

JUNE 2007

# Perth Hills National Parks Centre opens

By Joanna Moore

**ENVIRONMENT Minister David Templeman opened the Perth Hills National Parks Centre in April.**

The opening marked the official beginning of a new phase for the former Hills Forest Discovery Centre near the Mundaring Weir. The centre originally opened in 1991 and operated primarily as an office and home to the department's *Nearer to Nature* and EcoEducation programs.

The revamped facility now has a visitor information centre which is open seven days a week to the public. It provides visitor information about recreation and nature-based tourism opportunities including interpretation activities, walk trails, picnic facilities and campgrounds in the area's national parks, regional parks and State forest.

Centre manager Marie Milagro said about 35,000 people attended

programs or visited the Hills Forest Discovery Centre in 2006.

"With visitor information now available on weekends and public holidays, visitation is expected to double in 2007," she said.

Minister Templeman said the centre was the latest development under the State Government's *Protecting our old-growth forests* policy. Five new national parks had been established in the Perth hills under the policy, taking the total number of national parks in the area to 10.

DEC's Cultural and Community Coordinator Koodah Cornwall gave a welcome to country at the opening and highlighted the presence of Year 6 students from Mundaring Christian College.

"Welcome especially to the *mooditch koolingars*, the awesome kids, who must look, listen and learn so they can protect the environment into the future," Koodah said.



(Left to right) Marie Milagro, Koodah Cornwall, Mundaring Christian College student Emma Westlake and Environment Minister David Templeman cut the ribbon to officially open the centre. Photo – Joanna Moore

## Coral recovery is good news

**NINGALOO Marine Park corals affected by bleaching in 2006 have recovered well, according to recent DEC surveys.**

Coral bleaching is the loss of symbiotic algae in a coral and is a classic sign of corals responding to stress. From 12 to 14 July 2006, low spring tides coincided with unusually low air temperatures, resulting in the bleaching of the upper branches of shallow-water corals at Ningaloo Marine Park, probably from exposure to unusually low seawater or air temperatures.

Local tour operators were among the first to recognise the event and alerted DEC Exmouth staff who organised a reef-wide aerial survey to determine the extent of the bleaching.



Recording the coverage of live hard coral to determine reef health. Photo – Suzanne Long

DEC also conducted field surveys which revealed up to 80 per cent of the coral at southern back-reef sites remained bleached up to one month after the initial event.

However, according to DEC marine scientist Shannon Armstrong, follow-up surveys in April 2007 confirmed good news for Ningaloo Marine Park.

"We recorded close to 100 per cent coral recovery at the re-surveyed southern back-reef sites," Shannon said.

"While the positive results of the surveys are good news, there is no excuse for complacency. DEC will continue to keep a close eye on the health of Ningaloo Marine Park as part of its on-going monitoring program."

## Northern exposure

**A STUNNING DEC book which takes readers from the unique reefs off WA's north-western coast to the endless red plains of the State's heartland was officially released by Environment Minister David Templeman at Karratha recently.**

The glossy 148-page *North-West Bound* includes detailed maps and descriptions about the areas' history and natural features and is illustrated by spectacular photographs which capture the beauty of many of WA's most impressive land and seascapes.

The book was first printed 19 years ago and the new edition, with updated information and a new design by Senior Graphic Designer Gooitzen van der Meer, will ensure it remains popular.

It covers a much wider area than the first two editions and includes major attractions such as Kalbarri National Park, Geraldton and the Houtman Abrolhos Islands.

Director General Keiran McNamara acknowledged the teamwork associated with projects such as this.

Author and editor Carolyn Thomson-Dans worked with regional and district staff including Cheryl Cowell, Gordon Graham, Sue Hancock, Judymae Napier and Gae Mackay who made major contributions in reviewing the text.

*North-West Bound* features Warlu Way, a new 1800-kilometre drive trail from Ningaloo Marine Park to Broome through attractions including Karijini National Park, Millstream-Chichester National Park and the prehistoric rock engravings of the Burrup Peninsula.

