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WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### Closer ties for DEC and WA Police



Deputy Commissioner of Police Chris Dawson and DEC Director General Keiran McNamara. Photo – Tony Potts

DEC and the Western Australia Police have agreed to the exchange of criminal intelligence and information through the signing of a formal Memorandum of Understanding.

The document was signed on 28 February by DEC Director General Keiran McNamara and Deputy Commissioner of Police Chris Dawson.

Keiran welcomed the closer ties with the WA Police and said the enhanced enforcement capability delivered by the agreement was one of a number of strategies planned for a stronger departmental focus on enforcement.

“Exchanging information is an important step in enabling each agency to regulate and enforce the legislation they are responsible for,” Keiran said.

“It is important, however, for everyone to understand that the agreement ensures the information must be relevant and the reason for the exchange justified.

“Essentially, the MoU will allow DEC’s enforcement officers to seek and obtain crucial information quickly.”

Deputy Commissioner Dawson said the signing of the MoU had strengthened the existing relationship between DEC and the WA Police.

### ‘WARR’ against waste

By Samille Mitchell

**THE State Government has launched its ‘WARR against waste’.**

New legislation which came into effect early this year aims to slash waste across Western Australia.

The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery (WARR) Act and associated WARR Levy Act pave the way for improved recycling and promote the shift towards a waste-free society.

Environment Minister David Templeman said the WARR Act was an important step forward in dealing with waste and reducing greenhouse emissions in WA.

“A measure of this Act’s importance is the strong bipartisan support it received in both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council,” he said.

DEC Principal Consultant John Ottaway said one of the Act’s underlying objectives was to reduce WA’s dependence on landfills for disposing of municipal waste.

“The new legislation will allow for the establishment of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Schemes, where producers of consumer goods could be required to establish recycling programs for the goods they produce,” John said.

“The State Government has made it clear it will encourage and support producers to implement their own voluntary recovery and recycling schemes for problem wastes, but the Government has also made it clear it is prepared to bring in mandatory schemes if necessary.

“EPR schemes could see producers of problem wastes such as computers, mobile phones and tyres required to provide ways in which their products can be recycled.

“Currently a lot of these products go to landfill, which is neither sustainable nor economic in the long-term.”

John said the new Act would put more focus on construction and demolition waste, which was nearly all recyclable but still made up about one-and-a-half million tonnes of waste going into landfill in WA each year.

It also provides for the formation of a new waste authority to drive waste avoidance, waste reduction and improved recycling rates.

“To assist the new waste authority, we are working on a comprehensive strategic plan which sets out a five-to-ten-year plan of how to achieve a major reduction in waste going into landfills, with the plan covering all of WA including the rural and remote areas,” he said.

“The waste authority will also fund projects which can demonstrate innovations in waste avoidance or resource recovery.”

Funding is also being made available for local governments to prepare their own strategic waste management plans.

### A bumper year for new species

**BOTANISTS at DEC’s WA Herbarium named a record number of new species and varieties of Western Australian plants in 2007.**

More species were described than in any year since 1810, when botanist Robert Brown published the first major account of WA’s plants.

WA Herbarium Curator Kevin Thiele said 301 newly named plants, algae and fungi joined the nearly 13,000 already known in the State.

“WA is the most botanically rich state in Australia and is a global hotspot for plants and for botanical discovery,” he said.

“Naming is important, because once a species is named, it can be more accurately documented and its conservation needs assessed.

“Scientists and researchers, mining consultants, members of the general public and wildflower enthusiasts need names to be able to properly recognise, study and protect native plants.”

New species were found across the State, with many discovered as a result of botanical surveys in the banded iron ranges of the Midwest. Areas subject to mining or other

development applications were studied by botanists as part of the environmental assessment process.

Species are scientifically named by publishing a botanical description, partly in Latin, in a scientific journal. Laws and regulations for naming species are set out under an international agreement adhered to by botanists throughout the world

Among the new species named are emu bushes in the genus *Eremophila*, native bush-peas (*Jacksonia*), eucalypts and orchids.

