



Department of
Environment and Conservation

Our environment, our future

Environment the real winner at the WA Environment Awards 2009

A LEADING not-for-profit community environmental group has taken out the top prize at the WA Environment Awards 2009.

Kalgoorlie-Boulder Urban Landcare Group (KBULG) was also recognised with the Community Achievement Regional Award.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher said the group was setting an outstanding example in regional and community environmental excellence.

"The Kalgoorlie-Boulder Urban Landcare Group has been working within the community to improve the environment in and around Kalgoorlie-Boulder for the past 35 years," Mrs Faragher said.

"Through public awareness, education and action, this community environmental group involves the entire Kalgoorlie-Boulder community, including residents, businesses, industry, schools, community groups and visitors."

The Minister said KBULG provided meaningful, worthwhile community projects that rehabilitated and enhanced the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder's environment while fostering community spirit.

An overall Highly Commended was awarded to Seadragonz for its environmentally friendly and sustainable swim school which also took out the Small Business Leading by Example category.



2009 WA Environment Award Winners

"Seadragonz is leading the way for more environmental swim schools in Australia by reusing all waste waters and becoming 'green' while reducing environmental costs," she said.

Now in its eighth year, the WA Environment Awards have been successful in recognising business, government, community groups and individuals throughout Western Australia who are setting new benchmarks in environmental care.

This year, the WA Environment Awards were strengthened the focus on regional projects by splitting the category that rewards the contribution of community groups into two –

metropolitan and regional.

DEC received more than 100 entries in 11 categories.

Category winners in the 2009 WA Environment Awards include:

Corporate Business Leading By Example
Wesfarmers Premier Coal – The Ngalang Boodja Mine Lake Aquaculture Project.

Government Leading by Example
City of Stirling – Water Smart Parks.

Small Business Leading By Example
Seadragonz – environmentally friendly and sustainable swim school.

Biodiversity Conservation

Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) – Karakamia Woylie Project: providing a long-term haven for critically endangered species in WA.

Bush, Land and Waterways

Greening Australia, Alcoa of Australia and Harvey River Restoration Taskforce – Nell's Block: restoring a landscape for wildlife on the Swan Coastal Plain Damplands.

Coastal, Marine and Estuarine

Conservation Volunteers (CVA) and Woodside Perth Coastal Conservation Program.

Environmental Education and Communication

Perth Region NRM – Improving the Environmental Performance of Small Business.

Resource and Waste

Care for Hedland Environmental Association – Cash for Trash.

Community Energy Efficiency

Environment House – Our \$WaP (Saving Water and Power) Project.

Community Achievement Metropolitan

Kanyana Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre.

Community Achievement Regional

Kalgoorlie-Boulder Urban Landcare Group.

The awards were generously sponsored by Edith Cowan University, Packaging Stewardship Forum, Publishers National Environment Bureau, Royalties for Regions, Sustainable Energy Development Office, Western Power, the Waste Authority and Whiteman Park.



Cliffs and DEC getting the balance right

A NEW joint land management project signed by Cliffs Natural Resources and DEC will see improved land management for the greater Mount Manning Range area.

International mining and natural resource company Cliffs will contribute \$2.485 million to a range of projects in the area over three years.

The programs will be managed by a steering committee and working groups, and implemented by DEC. They will include Indigenous training and employment to improve on-ground management, fire management and planning, rare flora surveys, fauna research and management and feral animal control.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher announced the project on Wednesday 18 November, saying it was a significant land management agreement which balanced the enormous mining potential of the region with its high conservation values.

DEC Director General Keiran McNamara said that despite being a semi-arid region, the Mount Manning Range area had a rich and diverse flora and fauna which required protection.

"This is a welcome partnership that will lead to good,

on-ground collaborative endeavours," Keiran said.

Cliffs CEO Duncan Price said DEC had been a key partner in the Yilgarn region and that mining and conservation groups must work together for the best long-term goals.

Duncan said he hoped the plan would be the spearhead for a new and better approach to land conservation in the area, one which would include opportunities for young Indigenous people as well as the growth of the scientific knowledge base required to underpin good management.

The Mount Manning Range joint land management project also has links to the Great Western Woodlands (GWW) project. Twice the size of Tasmania, the GWW is internationally recognised for its biological significance and is a multiple use land area with mining, pastoral, conservation and Aboriginal heritage significance, spectacular landscapes and recreational values.

The launch also marked the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between DEC, Cliffs and the Wilderness Society. A project steering committee and MOU has been set up with representatives from the three organisations.