"Warlu Way is a shared vision between park councils, Aboriginal people and DEC and involves partnerships with other agencies including Tourism WA and Aust NW Tourism," Pilbara Regional Manager Ian Walker said.

*North-West Bound* is available at bookshops and visitor centres throughout WA, DEC's Kensington and Crawley offices, and online at [www.naturebase.net](http://www.naturebase.net), for \$29.95.

## DEC protects pristine marine environments

**DEC has prepared management plans to protect some of Western Australia's most pristine marine reserves.**

The management plans are designed to preserve and protect the Rowley Shoals Marine Park, Montebello/Barrow Islands Marine Conservation Reserves and the surrounding Barrow Island Marine Management Area in the State's north.

The reserves are vested in the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority and managed by DEC

staff in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions.

The plans pave the way for DEC to establish a zoning scheme for the Rowley Shoals Marine Park.

The scheme will include two sanctuary zones covering about 24 per cent of the park, three recreation zones covering 19 per cent of the park and general use zones covering about 57 per cent of the park.

Under the plan for the Montebello/Barrow Islands Marine Conservation Reserves, all of

the Barrow Island Marine Park and 49 per cent of the Montebello Islands Marine Park will be included in sanctuary zones.

Large areas of the reserves will remain open to recreational and commercial fishing, and other uses. More than half of the Montebello Islands Marine Park and more than 95 per cent of the Barrow Island Marine Management Area will be available for these pursuits.

Marine Policy and Planning Branch Planner Fran Stanley said the management plans

would pave the way for the areas' protection.

"The plans are the result of extensive community consultation and set out a range of strategies for the future management of these important marine areas," Fran said.

"These marine parks and reserves have achieved a good balance between protecting the rich marine biodiversity of the area and providing for a range of sustainable recreational, commercial, educational and scientific uses."

# Working Together

On a couple of occasions in recent months in this column I have mentioned the progress we have been making towards a corporate plan for DEC. This important milestone has now been achieved, and the department's first corporate plan has been sent to all staff.

The corporate plan is an important document in identifying our priorities and guiding our work. I urge all staff to use this three-year plan to help focus their own efforts on the outcomes we are collectively seeking to achieve.

In the 2006/07 financial year DEC operated with the two separate budgets that had already been put in place before the amalgamation of the former Department of Environment and Department of Conservation and Land Management. We now head into the new financial year with a single budget for DEC and will be able to build on the significant work that has already been done to integrate financial management and reporting systems. Nevertheless there will need to be some further budget adjustments as we work to bed down our finances across the agency.

Through the Government budget process, we will have increased funding in 2007/08 in several areas, notably for climate change, marine parks, and the regulation of industry's environmental compliance through increased licence fees.

We have also received the funds needed to construct the new Biodiversity Conservation Science centre at Kensington, including a new Herbarium. This is a major project and I am looking forward to its completion in terms of housing the State's flora collection, supporting scientific research and helping to meet DEC's accommodation needs. Further accommodation planning, in Perth and the regions, is also a priority for us.

**Keiran McNamara,**  
Director General



# Campers praise DEC staff



Breath testing is one way DEC staff, such as Ranger Wendy Birmingham, work with police to help ensure visitors to Lane Poole Reserve have a safe and enjoyable experience. Photo - DEC

**HUNDREDS of campers at Lane Poole Reserve in Dwellingup thanked DEC staff for their role in ensuring an enjoyable and well-managed experience at Easter.**

Easter is the busiest holiday time at the reserve which was once a notoriously busy and noisy camping area. DEC staff have been working to improve the management of the reserve over the past few years.

Lane Poole Reserve Ranger Lisa Bannister said that on the whole visitors to the reserve were there to enjoy friends, family and the outdoors and were very considerate of other visitors and the environment.

