



# DEC to manage Araluen Botanic Park

**DEC has formally accepted management responsibility for Araluen Botanic Park. The three-year transitional management arrangement with the Western Australian Planning Commission came into effect on 1 July 2010, in recognition of DEC's expertise in managing parklands with a variety of landscapes, uses and stakeholders.**

Araluen Botanic Park straddles the ancient Darling Scarp in Roleystone and consists of 45 hectares of natural bushland and 14 hectares of landscaped gardens, terraces, water features and buildings, some of which are listed on the State Heritage Register.

Since 1995, and prior to the transfer to DEC, the park was leased to the Araluen Botanic Park Foundation (ABPF). During this time, the ABPF worked to restore the buildings, develop and maintain the eclectic gardens and features of the park and conduct community events.

As part of the new management arrangements, the ABPF will be contracted by DEC to provide management services for the 14 hectares of landscaped areas in the park during the next three years.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher welcomed the new management arrangements for Araluen Botanic Park and the department's appointment of Renee Evans as project manager for the next three years.

"I am looking forward to working collaboratively with the ABPF, and the challenge of managing this diverse botanic garden and natural landscape," Renee said.

"The new management arrangements are ground-breaking for both DEC and ABPF. I'm sure I will learn a lot about managing gardens and the community's passion for the area."

**"The new management arrangements are ground-breaking for both DEC and ABPF. I'm sure I will learn a lot about managing gardens and the community's passion for the area."**

"Much of the bushland in Araluen Botanic Park is in excellent condition and is representative of the vegetation communities found on the weathered granite and laterite soils of the Darling Plateau."

"The acquisition of this bushland will create further ecological corridors for the conservation estate as it is adjacent

to the Stinton Cascades Nature Reserve and is in close proximity to Wungong Regional Park and Midgegoroo National Park.

"DEC will continue to liaise with ABPF in relation to notable events such as the Chilli Festival and planting of tulips within the park."

For more information about Araluen Botanic Park, including the interim management arrangements, please contact Renee Evans on (08) 9431 6500 or email [renee.evans@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:renee.evans@dec.wa.gov.au).



*Renee Evans and General Manager of the Araluen Botanic Park Foundation Rod Ross.*



# Tourists equipped with Keep Australia Beautiful Outback Packs

**TRAVELLERS throughout the State have received a helping hand to manage their own rubbish and the litter in their surrounds.**

Students from Beeliar's Emmanuel Catholic College and St Brigid's College were on hand to launch KAB's Outback Packs, which they had spent several hours of their community service requirement assembling.

The free kits will be available from visitor centres in major regional tourist areas across the State and include rubbish bags, tongs and gloves to help people on the road dispose of their own rubbish responsibly and collect litter spoiling otherwise scenic spots.

The packs also include information on litter, roadside rest areas, minimum impact travelling and a litter survey to help KAB keep a track of what is being littered where.

Keep Australia Beautiful WA Chair Mel Hay said regional highways and outback roads

were some of the most littered areas in WA and by picking up an Outback Pack, travellers could do their bit to keep the State beautiful.

"It's such a shame that many visitors to the State are greeted by the sight of roadsides, rest stops and parks littered with rubbish," he said.

"Even some of the State's most beautiful landmarks and popular tourist spots are marred by litter strewn along roads and pathways. The Outback Packs are a convenient way for travellers to take action against litter."

The launch of the state-wide Outback Pack program followed a successful trial in the Pilbara region last year.

Mel encouraged travellers to pick up a pack from visitor centres from July or contact Keep Australia Beautiful to find out where they can be collected from.

For more information about the Outback Pack phone 6467 5122 or visit [www.kabc.wa.gov.au](http://www.kabc.wa.gov.au).



*KAB Manager Jennie Anderton and Emmanuel Catholic College student Trent Francisco.*

## Upgrade of Handrail Pool at Karijini

**AFTER significant planning and meticulous site preparation, a new handrail has been successfully installed at Handrail Pool in Karijini National Park.**

A handrail was first installed in the late 1980s and has enabled thousands of visitors to access the tight, slippery descent into Handrail Pool. A new handrail was commissioned in response to increased visitation and the identification of a range of risks associated with the old handrail.

The new handrail was developed by a DEC team led by Pilbara Region staff, the Recreation and Landscape Unit, and DEC Jarrahdale works crew supervisor Greg Standing.

The new design incorporates a longer rail

that follows the almost-vertical rock wall contours, taking visitors out of wet zones, and guiding them onto drier flatter rocks. The rail descends a final 1.5 metres to the main pool and is accompanied by a set of natural-looking rock steps bolted to the rock face.

