

July 2007

## Endangered species planted on Arbor Day

**THE first of several plantings under a State-wide flora translocation project took place near Albany on Arbor Day, Friday 8 June.**

DEC staff planted three critically endangered south coast species – cactus dryandra, Fairall's lambertia and feather-leaved banksia.

DEC's coordinator for the project Tania Jackson said the threatened flora translocation project was part of the *Saving our Species* program.

The program aims to recover six of the State's critically endangered plant species from the threat of extinction.

"By establishing new populations in secure sites where threats can be effectively managed, we aim to bring the species back from the brink of extinction," Tania said.

"This will help ensure their long-term survival and will contribute to the conservation of the south coast's unique biodiversity."

Over the past seven months DEC, with support from the South Coast Natural

By Katie Schoch

Resource Management Group, has been working with the public and local businesses to select appropriate sites and prepare for the translocations.

Albany Flora Conservation Officer Sarah Barrett said preparation work involved seed collection, propagating or germinating the plants and growing them to the stage where they were ready for planting. DEC's Threatened Flora Seed Centre stored and germinated the seed.

"We are excited to be the first of several regions in the State to undertake the planting stage of the translocation project," Sarah said.

More than 200 plants made up of the three south coast species have now been translocated to two sites near Albany.

Natural populations of these species are highly susceptible to *Phytophthora* dieback and are also threatened by too-frequent fire.



Albany MLA Peter Watson joins property owner Peter Luscombe and DEC's Sarah Barrett and Tania Jackson to plant a feather-leaved banksia seedling near Albany. Photo – Sandra Thomas

## Act now for the future...

**DEC has launched an exciting new public awareness and behavioural change campaign aimed at showing everyone how they can do their bit to combat climate change and foster sustainability.**

The campaign, *Act Now for the Future*, started on World Environment Day, June 5, with the launch of a web portal and a major advertising campaign.

DEC Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs (SDCA) Director Ron Kawalilak said the campaign would provide the public with practical tips on protecting the environment and information on the various initiatives undertaken by the State Government in the sustainability and climate change areas.

"Climate change presents urgent environmental challenges and everyone must be part of the solution," Ron said.

"Governments, businesses and individuals all need to look at ways they can become more sustainable and a cooperative effort is required.

"The initial campaign of TV, print and outdoor advertising and a web portal will encourage everyone to do their bit while also providing practical information on how to help protect the environment.

"Previously there has been information about topics like saving

By Samille Mitchell

water, reducing electricity consumption and State Government rebates for sustainable actions but this information hasn't been presented in a cohesive or easy-to-find way.

"*Act Now for the Future* brings all such information together and packages it to the public with a common branding."

The *Act Now* brand will be applied to relevant advertising or community information campaigns across Government in the coming months.

The web portal, developed primarily by Donna Weston and Ryan Scott from SDCA, is key to the campaign, acting as a one-stop shop for practical tips and simple steps people can take to help the environment.

It includes easy-to-access information and services such as Waterwise rebates and programs, solar energy rebates, Travelsmart initiatives and waste and recycling initiatives.

The *Act Now* program is funded for five years.

Access the web portal at [www.actnow.wa.gov.au](http://www.actnow.wa.gov.au).

## Wood heater program

**UP to 800 Perth homes will receive a \$500 rebate if they switch from a wood fire to a flued or ducted gas heater this winter.**

The one-off rebates are available to eligible households through the \$400,000 Wood Heater Replacement Program which is being implemented under the Perth Air Quality Management Plan by DEC's Air Quality Management Branch.

Households that purchase an LPG gas system may also be eligible for an additional \$100 Kleenheat gas voucher.

The program has more than doubled in size this year, partly due to financial assistance from Alinta.

DEC's Haze Program Manager Amanda Jobson said the program aimed to accelerate the natural replacement process to alternative forms of heating.

"Smoke from domestic wood heaters is a major source of air pollution during winter in Perth," she said.

"Smoke particles in the air, known as haze, can be breathed in and can aggravate health problems for people with bronchitis, emphysema and asthma.

"A large percentage of wood heaters in use are past their working life and not compliant to current standards. This means they are more likely to emit more emissions."

If you would like more information on the program please call the wood heater replacement program hotline on 1300 886 162 to be directed to your nearest participating gas heater retailer.

Alternatively, go to <http://airquality.environment.wa.gov.au> and follow the 'Wood Heater Replacement Program' link under 'Active Projects and Programs' for a complete list of participating retailers and program conditions.

## Whale rescue DVD has already proven its worth

By Joanna Moore

**THE successful disentanglement of a humpback whale near Two Rocks has provided exciting proof of the value of a world-first DVD about whale disentanglements recently produced by DEC.**

DEC's Senior Marine Wildlife Officer Doug Coughran, who has headed the department's whale disentanglement team since its inception in the early 1990s, said a crew member of the lobster vessel that first spotted the entangled whale had viewed the training DVD about whale disentanglements.

"This meant the crew acted quickly and appropriately which ensured a successful rescue," he said.

"It was very pleasing to see the direct impact of the DVD, especially less than three weeks after its release."

With the assistance of Department of Fisheries' patrol boat *Hamelin* and crew, DEC's whale disentanglement team freed the young humpback from the craypot lines which had entangled its pectoral fin and tail. The rescue took just an hour and 15 minutes, despite choppy conditions.