“Some of the most spectacular and interesting new species are the salt-tolerant, succulent samphire (*Tecticornia bibenda*), a new black-eyed Susan (*Tetralochea erubescens*), that grows on cliffs on a single range of hills near Coolgardie; and a tiny new insectivorous sundew (*Drosera gibsonii*) from the Stirling Range that’s smaller than a five cent coin,” Kevin said.

Kevin said there were still many new species to be discovered and scientifically described in WA.

“We really can only guess at the number of plant species that occur in the State,” he said.

### Alex chalks up 50 years

**DEC’s Alex Errington has achieved 50 years of public service.**

After starting in the Education Department in 1958, Alex moved to the Public Works Department, the Public Service Board, the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), the State Ombudsman’s Office, then back to CALM, now DEC.

Alex’s duties have covered a wide range of activities including clerical, administration, industrial relations and finance. He was the inaugural head of Administration and Finance when CALM was established in 1985.

He was appointed as the Deputy State Ombudsman in 1992 and served in this senior statutory position for 10 years.

However, ask Alex in which activity he believes he has made the greatest contribution and he will say that his work in CALM and DEC relating to the consolidation and expansion of the State’s conservation estate has given him the greatest satisfaction during his working life.

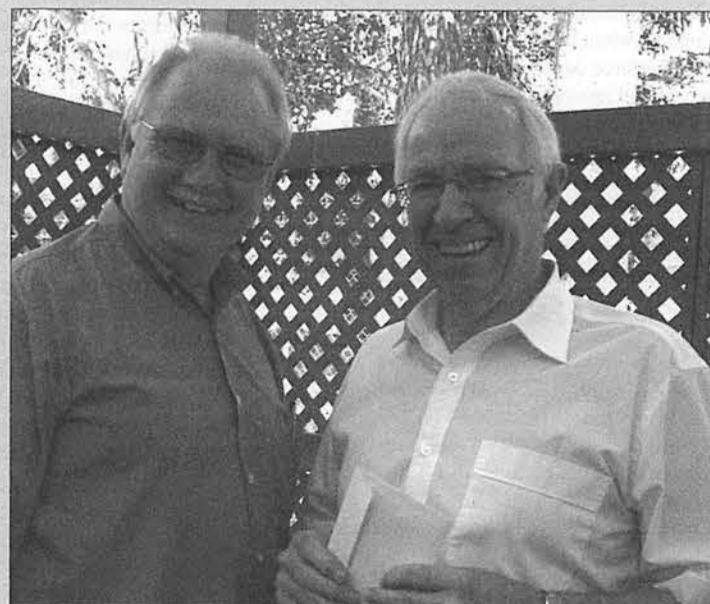
“It is an area where you can achieve things and leave a legacy which will be there for future generations,” he said.

At a morning tea held to mark the event, Deputy Director General Parks and Conservation Jim Sharp thanked Alex for his contribution to the department and presented him with a lifetime national parks pass.

“The significance of Alex’s work to clear up the acquisition of key parcels of conservation lands throughout the State cannot be understated,” Jim said.

Alex is involved in many land-related projects and said he still gets a buzz when negotiating the purchase of another parcel of conservation land or resolving a land tenure problem.

His current projects include the consolidation of areas forming D’Entrecasteaux National Park, Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park and Benger Swamp Nature Reserve. Alex hopes these once highly fragmented conservation areas will each be consolidated into single reserves this year.



Deputy Director General Parks and Conservation Jim Sharp and Alex Errington. Photo – Joanna Moore

# Working Together

By DEC's Deputy Director General Environment Kim Taylor, who takes up the position of Director General Department of Water on 21 April.

I'm disappointed to be leaving DEC after less than two years in my role as Deputy Director General Environment. It was not an easy decision for me to seek to return to the Water portfolio after nearly 12 years in the Environment portfolio. I have thoroughly enjoyed that time and value the many work friendships I have made. I have seen many changes during the 12 years, particularly in organisation arrangements. Two things which have stood out to me however, are the continued commitment and dedication of staff, and the continued importance of work in protecting and conserving the State's environment. The State is going through a phenomenal period of growth and development while also experiencing marked effects from climate change. At the same time, community expectations for protecting and conserving the State's environment continue to grow. All these place increased challenges and importance on the department's work.