"About 4000 people visited the reserve over the Easter long weekend and managing visitors in such large numbers is not always easy," Lisa said.

"Our improved management systems, combined with the fact there were lots of family groups camping this year, resulted in a great weekend."

DEC staff are managing areas that were previously considered 'problem areas' by liaising closely with local police, bringing in extra staff to manage the facilities over long weekends, issuing infringement notices and cautions and monitoring the number of visitors allowed into the area at any one time.

# New staff at Dwellingup



Researchers based at DEC's Dwellingup Research Centre are (back row) Jennifer Jackson, Gillian Bryant, (centre row) Paul de Tores, Anna Nowicki, Jennyfer Cruz, Duncan Sutherland, Judy Dunlop, (front row) Al Glen, Wes Manson and (absent) Kim Whitford, Judy Clark, Helen McCutcheon and Joe Kinal. Photo - Andy Williams

**DEC's Dwellingup Research Centre is a hub of activity with a group of new staff working on two new programs aimed at improving feral animal control.**

The major research project is a collaborative program involving DEC and the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre (IA CRC) to examine the interactions between two key feral predators - the fox and cat.

The new Dwellingup-based team is focusing on one of four IA CRC and DEC research sites - the northern jarrah forest - and is specifically interested in the biodiversity ramifications of fox control. The team will

determine whether fox control, through the use of 1080 baiting, causes a rise in cat numbers.

Research Scientist and DEC leader of the northern jarrah forest program Paul de Tores said anecdotal evidence suggested this might be the case. The support of the IA CRC meant DEC could test this in a scientifically rigorous manner.

"We are also interested in the response by native predators including the chuditch, Gould's goanna, southern heath monitor and the carpet python," Paul said.

"When fox numbers are reduced, we not only expect these species to increase in abundance, but to start to use the environment differently. For example, we expect to see pythons basking in the open more often."

"However, these responses may be muted if feral cats also benefit from fox control."

The second feral animal control research project based at the Dwellingup Research Centre is occurring through funding recently gained from the Australian Research Council (ARC) by DEC and Murdoch University.

The ARC and DEC research is determining the implications of cat and python predation for translocated and naturally occurring western ringtail possum populations, as well as the role of health and disease issues.

Twelve staff have started work at the Dwellingup Research Centre since January last year, including four PhD students and two Honours students.

# A partnership for conservation and the community

By Joanna Moore

**CYCLISTS who ride the Waterous Trail, an optional loop of the Munda Biddi cycle trail, will benefit from a new bridge recently built by a work crew from Bunbury Regional Prison.**

Both DEC's Construction Supervisor Scott Hunter and Munda Biddi Trail Coordinator Stuart Harrison were impressed with the efforts of the crew. The bridge was completed in less than four days, including the removal of the old bridge it replaced and the rehabilitation of the site after construction.

"Having crews available to assist our staff to complete construction and improvement works such as these really helps us maintain the standard of our trails," Stuart said.

The Waterous Trail bridge is just one of many construction, maintenance, rehabilitation and conservation works which have been undertaken by prisoners and community-based work crews under the control of the Department of Corrective Services on DEC-managed lands.

Work crews have built huts and other

buildings, planted trees to fight salinity in the Wheatbelt, removed weed infestations and helped DEC staff in fire control.

The projects are coordinated through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) first signed between the then Department of Conservation and Land Management and the then Ministry of Justice in 1999.

The MOU aims to provide community benefits through the conservation activities and recreation services and through the opportunities it creates for offenders to be engaged in constructive work and gain skills for later employment.

DEC's Visitor and Regional Services Coordinator Tracy Shea, who has been involved with the MOU since its inception, enjoys working alongside her Department of Corrective Services colleagues.

"The partnership has always been win-win. DEC and the community have benefited tremendously and the prisoners have approached the projects with great enthusiasm and picked up valuable skills," she said.

About 25,000 hours are contributed by prison and community-based work teams to DEC projects each year.