DEC's whale disentanglement team at work with the lobster vessel which raised the alarm. Photo – Garry Johannesen, Department of Fisheries

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# Working Together

Keiran McNamara has given up his regular column so that I can have a final word to this organisation with which I've spent so much of my working life.

I retired from the Department on 6 July 2007 to go to a full time private sector job after 32 years with the environmental protection side of DEC.

Almost without exception I've loved my time with the department. It doesn't seem three decades long despite my recollections of our first methylated spirits-based photocopier, the replacement of a plugs-and-wire telephone system with a PABX and the change from being paid in cash to direct bank transfers.

These of course weren't the only changes.

The first big change in the public service over my time was the transition from a traditional Westminster-style system to a more politically responsive form of governance with term of government political and media advisers in Ministers' offices wielding considerable influence over government decision making; a role once played principally by the public service.

The second is the shift by politicians to what Ken Henry, the Federal Treasury Secretary, has called 'a tolerance for risk that is close to zero'.

This means that public servants now operate within a political environment that is increasingly adversarial and a salacious

media, where accuracy is subordinate to impressions.

It is immaterial whether this is better or worse. It's today's reality.

Is there then a place for people to have long-term careers in the public service?

I would say yes, but for different reasons than existed 30 years ago. Then, pay scales and superannuation were comparatively good, leave entitlements generous and long-term security assured.

With the 'basics' taken care of, motivation in the public service revolved around contributing to public policy, protecting the environment and influencing the future direction of the State.

I suggest that today's reasons would more likely be things like flexibility between public and private sectors because gaining experience inside and outside the public service is no longer financially disadvantageous; the importance of influencing Western Australians to change the way we live to be more sustainable; to contribute to today's issues such as mitigation and adaptation to climate change; and, empowerment to make a difference for future generations in biodiversity, waste minimisation, industry registration and land management. The community in this State needs (and should demand) quality people in the public sector.

In my time I have been a strong supporter of the Environmental Protection



Authority model for environmental protection in this State. The independence of the authority – a power granted to very few government-based bodies – underpins its credibility. An EPA without credibility is of little use to government or the community. And for an EPA to function and maintain that credibility, it needs staff whose job it is to look after the EPA. It's encouraging to me that post-merger there is no evidence that this will change.

I am handing to Colin Murray the responsibility of being the longest serving officer in the environmental protection part of DEC knowing that he will oversee the maintaining of the good bits of the environment department from its many transmigrations.

I'm leaving with great memories and great friendships with exceptional people. Good luck for the future.

**Rob Sippe, Director, Strategic Policy A/Director, Sustainability Coordinator of EPA Services**

## Climate change action statement

**PREMIER Alan Carpenter recently released the major statement *Making Decisions for the Future: Climate Change*, which outlines a range of new policies and programs aimed at tackling climate change.**

The announcement was particularly significant for DEC as the new Office of Climate Change in DEC's Strategic Policy Division will drive the implementation of the initiatives.

Steve Waller, one of the Strategic Policy Division's Assistant Directors, heads the office.

"DEC is responsible for coordinating a whole-of-Government response to climate change," Steve said.

"We coordinate the implementation of the Western Australian Greenhouse Strategy released in 2004 and its review which begins in 2008.

"In addition, we are coordinating the Government's \$8.625 million Climate Change Adaptation Package, announced by the Premier in March 2007."

Key features of the *Making Decisions for the Future: Climate Change* action statement include a target to reduce emissions by at least 60 per cent below 2000 levels by 2050, a cleaner energy target of 60 per cent by 2020 and the purchase of 20 per cent energy from renewable sources by 2010 by the State Government.

Other features include a \$36.5 million Low Emission Energy Development Fund, a mandatory energy efficiency program for industry, expanding the successful Solar Schools program and a new \$1.5 million household audit and education program.

The Government has also committed to the establishment of a national emissions trading scheme by 2010 and to the development of new climate change legislation.

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**Managing Editor:** Kaye Verboon

**Editor:** Rhianna King

**Journalists:** Joanna Moore, Samille Mitchell

**Design and Production:** Natalie Jolakoski

**Telephone:** (08) 9389 8644

**Facsimile:** (08) 9389 8296

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## Conservation valued after restoration focus

A 24-YEAR-OLD Bachelor of Science student from Germany recently completed 20 weeks' work experience with DEC during his 11-month stay in Western Australia.

Moritz Joest's studies in environmental biology are towards an international degree which requires one year of study to be undertaken overseas, including both university study and field-based work experience.

Following a semester at Murdoch University, where he completed units in animal behaviour, environmental plant physiology and evolution and conservation, Moritz undertook

work experience at DEC's Perth Hills District Mundaring office.

While he was there, he was involved with DEC's invertebrate studies and also helped with landscape function analysis. Moritz said he enjoyed many aspects of his work experience with the department and it would be useful as his career developed.

"From my time here I have really learnt just how differently Western Australia's ecological systems have to be managed compared to back home in Germany," he said.

"As with any country, it is important

to know as much as possible about the environmental systems to minimise the chances of mismanagement.

"It was great to be involved with conservation work here in the Perth Hills District because in Germany, sadly because it has lost so much, it is more about restoration than conservation."