DEC has achieved a lot in its initial years. With a staff of some 2,000 people and budget of around \$300 million, it is a key government department with an important role to play in shaping the State's future and the environment it provides for future generations. I'm sure the department will continue to develop and respond to the challenges facing it.

Water and environment are closely linked and my new department, the Department of Water, faces many similar challenges to DEC. I look forward to DoW working together with DEC and, in my new role, being able to continue a working relationship with many staff in DEC.

**Kim Taylor,**  
Deputy Director General Environment



## Litter and You're Rubbish

**KEEP your eyes open for a fresh new marketing campaign to remind the community that we should not litter.**

The Keep Australia Beautiful Council (KABC), which is supported in WA by DEC, has launched the campaign with the message *Litter and You're Rubbish*.

The campaign includes posters on buses and billboards, as well as advertisements on metropolitan radio stations.

The billboard and bus exterior advertisements feature images of people who have littered crawling with rats, cockroaches or worms, or flocked by seagulls.

KABC Project Officer Shantell McClenaghan said the unpleasant images, combined with the catchphrase of the campaign – *It's illegal, ugly, irresponsible and inexcusable* – sent a strong message to people.

"It says that people who litter are rubbish themselves," she said.

"Keep Australia Beautiful has been around for almost 30 years and has been promoting litter prevention for a long time but it was time to remind people of the importance of not littering to ensure the WA environment is a cleaner and healthier place to live."

Shantell said the initial focus of the campaign was on the metropolitan area.

"If the campaign is successful, a second year of promotion will occur with a greater focus on regional areas," she said.

A research company will evaluate the campaign when it is finished.

Marketforce developed the campaign concept and artwork in consultation with DEC and the KABC.

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## Conserving Ningaloo a priority

By Sue McKenna

**MANAGING and conserving Ningaloo Marine Park is at the heart of research coordinated by DEC under the WA Marine Science Institution's (WAMSI's) funding program.**

DEC's Marine Science Program's Senior Research Scientist Kelly Waples coordinates \$5 million of research into biodiversity by scientists from WA universities, CSIRO and the Australian Institute of Marine Science.

"Ultimately the research will improve the scientific underpinning for the management of Ningaloo Marine Park," Kelly told delegates at a marine research seminar (see 'Marine scientists show and tell' below).

"Our aim is to improve the interface between science and management, develop linkages between the research programs and increase our communication and data management.

"We hope for a better understanding of the park, its biodiversity and its ecological processes which can be integrated into management."

Under the program DEC is coordinating eight research projects, which are being carried out by other organisations:

**Deep water biodiversity and monitoring protocols (Australian Institute of Marine Science)**

- Coral communities and habitats
- Whale sharks
- Stocktake of invertebrates
- Interaction with dominant oceanic processes
- Long term monitoring of reef health

**Biodiversity, human use (CSIRO)**

- Diversity, abundance and distribution of sharks and rays

- The effectiveness of sanctuary zones in protecting target fish and invertebrates
- Possible modeling of ecological, social and economic processes to improve management

**Water and sediment quality (Murdoch University)**

- Contaminants
- Current contaminant levels in areas to be developed

**Geomorphology (Curtin University)**

- Growth history of the reef
- Mapping the sea floor

**Groundwater (Curtin University)**

- Links from groundwater system to the park

**Oceanographic processes (The University of Western Australia)**

- Water flow around the reef
- Water flow's effect on biodiversity distribution, ecosystem health and threatening processes

**Large marine fauna monitoring programs (DEC)**

- Suitability of monitoring programs to manage species such as whale sharks, dugongs, marine turtles, whales and dolphins

**North West marine research inventory (DEC)**

- Searchable database of current, planning and completed marine research in the North West Bioregion from Kalbarri to the Northern Territory.

## Marine scientists show and tell

**DEC representatives were among people from agencies and universities around Australia who met in Fremantle in February to discuss marine research across WA.**

The seminar, hosted by the WA Marine Science Institution (WAMSI), the Australian Marine Scientists' Association and the WA Museum, discussed global warming, the importance of coral communities, the safety of industrial pipelines on the sea floor, biodiversity, marine mammals, molluscs, aquatic life and the biomedicinal potential of marine plants.

