



Medals recognise 970 years of fire service

THIRTY-TWO DEC and Forest Products Commission (FPC) staff from the Warren and Frankland regions have received National Medals and clasps

in recognition of more than 970 years of accumulated service to protecting Western Australians from the devastation of bushfires.



DEC staff from the Walpole office who received National Medals for their service to firefighting include (on the truck) George Doust and Ray Flanagan with Environment Minister Donna Faragher, as well as (in front) Alan Hatfield, Eric Donovan, Merv Smith, Alan Hexter and Peter Bidwell.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher presented the National Medals and clasps at ceremonies in Walpole and Pemberton.

The National Medal is awarded for 15 years' service, and clasps are presented for each subsequent 10 years' service.

Warren Region Regional Fire Coordinator Rod Simmonds said several of the award recipients had given more than 35 years' service to fire management.

"DEC firefighters are recognised as some of the most confident and experienced firefighters in Australia, if not the world," Rod said.

"Some of them have represented the department in NSW, Victoria and the USA.

"They are vitally important to protecting Western Australians from the damage of bushfires."

Awards were presented to Robert Hopkins, James Brown (retired), Peter Cully, Jeff Daubney, John Gillard, Phillip Keeble, Jeff Kimpton, Michael Liebrechts, Ian Marshall, Brian Moss, Mark Petterson, Mark Radomiljac, James Shugg (retired), Rod Simmonds, John Smethurst, Edward Tamm, Edward Turner (resigned), Ronald

Turvey, Graeme Liddlelow, John Rooney, Christos Velios, Colin Hooper, Peter Bamess, Peter Beatty (FPC), John Brealey (FPC), Peter Bidwell, Eric Donovan (resigned), George Doust, Raymond Flanagan, Alan Hatfield (retired), Alan Hexter (retired) and Merv Smith (retired).



(Left to right) John Rooney, Rob Hopkins, Mark Radomiljac, John Smethurst, Gerrard Barnsby, DEC Director General Keiran McNamara, Jeff Kimpton, John Gillard, Brian Moss, Environment Minister Donna Faragher, Peter Bamess, Ian Marshall, Michael Liebrechts, Peter Beatty and Colin Hooper.

Successful dolphin rescue

A BOTTLENOSE dolphin was rescued and is swimming again after members of the public alerted DEC wildlife officers to the stranded animal at Golden Bay near Mandurah.

DEC Senior Wildlife Officer Doug Coughran said the successful rescue was helped by the actions of two women who discovered the dolphin and followed instructions from DEC wildlife officers to assist the animal until they arrived.

"The dolphin was a 1.7-metre male juvenile, that likely made a judgmental error and became stranded among the stormy swells and turbulent

water inside the breaker line," Doug said.

"Once we arrived, we immediately began to try to settle and calm the animal, and the people around, and assess it for alertness and any injuries that would harm its ability to survive in the wild.

"Thankfully, while the dolphin was stressed, he was very alert, strong and vocalising, with no obvious injuries."

Due to the difficulty in moving the animal back out past the breaker line, a decision was made to transport the dolphin by road to the nearest boat ramp.

DEC Shoalwater Islands Marine Park staff were on hand in the water after a routine monitoring session was cancelled due to low visibility and immediately diverted their services to the rescue mission.

The dolphin was loaded onto a marine park vessel and transported to the Bent Street ramp, where it was taken out into deeper calmer waters.

"We deliberately released the dolphin where it would have been prior to beaching and once it orientated itself to the area it was off like a shot heading in a deliberate track north," Doug said.

"The dolphin breached a few times as it went and I feel confident that it reached its family group.

"The whole operation was very quick, after receiving the call at about 8am we had the dolphin safely in deeper waters before lunch. It was a great outcome with a happy ending."

Doug and the DEC Shoalwater Islands Marine Park staff said they would like to thank the public for their assistance with the dolphin rescue.

Anyone who sees a sick, injured or distressed dolphin should contact DEC's Wildcare Helpline on 9474 9055.



