hunt for themselves and to teach their calves to hunt.

Attempts will be made to recruit nine-year-old Piccolo first and, if the program is successful, to recruit seven-year-old Shock in the future, and four-year-old Kiya in 2007. These dolphins have



been chosen as they are progeny of Nikki, Puck and Surprise and they often visit Monkey Mia with their mothers, even though they are not currently given fish.

It is expected that the dolphins will take between two and three weeks to accept the feeding program, and up to 12 months to be integrated totally into the regular program.

*Above: Monkey Mia Operations Manager David Charles is pictured feeding Piccolo.*

*Photo – Janet Mann*

*Right: Monkey Mia Reserve Officers supervise the dolphin feeding to ensure visitors enjoy the experience and the welfare of the dolphins is protected.*

*Photo – Cindy Flaherty*

The feeding program will include a 12 month onshore and offshore monitoring regime of Piccolo's behaviour. This will be carried out according to

strict guidelines, designed by international dolphin researchers, and conducted in consultation with local district staff.



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# LANDSCOPE



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The first stage of a long-distance mountain bike trail, that will ultimately lead from Mundaring to Albany, is now open. See page 49.



Discover the underwater wilderness of the Geographe Bay, Leeuwin-Naturaliste, Hardy Inlet area, a potential marine conservation reserve, on page 18.



Little was known about the distribution of the dalgyte, or bilby, in the south-west forests until scientist Ian Abbott interviewed old timers. Turn to page 28.



Older piles of the Busselton Jetty are crowded with marine life, but it was not always so. How do marine animals gradually colonise the piles? See page 34.



The Stirling Range National Park experiences many extremes of weather, from snow falls to bushfires. Find out why on page 10.

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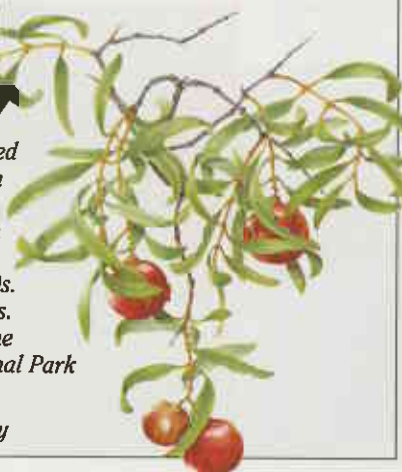
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## COVER

*Quandong* (*Santalum acuminatum*) is one of the most widespread plants in Australia. This small, upright tree is most easily recognised by its bright red fruits, which are edible and also contain a nutritious nut. It belongs to the same genus as the famous sandalwood, which was one of Western Australia's major exports in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Members of this genus are root parasites. Quandong grows in dense stands in some areas within the Woodman Point Regional Park (see story on page 42).

Cover illustration by Philippa Nikulinsky



DEPARTMENT OF  
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