



Win for DEC spatial data application

THE innovation and drive of DEC Principal Research Scientist Paul Gioia has been recognised with a prestigious award for the department's web-based *NatureMap* application.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher said the site won the Environment and Sustainability category in the 2009 WA Spatial Excellence Awards, that recognise projects showing exceptional innovation, community or environmental benefits and raise the public profile of information databases.

"*NatureMap* is an online window into the State's native plants and animals and where they live and is designed to provide users with comprehensive and up-to-date information on groups of biodiversity," Mrs Faragher said.

"The site lists 14,201 flowering plants, 691 algae, 525 lichens and liverworts; 170 mosses; 3,885 invertebrates; 76 amphibians; 728 birds; 224



Principal Research Scientist Paul Gioia shows off NatureMap.

mammals; and 549 reptiles."

The application is the brainchild of Paul Gioia and was created as a joint venture between DEC, the WA Museum and industry partner Fugro Spatial Solutions Pty Ltd.

NatureMap enables researchers, conservation planners, community groups, industry, consultants and the general public to produce maps, lists of species, reports and information on WA's biodiversity.

"*NatureMap* is, by its very nature, a collaborative project with major contribution from the

Herbarium and the WA Museum, and is live-linked to most of DEC's corporate species occurrence databases, including the WA Herbarium Specimen Database and threatened flora and fauna databases," Paul said.

Paul said the creation of *NatureMap* has been an ongoing vision developed during his time at the WA Herbarium and working on the Regional Forest Assessment in 1997.

"Often what people really need is quite basic information, in this case literally dots on a map to

show where species are. It's about how we manage knowledge and make it easily available to everyone."

The project was born at the end of the 2005-06 financial year when an opportunity arose for project funding and Paul successfully pitched the idea and gained funding to begin creating *NatureMap*.

"It is a great example of how persisting at a goal and doing the big sell can lead to a great outcome," he said.

The WA Spatial Excellence Awards began in 2007. They have previously been won by DEC Senior Environmental Officer Rod Nowragee, who then went on to win the Asia Pacific Spatial Excellence Awards.

NatureMap is now in the running for the 2009 Asia Pacific Spatial Excellence awards to be announced in November.

NatureMap is available on the DEC website: <http://naturemap.dec.wa.gov.au/>.

Nearly \$1 million for Kimberley parks

DEC-managed national parks and conservation reserves in the Kimberley have been given a \$945,000 boost.

The State Government funding will go towards visitor facilities in parks across the increasingly popular region.

DEC's Kimberley Regional Manager Daryl Moncrieff said DEC had recorded a 16 per cent increase in visits to parks and reserves in the Kimberley in the past two years.

"That figure is almost three per cent higher than the State average," he said.

The funding will pave the way for key Kimberley projects including the construction of a lookout on Lennard Gorge walk trail in King Leopold Ranges Conservation Park, as well as the installation of interpretive and directional signage in all parks and reserves across the Kimberley.

DEC will also start plans to provide wheelchair access to the 'Looking at Plants' walk in Mirima National Park, near Kununurra.

DEC 'flick off' trial a success

AS part of DEC's *DECcrease* project and launch of the department's new Energy Management Plan, staff at DEC's Atrium office recently took part in the first 'Shut down and flick off' trial.

Senior *DECcrease* Project Coordinator James Milne said staff in the Community Education, Waste Management and Contaminated Sites branches were among those who took up the challenge.

"The challenge was aimed at minimising wasted electricity in the workplace, saving money, decreasing DEC's impact on the environment and ultimately creating sustainable outcomes from our actions and decision-making processes," he said.

The month-long trial encouraged staff to not just shut down their computers at the end of the day, but also flick off at the wall to avoid wasting standby power.

"While the standby load of an individual desktop PC is a seemingly insignificant 3.5 watts (compared with full operational load of about 110 watts), the DEC-wide cumulative impact of not switching these devices off at the wall is highly significant," James said.

James said many other electrical items found in our workplaces also draw standby power, even in their 'power saver' mode.

"For instance, photocopiers have a standby load of about six watts, printers are similar and microwave ovens sit at about three watts when they are not cooking anything," he said.

"Across DEC there are hundreds of such devices, which every year are wasting hundreds of units of electricity, thousands of dollars on our power bills and unnecessarily contributing the creation of tonnes of greenhouse gases."

About 80 computers were targeted as part of the trial, with random visual audits indicating that, on average, 55 per cent were left on standby mode at the end of every day.