DEC staff and members of the public watch on as Senior Wildlife Officer Doug Coughran (centre) conducts a health check on the dolphin.

Photo – Alex Bowlay

Consultation for Kimberley strategy progresses

ENVIRONMENT Minister Donna Faragher has welcomed feedback from a broad cross-section of the community and industry in response to the State Government's proposed Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy.

The Kimberley is home to a rich diversity of marine and terrestrial environments and supports significant species including humpback whales, dolphins, dugongs, crocodiles and northern quolls.

The region is also developing at a rapid rate with tourism, mining, pearling and the horticultural and pastoral industries generating more than \$1.5 billion a year.

In order to protect the region's natural and cultural values, while allowing it to fulfil its economic potential, a new Kimberley strategy is being developed.

DEC Senior Planning Officer (Policy and Practice) Jacinta Overman said DEC staff prepared a synthesis of scientific knowledge to support conservation management in the Kimberley.

"The document was developed and released in March with an invitation to the public, community groups, industry and Indigenous groups to present written submissions," Jacinta said.

An intensive series of open forums and community workshops has been held during the past two months in Wyndham, Kununurra, Halls Creek, Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing and Perth to help shape the strategy.

Mrs Faragher attended workshops in Perth and Broome to hear issues raised by the community.

"These workshops and forums gave members of the community an opportunity to outline the issues they think should be considered in the development of the strategy," she said.

"We have received more than more than 100 verbal and written submissions from community members, industry and environment groups, researchers and universities that cover a wide range of issues in the Kimberley.

"The excellent response to the consultation process shows the high level of interest that people in the Kimberley and its conservation."

The Kimberley region extends across nearly 422,000 square kilometres of northern WA.

"There is no doubt the Kimberley is an area of enormous interest to the community and this is why we are having a very open consultation process," the Minister said.

Investigative training

DEC staff from across the State are gaining a whole new understanding of investigative principles.

Twenty-six DEC staff recently completed the nationally recognised Certificate IV in Government (Investigations), with another five staff going on to achieve a Diploma in Government (Investigations).

The staff, from backgrounds as varied as environmental officers and investigators to national park rangers and wildlife officers, completed the training to help with day-to-day work in investigation, compliance and enforcement.

DEC's Regulatory Training Team and the Environmental Enforcement Unit developed the Certificate IV program to further integrate regulatory training across the agency.

DEC Wapole National Park Ranger Chris Goodsell said the study had real benefits.

He said the qualification was an opportunity to further his professional development and a reward for all his hard work over the years.

"It takes years to get field experience in enforcement and completing the Certificate IV was the icing on the cake," he said.

"Enforcing DEC's regulations can be complex and, for me, it was a very steep learning curve. Having the Certificate IV, along with my field experience, means that I feel more confident in tackling future cases."

Manager Regulatory Training Kym Squires said the regulatory training program was continually improving to ensure it was meeting the needs of DEC officers in the regions.

"We are in the process of developing additional materials for Certificate IV in Government (Statutory Compliance) along with supporting e-learning and video conferencing components to improve the overall delivery and assessment options available," she said.

Community have their say in Lake Muir-Perup



Ian Michael, DEC Donnelly District's Aboriginal Liaison Officer, with Mark Rothery from the Warren Catchment Council after the workshop.

STAFF from DEC's Manjimup office and Public Participation Planning Section are conducting a series of community workshops to help develop a draft management plan for the parks and reserves of the Lake Muir, Perup, Kingston, Tone and Unicup area.

Public Participation Planning Manager Amanda van Loon said the aim of the workshops was to gain further insight into issues of importance to the community and to use local knowledge to explore ideas and management partnerships.

Policy and Planning Branch Manager Paul McCluskey said the workshop structure was transparent, inclusive and flexible.

"It also allows relationship building with the local DEC officers

and the community and fosters a greater understanding about how DEC conducts its business," he said.

"Rather than working with the more traditional community advisory committee, with only a few community members participating, a wider group of about 30 participants were targeted and invited to attend each workshop.