Cliffs CEO Duncan Price, Environment Minister Donna Faragher and DEC Director General Keiran McNamara with the new joint land management project agreement.

20,000 reasons to care about cigarette butt litter

THE Keep Australia Beautiful Litter Report Scheme has received its 20,000th report for a cigarette butt thrown from a vehicle.

DEC Fines Enforcement Coordinator Cindy Fryer said cigarette butts caused serious harm to the environment by making their way into waterways where they can leach toxic chemicals such as cadmium, lead and zinc.

"Approximately seven billion of the 24 billion filtered cigarettes sold every year in Australia are littered and cigarette butts are responsible for eight to 10 per cent of bush fires in rural areas," she said.

"In WA they comprise more than 50 per cent of the litter stream and are commonly mistaken for food by marine life, and can be found in the stomachs of fish, birds, sea turtles and other marine creatures."

The 20,000th report came from litter reporter Damian Mansfield who has sent in 15 litter reports.

Damien said he became a litter reporter after he witnessed a friend's father carry out a litter report.

"I was impressed to see him report litter and I still remember it 25 years later. It was a lit cigarette butt at night on the Bussel Highway," he said.

Under the *Litter Act 1979* people can be fined \$75 for incorrect butt disposal and KAB's Litter Report Scheme empowers the community to take it upon themselves to report people littering.

"If you want to help prevent littering, you can become a litter reporter today," Cindy said.

To register as a litter reporter visit the Keep Australia Beautiful Council's website at www.kabc.wa.gov.au.

If you are a smoker, you can obtain a free personal ashtray by emailing kabc@dec.wa.gov.au with your details.



Blue Holes Beach clean-up

DEC staff and 10 volunteers from the Walpole Nornalup National Parks Association joined forces to clean up a section of local beach as part of the annual South West Beach Clean Up.

Armed with several large rubbish bags, tongs and enthusiasm, the group braved impending rain to clean four kilometres of Blue Holes Beach to remove harmful rubbish and debris.

In all, 66.2 kilograms of rubbish were collected, sorted and suitably disposed of, including 265 pieces of plastic, 47 glass bottles, 11 shoes and three toothbrushes.

The South West Beach Clean Up is organised by Tangaroa Blue Ocean Care Society and involves volunteer groups between Walpole and Perth removing litter and marine debris from WA's beaches.

Marine debris is a major problem in the world's oceans and contributes to the deaths of more than one million seabirds and 300,000 marine mammals and turtles every year.

Much of the debris found washed up on our beaches comes from waste dumped at sea by passing ships or washed into the ocean via storm water drains and rivers.

Clean-up coordinator Bron Routley said it was terrific to see such a great interest from the local community.

"It's something that everyone using the beaches can do at any time of the year," she said.

"There is a lot of satisfaction in knowing we can all make a difference, no matter how small."

Tourism award success

DEC shone at the WA Tourism Awards this year with a gold medal awarded to the Pinnacles Desert Discovery centre and a bronze medal for Yanchep National Park.

The Pinnacles Desert Discovery centre in Nambung National Park won the 'New Tourism Development' category while Yanchep took bronze for 'Tourism Attraction'.

DEC Jurien District Parks and Visitor Services Coordinator George Watson said the awards were an excellent acknowledgment of the hard work and planning that went into opening the Pinnacles Desert Discovery Centre.

"A project of this magnitude required an enormous amount of forward planning to ensure the needs of visitors, the community, the environment and the local Indigenous people were met," George said.

"This award pays tribute to all the groundwork that led to the development of the centre.

"We have been receiving excellent feedback from visitors on the quality of the interpretive material.

"The building itself has also received widespread acclaim, having been a finalist in the World Architecture Awards in Barcelona in October 2008 and taking out the federal 'Best of State (WA) Commercial Interior Design Award' in 2009."

Yanchep National Park Manager Alison Pritchard paid tribute to her team in helping the park secure its bronze.

"This award is not possible without the outstanding effort



DEC staff Daryl Dennis, Anne Hockey, Derren Foster and Rhonda Pendlebury celebrate the Pinnacles Desert Discovery centre winning gold at the WA Tourism Awards.

put in by everyone in the park over numerous years," Alison said.

"The commitment by everyone involved to provide our visitors with an exceptional experience goes hand in hand with this accolade and it's great to see us acknowledged for this at a State level."

"We are going for gold next year!"



Yanchep National Park team celebrating its bronze medal.