With regular progress updates and encouragement to staff, further audits during the following month demonstrated a significant increase in the number of

staff remembering to flick off at the end of the day.

In addition, power meter readings were taken weekly for the small section of the Atrium, with staff behavior change during the course of the trial contributing to a power reduction of 12 per cent over this period.

James said the *DECcrease* committee planned to eventually roll the challenge out across DEC.

"A similar reduction in wasted energy through this simple act could potentially save the agency a significant amount over the course of a year and reduce our greenhouse gases emissions."

Manager of DEC's SDS Helpdesk Garry Morris said he supported staff taking part in this initiative and advised that shutting computers down and switching them off at the wall every day helped to improve the longevity and performance of computers.

For more information about the trial, DEC's Energy Management Plan, or any other *DECcrease* initiatives, contact *DECcrease* Senior Project Coordinator James Milne on 6467 5454.



Senior DECcrease Project Coordinator James Milne 'flicks off' at the wall before leaving for the day.

A matter of ethics

ETHICAL and accountable decision-making training sessions developed by DEC's Regulatory Training team, People Services Branch and the Management Audit Branch have been held at the Atrium and will soon be rolled out to all staff.

A Premier's circular in 2008 required that all State Government departments provide training to their staff on ethical and accountable decision-making, to address the increasing complexity of public sector accountability requirements.

DEC Senior Environmental Officer (Training) Cath Nind said that the sessions, entitled 'Ethical and Accountable Decision Making in the Public Sector', were based on material developed by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Accountability Support

Unit. They are designed to provide people with practical information to assist them in dealing with ethical situations in their day-to-day work.

"The training covers the myriad of requirements expected of people working in the public sector, including modules on personal behaviour, record keeping and use of information, fraudulent and corrupt behaviour and conflicts of interest," she said.

Cath said the awareness sessions had been well received.

"Two sessions have been held so far, attended by 212 people, with three more sessions planned in August," she said.

A session has also been held with 47 Swan River Trust staff as part of their business planning day held in July.

New funding for endangered Carnaby's black-cockatoo

WORK to protect the endangered Carnaby's black-cockatoo has been given a boost thanks to a \$360,000 grant under the State Government's Natural Resource Management program.

The money will fund a joint DEC and Department of Planning project to survey Carnaby's black-cockatoo nesting and living habitats and to make this information available to decision-makers.

Chairman of DEC's Carnaby's Black Cockatoo Recovery Team and Swan Region Nature Conservation Regional Leader David Mitchell said about 15,000, or 20 to 25 per cent of the total Carnaby's black-cockatoo population were estimated to visit the Swan Coastal Plain each year.

He said more and more of the Carnaby's black-cockatoo feeding, roosting and breeding habitat on the Swan Coastal Plain was being cleared for development. Increasingly this reduction of food resource and habitat is a factor in land use decisions and environmental impact assessment.

"This project will enable us to collect information on the distribution and habitat of Carnaby's black-

cockatoo and will make the information available for conservation and recovery planning," David said.

"Survey results, which will be finalised by the middle of 2010, will be made available online through DEC and the Department of Planning for use by planners and developers, landholders and community generally to help conserve Carnaby's black-cockatoo habitats.

"It will enable more informed land use planning decisions to take place by providing valuable information on Carnaby's black-cockatoo habitats."

The project will also provide information about the suitability of common mitigation activities.

"Often artificial nest hollows and planting of food plants as part of the landscaping of new urban developments are promoted as mitigation or offsets for loss of Carnaby's black-cockatoo habitat," David said.

"The project will include assessment of the use of artificial hollows by Carnaby's black-cockatoo, and will provide advice and information on when and where it is appropriate to use artificial hollows, and landscape planting to create Carnaby's black-cockatoo feeding habitat."

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



DEC Senior Investigator Rick Dawson and former DEC Wildlife Officer Nick Phillips working to conserve Carnaby's black-cockatoos.



DEC Environmental Officer David Weir is gracing billboards with this photo which advertises studies at Edith Cowan University.

DEC employee 'face' of ECU

A DEC employee has unwittingly become the 'face' of Edith Cowan University (ECU).

Incident Management Systems Environmental Officer David Weir is gracing billboards and bus-sides, advertising the university by showing how his ECU studies led to his current role with DEC.

David's new-found fame came after he agreed to write a testimonial and take part in a photo shoot for an ECU brochure, highlighting his Environmental Science studies, with a major in Environmental Forensics.