On his return to the University of Applied Science in Bremen, Moritz will have one semester of his degree to complete. He then hopes to undertake study towards his Masters, possibly in ecology.

## DEC staff join bid to save turtles

**SEVENTEEN DEC staff from Exmouth have volunteered their time to help save turtles in the Ningaloo Marine Park.**

The staff lent a hand in the Ningaloo Turtle Program, which started in 2002 as a collaborative effort between the community Cape Conservation Group, DEC and Murdoch University, with the assistance of a Threatened Species Network Grant from WWF-Australia and the Natural Heritage Trust.

The program aims to engage the community in a long-term research and conservation project that fosters community stewardship, reduces the threats to marine turtles and determines the status of Ningaloo turtles over time.

It involves monitoring the nesting beaches of North West Cape, Ningaloo Station and Coral Bay, developing community awareness and education programs through the Jurabi Turtle Centre and building the capacity of community groups and supporting them in developing turtle conservation programs.

The group's 2006-2007 monitoring resulted in the recording of more than 4000 green turtle nests, 85 hawksbill nests and 140 loggerhead nests on North West Cape between 1 December and 28 February. While the number of



*DEC's Claire O'Callaghan rescuing a stranded turtle with the assistance of Ningaloo Turtle Program volunteers.*

Photo - DEC

By Samille Mitchell

green and hawksbill turtle nests was average, the number of loggerhead turtle nests was about half of last season and the lowest number of loggerhead

turtle nests since the program began in 2002-2003.

During the 2006-2007 season volunteers also rescued 42 adult female turtles stranded in the rocks or behind the steep dunes, bringing the total rescued to 150 since the program began.

DEC Community Turtle Conservation Officer Cath Samson said the success of the program was due to the commitment and hard work of the volunteers.

"Since its inception the Ningaloo Turtle Program has attracted 346 local community, State, interstate and international volunteers who have contributed more than 26,000 volunteer hours towards turtle conservation," Cath said.

Coastwest, BHP Billiton, the Tony and Lisette Lewis Foundation and the Natural Heritage Trust through the Rangelands Natural Resource Management Coordinating Group Investment Plan, provided financial support for the 2006-2007 season.

If you would like to be involved in the program, please email [ningalooturtles@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:ningalooturtles@dec.wa.gov.au) or contact Cath Samson on 9947 8000. For more information on the project visit [www.ningalooturtles.org.au](http://www.ningalooturtles.org.au).

## Benefits for all in new whale shark tour guide course

**DEC has helped whale shark tour operators in Ningaloo Marine Park deliver a better product to their passengers.**

DEC Exmouth District staff conducted a Whale Shark Interaction Training Course to improve and streamline the delivery of the tourism attraction in Ningaloo Marine Park.

DEC Whale Shark Project Officer Emily Wilson said the course came in response to a study showing visitors wanted more information about whale sharks.

"In the past, those embarking on wildlife tourism experiences were in it simply for the thrill of the encounter but now they want to know more about whale shark biology and ecology," Emily said.

"Weekly whale shark talks provided by DEC over the past two whale shark seasons have been very popular and highlight the fact that visitors want to learn more about whale sharks and their environment to complete their experience."

DEC developed a whale shark interaction course for tour guides operating under Whale Shark Commercial Tour Licences.

The course gives them practical training to improve the tours and minimise the impact on whale sharks. It also includes information for guides to provide during tours as well as helping them with advice on complying with licence conditions and completing log books.

DEC has also developed a whale shark interaction training DVD.

Forty-eight participants representing eight whale shark operators from Exmouth and Coral Bay have taken part in the course this year.

Emily said operators were beginning to realise the benefits of the course in helping with staff training and providing a forum for queries and concerns to be raised.

"This in turn enables DEC to understand and better address management issues that may arise and helps to make Ningaloo Marine Park a world-class centre for whale shark interaction," she said.



2007

# Graduation AND award CEREMONY

## Graduate Development Program

DEC's Graduation and Awards Ceremony for 2007, held at the WA Maritime Museum in Fremantle in June, celebrated the wide-ranging achievements of staff and trainees.

The ceremony marked the graduation of 26 young men and women from DEC's Graduate Development Program and the achievements of 26 Aboriginal trainees and two cadets through the department's Mentored Aboriginal Training and Employment Scheme (MATES).

Recipients of the department's study scholarships and awards were also commended at the event.

East Metropolitan MLC Louise Pratt, representing Environment Minister David Templeman, thanked the graduates, trainees and award recipients for their important work now and in their future careers with DEC.

"We have a collective goal and a moral duty to preserve our unique and irreplaceable natural environment," she said.

Stories – Joanna Moore  
Photos – Ron D'Raine



**NOW** in its thirteenth year, the department's Graduate Development Program provides up to 12 weeks' training during two years' work with the department to a carefully selected pool of recent tertiary or Conservation and Land Management Certificate IV graduates.

Those graduating from the program this year were chosen from 255 applicants in December 2004. All 26 have now been appointed to positions with the department.

Director General Keiran McNamara said the program provided future leaders and a steady flow of well-trained staff to DEC.

"As we approach 12 months of the new department, the task now is to broaden the program so we are equipped for the changes and different challenges of DEC's wider role," he said.

Since its inception in 1995, 281 staff have graduated from the program.

