



# ecoeducation news

Statewide

October 2011, Number 33

## 2011 International Year of Forests

Hello colleagues,

Gorgeous spring weather has appeared and along with it the wildflowers. It is the perfect time for learning in nature's classroom.

*Busy in the bushland*, a new EcoEducation resource book, has arrived at the perfect time. This is focused toward ECE teachers and is available free for teachers who book this excursion program or professional learning (PL).

We have recently secured Simon Leaning, who will manage the Perth Hills Centre (PHC). Now that EcoEducation and *Nearer to Nature* have merged at PHC, we have a centre to manage as well as great education programs and activities. Simon is aiming to continue our amazing offerings and develop new possibilities.

Our EcoEducation excursions at centres near Mundaring Weir, Bunbury and in Margaret River are very popular at the moment. Jasper Kruse from the Kununurra DEC Regional Office visited the Perth Hills Centre recently to train for EcoEducation program delivery at Kununurra.

We have linked all our education activities to the Australian Curriculum. Geoff Quinton, our WA representative for the Australian Curriculum, visited recently and interacted with classes on our *Six-season walkabout* excursion. I took part the next day in feedback to the Australian Curriculum *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures* Cross Curriculum Priority.

*Nearer to Nature* has completed a very successful holiday activities program and led non-holiday programs such as *Dads and sons day*. This followed a brilliant *Mothers and daughters day* earlier in the year.

Bush Ranger units and instructors have continued to do amazing things. Carleen Edwards was awarded a 15-year Bush Ranger bar at the recent Cadets WA anniversary. As Bush Rangers WA has only been going 13 years, we were very fortunate that Carleen defected from another cadet group to be one of our leading Bush Rangers. Currently Bush Rangers is undergoing a review by Caroline Conway-Physick. This is very informative and will help in our future directions.



Carleen Edwards receiving the 15-year bar to add to her 10-year medal from Hon Robyn McSweeney, Minister for Youth

Our Professional Learning Symposia have been spectacular, one at Valley of the Giants and Perup, and another to Shark Bay. WA Chief Scientist Professor Lyn Beazley accompanied both groups.



Santa Maria students and teachers with Geoff Quinton and EcoEducation staff



Teachers at a PL at the Valley of the Giants.



# ecoeducation news

EcoEducation hosted the Student Leadership Conference at DEC in Kensington recently, organised by Millenium Kids and Hot Rock. The organisers secured Tim Flannery and three members of the new Climate Change Commission for the conference, and so DEC staff were treated to wonderful talks and an exciting atmosphere along with 120 students.



*Tim Flannery and Climate Change Commissioners surrounded by student leaders and DEC staff*

The wonderful Tracy Shea has delivered a gem of a conference, the FACET – Rediscover Parks conference. Jim Sharp was front and centre on behalf of DEC and through his international contacts, attracted the inspiring Tom Kiernan, President of the National Parks Conservation Association, as the keynote of the conference. Delegates also explored outside aspects and opportunities that parks offer and collaborated on future partnerships.

Regards,

**Elaine Horne, Senior Education Officer, DEC**



*Teachers on a PL to Shark Bay*

## Bush Ranger news

A vignette from Mandurah Senior College:

The Bush Ranger cadet program is part of the Mandurah Senior College (MSC) year 10 academic extension program. This is an innovative program, not only providing students with a comprehensive year 10 curriculum but also with the opportunity to participate in the Bush Ranger cadets and the prestigious Duke of Edinburgh Award.

These programs aim to develop strong leadership and team work skills in young people, along with providing adventurous activities which the students will challenge and extend the students.

The MSC cadets volunteer on a weekly basis for a range of conservation and wildlife projects in the Peel region. As a Bush Ranger cadet, the students also go on camps, learn about the role of DEC, acquire bush survival techniques and learn first aid.



*MSC Bush Ranger cadets from years 10 and 12 camping at the Perth Hills Centre in Mundaring, with camping gear kindly donated by Alcoa Australia*





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## Nearer to Nature news

Dads and sons celebrate Father's Day in traditional style:

A group of fathers and sons celebrated an early Father's Day with some traditional Aboriginal activities at John Forrest National Park. The special event hosted by *Nearer to Nature* had the boys hunting and gathering during a traditional bush walk, as well as trying their hand at making an authentic knife.