# DEC hosts feral animal research review

**DEC hosted the Commonwealth-funded Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre (IA CRC) annual Uptake Program review in Dwellingup in April.**

Director General Keiran McNamara said the IA CRC brought together public and private landscape managers to integrate national approaches to invasive animal management.

"In addition to DEC, other Western Australian members of the IA CRC include the Department of Agriculture and Food, The University of Western Australia and the Australian Wildlife Conservancy," he said.

"Another 37 partners represent State, Territory and Commonwealth conservation and primary production agencies, biotechnology companies, universities and community groups from around Australia. Six of these partners are overseas organisations."

The CRC began in 2005 with most field research sites for the program starting in 2006 for seven years.

Keiran said DEC's involvement in the CRC focused on the role of introduced predators in mammal declines. This included research that would improve feral cat control techniques in WA as well as an investigation of the interactions of foxes and feral cats.

The need for the research was highlighted in a review of the *Western Shield* fauna recovery program published in August 2004.

"By becoming a partner of the CRC, DEC has significantly increased its commitment to scientific research into the management and conservation of native wildlife," Keiran said.

"It has contributed to four key scientific research projects sites throughout the State at Mt Gibson, the northern jarrah forest, Dryandra and Lake Magenta."

## Environment and Conservation News June 2007

Published by the Department of Environment and Conservation's Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs Division, Cygnet Hall, (cnr) Mounts Bay Road and Hackett Drive, CRAWLEY, Western Australia 6009

**Managing editor:** Kaye Verboon

**Editor:** Rhianna King

**Contributing writers:** Joanna Moore, Samille Mitchell

**Design and production:** Alison Blackwell

**Telephone:** (08) 9389 8644

**Facsimile:** (08) 9389 8296

Printed on 100% recycled paper

# Fire part of innovative weed control trial



Environment Minister David Templeman (fourth from left) with DEC staff Mark Garkaklis, Moritz Joest, Stefan De Haan, Richard Reid, Kate Brown, Kellie Agar, Bob Huston and Jessica Allen. Photo – Katie Schoch

**THE FIRST DEC project to use a combination of fire and weed control to restore biodiversity is being trialled in St Ronan's Nature Reserve in the York District.**

The *Saving our Species* project aims to control and, if possible, eradicate infestations of *Moraea fugax* that have become established in degraded patches of remnant bushland at the nature reserve.

Perth Hills Nature Conservation Officer Bob Huston said the trial would combine the use of fire and herbicide treatment to

examine how these could be used together to minimise damage to non-target species, especially in sensitive areas, and reduce weed numbers faster.

"Fire doesn't kill the *Moraea fugax*, but should help rejuvenate its dormant bulbs below the ground," Bob said.

"This means that when in bloom, a bigger percentage of the infestation will be reached by herbicide spraying and therefore the likelihood of eradication will be higher."

*Moraea fugax* is a pervasive weed with the ability to grow in a range of soils and the

potential to invade woodlands, wetlands, granite outcrops and shrublands across the south of WA.

DEC Regional Ecologist Mark Garkaklis said the project also included comprehensive weed mapping of infestations across the reserve.

"The *Moraea fugax* weed control project has the potential to further integrate fire and biodiversity management in the State," Mark said.

Environment Minister David Templeman visited St Ronan's Nature Reserve on the first day of the trial in April to light the first fire.

## Exploring cave management

By Joanna Moore

DEC's Blackwood District Cave Manager Anne Wood travelled to Victoria recently to attend the 17th Australasian Conference on Cave and Karst Management.

"Cave and karst management is a specialised field and the two-yearly conference provides a useful opportunity for about 80 cave and karst managers to get together and discuss issues and new research in their area," Anne said.

The next conference will be held in WA in 2009, hosted by DEC and the Augusta Margaret River Tourism Association.

Anne is involved in managing of caves for recreational purposes and environmental work in caves – such as monitoring water levels.

