

Firefighter recognised in Australia Day honour

DEC Principal Fire Operations Officer Terry Maher was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal on 26 January in recognition of more than four decades of fire fighting service in Western Australia.

Awarded to paid and volunteer members, the Australian Fire Service Medal recognises distinguished service by members of Australian fire services.

Humble in his acceptance of the award, Terry said a lot of the credit was due to the support of his colleagues.

"I believe that I have been fortunate enough to spend my whole career working with very articulate and professional land managers," said Terry.

"The support that I have received to date in my career is outstanding.

"I have also enjoyed my involvement in development, training and work with volunteer bush fire brigades and staff."

The Australian Fire Service Medal is awarded by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the responsible federal, state and territory ministers.

Fire Management Services Branch Manager Murray Carter said it was

no surprise that Terry was bestowed the honour during the Australia Day announcement.

"Terry's recognition was well deserved after 43 years of bushfire management service with the Forests Department, CALM and DEC and I hope there are a few more chapters to be written yet," said Murray.

"Terry is nationally recognised as an operational expert in fire and has been involved in several international deployments reflecting this status.

"As Principal Fire Operations Officer, Terry currently fills a critical role in the management and coordination of DEC's highly regarded fire resources."

Terry's first experience fighting fire came at the age of 16 alongside forestry crews in his home town of Pemberton.

Since then, Terry has worked in fire operations throughout the south-west until taking on his current state-wide role in 1993.

Terry's expertise has also taken him overseas, where he fought fires in Greece and led the first team of Australian firefighters to work in North America.

On 28 February, Terry notched up a total of 44 years of firefighting service.



Accolades to a model advocate for wellness



(Left to right) Tony Raudino, Nardi Ling, Frances Kirchner, Tony Smith and Robyn McGrath.

BUNBURY Regional Conservation Officer Frances Kirchner was recently named most proactive wellness advocate for 2010 by DEC's Risk Management Section.

The annual award is given to a nominated wellness advocate who has demonstrated a high level of application to their role, as well as being proactive and creative in various health promotion areas.

South West Regional Manager Bob Chandler said Frances' enthusiasm and creativity typified a great wellness advocate.

"During her time as the Bunbury work centre's wellness advocate, Frances not only assisted her colleagues to improve their individual wellness, but also benefited herself," he said.

"By leading from the front, Frances' confidence and leadership ability has grown, while her individual pursuit in maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle has been nothing short of proactive, in line with the wellness advocate role."

Highlights of the health initiatives Frances put in place at the Bunbury work centre included

the Tape Measure Challenge, which involved two teams from Bunbury and resulted in three Bunbury staff taking out first, second and third place by logging their exercise during the winter months.

Frances also conducted fruit monitoring in the morning tea area to counter the consumption of sweet biscuits and introduced Bunbury staff to laughter yoga as part of Mental Health Day.

Around the office, Frances organised a number of wellness boards to communicate information and initiatives to staff.

Regular Monday morning 'Wellness in your inbox' emails were a fantastic way to spread health tips, encouragement and a list of activities and events to Bunbury staff, including those working in the field.

"Despite Frances' own achievements, she continually encourages others and draws inspiration from seeing them achieve," Bob said.

"A gentle marvel—we are lucky to have Frances' energy and commitment. In our eyes she would have been the top wellness advocate for 2010 whether she won or not."

Noise regulations amendments out for public comment

DEC has released the proposed Environmental Protection (Noise) Amendment Regulations 2010 for public comment.

The proposed amendments contain some interesting aspects, including new regulations to manage noise from speedways, shooting clubs and major concert venues.

The public comment period for the amendments to the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997 will be for three months, closing on 23 May 2011.

The current regulations cover a wide range of activities and are used by DEC and local governments to guide Western Australians in maintaining acceptable noise levels and meeting health standards.

DEC Noise Regulation Branch Manager Peter Popoff-

Asotoff said the proposed amendments were designed to improve the management of noise from premises such as motor sports and concert venues, and from essential services.

"As part of improving noise regulations in WA, the new amendments will reduce some limits and increase others, and introduce fees to recoup part of the regulatory costs," he said.

"The financial cost to local and state governments for noise assessment of large venues and industries is often very high and the new proposed fees would allow them to continue carrying out these vital assessments."