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Wildflower Society visits Jaurdi Station

IN early October Deputy Director General – Environment Robert Atkins escorted 10 members of the Wildflower Society Eastern Hills Branch to the former Jaurdi Station, a proposed conservation park, to enjoy the spring wildflowers and be introduced to DEC's pastoral region nature conservation program.

Wildflower Society member Sue Birney said she thoroughly enjoyed the experience and wrote an article for the branch newsletter:

"Early on Friday our convoy of cars, motor home, trailers and campervan set off along the Great Eastern Highway.

"All along the way the verges and plains were full of colour and interest but we couldn't stop yet. Finally Jaurdi. This is a DEC-managed former sheep station, now de-stocked with basic facilities for visitors.

"From our base each morning we went north exploring the tracks. First through the eucalypt woodlands admiring the gimlets and salmon gums, quandongs and kurrajongs. We found wonderful places – an area of rugged red breakaways with abandoned mines. Here there was a lizard pretending to be a red rock and a plant new to us all but now we know is a yellow Ptilotus.

"Then on to a large granite rock area – this also had surprises – beautiful lichen gardens; orchids, yellow sun orchid, scented blue leek; ancient gnarled kunzea pulchella, unusually white flowering. An Amphipogon growing where we would normally

expect borya if nearer home and up under the sheoaks, swathes of blue Australian pincushion Brunonia australis. There was a campsite near the gnamma hole (water hole) in the rock, under the Acacia lasiocalyx just waiting for campers.

"The next day we went further through the banded ironstone country onto the deep yellow sands. Much of this area had been recently burnt. There was a sea of firebush, purple Keraudrenia but also blues of Dampieras, yellow Grevilleas and Petrophiles, pink and white Melaleucas, Hakeas, Pityrodias, Verticordias, Calytrix. Something new and beautiful at each stop.

"In the late afternoon we went walking and bird-watching at the dams. The campfire was lit and after our evening meal we sat around telling tall tales. Then off to bed, lulled to sleep by the night carolling magpies and the ore trains on the Trans-Australian Railway line.

"On Monday we made our way back home safely enjoying the flowers all the way home."

Jaurdi is one of a group of former pastoral stations in the area now managed by the department.

Goldfields Regional Manager Ian Kealley said Jaurdi was purchased by the department in 1989.

"A tremendous amount of reserve and conservation work has been carried out on Jaurdi during the past 20 years including nature conservation reserve management, homestead maintenance and development, management of mining and exploration, fire control, flora work and biological surveys," he said.

Safe as sea lions

DEC Supervising Wildlife Officer – Marine Doug Coughran, with help from a private boater, successfully disentangled a sea lion in November off the coast of Perth at Carnac Island, an Class A Nature Reserve managed by DEC.

Doug was carrying out whale monitoring duties near Rottnest Island when he was alerted to the sea lion by a concerned member of the public.

The sea lion was wrapped in lengths of fishing line and had hooks all the way along its body and on the left side of its face.

"The animal looked as if it had moved through more than one taylor rig, most likely by hanging around jetties and attempting to eat hooked fish," Doug said.

"The demeanour of the animal was very relaxed and I am pleased to say that after responding to the report in

the afternoon we were able to seize the moment and successfully disentangle the animal."

Doug said the sea lion had an excellent chance of survival and lazily drifted back to sleep after it was disentangled.

"We wouldn't have known about the animal if it hadn't been reported by the public," he said.

To report injured wildlife contact the 24-hour Wildcare Helpline on (08) 9474 9055.

Sea lions tracked in Perth waters

MALE Australian sea lions off the Perth coast will have their wanderings revealed during a tagging program being carried out by DEC in collaboration with Perth Zoo and the Department of Fisheries.

DEC Marine Nature Conservation Officer John Edwards said satellite tags and dive recorders had been applied to a small number of Australian sea lions on Carnac Island to transmit data via a satellite link.

"This is our first chance to look at where male Australian sea lions go in search of food while they are in metropolitan coastal waters," John said.

"These animals are among the rarest sea lions in the world and are the only sea lion species endemic to Australia. So it is vital that we learn as much as possible about their habits in between their visits to the breeding islands around Jurien Bay and Green Head."

Australian sea lions off the Perth coast are all males. They head north to breed and then leave the females as they return to rest on the sandy beaches around Perth's offshore islands.

Veterinary staff from Perth Zoo managed the

anaesthesia of the male sea lions, which weigh 150 to 200 kilograms, and took blood samples to assess the animals' health.

Perth Zoo senior veterinarian Simone Vitali said very little was known about the health of sea lions in the area.

