



Final cane toad strategy released

THE final *Cane Toad Strategy for Western Australia 2009–2019* has been released in the Kimberley by Environment Minister Donna Faragher.

“The final strategy focuses on a number of objectives for managing cane toads in WA over the next decade and aims to minimise their impacts and implement long-term management solutions,” the Minister said.

“Our priorities for this coming wet season include carrying out surveillance work to monitor and map cane toad populations at the front line, working with community groups to develop and implement action plans for priority areas and cane toad education awareness in local communities.

“A range of measures is currently in place to assist the community in managing cane toads, including the establishment of disposal points in Kununurra, the creation of a database to record sightings and a series of information brochures and Cane Toad Packs.”

After crossing into WA earlier this year,

the cane toad front line is currently about 30 kilometres east of Kununurra.

Mrs Faragher said the strategy was a streamlined, action-oriented, ‘living’ document that could be readily updated as new information came to hand.

“A means of controlling cane toad numbers will be developed,” she said.

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The document was prepared by DEC’s Kununurra-based cane toad team and other DEC staff in consultation with the Kununurra Stakeholder Reference Group.

The State Government has pledged ongoing funding to the Kimberley Toad Busters of \$1.2 million over four years from 2008–09, so they can continue their on-the-ground field efforts.

To view the final strategy, visit www.dec.wa.gov.au/canetoads.



(From left) DEC’s State Cane Toad Initiative Program Coordinator Corrin Everitt, Community Chair of the Stakeholder Reference Group Kimberley Wildlife Rescue Sarah Brett, Board Member for Kimberley Toad Busters (KTB) Sharon MacGlachlin, Federal Member for Kalgoorlie Barry Haase, President of KTB Lee Scott-Virtue, Environment Minister Donna Faragher, Stop the Toad Foundation’s Kim Hands and KTB Field Coordinator Ben Scott-Virtue.

Camden Sound marine park to protect humpbacks

DEC may soon manage a key nursery of the world's largest humpback whale population as a marine park.

Premier Colin Barnett and Environment Minister Donna Faragher have pledged to establish a marine park at Camden Sound, about 400 kilometres north of Broome, to protect its pristine marine environment for generations to come.

After consultation, including a public comment period of three months, a marine park could be established by mid-2010.

Mrs Faragher said Camden Sound was the biggest

calving area for humpback whales in the southern hemisphere.

"More than 1,000 humpback whales can be found in the Camden Sound 'maternity ward' during the calving season," Mrs Faragher said.

"They are part of the biggest population of humpback whales in the world – numbering about 22,000 – that migrate from Antarctica every year to give birth in the waters off the north of our State.

"Camden Sound is also rich in other marine life, from coral reefs and mangrove forests to turtles and dugongs."

The Minister said marine parks protected the natural features and aesthetic values of an area while enabling recreational and commercial activities to take place without compromising conservation values.

She said the proposed Camden Sound marine park would be created in consultation with the local Indigenous community, meeting the requirements of native title, and in consultation with all stakeholders with an interest in the area.

"This consultation will be conducted on behalf of the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority under the statutory planning process for new marine parks," she said.

Community consulted on Kimberley

DEC has welcomed community consultation on the future protection of the Kimberley.

A report tabling results of the consultation process on the Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy was released by the Minister for Environment on 3 October 2009. The report is by former Western

Australian Senator Hon Chris Ellison, who convened the forums and oversaw the consultation process.

The report summarised the responses of 200 participants in public forums, as well as more than 100 verbal and written submissions and 40 stakeholder meetings.

DEC Parks and Conservation Deputy Director General Jim Sharp said the consultation process had highlighted the public's desire to see the natural wonders of the Kimberley conserved for future generations.

"A broad range of issues was raised in respect to the Kimberley, but a clear theme was that conservation of the Kimberley is high on the community's agenda," Jim said.

"People believe the region is at a critical point in time, with increasing recognition of its development potential, impending development of offshore petroleum reserves, the expansion of the Ord irrigation scheme, a growing population and an expanding international profile and visitation from tourists.

"People also talked of the need to work together across different land tenures 'at a landscape scale' on shared conservation issues.

"The region is vast with a sparse population but the

issues faced by land managers are often the same, so working cooperatively on issues such as fire has widespread support."

People consulted for feedback on the Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy came from a wide variety of backgrounds, including representatives from Indigenous, environmental and tourism groups as well as mining and resource companies, local business and local government.

Other issues raised included support for the involvement of Aboriginal people in conservation; a need to develop more effective strategies to counter late season bushfires; a need for effective plans to combat noxious weeds and feral animals, in particular cats, pigs and cane toads; and support for the establishment of more conservation reserves, both marine and terrestrial.

The comments made through the consultation process will be considered in the preparation of the Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy, which the State Government aims to have completed by late this year.

The report on the consultation process is available at www.dec.wa.gov.au/kimberleystategy.

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Year 4 and 5 students from Coogee Primary School Pia Bathgate, Cameron Cook, Mark Ferron and Cassandra Beers. Coogee Primary School students help keep McNeil Field beautiful.

Clean-up program hits the spot

JUST three months after being launched, the Keep Australia Beautiful Council's (KABC) Adopt-a-Spot program has registered its 100th group.

South Coogee Primary School helped the program to reach the milestone when it registered to take care of McNeil Field, public bushland next to the school.

Community Education Officer and KABC Adopt-a-Spot Coordinator Maureen Maher said more than 3,000 people were now involved in the program, which encourages community groups, individuals or businesses to 'adopt' an area in their community and keep it litter-free for two years.

Since the launch of the program, KABC has supplied about 14,000 litter collection bags and 400 pairs of gloves to Adopt-a-Spot groups and more than 800 bags of litter have been collected throughout the State.