DEC is hosting a number of public information seminars for interested community members during March.

"The seminars will provide an overview of the proposed changes and participants will have an opportunity to ask questions and request further information," Peter said.

"DEC will also hold special interest seminars on specific topics including proposed changes to airblast limits and regulation of audible safety warning devices."

Principal Environmental Noise Officer John Macpherson said many years of work had led to the package of proposed amendments to the regulations.

For information about the proposed amendments and information seminars or to lodge an online submission, visit www.dec.wa.gov.au.



In thanks ...

The following email was recently received by staff at DEC from walkers of the Bibbulmun Track.

Hi All,

We would like to thank the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Bibbulmun Track Foundation for looking after the track. It is a mighty effort.

The track is such a fantastic facility—and, as you know, it is being enjoyed by many, both young and old, locals and internationals.

A few months ago we walked from Kalamunda to Albany. It was a wonderful experience and one which added to our earlier enjoyment when we walked the track in sections with our children. While we walked the track in 2010 we appreciated the recently renovated huts and the well maintained trail with new bridges and improved alignments.

We are particularly impressed with the partnership between DEC and the foundation, and your active support of volunteer involvement. In our view such collaboration and community involvement is crucial to the long-term success of such an endeavour—and we certainly hope the track is around for a very long time.

Well done and thanks to all those involved in both organisations—your outstanding work is appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Richard and Pippa Moore

(Bibbulmun Track Volunteers and End-to-Enders)



Richard and Pippa Moore at the completion of their 'end-to-end' of the Bibbulmun Track, almost 1,000 kilometres.

Community contribution celebrated

A COMMUNITY event was held in February to celebrate the release of the Rockingham Lakes Regional Park management plan.

The event was hosted by the Rockingham Lakes Regional Park Community Advisory Committee and provided an opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to the management plan, which was released by the state government late last year.

DEC Regional Parks Manager Brendan Dooley said community input was invaluable and an essential part of the process.

"The management plan was prepared by DEC on behalf of the Conservation Commission of Western Australia, in close liaison with the City of Rockingham, the advisory committee, and other interested community members," he said.

"The Rockingham Lakes Regional Park Community Advisory Committee

in particular has been instrumental and the work of its members has shaped the document into a community-based plan.

"The plan outlines the overarching approach for the protection and enhancement of the park's nature conservation, recreation, cultural and landscape values."

Rockingham Lakes Regional Park covers 4,270 hectares of land within the City of Rockingham, about 39 kilometres south of Perth. The park caters for a variety of recreational activities such as walking, cycling, picnicking, swimming, fishing and snorkeling and attractions include Cape Peron, nearby beaches, Shoalwater Islands Marine Park and the Cape Peron Snorkel Trail.

Rockingham Lakes Regional Park Community Advisory Committee Chairman Richard Smith said the plan was a vital resource to assist

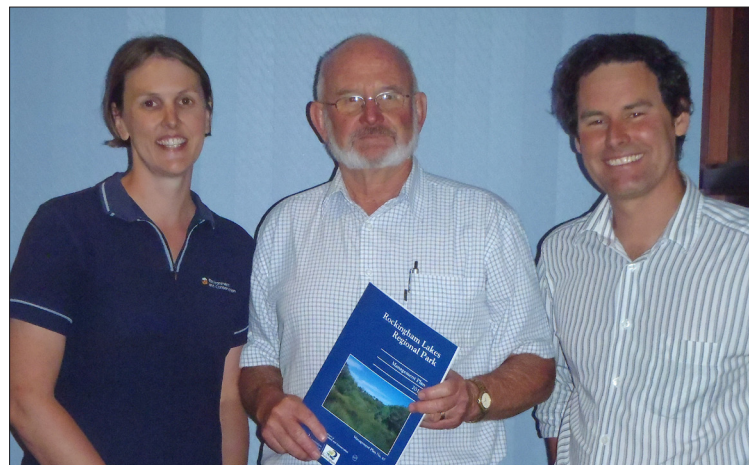
in managing the park, which protected two threatened ecological communities.

"The two threatened ecological communities, the 'thrombolites at Lakes Richmond' and 'sedgeland in Holocene dune swales' at Becher Point, are both listed as critically endangered in WA," he said.