"This is a great opportunity to learn about this population. We were able to perform physical examinations on the sea lions, as well as collect blood samples which will inform us about their general health," Simone said.

Dr Richard Campbell, who has been researching Australian sea lions for more than a decade, said the small devices attached to the back of each animal would have no effect on the animal's ability to swim, feed or fend for itself.

"These instruments have been used extensively around the world for marine fauna research and provide an incredible insight into the behavior of the species," he said.

The program will run until the end of December, when the research team will recapture the animals and remove the tags, if they have not already fallen off during the animal's seasonal moult.



Campground hosts meet

ONE hundred and twenty campground hosts came together for a two-day training workshop in November.

More than 220 people took up positions as campground hosts last year and stayed in some of WA's most stunning national parks and ex-pastoral lease stations.

Acting Coordinator of DEC's Community Involvement Unit Judith Holmes said the information days were an important part of campground host training.

"The event is an essential induction to the role and responsibilities of campground hosts and provides a chance for hosts to meet DEC rangers and staff from around the State," she said.

"We discuss how campground hosts help rangers in activities such as meeting and greeting visitors; allocating campsites; providing local information; collecting fees and visitor statistics; monitoring site usage; cleaning facilities; and transporting water and firewood.

"Because campground hosts are often the first DEC representative visitors meet at a campground, the workshop provides volunteers with strategies on communicating pleasantly and effectively with a range of people.

"It is also a great social forum for campground hosts to get together with others from locations throughout WA."

Workshop participants had the chance to meet 12 DEC rangers and regional staff from around the State with whom they will potentially be working.

Judith said the program was also developing reciprocal arrangements interstate.

In addition to their initial interview and the two-day workshop, volunteers undertake several short training courses before taking up a hosting position in a DEC campground. They learn about basic fire awareness; first aid; Aboriginal cultural protocol and, when posted to a site,



DEC campground hosts at the workshop at DEC's Kensington office.

receive a local induction by a DEC ranger.

The campground host program has been running since 1991 and volunteers are now located at 53 sites across the State.

Judith said another way people could volunteer with DEC was through the Wildcare Helpline. Started in 2001, the helpline receives calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week from people who have found injured native animals and want to be put in touch with a DEC-registered

volunteer wildlife rehabilitator.

The Wildcare Helpline, which is based at DEC's Kensington office, urgently requires more volunteers to staff the phones. Volunteers do not need to have experience in wildlife rehabilitation as training and support is provided. Interested people should contact DEC's Community Involvement Unit on 9334 0251 or email community.involvement@dec.wa.gov.au.

Adopting spots to clean up

DEC staff members are 'adopting spots' across the State as part of the Keep Australia Beautiful WA Adopt-a-Spot program.

The Adopt-a-Spot program focusses on keeping WA's natural areas, waterways, roadsides and other areas free of litter and is open to any interested individual or group.

DEC staff in the Moora District have come on board, adopting a beach in Jurien Bay Marine Park and embarking on a second major clean-up.

DEC Marine Park Ranger Suzie Glac said the latest clean-up was a big success.

"With the help of eight Conservation Volunteers Australia volunteers, three DEC staff, a community group from Green Head, three vehicles and a quad bike, we were able to remove 313 bags of marine debris plus numerous

non-baggable items such as cray pots, masses of ropes, pallets, bed frames and other items over nearly 30 kilometres of coastline," Suzie said.

"It was a great effort by all and a significant environmental win for the marine park."

Keep Australia Beautiful WA Community Education Coordinator Maureen Maher said DEC Manjimup was also involved in the program.

"Regional Parks and Visitor Services leader Tim Foley and his DEC team are also working hard to clean-up and have recently picked up more than 85 bags," Maureen said.

"Tim is a great supporter of Adopt-a-Spot and talks it up all over town, so we have a lot of interest from communities down there.

"Senior Ranger Jeff Kimpton has also adopted a spot at

Donnelly and there are three or four other DEC staff who have adopted spots with family or community groups.

"It's really great to see the wonderful community work DEC staff are involved in.

"Some have engaged their teams as a team building exercise and some are simply doing it because they are passionate protectors of the environment."

Groups registering to adopt a spot must agree to look after a site for two years and Keep Australia Beautiful WA provides tools, an adoption certificate, volunteer insurance, safety information and recognition on the Keep Australia Beautiful website honour roll.

Thirty-four schools, 43 community groups, 19 families and 13 schools across the State are also part of the program.