Local rocks were sourced for these, blending in to the local environment and enabling safe entry and exit from the pool.

Once the design was completed, Senior Operations Officer Geoff Passmore was faced with the considerable challenge of organising the construction.

"We had to plan for a network of ropes and flying fox, electrical cables, scaffolding, ladders, drills and a stack of diamond-

tipped drill bits to bore through the extremely hard compressed rock found in the depths of Karijini's gorges," he said

Construction was carried out by DEC's Jarrahdale construction team, led by Greg Standing, who is no stranger to challenging constructions in remote areas of the north.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, Nathan Greenhill from DEC's Recreation and Landscape unit sorted out the planning, geo-technical and engineering support and approvals. Karijini Park Ranger staff provided the much-needed local support.

Since being given the tick of approval by a certified structural engineer, the handrail has catered to dozens of tourists and has attracted significant positive feedback.

"It was a real sense of achievement walking into Handrail Pool and seeing the end result of what had taken many days of planning and organising," Geoff said.

"What is even more pleasing is that the end result looks great and has vastly improved the access into one of Karijini's iconic sites.

"It also highlights the depth of staff professionalism within the department, being able to meet and address these challenging projects, and the ability to stage works over a long period to produce a positive outcome. I would personally like to thank everyone involved with this upgrade; it has been a fantastic team effort."



# John Woodward honoured

**DWELLINGUP Airstrip has been renamed to honour the services of one of DEC's most experienced fire spotters, Senior Pilot John Woodward, who passed away one year ago after a long battle with cancer.**

Fire Operations Officer Steve Gunn said the newly titled Woodward Airstrip was a fitting and deserving tribute.

"It is good to see the recognition of people who have been dedicated and committed to their jobs over such a long period of time," he said.

"John was a long-time resident of Dwellingup and very committed and passionate about the local community and the surrounds, so it is very fitting that his name will continue to be linked to the community with this renaming."

John was first employed as a fire spotting pilot by the Forests Department in October 1978. During his time as pilot with the department, John flew more than 15,500 hours in a range of aircraft.

"John's experience as he guided you into a fire instilled confidence in the accuracy of information he gave from the air on what the fire was doing and that you were being guided safely," Steve said.

"The maps 'Woody' produced on the fire boundaries of burnt land were also very good due to his years of experience. When John wasn't flying he always seemed to be working on setting up, fixing or repairing computers for the district, Dwellingup research or the training school."

The idea to recognise John's services to the department was a joint initiative between Principal Fire Projects Officer Rick Sneeuwjagt and Perth Hills District manager Stefan de Haan.

The project also provided a new shelter at Woodward Airstrip, which Steve said was a welcome addition.

"The shelter has provided somewhere for our waterbomber crew members and pilots to take a seat, refuel and recharge their batteries out of the summer sun when time permits."

# Scholarship program rewards budding research scientist

**A PARTNERSHIP between DEC, The University of Western Australia and the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre's Vacation Scholarship, has given one UWA graduate the opportunity to gain formal research experience alongside DEC staff and a visiting French PhD student in WA's south-west.**

DEC Principal Research Scientist Lachie McCaw and his team in Manjimup were joined by Nicholas Faivre as he conducted comparative studies of plant fire responses in the ecosystems of southern France and south-west WA.

In the final year of his PhD study, Nicholas investigated how fire mosaics affected the structure and floristic composition of plant communities in Mediterranean environments.

Having just completed a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Management, Busselton native Kelly Paterson was presented with the chance to provide technical support for Nicholas as he conducted his field studies—an opportunity that Kelly said was simply too good to miss.

"I've always been really interested in biology. I found a

particular interest in a fire ecology unit. I'm fascinated by different plant species and the impacts of fire on species composition," she said.

"I was able to provide Nicholas with technical support which was a really rewarding experience. It basically involved four weeks of vegetation survey in areas of varying fire history in the Walpole area of south-west Western Australia.

"In addition to vegetation mapping, we have been recording the composition and structure of various habitats such as jarrah forests, Melaleuca shrublands or hakea heath lands.

"DEC provided us with logistic support and we also received great help to identify most the plant specimens. We recorded 287 plant species and characterised them according to their functional traits and post-fire regeneration strategies."

Nicolas's findings in southern France and now south-west Western Australia have enabled him to compare the effects of fire in forests and shrublands from similar climates across two continents. He is currently preparing his findings for publication in an ecological science journal.

Lachie said that the collaboration of DEC, The University of Western Australia and Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre was a worthwhile initiative.