*Pictured at the awards were (back row, left to right) David Chemello, Tim Button, Leah Martin, Lindsay Bourke, Melanie Harding, Manager Learning and Development Richard McAlinden, Mia Morley, Consultant Learning Programs Peter Hill, (centre row) Director General Keiran McNamara, Geoff Cullen, Rowan Dawson, Megan Flowers, Benson Todd, Jennifer Jackson, Cassandra Lawler, Karin Carnes, (front row) Sharon Ferguson, Meagan O'Connor, East Metropolitan MLC Louise Pratt, Nicki Warnock, Catherine Page, Amanda Broome, Marissa Speirs, Verity Steptoe and Fiona Kirkpatrick. Absent: Ryan Donegan, Sylvia Clarke, Anthea Jones, Susan Ajah Subah and Luke Bentley*



## MATES

**THE Mentored Aboriginal Training and Employment Scheme (MATES) is one component of a multi-faceted employment and training strategy to increase Aboriginal employment within DEC's workforce.**

The program supports Aboriginal trainees through the three-year Conservation and Land Management Training Package in work centres across the State.

The nationally accredited program receives funding from the Federal

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, the Department of Education and Training, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Employfast and BHP Billiton and supports DEC's status as a registered training organisation.

The ceremony awarded 26 Aboriginal trainees for their completion of Certificates II, III or IV in Conservation and Land Management.

DEC also supports six Aboriginal students who are studying degrees relevant to the department under the National Indigenous Cadetship Project. Two cadets, Tim Moore and Cheryl-Anne McCann, who have recently achieved their tertiary degree, were honoured at the ceremony.

*Pictured at the awards ceremony were (back row, left to right) Tim Moore, Wayne Dekker, Rob Narrier, Learning and Development Officer Ashley Millar, Anthony Aiken, Manager Learning and Development Richard McAlinden, Ian Michael, Luke Puertollano, Glen Camille, Renea Dingo, Craig Hart, (middle row) South West Aboriginal Training Supervisor Karim Khan, Cultural and Community Coordinator Terry 'Koodah' Cornwall, Robert Thorne, William Newchurch, Michael O'Dene, Kris Hayden, Eddie Wilkes, Ryan Humphries, Nigel Johnston, Pilbara Aboriginal Training Officer Hardy Derschow, Jonathon Corpus, (front row) Learning and Development Officer Jess Mann, Coordinator Traineeships and Cadetship Programs Laura Sinclair, Cheryl-Anne McCann, Director General Keiran McNamara, Sara Scanlon, Ricki Allen, East Metropolitan MLC Louise Pratt, Marie Houghton and Carol Rodd. Absent: Jerry Narkle, Thomas Dimer, Rodney Thomas, Wendy Bearfoot, Tina Smith and Douglas Cook.*



# 2007 Graduation AND award CEREMONY

## Keynes Memorial Award – Sharon Ferguson

THE Keynes Memorial Award recognises the most outstanding member of the Graduate Development Program and was this year won by Sharon Ferguson (pictured with East Metropolitan MLC Louise Pratt).

Sharon has already taken on a wide range of roles with DEC and at diverse locations – Pemberton, the Dwellingup Training Centre, Mt Manypeaks on the south coast and, most recently, in the West Kimberley District.

Accepting the award, Sharon said she was grateful for the training and support she had received from colleagues and the professional and personal networks she had gained with her co-recruits.

“My time in the program was enriched by the other graduates, the variety of experiences and being surrounded by fantastic mentors,” she said.

“When I reflect on my two-and-a-half years with the program, I think back to how green around the ears we all were. I am so proud of us. We made it!”



## Director General's Merit Award – David Chemello



AN inspiring conversation with a ranger while on a holiday at Millstream-Chichester National Park led David Chemello to decide pursue a career with the former CALM.

David was this year's recipient of the Director General's Merit Award, the runner-up award for the graduate recruit who has displayed the best all-round performance in both theoretical and practical areas.

David said since he had joined the department he had developed a passion for his job equivalent to that of the unnamed ranger.

He also spoke highly of the inspiration he has gained working alongside many “down-to-earth, hard-working DEC staff”.

“There is a lot of potential within the graduate program,” David said.

“As our careers develop, we will have a fantastic network of familiar faces across the State who can provide advice, support and expertise.”

## Aboriginal Trainee of the Year Award – Sara Scanlon



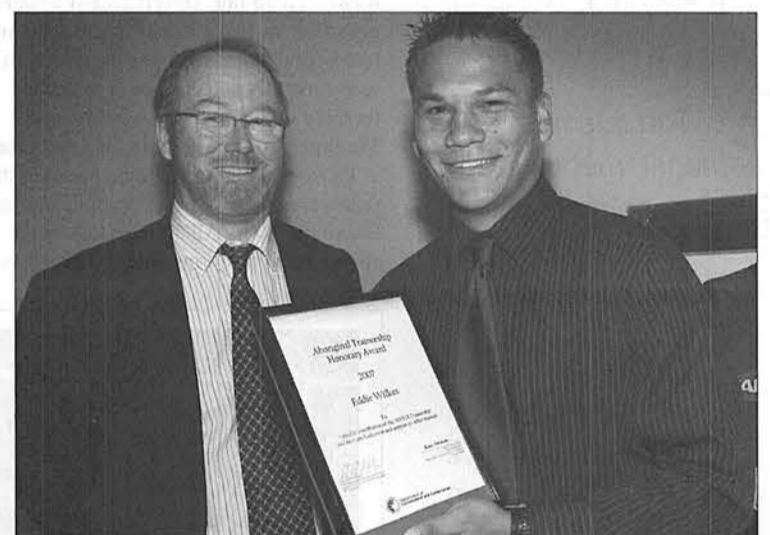
THE partnership between DEC and the Fremantle Football Club was celebrated when the club's Marketing Services Manager Jon Haines presented this year's Aboriginal Trainee of the Year Award to Sara Scanlon.