WAMSI has received \$21 million in research funding from State and Commonwealth



Chairman of the WA Marine Science Institution Dr Peter Rogers (third from left) with marine research coordinators who spoke at the seminar. They were (from left) Node leaders Kelly Waples (DEC), Greg Ivey (UWA), John Keesing (CSIRO), Ming Feng (CSIRO) and Chris Battershill (Australian Institute of Marine Science). Photo – Sue McKenna

governments for marine research in WA, \$5 million of which is allocated to research supervised by DEC to manage and conserve

biodiversity at Ningaloo (see 'Conserving Ningaloo a priority'). Scientists from all sectors of research funded by WAMSI are

working on 27 marine research projects and numerous sub projects in an intensive program that will take them to 2011 and beyond.

WAMSI's Chairman, Dr Peter Rogers, said the challenge of the research was effective collaboration.

"It's about building capacity and opening the door to long-term investment in marine science," he said.

"Research must be relevant to the Government and the community, and have an outcome for implementation."

He said the fact that agencies had joined forces should increase the accountability of data and the transfer of knowledge.

DEC is one of WAMSI's 14 foundation members.

## Contaminated sites auditors meet

**FIFTEEN contaminated sites auditors accredited under the Contaminated Sites Act 2003 met recently to exchange expertise and experience in contaminated sites policy, guidance and best practice.**

DEC's Contaminated Sites Branch administers the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003* and Regulations which came into force on 1 December 2006. The Act requires the mandatory reporting of known or suspected contaminated sites and for the classification and transfer of information on reported sites, including a free public database of confirmed contaminated sites.

The Act also provides a range of regulatory notices to enforce investigation and remediation of contaminated sites with an appeals process administered by the independent Contaminated Sites Committee.

DEC has accredited 17 senior consultants, scientists and engineers from Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales to work in WA as contaminated sites auditors.

Auditors provide an independent review of all contamination information submitted to DEC. Contaminated sites auditors are currently involved in the independent review of more than 90 projects in WA and the number is likely to increase.



(Back row, from left) Contaminated sites auditors Tony Scott, Dr Ian Swane, Jeremy Hogben, Andrew Nunn, Stuart Jeffries, Phil Hitchcock, Paul Turner, Paul Steinwede and Ross McFarland with (front row) Contaminated Sites Branch staff David Jackson, Acting Branch Manager Kerry Laszig and Dr Janet MacMillan. Photo – DEC

Environmental Regulation Division Director Robert Atkins opened the auditors' meeting by acknowledging the wealth of knowledge and experience in the group and reaffirming DEC's commitment to supporting auditors in their work.

Auditors commented that the meeting provided a great forum to have open discussions with DEC about the significant

technical and regulatory issues that affect the contaminated sites and auditing community. They welcomed the opportunity to obtain clarification and input into new and developing policy and guidance areas.

For more information contact Senior Environmental Officer David Jackson on phone 6467 5373 or email david.jackson@dec.wa.gov.au.

# Indigenous shire councillor joins DEC

MERREDIN'S first Indigenous shire councillor, Mick Hayden, has recently joined DEC on contract as a conservation employee.

Mick is a long-time resident of Merredin and a Nyongar member of the Njaki Njaki people – the traditional owners of about 33,000 square kilometres of land between Lake Grace and Trayning.

Since he started at the department's Yilgarn District office in December last year, Mick has enjoyed his role which includes looking after nature reserves and maintaining visitor facilities.

"It is very satisfying to get out in the field each day, and the



Mick Hayden. Photo – DEC

By Joanna Moore

work is varied and interesting," he said.

"Conservation work in the

Wheatbelt has many challenges, particularly because of salinity, and it is good to be working to help deal with these environmental issues."

Mick hopes to encourage Indigenous people to get into roles looking after the land, such as through employment with DEC.

"It's a very rewarding area to work in and there are plenty of opportunities for the right people," he said.

Mick commended Yilgarn District Manager Paul Blechynden on his approach to working with the locals in managing country through the Yilgarn District.

Paul said there was a strong and very positive working relationship between DEC and the Njaki Njaki people.

"This relationship has been very rewarding for DEC staff, the Njaki Njaki community and our ongoing work to conserve the natural and cultural values in the district," he said.