Water levels have been declining in the caves of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park in the Blackwood district since about 1970 with an increase in the rate of decline in the past six years.

"This is a significant issue as declining water levels are a threat to aquatic fauna in the caves, including four critically endangered aquatic root mat communities," Anne said.

"A drop in water levels also affects cave tourism, as it causes changes to aesthetic values and interpretation."

Various research projects are being carried out in caves in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park to provide essential background data for better managing of fauna in view of the potential negative effects of global climate change.

## Youth Awards finalist gains experience with DEC

A FINALIST in the environment category of the 2007 WA Youth Awards has started a work placement in DEC's Tourism and Marketing Unit.

Seventeen-year-old Dianna Wright was nominated for the environment category of the awards because of her involvement in the Sustainable Schools initiative, Millennium Kids Inc and environmental conferences and projects.

Her selection as one of the six finalists in the category reflected her dedication to strengthening the connection between environmental work and Indigenous students.

Last year Dianna attended the Students of Sustainability Conference at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, at which she was one of just a few high school, rather than university, students.

"The conference was very worthwhile. It was great being surrounded by so



Dianna Wright.  
Photo – Joanna Moore

many like-minded and informed young people who were so eager to share their knowledge," Dianna said.

"It was probably the first time I had really acknowledged my own environmental awareness and since then I have become much more outspoken and active."

The two-days-a-week placement at Kensington is part of Dianna's Year 12 studies through which she

will receive a Certificate of Business II.

Dianna aims to go to university to become a Geography teacher. She has been inspired by her Practical Geography class at school and her enjoyment of sharing knowledge with and motivating her two younger siblings and other young people at her school, Sevenoaks Senior College, and in Millennium Kids.

DEC sponsored the environment category of the WA Youth Awards.

Aimee Silla, the winner of the environment category, went on to become the Young Person of the Year. Aimee is at The University of Western Australia undertaking a PhD investigating the decline of frog species. She has also spent time volunteering for the Ningaloo Turtle Monitoring Program in Exmouth which saw her work closely with DEC staff.

## Fish out of water



Yanchep Park Manager Ray De Jong, Ian Thorpe and Swan Coastal District Manager Paul Brown. Photo – Alison Pritchard

**IAN THORPE'S celebrated swimming career has come to a close, but a new mission has just begun and its urgency is paramount.**

Water has been good to Thorpe. Without it he wouldn't be where he is today. In fact, none of us would. Yet Australia is experiencing record droughts in the bush and water shortages in our cities. Climate change has come to change our way of life.

A two-hour documentary through Fox 8 called 'Fish Out of Water' is being made in which Ian will investigate our sustainable energy options, domestic and eco-friendly homes. He will also search out experts to shed light on the issues and quash many

fallacies. The program is planned to be inspiring and proactive in its attempt to motivate viewers into thinking about our global predicament.

A film crew from In Pictures Pty Ltd and the legendary swimmer recently spent some time in Yanchep National Park. They were there to check out the wetlands and the program to alleviate the subterranean water level concern in the park's crystal cave system.

District Manager Paul Brown showed Ian the replenishment system that takes underground water from a bore elsewhere in the park, cleans it of unwanted minerals and keeps water levels up in the caves' spectacular pools.

# A new focus on regional marine planning

A NEW initiative called regional marine planning aims to ensure the many benefits of Western Australia's south coast marine environment are available for all time. DEC is the lead agency for the whole-of-government process which started in September last year.

The south coast marine environment is one of the State's natural treasures. A unique assemblage of plants and animals has evolved there and the area has been important to

Aboriginal people for thousands of years.

Today the area is used by many sectors – commercial and recreational fishing, shipping, tourism, research and education, cultural interests and mineral and petroleum industries. Each group is active in planning and managing various aspects of the marine environment and its resources but do so largely in the absence of a 'big picture' vision.