Jon said the Fremantle Football Club was proud of its partnership with DEC in sponsoring the awards and of its connection to the Indigenous community. Fremantle Football Club has the highest number of Indigenous players of any AFL team.

In her position as Acting National Park Ranger in the Wellington District, Sara has gained considerable experience in parks and visitor services, natural resource management, wildfire suppression and in planning and implementing projects such as revegetation works.

Sara thanked Jon for the club's ongoing support of Aboriginal training and congratulated all the Indigenous trainees on their achievements.

## Aboriginal Traineeship Honorary Award – Eddie Wilkes



EDDIE Wilkes (pictured with Director General Keiran McNamara) received the Aboriginal Traineeship Honorary Award for contributing above and beyond the requirements of the MATES traineeship, particularly through the support of his fellow trainees.

In his time with the department since beginning his traineeship at Yanchep National Park in 2004, Eddie has taken part in a wide range of nature conservation and parks and visitor service programs.

He was appointed as an Aboriginal Heritage Officer with DEC's Aboriginal Heritage Unit last year and recently completed his Certificate IV in Conservation and Land Management.

Eddie acknowledged the tremendous effort made by all graduates and trainees and thanked his traineeship peers for their enthusiasm and support.

“My fellow trainees always made those cold and rainy weeks at the Dwellingup Training Centre fun,” he said.

Many of the award recipients acknowledged the support and mentoring they received from DEC colleagues in their districts and regions and from staff at the Dwellingup Training Centre.



(Back, left to right) Director General Keiran McNamara, Craig Faulkner, Emma Clingan, Wendy Yorke, East Metropolitan MLC Louise Pratt, Manager Learning and Development Richard McAlinden, (front) Sue Hancock, Karlene Bain and Stefan de Haan.

## Scholarships for DEC staff

DIRECTOR General Keiran McNamara said DEC staff graduating from a development program or a traineeship were by no means at the end of their learning within the department.

“DEC aims to provide an environment of continuous learning and we need employees who are constantly developing in order to meet new challenges,” he said.

“The department's various scholarships and study assistance awards support this continuous learning.”

The Director General's Scholarship for Study Assistance was awarded to Emma Clingan – who intends to use the scholarship

to help achieve her goal of becoming Fire Coordinator for DEC's Jurien Bay District.

Kate Fitzgerald was honoured with the Sciences Scholarship in memory of Dr George Malajczuk, which has enabled her to undertake an intensive unit in Quantitative Resource Ecology at Murdoch University.

Kathleen Mulholland presented the Leadership Scholarship in memory of her brother Seamus Mulholland to Stefan de Haan and Wendy Yorke.

The scholarship aims to support staff leadership qualities such as those demonstrated by Seamus in his career with the department.

This year's Scholarship for all DEC women in honour of June Craig was received by Midwest Regional Leader for Parks and Visitor Services Sue Hancock.

The scholarship will enable Sue to study visitor management strategies in parks and reserves in south-west USA.

Nine DEC employees studying at post-secondary level received up to \$1000 a semester through the Director General's Career Development Scholarship. They were Andre Maynard, Rebecca Coyle, Therese Jones, Jonathan Pridham, Bruce Richardson, Kyla Ford, Graeme Keals, Mark Neilson and Emma Fiorentino.

## Aboriginal Trainee Supervisor of the Year Award – Karlene Bain and Craig Faulkner

TWO staff members who provide a high level of support and commitment to the development of Aboriginal trainees were also recognised at the ceremony.

They were Senior Ranger at Millstream-Chichester National Park Craig Faulkner and District Nature Conservation Coordinator for the Frankland District Karlene Bain.

Craig is responsible for supporting the Millstream-based MATES trainees Ken Sandy and Kingsley Woodley. He is also involved in the coordination of the local park council through DEC's joint management arrangements.

Craig said the most worthwhile factor of the Aboriginal traineeship program was that it provided a cultural link with the traditional owners.

“I cannot overstate how important and worthwhile maintaining a cultural link with traditional owners is,” Craig said.

Karlene said it had been a rewarding and developmental experience supervising Carol Rodd through her Certificates II and III.

“Carol has become an integral member of the nature conservation team,” she said.



From page 1

"This rescue brings the number of whales DEC's specially trained team has responded to in the past 15 years to 49," he said.

The new DVD was produced by DEC in collaboration with the Western Rock Lobster Council and the West Coast Rock Lobster Managed Fishery (WCRLMF) and aims to help reduce the number of whale entanglements during the rock lobster fishing season.