Through his role on the Merredin Shire Council, Mick hopes to represent and raise awareness of Indigenous issues and make sure local Indigenous people have a voice in running the town and managing the land.

He also hopes to pursue his ideas for Indigenous tourism in the region.

# Revamped AirWatch

By Samille Mitchell

DEC is revitalising its long-running and highly popular AirWatch program.

The environmental education program is renowned for its WeatherWatch project which provides 50 WA schools and 1,250 students from Years 4 to 9 with the chance to monitor and report their local weather conditions on television news on Channel Seven in Perth and GWN.

Now, additional features are being added to the overarching AirWatch program.

The first step in the program's makeover is its revitalised website ([www.airwatch.wa.gov.au](http://www.airwatch.wa.gov.au)).

The website aims to inspire and inform students, teachers and householders about air quality and climate change and invites them to share what they've learned about air quality in their area.

The AirWatch makeover also includes new partnerships and new resources including a school resources CD-Rom.

AirWatch Program Manager Fiona Marr said AirWatch now featured projects and resources that encouraged students to learn about climate change and their local air pollution issues.

"We've now got a range of resources and projects which engage students and teachers in actively learning about how people's behaviour can affect air quality at a local level and climate change at a global level," Fiona said.

"For example, AirWatch schools taking part in WeatherWatch can complement their weather studies by learning about air quality and car transport or survey how local students get to and from their school.

"We can also provide items like monitoring kits to schools to help them teach students about air quality.

"A visit to the new AirWatch website will give students, teachers and householders some ideas of how to get involved in the AirWatch program."

Fiona thanked AirWatch Community Educator Kristie Stevens and Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs' Ryan Scott, Donna Weston and Nitin Solanki for their help in revamping the program.

# Seeking the sun star orchid

MEMBERS of the West Australian Native Orchid Study and Conservation Group joined forces with DEC staff to search for the endangered sun star orchid in Lesueur National Park.

While the sun star orchid (*Thelymitra stellata*) occurs from Three Springs to Pinjarra, it is only known from a few populations, most with low numbers.

The species has been recorded in Lesueur National Park, with some records dating back to the mid 1980s, but most plants have not been seen since their initial discovery.

DEC Flora Conservation Officer Benson Todd said having up-to-date information about the location and condition of threatened flora populations was central to ensuring their conservation.

"The group spent a weekend surveying areas where the sun star orchid had been recorded in the past, as well as other areas of suitable habitat in an effort to locate new populations," he said.

Three populations were identified, consisting of 34 individual plants. Information about the location, habitat, condition and



The survey team. Photo – DEC

reproductive status of these populations was collected along with photographic records.

More than 400 volunteer hours were spent surveying the park.

"To achieve what we did in a single weekend is really great, something we wouldn't have been able to achieve without the help of volunteers," Benson said.

"The combined knowledge the group held about orchids was quite amazing and, along with their well-trained eyes, was crucial in locating the populations."

The information gathered will be integral to bringing the sun star orchid back from the brink of extinction.

The survey was initiated under the DEC-managed *Back from the Brink* project, funded by the Federal and State governments and administered by the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council.

For more information please contact Benson on 9652 1911 or 0429 600 580 or email [benson.todd@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:benson.todd@dec.wa.gov.au).

# Women in science and technology in DEC

WOMEN in science and technology was the theme for this year's International Women's Day on Saturday 8 March.

The event provided a chance to highlight the strong contingent of women working in science and technology in DEC, ranging from research scientists and volunteer botanists to certified environmental practitioners and social science researchers.

Here we feature just a few of the many women who work in these areas.

## Dr Margaret Byrne

Senior Principal Research Scientist Dr Margaret Byrne is based at DEC's Kensington Science Centre and conducts genetic research which is applied to plant conservation and recovery and in the use of native flora in agroforestry and revegetation.

Margaret enjoys her work because it provides the opportunity to do what she loves – science and scientific research – as well as to see the way science has an impact upon conservation.

"You can see the science being used," Margaret said.

"You can see how it is employed to make decisions."

## Kerry Laszig

Acting Manager of DEC's Contaminated Sites Branch Kerry Laszig describes as a highlight of her career her involvement throughout the development and implementation of the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003*, which came into effect on 1 December 2006.