Principal Marine Policy Officer Ian Herford from DEC's Marine Policy and Planning

Branch is coordinating the department's role in the south coast initiative. The work will produce a strategic plan to better integrate the activities of the various marine sectors to achieve protection, maintenance and sustainable use of the marine environment.

"The regional marine planning process for WA's south coast from Cape Leeuwin to the South Australian border will be one of the first of its kind in Australia," Ian said.

"It will create a framework beneath which

more detailed planning, such as for the creation of marine protected areas, can occur."

Many government agencies are involved in the planning process and maritime industries, non-government organisations, community groups and the general public will also play a role.

"A planning advisory group is being established and this will really get the ball rolling in terms of stakeholder engagement," Ian said.

# Alex achieves national qualification

**KUNUNURRA'S District Wildlife Officer Alex Bowlay has been awarded the nationally recognised qualification Certificate IV in Government (Investigation).**

The achievement follows his successful completion of the Regulatory Officer's Training Course in December last year.

The Regulatory Officer's Training Course is a competency-based program that has been developed in consultation with the Federal Department of the Environment and Water Resources through DEC's membership of the Australian Environmental Law Enforcement and Regulators Network, known as AELERT.

The program lectures are delivered by experts from DEC

and specialist investigative areas of the WA Police.

"Alex's efforts epitomise the aims of the program to increase staff confidence and knowledge in the requirements of their job while providing them with the opportunity to advance their qualifications and careers," DEC Training Coordinator Kym Squires said.

Alex started with the department in 1998 as a national park ranger in Kununurra and, after two and a half years as a senior ranger near Perth, returned to the East Kimberley District as a district wildlife officer last year.

His new position has a considerable focus on regulation and legislative compliance. Alex is responsible for administering the *Wildlife*

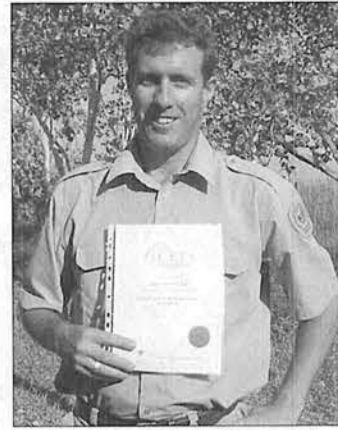
*Conservation Act 1950* and the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* and their respective regulations.

The training has also enabled him to be authorised under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* and associated regulations.

"The training was incredibly valuable and has certainly given me a solid understanding of the department's legislative powers and responsibilities," Alex said.

"It has also increased my ability to identify and investigate offences, collect and preserve evidence and follow correct procedures to ensure that offences against wildlife and the environment make it to court."

The next Regulatory Officers' Training course is fully booked,



Alex with his Certificate IV in Government (Investigation). Photo - DEC

but another, from 24 September to 5 October, still has places available. To register contact Kym Squires on 6467 5115.

# Four-wheel drivers on track

**THE ONLINE forum, Perth 4X4.net, is working with DEC to minimise the effects of recreational four-wheel driving on the Powerline Track at Wandoo National Park.**

DEC Senior Ranger Michael Phillips was pleased with the enthusiasm and hard work of a big team of four-wheel drivers who recently removed five trailers of rubbish from the popular four-wheel driving track.

The clean-up follows Perth 4X4.net formally adopting the Powerline Track through DEC's Adopt A Track program.

"The Adopt A Track program initiative came out of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by DEC, TrackCare and the WA Four-Wheel Drive Association last year," Michael said.

"Forty-five people came to lend a hand for the first busy bee and had a great day out."

The aim of the clean-up day was for four-wheel drivers to do their bit to ensure the popular track remains clean and tidy. Members are keen to demonstrate their commitment to helping protect the environmental values of the area.

Chairman of Perth 4X4.net Rod Egan said the track had been under threat of closure or restricted access due to concerns raised in the draft Mundaring Weir Water Source Protection Plan.