The DVD details the WCRLMF's code of practice aimed at preventing entanglements and explores the reasons for entanglements and the dynamics of dangerous situations. It also explains ways in which fishers can work cooperatively with DEC's whale disentanglement team.

The DVD has attracted interest from other conservation agencies in Australia as well as in the United States, New Zealand and South Africa.

"An increasing number of entanglements each year created a need for increased resources and knowledge in this specialty area, as well as collaborative efforts between DEC and industry bodies," Doug said.

## Air quality figures on the web

**THE results of studies into background air quality at a number of sites within the Perth metropolitan region can now be viewed online.**

The studies are part of a broader departmental initiative to examine air quality levels in key airsheds around the State that include study sites near Albany, Collie, Kalgoorlie and Port Hedland.

Results from all these sites are available at <http://airquality.environment.wa.gov.au/airtoxics>. The result of studies at Midland and Kwinana will also be available online.

Senior Environmental Officer at DEC's Air Quality Management Branch Arthur Grieco said the term 'background' referred to the collective

level of air toxics present in the air generally, rather than the levels from specific sources.

"The studies therefore examine the levels of aerosol, gaseous or particle pollutants present in the air we breathe on a daily basis," he said.

"Although 'air toxics' tend only to be present in the air in low concentrations, they can still be hazardous."

Air toxics measured by the department include polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, heavy metals, volatile organic compounds and carbonyl compounds.

The studies will enable the measured levels of air toxics to be compared with guidelines proposed in the

National Environment Protection (Air Toxics) Measure and with those set by authorities such as the World Health Organisation. The data can also be used in future health risk assessments and epidemiological studies.

"Members of the public and researchers, both here and around the world, are now able to access the information for their own interest," Arthur said.

Arthur thanked staff at DEC regional offices for their contribution to the ongoing studies.

"These programs could not have got off the ground without the enthusiastic participation and support of DEC officers in the regions," he said.

## Touching examples of why we have principles



(Left to right) Matt Warnock, Murray Baker (back) and Fiona Bujok with a Stimson's python, Cressida Wilson with a blue-tongued skink, Hafeel Kalideen with a south-west carpet python and Sarah McEvoy with a bobtail at the clearing principles meeting in May. Photo - Bev Sinclair

### MORE than 60 native vegetation conservation program members put clearing principles under the spotlight in May.

The 50 DEC participants and 10 from the Department of Industry and Resources gathered for two days to analyse the 10 clearing principles in detail.

Guest speakers talked about each of the principles and

provided information on where to access more information within DEC as well as from the Department of Water, the Department of Agriculture and Food, the Roadside Conservation Committee, the Commissioner of Soil Conservation and the Office of the Appeals Convenor.

Native Vegetation Conservation Acting Branch Manager Sarah McEvoy said DEC regional staff

were now learning how to use new datasets and databases to conduct their own assessments in relation to rare, priority and threatened flora and fauna. Previously this was occurring centrally.

"About 30 per cent of the people in the room were new since the 2006 Native Vegetation Program workshop so networking was an important aspect of the two days," Sarah said.

"Participants also enjoyed interacting with the endangered species that rely on vegetation for survival - species like reptiles and birds such as the Carnaby's cockatoo and the red-tailed black-cockatoo.

"It was also really interesting to listen to animal rescue volunteers talk about the species' struggles and the work volunteers are doing to help them."

## Wildcare Helpline calls for volunteers



Volunteer Wendy Marriott. Photo - Christina Pailthorpe

MORE than 5500 calls have been made to DEC's 24-hour Wildcare Helpline already this year. The helpline provides support and service to the public for all matters relating to sick, injured or 'unwelcome' wildlife in the State.

The hotline is staffed by volunteers at DEC's Kensington office or diverted to rostered home telephones after hours and at weekends.

Wildcare Helpline operators are the first point of contact for people who have found injured animals. They can provide immediate advice and refer callers to one of DEC's registered wildlife rehabilitators who care for and rehabilitate the animal before releasing it back into its native habitat.

Most of the calls are from people who have found sick or injured animals on the sides of roads or in parks, suburbs and forests.

Community Involvement Coordinator Marg Buckland said that even though the Wildcare Helpline had received great support from volunteers since it began in 2000, more volunteers were needed to staff the phones during business hours.

Volunteers do not need to have experience in wildlife caring or staffing helplines as training and support is provided.

Wendy Marriott is one of DEC's valued volunteers. She has been volunteering with the Wildcare Helpline for four years.

"It's such a worthwhile service to be involved with because I feel I am contributing to the welfare of native animals in Western Australia while gaining a greater appreciation and knowledge of wildlife," she said.

"I also gain a great sense of achievement through being able to assist the community. I think many people would enjoy interacting with the public through volunteering."

Daytime volunteers are needed to fill four-hour shifts between 9am and 1pm and 1pm and 5pm from Monday to Friday.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in volunteering with the Wildcare Helpline, please contact DEC's Community Involvement Unit on 9334 0279.

## DEC and industry team up to protect wildlife



(Left to right) Gerry Rayner, Environment Minister David Templeman who announced the partnership, pictured with Kanyana Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre's June Butcher holding a bilby, and Keiran McNamara.

Photo - Rhianna King

DEC has partnered with big business to protect Western Australia's wildlife.