She advised and supported the then Environment Minister Dr Judy Edwards during the Parliamentary debate on the Act and prepared the drafting instructions for the accompanying Regulations.

"Having the experience of seeing this through,

By Joanna Moore

then making the legislation work in practice, has been a most rewarding process," she said.

## Daphne Edinger

LANDSCOPE Expeditions botanist Daphne Edinger has been volunteering as a scientist with DEC's LANDSCOPE Expeditions since they began, 13 years ago.

Daphne says science – and especially field botany – is fun because she enjoys the travelling, the camping and the hands-on nature of the work.

"A great range of people come along on the LANDSCOPE Expeditions and I really enjoy sharing science knowledge with them," Daphne said.

## Dr Jill Lethlean

Dr Jill Lethlean is Acting Manager of DEC's Waste Management Branch.

"Like most people in DEC, I like the idea of doing a job that can make a difference, the chance to do something good for the environment and for our community," she said.

"I like waste management in particular because it covers so many aspects. There are highly technical aspects, economic considerations, behavioural change aspects, broader communication and awareness aspects, negotiations with stakeholders – and it can get quite political too."

## Leonie Monks

Research Scientist Leonie Monks has worked in threatened flora translocation with DEC and its predecessor CALM for a decade and also enjoys the variety her science role provides.

Leonie said it was important to break down preconceived notions of what a scientist is.

"The word 'scientist' is too limiting," she said. "It's not just wearing lab coats and working

inside with only chemicals, or with only numbers.

"It's fun and challenging, it's hands-on and practical, you work with people from a wide range of fields and are always learning from others' expertise and from your own trials and errors."

## Val English

Principal Ecologist in DEC's Species and Communities Branch Val English coordinates the listing and recovery of the State's threatened ecological communities, or TECs, and has worked with CALM and DEC for 14 years.

Val said she enjoyed seeking ways and means of conserving threatened biodiversity through science.

She also appreciates the chance her job provides to work with staff from regional areas who are dedicated to the task of biodiversity conservation.

## Dr Amanda Smith

A background in environmental science and an interest in human-nature interactions led Dr Amanda Smith to her position as Social Science Coordinator and unit leader for the Social Research Unit in DEC's Parks and Visitor Services Division.

Social research investigates the impact visitor activities have on the natural environment and surrounding communities. Amanda describes her research as diverse and multidisciplinary in nature.

"Working with DEC I am able to conduct research that assists the department in monitoring its effectiveness and performance in managing visitors," she said.

"I pursued my career in social science because of a love of the natural environment developed as a child – through tadpoling in wetlands and weekend picnics in national parks," she said.

"In my opinion you have to have a passion for anything that you do."

## Suzanne Long, Kelly Waples and Shannon Armstrong

An interest in science stemming from

childhood also led three women – Suzanne Long, Shannon Armstrong and Kelly Waples – into the science field.

They are a part of a growing Marine Science Program team in DEC's Science Division which – among its other jobs – will supply integrated scientific information for marine park management.

Suzanne, who has taken part in coral reef research projects at Ningaloo and the Rowley Shoals, encouraged young scientists to take an interest in their research outcomes.

"Anyone interested in conservation knows we're in a period of crisis," she said.

"It's important we have people able to supply some strategic oversight directing research and making sure research improves conservation outcomes."

Kelly is responsible for coordinating 11 research projects at Ningaloo Marine Park.

"I like the concept of translating research and science into management and I have a diverse relationship with scientists," she said.

Shannon – apart from being WA's State Open Women's Surfing Champion – is completely in love with her job in marine science.

Most of her work involves monitoring the effects of human-induced changes on the marine environment. Shannon leads three major long-term monitoring programs at Ningaloo, Dampier Archipelago and metropolitan marine parks.

"My passion for conserving the marine environment has and will continue to drive my career," she said.

To mark International Women's Day, 10 DEC staff attended a breakfast forum at which Professor Chilla Bulbeck discussed the expectations of young Australian women and men on equality, love, family and work.

# Western bristlebirds settle in a new home

**THE future of the rare western bristlebird looks brighter following the successful translocation of three birds to D'Entrecasteaux National Park.**

The birds are found from the eastern end of Fitzgerald River National Park to Two Peoples Bay near Albany, but the species once occurred further west. The western bristlebird is considered vulnerable with less than 350 pairs known.