"In addition, the planning team is undertaking consultation more intensively but over a shortened period to ensure the time between consultation and the draft plan released by the Minister is shorter, thereby better meeting the communities expectations."

Three workshops have been held in Perup, with another planned for early August.

For more information contact Paul Roberts on 9771 7942 or Amanda van Loon on 6467 5144.

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: Ron Kawalilak

Editor: Rhianna King

Contributing Editors: Catherine Jack, Samille Mitchell

Design and Production: Peter Nicholas

Telephone: (08) 9389 8644

Email: ecn@dec.wa.gov.au

Obsolete Perth Transport Authority towers get new lease on life



Towerman Wayne Glidden (left) and Fire Operations Officer Paul Musarra work in an existing fire tower.

DEC is looking into converting two obsolete Perth Transport Authority light towers into new fire lookout towers.

The towers were offered as part of a deal from the Perth Transport Authority.

The 40-metre-high towers offer a great platform for DEC to attach a fire lookout tower.

Fire Management Services Branch Acting Fire Resources Operations Coordinator Greg Napier said similar lighting towers had been erected as fire towers in Walyunga National Park, Bickley Observatory and Nannup in the past.

Greg said the new towers could be erected anywhere in the State.

“However, it is most likely the towers will be located in the south-west forests,” he said.

“If the light towers are converted, DEC will need

to employ a contractor to design and engineer a suitable cabin.

“If used as fire spotter towers, they will be an important addition to our fire lookout tower network.

“We currently have eight actively used towers across the south-west forest region.”

The towers are manned during the core period of the fire season, and complement DEC’s fire spotter planes. If a fire is spotted, towermen advise district or regional officers of the fire’s whereabouts.

These bearings are plotted on a large wall-mounted map and the location of the fire is confirmed. Fire suppression resources are then deployed to contain the fire.

“We are most appreciative of the Perth Transport Authority’s interest in supporting DEC’s fire control effort,” Greg said.

Helicopter removal of an abandoned vehicle

A HELICOPTER was enlisted to remove a stolen car from Yalgorup National Park in June after it caused extensive damage to a car park and surrounding area.

The stolen vehicle was used to cause destruction in the Lake Hayward car park and day-use facility. The driver then removed barriers and drove through bushland to the shoreline of the lake, degrading the natural environment in its path before setting the vehicle alight.

A/Senior Ranger Terry Goodlich said there had been a number of similar incidents in the park in recent times and the impact on the surrounding environment was of great concern.

“We are getting a lot of these joyriders and when it impacts on areas of substantial significance there is a high cost,” he said.

To minimise any further damage to the area an air lift operation was organised to remove the vehicle, with the use of a Helicopters Australia B3 Squirrel helicopter.

“It is not as easy as simply cleaning up the mess. This vehicle could have caused a bushfire and without the use of a helicopter it would have been necessary to tow the car, further destroying an area of protected tuart trees and then rehabilitate that area of the park at a great expense.”

The vehicle was cut into two pieces and carried below the helicopter to a nearby

drop area, before being loaded onto a truck and removed to a recycling facility.

Yalgorup National Park features 10 lakes which are part of the Peel–Yalgorup system. They are recognised internationally under the Ramsar Convention as wetlands of international importance, as they provide a valuable habitat for birds migrating from the northern hemisphere.

In addition to this significant waterbird habitat, the lakes contain organisms that form algal mats in the majority of the lakes and living stromatolites and thrombolites in Lake Clifton.

Yalgorup’s stands of tuart and peppermint trees are identified as suitable sites for reintroduction of native

animals, particularly the ringtail possum. Woodlands surrounding the lakes are home to the only recorded chuditch population on the Swan Coastal Plain as well as grey kangaroos, brush wallabies, quenda, brush-tail possums and emus.

“We have had some excellent community feedback in response to the event and this greater public awareness will hopefully result in people advising us, or the WA Police, when a suspect vehicle is seen in the park.”

DEC staff will now begin to rehabilitate the area affected and are working with the WA Police to investigate the matter. People with information are asked to ring Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000.