BHP Billiton's Ravensthorpe Nickel Operation and Worsley Alumina have provided \$375,000 and \$400,000 respectively over five years to bolster DEC's highly successful *Western Shield* program.

*Western Shield* is the biggest wildlife conservation initiative undertaken in Australia. It focuses on wildlife recovery through the control of introduced predators, the European fox and feral cat.

DEC Director General Keiran McNamara said the 10-year-old program drew on the skills of staff from a wide range of positions across the department.

"*Western Shield* is WA's premier wildlife protection and conservation program and is characterised by its boldness, vision and large scale," Keiran said.

"It is a department-wide effort aimed at returning native animals to their former habitats and abundance.

"Worsley Alumina and BHP Billiton have the appreciation of the department for their support."

BHP's sponsorship will fund fox baiting of the Hamersley River Catchment within the Fitzgerald River National Park and the Bandalup macro corridor extension near Ravensthorpe while the Worsley Alumina sponsorship will see extended and more intensive baiting in the northern jarrah forest.

Worsley Alumina Health, Safety and Environment Manager Gerry Rayner said Worsley's support of the program was a natural extension of the company's commitment to conservation efforts.

"This partnership is a great example of the mining industry working with government," Gerry said.



# Lotterywest funds boost Woodland Recovery Project

**THE Wandoo Recovery Group (WRG) and WWF-Australia are partners in a new project to improve the conservation of wandoo woodlands, an important tree species that is in serious decline.**

The partnership received a grant of \$71,295 from Lotterywest for the Woodland Recovery Project that will advance knowledge relating to the health and conservation of woodland species, with a focus on wandoo.

Environment Minister David Templeman presented the cheque on behalf of Lotterywest at a ceremony at Panda Cottage attended by staff from WWF-Australia, WRG, DEC and community members.

Mr Templeman acknowledged Lotterywest's role as a vital source of support for community projects and highlighted the important role not-for-profit community groups played in protecting and managing threatened woodland ecosystems.

The two-year project will include

a historical review of wandoo, community surveys to record and monitor wandoo health and an education campaign to inform people about woodland recovery strategies.

WRG Executive Officer Liz Manning and WWF-Australia Land Program Leader Richard McLellan emphasised the collaborative nature of the project which unites research with community knowledge and is underpinned and strongly supported by DEC.

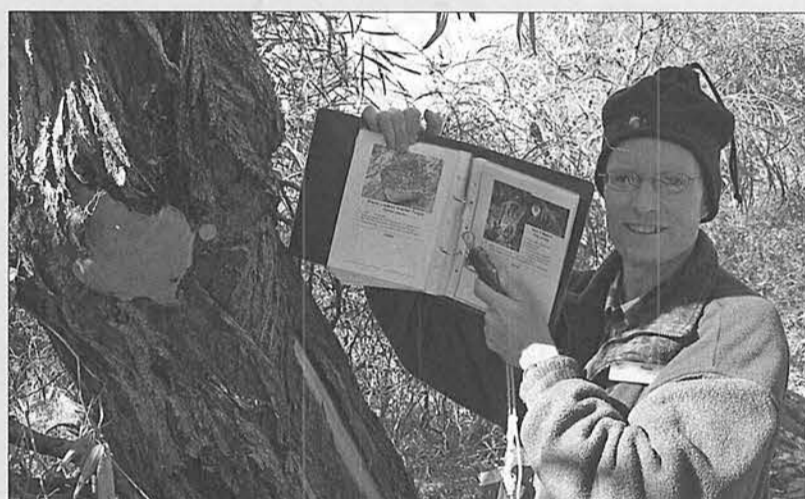
"Several community groups and individuals have already taken part in the first stage of the WRG's community mapping project," Liz said.

"Their continued support will greatly assist us to implement stage two of this project to understand where and when declines occur."

Results from the project will be communicated widely and used to monitor and evaluate the health status of woodland ecosystems.



(Left to right) DEC Director General Keiran McNamara, WWF-Australia Land Program Leader Richard McLellan, DEC Manager Swan Region and WRG Chairman Alan Sands, WRG Executive Officer Liz Manning and Environment Minister David Templeman at the Lotterywest grant presentation for the Woodland Recovery Project. Photo – Roger Harris



DEC WA Herbarium mycologist Neale Bougher has produced an online field guide to fungi in the Perth region. Photo – Louise Little

## New fungi guide

**WHILE most of us are aware of the humble mushroom and toadstool, few realise the extent of different fungi species around Perth and their important contribution to bushland health.**

DEC's WA Herbarium fungi specialist Neale Bougher has authored an expanding online guide to Perth's fungi, called the *Perth Urban Bushland Fungi Field Book*.

Neale said fungi needed to be considered in the same way as animals and plants in the overall management of Perth's bushlands.

But until now, such consideration had been hampered by a lack of information about fungi.

"This has been the impetus for the book," Neale said.

"Photographs of each species in the book are of examples of fungi species in a local habitat. This is significant

By Samille Mitchell

because fungi species can appear slightly different in different regions."

The book's online, self-managed format designed by fungi volunteer John Weaver enables the addition of more fungi to the book as they are discovered and identified in the Perth region.

It means users can download all or part of the book and create their own hard copy for using in the field.

Updates to species also can be implemented with ease. Users are encouraged to supplement and expand the field book with their own notes and photographs. A downloadable template is provided for the purpose.