DEC Principal Research Scientist Allan Burbidge said the release was part of recovery efforts by DEC, the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team and volunteers to re-establish a population west of Albany.

"The translocation is part of an attempt to reintroduce the species to parts of its former habitat," Allan said.

The bristlebirds were released near Mandalay Beach in D'Entrecasteaux National Park where habitat was thought to be suitable.

"The habitat in this area is similar to that at Two Peoples Bay, where the three birds were caught in the wild," he said.

"The area has dense heath and patches of long unburnt vegetation."

"Working closely with the recovery team, DEC staff from the Walpole District have put in place a fire management program designed to optimise the conservation values in the release area, as well as provide protection for the bristlebirds."

The catching and translocation of the birds was coordinated by DEC Research Scientist Abby Berryman.

The birds were fitted with radio transmitters and Abby closely tracked their movements for the first week after release to determine their locations. They are still being followed, but in less detail now.

"The three birds appear to have settled down and two of them seem to have paired up. They have been staying close together and singing duets," Abby said.

Allan said that fortunately the recent bushfires in Fitzgerald River National Park were patchy in the areas where the bristlebird habitat had been burnt.

"We're hopeful that there wasn't a great impact on western bristlebird numbers," he said.

"A follow up survey in spring will gauge the actual impact."



Volunteer Saul Cowen radio-tracking a bristlebird at the translocation site in D'Entrecasteaux National Park. Photo - Abby Berryman

## Improving the way we make submissions

By Caris Bailey

**DEC's Parks and Conservation Services recently held a workshop to discuss the way the department prepares submissions to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) on proposals subject to environmental impact assessment.**

Key staff in the Nature Conservation and Environmental Impact Assessment divisions met to review EPA requirements and DEC's approach to submissions to try to improve the way in which comments are presented.

EPA Chairman Paul Vogel spoke at the workshop and said the EPA had to make timely decisions in the face of uncertainty and the pressure to do so was going to increase over the next few years.

"In response to this, Environment Minister David Templeman and I have announced a review to streamline the State's environmental approvals processes," he said.

Acting Director Environmental Impact Assessment Division Colin Murray outlined the role of the EPA Services Unit within DEC and their workload.

Deputy Director General Environment Kim Taylor talked about DEC's multiple roles which include supporting the EPA to undertake assessments, making submissions as a decision-making authority, providing advice to the Appeals Convenor and Environment Minister on appeals, responding as a decision-making authority during the consultation to determine conditions and auditing conditions set on proposals.

Environmental Management Branch Manager Norm Caporn outlined the role of his branch and the issues they faced, such as high staff turnover and the increasing number of Mining Act referrals received.

As a result of the workshop, tailored report writing courses will be developed for staff, as will guidance documents setting out environmental impact assessment process and submission requirements.

Information sheets will also be prepared for proponents and templates will be developed for information requests and submissions.

## Study explores working relationships in protected areas

**POST-DOCTORAL research fellow Aggie Wegner has worked closely with DEC as part of a PhD project which will help improve collaboration between protected area managers and commercial tour operators.**

In her PhD through Murdoch University's School of Environmental Science, Aggie explored the factors influencing the working relationships of the two groups in providing commercial tourism products in protected areas across Western Australia.

"Building good relationships and working collaboratively is important for the working arrangements between protected area managers and commercial tour operators as well as for visitors," Aggie said.

"Previous research flagged problems in the daily working encounters between protected area managers and commercial tour operators, with poor communication being identified as the main reason. Having used this as a starting point, this research went deeper in order to identify the triggers of the communication difficulties."

Aggie thanked DEC Assistant Director Policy and Planning Colin Ingram for his role in framing the research project as well as Tourism Branch Manager Rod Quartermain and Licensing Unit Leader Kate Reading for their involvement.

"The participation of Colin, Rod and Kate was invaluable and they provided tremendous support throughout the journey," Aggie said.

Aggie was supervised by Associate Professors Susan Moore and Jim



Kate Reading, Colin Ingram, Aggie Wegner and Rod Quartermain. Photo - Samille Mitchell

By Joanna Moore

Macbeth at Murdoch University and, at DEC, by former Parks and Visitor Services Output Coordinator Wayne Schmidt.