"The Becher Point wetlands at Port Kennedy are also recognised as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, adding to the park's extremely high conservation values.

"The park provides the local community with a unique opportunity to recreate in the natural environment and it also has cultural significance for Aboriginal people and heritage values relating to the defense of WA during the Second World War."

Copies of the plan are available on DEC's website at www.dec.wa.gov.au.



DEC Senior Project Officer Renee Evens, chair of the advisory group Richard Smith and DEC Regional Parks Manager Brendan Dooley with the Rockingham Lakes Regional Park management plan.

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: Sarah Deverell

Contributing Editors: Joanna Moore and Kahla Emonson

Design and Production: Peter Nicholas

Telephone: (08) 9389 8644

Email: ecn@dec.wa.gov.au



WA roads recognised for biodiversity conservation

In a fitting end to the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, 11 WA roads were nominated by local governments and members of the public for inclusion in the Roadside Conservation Committee's (RCC's) register of Flora Roads.

The register acknowledges rural road corridors that have significant nature conservation value.

RCC Chair Dr Ken Atkins said the corridors were often the best remaining examples of threatened or rare vegetation

in highly cleared rural landscapes.

"In spring 2010, the RCC visited each nominated road to assess the conservation values and in December recommended 10 of the 11 nominated roads for inclusion on the register," he said.

"There are currently 36 Flora Roads registered for the south-west of WA, so the addition of another 10 would be quite an achievement.

"Over the coming months, the RCC will approach the managing authorities of each of the 10 roads to gain the necessary

support and cooperation in managing these important areas."

Ken commended the nominators for their interest in roadside conservation and the road managers for their conservation efforts.

"It is encouraging to see that Western Australians value roadside vegetation and recognise the role it plays in connecting our often fragmented landscape," he said.

"We recognise that WA's road network is primarily for transport but some of these roads are also vital relics of the biological

diversity once prevalent throughout extensively cleared areas of the state's agricultural region."

The RCC was formed by the Environment Minister to coordinate and promote the conservation and effective management of rail and roadside vegetation.

If you wish to receive a Flora Roads nomination form for the 2011 spring season, contact RCC Executive Officer Caron Macneall on 9334 0423 or email rcc@dec.wa.gov.au.

Funding boost for household hazardous waste

THE collection and disposal of hazardous materials received a boost recently thanks to \$10 million in state government funding for the Waste Authority's Household Hazardous Waste program.

Speaking at the Jim McGeough Resource Recovery Facility in Shenton Park, Environment Minister Bill Marmion said the new funds, to be delivered over four years, would ensure Western Australia remained at the forefront of household hazardous waste management in Australia.

"Hazardous wastes, including pesticides and other poisons, pool chemicals, batteries and paints, can pose a threat to health and the environment or could contaminate 'clean' waste streams if not disposed of correctly," he said.

"Between June 2008 and December 2010, the government allocated more than \$5.3 million to local governments under the current program which is coming to a close, with more than 487 tonnes of household hazardous waste diverted from landfill.

"The funding will allow a new version of the program to be implemented from July this year by the Western Australian Local Government Association on behalf of the Waste Authority."

The Minister also turned the first soil at the site to begin construction on a new waste facility that will use WA-developed technology to recycle up to 85 per cent of household waste from Perth's western suburbs.

Mr Marmion said the new system would remove recyclables, including metal, glass and plastic, before converting the organic leftovers into compost and biogas.

"The process produces agricultural-grade compost and biogas, which is converted into green energy, used to power the facility. Excess is sold back to the grid," he said.

"The new facility is a world first and it is the only available design that can be retrofitted at an existing waste transfer station, cutting out extra transport costs because waste can be processed on site.

"West Australians are currently recycling more than 1.83 million tonnes each year and hopefully this will increase with the help of new technology and facilities like this.

"Once operational, the plant will process about 55,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste each year, with 33,000 tonnes of that coming from West Metropolitan Regional Council member councils and the rest from other metropolitan sources."

The Waste Authority is fully funded through the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account. DEC provides executive, administrative and contract management support to the authority and coordinates project-specific activities on behalf of the authority.

For more information visit the Waste Authority's website www.zerowastewa.com.au.



Hon Bill Marmion and Amy Warne.