"The partnership has proved to be a great success from DEC's perspective by introducing a recent graduate to the diverse work of the agency and by helping to support a valuable international scientific exchange," he said.

"This project will make a significant contribution to improving understanding of fire ecology in Mediterranean ecosystems."



*University graduate Kelly Paterson collecting plant specimens in the bush in Frankland District.*

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, WA 6009

**Managing Editor:** Madeleine Clews

**Editor:** Rhianna King

**Contributing Editors:** Joanna Moore and Kahla Emonson

**Design and Production:** Peter Nicholas

**Telephone:** (08) 9389 8644

**Email:** [ecn@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:ecn@dec.wa.gov.au)



# Water efficiency in action throughout DEC's district offices

**DEC regional offices are using less scheme water thanks to a number of DECcrease initiatives.**

Blackwood District Operations Manager Brad Commins has designed a system for DEC's Margaret River office, which operates independently from town water supplies. The previous connection involved a 2.5-kilometre pipe



*Project Manager David Favero (left) with the plumber installing a purifier.*

through the bush which commonly ruptured.

"The 250,000-litre rainwater tank is filled from roof catchments within the compound. The water receives an ultraviolet treatment and is distributed through the original water pipe infrastructure with the aid of a small pressure pump," Brad said.

With a set-up cost of about \$21,000, the tank filled quickly in two rain events—each lasting about four days, and now tops up easily. It can service all facilities on site, including fire appliances if required. The district now plans to commence the conversion of the Kirup Work Centre to rainwater.

In Pemberton, staff have reduced water use across the complex and installed water wise gardens which are completely self-sufficient.

Project supervisor David Favero said the district had installed two 153,100-litre water tanks and there were plans in place to double this capacity next summer to ensure sufficient water reserves met all contingencies.

"The water collection area is 1,068 square metres of shed roof within the Pemberton complex. The collection system has a simple flushing mechanism to allow the diversion of 'the first flush' of water off the roofs," he said.

"A licensed plumber has installed water purifiers to outlets used for drinking water to ensure all the appropriate health standards are met."

District Manager and sustainability advocate John Gillard said there were many more initiatives planned for the future.

"The next exciting challenge will be to obtain funding to install a solar energy system at the complex to complement the recent gains made in reducing energy use," he said.

Staff at the Exmouth District office have been making use of access to plentiful rainwater supplies for drinking thanks to the installation of a 4,500-litre tank.

Exmouth's DECcrease Committee Member and Marine Parks Coordinator Heather Taylor said the tank, which was popular with staff, collects from the roof, but is not connected to the plumbing.

"There is a tap at the bottom of the tank which staff fill their water bottles from. It certainly seems that everyone's preference is for drinking the rainwater as the water is so 'hard' in Exmouth," Heather said.

DEC has an endorsed Water Efficiency Management Plan with a raft of potential initiatives to be undertaken across the agency as part of the DECcrease project.

## WA's most Sustainable City awarded

**FOURTEEN local government authorities, schools, community and environmental groups were recognised at the Keep Australia Beautiful (KAB) 2010 Sustainable Cities Awards ceremony held at Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre earlier this month.**

WA KAB Chair Mel Hay congratulated Stirling on its commitment to sustainability and for encouraging the community to support and adopt sustainable practices.

"Stirling is clearly serious about sustainability and its social and environmental projects are impressive," he said.

"I congratulate all the entrants in the 2010 program and thank everyone involved with the projects for their efforts."

"The City of Stirling submitted three projects for the

award—the Million Trees Initiative, Public Open Space Exercise Equipment and Clubs Forever Goes Green, which demonstrated efforts in environmental and social sustainability," she said.

Judging of the awards took place in early June and the finalists were visited by the chief judge and Environmental Programme Manager at Murdoch University, Caroline Minton.

KAB Community Education Officer and Sustainable Cities Award Coordinator Tarryn Truscott said the standard of entrants in the 2010 competition was high and congratulated the City of Stirling for winning the overall state title.

The City of Stirling will represent Western Australia at the National Sustainable Cities Awards in Sydney in October.

The 2010 Sustainable Cities Award Category winners were:

- Community Action – Secret Harbour Primary School for Secret Harbour Community Working on the Three R's.
- Protection of the Environment – City of Stirling for its Million Trees Initiative.
- Environmental Innovation – South East Regional Energy Group for Switched on Business and Industry.
- Litter Prevention and Waste Management – City of Armadale for Drop 'n' Shop Reuse Centre.
- Young Legends – City of Joondalup for Adopt a Coastline.

The Sustainable Cities wards are part of the Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Communities awards program, which encompasses the Tidy Towns—Sustainable Communities and Clean Beach Awards.