She interviewed protected area managers from across the department's regional offices, ranging from field staff such as rangers and gatekeepers, to district managers, regional managers and policy makers.

She also interviewed many commercial tour operators to gain a range of perspectives and insights based on their different working relationships.

Differences and similarities in values, policy context, culture, power

and perception between protected area managers and commercial tour operators were identified as impacting on their working relationships and level of collaboration.

Aggie said there were many opportunities for collaboration between protected area managers and commercial tour operators and adjustments at the individual, organisational and policy level would help these to happen.

"As a result of this research, I hope that protected area managers, commercial tour operators, DEC and Tourism WA will gain a better understanding of each other's concerns, values, expectations and perceptions, and will benefit from their new knowledge," Aggie said.

## Tram 57 back in service at Yanchep

**FOUR years of hard work by a team of volunteers was recognised when restored tram 57 was officially opened at Yanchep National Park.**

DEC volunteers - Chris Hall, Walter Logue, John Kemp, Dave Greig, Nick Palmer, Murray McLeod and Dennis Rickman - restored the tram which was one of the first to be built at Midland by the Western Australian Government Railways in 1913.

The stationary tram is on display at the park's Gloucester Lodge. It is hoped interpretive signage will be added in the future to help people understand the tram's history and significance to the national park.

Tram 57 was one of a batch of eight classified as 'C class' when they entered service in 1914. Being only nine-and-a-half-metres long and fairly uncomfortable, they were unpopular with passengers and became obsolete by the early 1930s.

In 1933 they were taken by low-loaders to Yanchep National Park to be converted into tram-bungalows for use by overnight visitors



(Back row, from left) volunteers John Kemp and Chris Hall, DEC Swan Coastal District Manager Mike Meinema, Acting Yanchep National Park Manager Alison Pritchard, volunteers Walter Logue and Dave Greig, (front) DEC Nature Conservation Officer Nicole Lincoln and Acting Volunteer Coordinator Naomi Hunt. Photo - Alice Benz

By Naomi Hunt

(mainly honeymooners), sustenance workers and staff.

Over the years, all but two succumbed to bushfires or infestation and in 1987 the remaining two were classified by the WA National Trust. The WA Heritage Council placed them on the Interim Register of Heritage Places in 1992.

In the meantime the trams were moved - number 57 to Gloucester Lodge and number 61 to Whiteman Park - to await full restoration.

In November 2003 the team started to strip, repair and repaint the exterior. Work started on the interior in early 2004. The optimum size of a team working on the interior was three, making progress slow.

## Feral pigs in focus

**REPRESENTATIVES from government, private industry and community groups took part in a DEC workshop to consider the problem of feral pigs.**

Feral pigs in the south-west compete with native animals for food and damage native vegetation and landscapes by trampling, wallowing and rooting around the edges of watercourses and swamps, causing erosion. They also pose a significant threat to agriculture and spread environmental weeds and diseases, including *Phytophthora dieback*.

The workshop at the Perup Ecology Centre near Manjimup, included an overview of DEC's 2007 pig control program - a product of the *Saving our Species* biodiversity conservation initiative - and discussion on the issues associated with the dumping of pigs and illegal pig hunting activities.

DEC officers from the Perth Hills, Blackwood and Donnelly districts discussed the number of feral pigs they had caught and how their respective districts were tackling the problem.

The workshop also provided an opportunity to talk about trap design and construction and how to prevent the spread of *Phytophthora dieback* when conducting feral pig control. The possibility of TAFE accreditation for feral pig trappers was also explored.

Jordan Hampton, a vet from Murdoch University, gave a presentation on the broad management issues associated with feral pigs and new technologies that have been developed. Local community groups also gave presentations.

DEC Nature Conservation Officer Cherylene Ehlers said the workshop was a great networking exercise as it enabled open discussion between people involved in all aspects of feral pig control.

"Stakeholders were able to identify issues and come up with solutions together," she said.

"The workshop highlighted the need for everyone to work together to combat the growing issue of feral pigs in WA."

For more information about the workshop contact Cherylene on 9771 7988.