"The commitment of our members in making sure the track is clean will help ensure the local environment is not overly impacted by recreational use and demonstrate the value of the track to the community," he said.



The Chairman of Perth 4X4.net Rod Egan and DEC District Parks and Visitor Services Coordinator Rod Annear shake hands to mark the signing of the Adopt A Track agreement. Photo - Michael Phillips

# Dark side of the asteroid

**A RESEARCH program to gauge the size and shape of asteroids is being developed at the Perth Observatory.**

It gives amateur astronomers the chance to take part in scientific research in the Perth Observatory-Curtin University research project into asteroid 'occultations'.

An occultation occurs when an asteroid passes between Earth and a distant star, casting a shadow over part of the Earth's surface. By placing a number of telescopes under the shadow and recording the data obtained, it is possible to acquire a two-dimensional image of the asteroid - precisely what astronomers at the Perth Observatory hope to achieve with the help of some dedicated volunteers.

Although the paths of most asteroids are already well known, it is difficult to know their size and shape. Any data collected are analysed by the staff at the Perth Observatory and contribute to astronomical research.

A number of occultations have already been observed with the help of volunteers from the South West Society.

Government Astronomer James Biggs said there were plans to involve schools and community groups in subsequent observations.

# Libraries begin to integrate



The Atrium librarian Trudy Parker (left) and Woodvale librarian Lisa Wright. Photo - Samille Mitchell

By Samille Mitchell

**PART of the library of the former Department of Environment and the collection from the former Department of Conservation and Land Management are being integrated.**

Hundreds of volumes of books and journals have been moved from DEC's collection at The Atrium to the Wildlife Science collection at Woodvale.

The move frees up space at The Atrium and adds to the Woodvale collection - which boasts about 15,000 books, 30,000 journals under 750 titles, 16,000 articles and papers plus maps and departmental archive collections of publications, pamphlets and posters.

When the changes are complete, DEC's library at The Atrium will hold about half of its former collection on site.

Organising the integration are librarians Trudy Parker and Lisa Wright who, coincidentally, began their careers with the then separate departments in 1989.

"We'd always worked together to some extent in a formal manner but the merger of departments means the process of loaning books from the two libraries is now easier," Trudy said.

"This move is the first tentative step in creating an integrated library system."

Lisa said the merger of the two departments' libraries meant staff had access to a huge range of research material.

"While we've also done inter-library loans, now staff can more easily access books from both library collections, significantly increasing the range of reference material," she said.

Anyone wishing to search the collections should access the databases on the former DoE and CALM intranet pages.

# Nature conservation leaders visit the south west

**THE FOURTH annual nature conservation leaders' trip was held recently in the south west.**

Twenty-four staff visited about 30 sites from the Ramsar-listed Forrestdale Lake to Jewel Cave near Augusta to discuss topical issues.

Acting Assistant Director Nature Conservation Keith Claymore said two major themes for the trip were managing for biodiversity with the uncertainty of global-scale climate change and succession planning and capacity building for the department's Nature Conservation Service.

"It is important that regional leaders of nature conservation and scientists come together to examine nature conservation issues

*in situ* and take a broader leadership role in finding solutions," he said.

Issues ranged from wetland management, recovery of threatened species and ecological communities, groundwater management, forest management and introduced species management.

"One of the overarching aims of the annual trip is to expose regional staff to other regions' issues and build their corporate knowledge in terms of the biodiversity of the State," Keith said.

"These trips are a valuable part of strategic planning for the service and will lead to a stronger team to deliver the department's priorities."



Nature Conservation leaders met the Wungong Catchment team at a thinning trial: (left to right) Richard Boykett, Russell Smith, Mark Garkaklis, Brad Barton, Barbara Wilson, Adrian Pinder, Stephen Van Leeuwin, Keith Claymore, Frank Batini (Water Corporation consultant), Femina Metcalfe, Karl Brennan, Kevin Year, Alan Danks, Roger Armstrong and Michael Loh (Water Corporation).