The *Perth Urban Bushland Fungi Field Book* is available online at [www.fungiperth.org.au/fieldbook/cat\\_index.html](http://www.fungiperth.org.au/fieldbook/cat_index.html).

## WAMSI launched

By Joanna Moore

A NEW chapter in Western Australian marine science began recently with the official launch of the Western Australian Marine Science Institution (WAMSI) at the WA Maritime Museum.

Premier Alan Carpenter formally launched the \$21 million, five-year multidisciplinary research initiative which aims to help address the impact of climate change on important marine areas such as WA's pristine Ningaloo and Jurien Bay marine parks, and other marine conservation issues.

WAMSI is a collaborative venture between 14 State, Federal, industry and tertiary organisations with a key interest in marine science.

The institution aims to provide a better understanding of the marine environment through sound science and innovative technology.

It also provides the opportunity for scientists to work together, leading to significant gains in understanding, appreciation and conservation of marine ecosystems in WA.

Strategic marine research through WAMSI will occur across six interlinked themes, each led by a key collaborating partner.

In addition to the State Government's commitment, partner organisations have committed \$30 million to the initiative.

The biodiversity research stream directed by DEC, under the leadership of Marine Science Program Leader Chris Simpson, will focus on an improved scientific knowledge base to support the implementation of marine conservation and protection policies and will also support decision-making for tourism and industrial developments. Its geographical focus is on Ningaloo and Jurien Bay marine parks.

WAMSI comprises DEC, the departments of Fisheries and Industry and Resources, the WA Museum, CSIRO, the Australian Institute of Marine Science, the Bureau of Meteorology, the WA Global Ocean Observing Systems Inc, The University of Western Australia, Curtin University of Technology, Murdoch University and Edith Cowan University. Visit [www.wamsi.org.au](http://www.wamsi.org.au) for more information.

## Briefly...

### DEC Alive Wire

The department's Risk Management Section has developed a new resource to help staff improve their health and fitness.

DEC Alive Wire provides information, strategies and motivation and can be accessed on the People Service's page on the department's CALMweb intranet.

DEC Alive Wire promotes health and fitness topics to DEC employees across the State and provides useful tools to help staff set and achieve their personal health, fitness and overall wellbeing goals.

The webpage includes information sheets on a monthly topic, the health and fitness activities calendar for DEC's Kensington office, nutrition information, details about how to get involved with an 'activity of the month' and useful links to external health websites.

### Environment Awards submissions welcomed

Champions for the environment can have their efforts recognised in the 2007 WA Environment Awards.

Entries are invited under 11 categories: Corporate Business Leading by Example; Government Leading by Example; Small Business Leading by Example; Biodiversity Conservation; Bush, Land and Waterways; Coastal Marine and Estuarine; Resource and Waste Management; Air Quality; Community Energy Efficiency; Littering and Illegal Dumping Prevention; and Community Achievement – Individual and Community/Volunteer group.

An overall winner will also be judged.

Entries close Friday 3 August. For more information visit [www.dec.wa.gov.au](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au).

### Bibbulmun Track on Lonely Planet Bluelist

WA's own Bibbulmun Track featured as one of Australia's top five journeys on the 'Lonely Planet Bluelist Australia' program on SBS recently.

The final episode in the four-part mini-series on Wednesday 27 June, 'Top Natural Highs and Most Amazing Journeys', featured the 963km-long Bibbulmun Track.

The Bibbulmun Track is one of the longest, continuously marked trails in Australia and is considered a world-class walk trail.

An online survey determined the 'Bluelist' ranking which was topped by attractions including The Ghan, the train line which crosses the heart of the continent from Adelaide through Alice Springs to Darwin.

## Investigating tuart woodlands

**YOUNG Western Australians have the opportunity to learn more about the conservation of the State's tuart woodlands with the release of new resources from DEC's EcoEducation team.**

Teachers, community group leaders, land managers, scientists and researchers attended recent launches of the 'Investigating tuart woodlands resources' at venues from Yanchep to Busselton.

Everyone at the packed events received copies of the new resources and heard about current management plans, community involvement and research into tuart woodland decline.

Presenters included Chairman of the Tuart Response Group Alan Walker,

Executive Officer Drew Haswell and Project Coordinator of the Tuart Health Research Group Paul Barber.

The resources were developed by DEC's EcoEducation section in conjunction with curriculum writers and are mapped to the Science and Society and Environment learning areas for early and late adolescence.

They include two CDs, the fieldwork kit 'A Field Ecologist for a Day', a poster and excursion activities designed for different levels of students.

The materials detail strategies to provide hands-on activities for students that explore the ecology, history and value of tuart woodlands, as well as conservation

and management strategies to protect the woodlands for future generations.

The CDs offer rich interactive multimedia learning materials including video interviews, virtual field trips, investigation and planning tools and mapping exercises.

Tuart woodlands once covered much of the Swan Coastal Plain but due to clearing for urban development and agriculture, only an estimated 35 per cent of this ecologically important woodland remains as remnants.

The tuart resources are the latest addition to DEC's EcoEducation programs. For more information contact Senior EcoEducation Officer Liz Moore on 9334 0387 or by email ([liz.moore@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:liz.moore@dec.wa.gov.au)).