"The next thing I knew it appeared on a billboard in Subiaco so I called ECU and they said 'yeah, and you're going to be on the back and sides of about 40 buses'," David said.

Despite copping jibes from his colleagues and friends, David says he is happy to promote his studies and how they helped lead to his role with DEC.

David got his first taste of the department by studying a DEC Regulatory Officer Training Course as part of his university studies.

During the course, he listened to Pollution Response Environmental Regulation and Response Manager Ken Raine, which sparked his interest in a career in industryregulation and fighting environmental pollution.

He then took part in DEC's pilot industry regulation cadet program and before taking on his current role.

"I'm really enjoying it," he said.

"It's a bit of a challenge every day and the people I work with are really great."

Green is the new pink at Perth Fashion Festival

PERTH'S 2009 Fashion Festival is set to ensure Perth's streets match the glitz and glam of the runway shows with the new theme 'Green is the New Pink'.

A series of green initiatives have been implemented this year including volunteers on hand to remind festival goers to display model behavior and put their rubbish in the bin.

The Keep Australia Beautiful Council is the festival's anti-littering partner and inaugural sponsor of the Green is the New Pink program, which includes being carbon offset and powered by renewable energy.

Keep Australia Beautiful Chairman Mel Hay said litter was not only unsightly, but illegal.

"During the Perth Fashion Festival, not only do the designer clothes go on parade, but so does our city and

we want to make sure that it is clean, safe and litter-free," he said.

"This partnership will include visual and practical reminders about doing the right thing at the events via bin station signs, volunteers, recycling of waste and giving out useful items like pocket ashtrays.

"I congratulate the Perth Fashion Festival for setting this important trend by incorporating litter prevention strategies and education campaigns into the festival and for working towards a litter-free event."

The 11th annual Perth Fashion Festival was officially launched in July and will run from 4–10 September in the Perth CBD and other locations.

Perth Fashion Festival Director Mariella Harvey-

Hanrahan said the festival was thrilled about this new partnership.

"Partnering with Keep Australia Beautiful further enhances the festival's appeal and reach," she said.

"Now in its second decade, the festival has grown from strength to strength and this anti-littering partnership is just another exciting step for festival organisers. We are excited to be able to promote the fashion industry in an environmentally friendly manner."

"By working together we can help make sure that littering remains the unfashionable option," Mel said.

For more information on litter prevention contact Keep Australia Beautiful on 6467 5122, visit www.kabc.wa.gov.au or email kabc@dec.wa.gov.au.

Radio-tracking endangered numbats

DEC has a better understanding of numbat populations near Ravensthorpe, following a radio-tracking project funded by community group Project Numbat.

DEC Principal Research Scientist Tony Friend said the funding had enabled DEC to conduct two radio-tracking flights over Cocanarup Timber Reserve near Ravensthorpe.

"The flights enabled DEC to search for radio-collared numbats and gather information about the distribution and status of the translocated population at Cocanarup," Tony said.

"As a result, we found five numbats that we had previously lost contact with, including an adult captive-bred numbat that was released in 2007 but not located the January 2009 mating season."

The funding also supported an on-ground survey of the numbat population in Dryandra Woodland near Narrogin.

Tony said just 1,000 numbats were thought to exist in the wild, following population declines caused by the effects of foxes and feral cats and loss of habitat.

"Numbats, classified as 'vulnerable' on State and Federal lists, were recently elevated to endangered on the World Conservation Union's Red List of Threatened Species," he said.

DEC, Perth Zoo, the Australian Wildlife Conservancy and *Project Numbat* have long worked to save numbats by baiting foxes and through breeding and translocation programs.

Perth Zoo has bred numbats for

release into the wild since 1993. Since then, more than 140 zoo-bred animals have been released through DEC's numbat translocation program. Thirty-nine numbats, including 26 from the captive colony and 13 from Dryandra Woodland have gone into Cocanarup in the past three years.

In December 2008, 13 numbats were released into Cocanarup in the third release of numbats at the reserve since 2006.

Cocanarup Timber Reserve was chosen as a numbat translocation site as it is baited each month for foxes under DEC's *Western Shield* baiting program, and because it is an area of eucalypt woodland with good densities of hollow logs and termites, both of which are required by numbats.



Dan Biddulph from DEC's Ravensthorpe office releasing a captive-bred numbat at Cocanarup Timber Reserve.