*Nearer to Nature* (N2N) guide Gudathada (Zak) Walker said it was a great way for fathers and sons to bond while learning about the importance of 'men's' business in Aboriginal culture. During the day the boys also got to hone their wood-making skills by building a habitat box to take home. And, of course, no boys' day would be complete without a taste of the traditional billy tea and damper, which was met with much enthusiasm at the end of the day.

Jill Francis

**N2N Program Coordinator**



Dads and sons day led by Zac Walker

## Perup PL

On the weekend of 11 and 12 June I was able to attend a wonderful PL weekend down in the beautiful forests of the south-west. At Perup we were able to have a close look at the new woylie enclosure and participated in night walks through the surrounding forest. We also took part in fauna trapping and were rewarded with a few brushtail possums and a very cute brush-tailed phascogale. At night we also had a family of brushtail possums come to visit the main bunkhouse and take up residence in the old stove!

The days were filled with beautiful experiences throughout the Walpole Wilderness and the Valley of the Giants and Tree Top Walk.

Information sessions were led by officers from the Frankland District, Perup and Manjimup. The PL was organised by Elaine Horne (Senior



A phascogale spotted at Perup on the teacher PL

EcoEducation Officer) and Lisa Ingram (EcoEducation Coordinator) and was attended by teachers as well as Chief Scientist Professor Lyn Beazley and eminent medical educator Dr Richard

Tarala. It was a great experience and was enjoyed by all!

Fiona Harris

**Nature-based program leader**



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## Extra monitoring at Dryandra Woodland

Marsupial monitoring in Dryandra Woodland is a favourite of visiting educational groups and recently we have been adding an extra element to the experience. After setting traps, we have also been placing a night-vision motion camera in the area to demonstrate other, less invasive, ways of monitoring animal species in Dryandra Woodland.

Cameras can tell you what species are in an area and give a good indication of health without disturbing the animal, but cannot give you individual data for the animal or the experience of working with them.

The cameras are used extensively throughout reserves in the Wheatbelt. School groups may be able to take advantage of this in booked monitoring sessions.

The aim is to eventually have one or two cameras dedicated to EcoEducation so visiting educational groups can experience another form of monitoring of marsupials in Dryandra Woodland.

Matt Harding  
**Parks and Visitor Services Officer**  
Great Southern District

## International Year of Forests art competition at the Valley of the Giants

Students at Walpole Primary School have embraced the 2011 International Year of Forests theme 'Forests for people' in an art competition organised by DEC.

The art competition was run in conjunction with the school's UR WALPOLE program. The competition theme 'What does the forest mean to you?' provided students of all ages the opportunity to express their connections to the forest through various artistic media. It also stimulated thought and awareness of our unique environment.

This competition has been a great way to engage the students with nature and to encourage a greater awareness of the important role that forests play in our environment. The winning entries are being showcased at the Tree Top Walk for visitors to enjoy, and will complement the International Year of Forests display which is currently on show.

Claudia Simpson  
**Frankland District Interpretation Officer**

## FloraBase the Western Australian Flora



Smokebush

*Conospermum caeruleum* R.Br.

See what's flowering  
each month

[www.dec.wa.gov.au/florabase](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/florabase)

## Statewide

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### Perth Hills Centre and Henderson Environmental Centre

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### EcoEducation in the South West Region

For inquiries, bookings for excursions or PLs contact the DEC Bunbury District Office on 9725 5900 and ask for EcoEducation or contact the EcoEducation project officer on 9725 5944 or email [swecoed@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:swecoed@dec.wa.gov.au).

Visit DEC's website at [www.dec.wa.gov.au](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au).





Department of  
Environment and Conservation



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*Hosted by EcoEducation and organised by Millenium Kids and Hot Rock, the Student Leadership Conference was held at the new Western Australian Conservation Science Centre at DEC's Kensington office recently.*



*Students enjoyed meeting Tim Flannery at the Student Leadership Conference.*