Local governments can also assist the program by collecting full litter bags after a clean-up and

promoting the program to residents. Thirty-three local governments have already pledging their support.

City of Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett said volunteers involved in Adopt-a-Spot groups were contributing to a cleaner Cockburn.

"In two months, nine spots in Cockburn have been adopted. Congratulations to these groups for taking part in such a great community and environmental initiative. I encourage others to consider adopting a spot to help keep Australia beautiful," Logan said.

KABC WA Chair Mel Hay said the hard work of volunteers participating in clean-ups through the Adopt-a-Spot program was helping to reduce litter, and was much appreciated, but we must all do our bit.

"Keeping WA litter-free is as simple as finding a bin and putting your rubbish in," he said.

For information about Adopt-a-Spot, visit the Keep Australia Beautiful website at www.kabc.wa.gov.au or phone (08) 6467 5339.

DEC takes a bird's-eye view of polluters

DEC's Pollution Response Unit (PRU) has been awarded a High Commendation for taking a bird's-eye view of industrial pollution in Perth.

The PRU received the commendation in the State Government category of the Australian Safer Communities Awards, for its aerial surveillance program. Using a high resolution camera from a helicopter, the team has been able to survey industrial areas to identify problem sites.

PRU Section Manager Jimmy Seow said many of Perth's industrial premises had been photographed and, while most of businesses were compliant, 60 required more ground-based investigation.

"It's a useful tool and means we can focus rather than just doing blanket inspections," he said.

"Many of these problem sites would not

have been identified without the use of aerial surveillance."

Jimmy said DEC officers had visited the offenders to issue fines and clean-up notices.

One of the worst cases, a company in Osborne Park, was issued with a \$200,000 clean-up bill after it was caught dumping engine oil, containing heavy metals, in a sandy yard.

"They have had to get consultants in to assess how deep the pollution has gone and to remediate the site," Jimmy said.

As a result of the program, more than \$100,000 worth of remedial work has been completed by industry and a number of infringements and prosecutions have been issued to offending businesses.



(Left to right) Emergency Services Minister Rob Johnson, PRU Section Manager Jimmy Seow and Senior Environmental Officer John Edwards with the award.

Invasive plants online

A NEW information portal for invasive plants and environmental weeds is now live on DEC's website.

Put together by Invasive Plants Program Coordinator Kellie Agar, the webpages are designed as a first stop for information on invasive plants.

The webpages include information on invasive plant control methods, environmental weed strategies, identification, legislation and important documents, national weed lists and links to various sources of information.

"The site is a great resource and incorporates information on how people can stop the spread of weeds and choose the right plants for their garden and details what makes plants invasive," Kellie said.

"Exotic plants found in the wrong spot can become invasive weeds, as can native plants."

Kellie is now keen for DEC staff and external stakeholders with an interest in invasive plants to forward comments and suggestions for the site's content.

"I have provided the sort of information I think people will find useful and am looking forward to further updating and enhancing the site," she said.

Before Kellie attained her position 18 months ago, there was no full-time role in DEC attributed to invasive plants.

Kellie was faced with the challenging task of pulling together the gaps in invasive plant programs around the State, which has included the creation of the webpages.

"It has been really satisfying to be able to gather this information and make it available to staff and the public online," she said.

Kellie said she was greatly assisted by Community Information Manager Donna Weston who organised for the invasive plants information to go online.

To view the webpages visit www.dec.wa.gov.au/management-and-protection/invasive-plants/index.html.

To provide feedback or suggest content for the webpages please contact Kellie Agar on (08) 9334 0312 or email kellie.agar@dec.wa.gov.au.

Significant rediscoveries of vanished Wheatbelt flora



DEC Conservation Officer Joel Collins with Dowerin Shire CEO Dacre Alcock, Dowerin Works Supervisor Steve Geerdink and Nature Resource Management Officer Kezia Pontifex at the site of the re-discovered *Acacia leptoneura* population.

TWO *Acacia* species have been rediscovered in the central Wheatbelt after 170 years.

DEC Yilgarn District's Flora Conservation Officer Joel Collins said the finds had thrilled staff from the WA Herbarium and Species and Communities Branch.

"I am pleased to have come across these species through my on-going survey work in the Wheatbelt," Joel said.

The first species, *Acacia leptoneura*, was initially rediscovered in December 2008 but a flowering specimen was required this season to assign the collection to the long-lost species. The population consists of one lonesome plant on a mostly cleared road reserve north of Dowerin.

Mike Hislop and Bruce Maslin at the WA Herbarium validated the collection and were excited that the species was rediscovered. *Acacia leptoneura* was previously only known from the type specimen collected by James Drummond during his revered botanical career from 1837 to 1848.

The plant grows to 0.6 metres high and spreads to 2.2 metres wide. The Dowerin Shire has been informed of the precise locality of the population.

"I discovered the plant from the cab of my vehicle, its distinctive spreading habit very similar to another rare *Acacia*, so I decided to have a closer look," Joel said.

"Due to the extreme rarity of this species, an on-site meeting with the Dowerin Shire's CEO and Works Supervisor was organised.

"The shire was extremely supportive of the protection of the species and would like to see more populations discovered in the area."

The second rediscovery, found in August 2009, was *Acacia torticarpa*, previously known from only a small handful of collections made by Charles Gardner during 1945 to 1949. The population just north of Cunderdin consists of 120 plants.

Both species are currently ranked as priority one. Staff from the Yilgarn District will undertake surveys to locate additional populations. Seed collection is also planned.

Joel said the discoveries highlighted the need for continuing surveys of poorly known flora species.

"There are many road reserves that have not been thoroughly surveyed with many more populations of threatened flora waiting to be discovered," Joel said.