



# Bushfire Research Forum to be held in October

**A two-day forum detailing the latest bushfire research will soon be held in Perth. The Western Australian Bushfire Research Forum 2011—to be held at The University of Western Australia (UWA) on 12–13 October 2011—will showcase local contemporary science that supports bushfire management in WA. It will be co-hosted by DEC, the Fire and Emergency Services Authority, the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) and UWA.**

DEC Principal Fire Projects Officer Rick Sneeuwjagt said the forum will feature 24 researchers and leading experts who will deliver their latest findings and management implications in a range of disciplines, including fire behaviour, fire ecology, environmental and social sciences.

“The forum will provide a valuable opportunity for people responsible for and interested in the planning and implementation of bushfire management, protection and conservation programs to

share and expand the base of knowledge needed to approach the future in the face of changing climates and increasing community risks and expectations,” he said.

The fire ecology research studies included in the first day of the forum will cover all parts of the state, including the Kimberley, the deserts of the Pilbara and Goldfields, the Kwongan coastal heaths, the forests of the south-west and the woodland reserves of the Wheatbelt. The second day will focus on fire behaviour studies and the contribution of prescribed fire in controlling major bushfires.

Lead speakers will include:

**Dr Jeremy Russell-Smith**, Fire Management Consultant, Charles Darwin University; and Bushfires NT

*andscape-scale fire research in northern Australia: leading to customary fire management to transform the social and biodiversity landscape.*

**Dr Neil Burrows**, Senior Principal Research Scientist, WA Conservation Science Centre DEC  
*Preliminary findings on the ecological impacts of applying a fine-grain fire mosaics regime in southern forest ecosystems near Walpole. Fire regimes in the arid zone of WA.*

**Prof Doug Bird and Dr Rebecca Bird**, Anthropology Department, Stanford University  
*Martu People fire regimes and foraging strategies in Australia’s Western Desert.*

**Phil Cheney**, Senior Principal Research Scientist CSIRO (retired), Canberra  
*The 2005 Perth Hills bushfire: a case study on the effectiveness of fuel reduction burns in containing major forest fires.*

**Dr Lachlan McCaw**, Principal Research Scientist, Science Division, DEC, Manjimup  
*Studies of behaviour and impacts of major WA and Victorian bushfires in relation to prescribed burns.*

**Prof Neal Enright**, School of Environmental Science, Murdoch University  
*Fire frequency in Northern Sandplain Kwongan.*

**Prof George Milne**, School of Computing Science and Software Engineering, The University of Western Australia

*Development and application of the UWA bushfire simulator.*

**Dr Sarah Legge**, National Conservation and Science Officer, Australia Wildlife Conservancy  
*Development and use of biodiversity indicators for evaluating fire management in the Kimberley.*  
Chief Scientist of WA Professor Lyn Beazley will also be addressing the forum on Thursday 13 October. For more details about the forum or to access the registration form visit [www.dec.wa.gov.au/content/view/full/6562/1916/](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/content/view/full/6562/1916/). Registration fees apply.



# Petrel rescue in the south-west

**TWO southern giant petrels have been rescued and rehabilitated after they were found dehydrated and exhausted washed up on the south-west coast.**

The two juvenile birds—one found in Bunbury and the other in Hamelin Bay—succumbed to the elements on the same day following severe weather experienced across the south-west in late July.

Both birds are now being rehabilitated by WA Sea Bird Rescue, with one ready to be released. The other will be ready for release within several weeks.

DEC Regional Wildlife Officer Pia Courtis said a member of the public alerted a local ranger to the presence of one of the birds on the beach at Boranup after noticing that it had not moved for at least a day.

“After it was taken to the local vet, WA Sea Bird Rescue’s Marg Larner came down from Mandurah to pick up the bird for rehabilitation,” she said.

“In the meantime a colleague and I were called out to rescue another juvenile petrel that had washed up on the beach at Koombana Bay in Bunbury. We quickly contacted Marg, who was almost back in Mandurah by then. However, she returned to Bunbury to pick up the second bird.

“We appreciate the efforts that WA Sea Bird Rescue, and especially Marg Larner, went through to pick up and rehabilitate the petrels. Marg is a mentor to many rehabilitators learning about seabird rescue and her passion is unprecedented.”

Pia said the southern giant petrel is listed as specially protected fauna, or fauna that is rare or likely to become extinct.

“Southern giant petrels have been known to follow fishing vessels and compete for baits, resulting in many of them being hooked and drowned or seriously injured. We ask that people are aware of these birds and other wildlife.”

DEC relies on members of the public to report sick, injured or orphaned wildlife. The Wildcare Helpline is a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week telephone referral service that puts callers in touch with DEC-registered volunteer rehabilitators, who will assist with the recovery of the injured animals and release them back into their natural habitat. The Wildcare Helpline number is (08) 9474 9055.

Severe weather also caused several other sea birds to wash up on the shores around the metropolitan area recently. Two of these were also southern giant petrels, which are now being rehabilitated and will be released shortly.

# DEC books take out prizes

**TWO new books produced by DEC—*Exploring Western Australia’s natural wonders: national, marine and regional parks* and *A botanical journey: The story of the Western Australian Herbarium*—have recently won awards at the Western Australian Printing Industries Craftsmanship Awards (PICA).**

*Exploring Western Australia’s natural wonders* won gold for book printing (soft bound) while *A botanical journey* took out silver in the same category at the awards presentation night in late August.

The PICA awards celebrate excellence in the print, packaging and visual communication industry in WA. While the awards recognise the achievements of printers, publications considered for the awards also need to be well designed.

DEC Senior Graphic Designer Gooitzen van der Meer, who worked on both books, said it was great for the books to receive the recognition.

“They are both excellent books—both informative and visually stunning,” he said.

“*Exploring Western Australia’s natural wonders* takes readers on a journey of discovery into our state’s top parks and reserves.

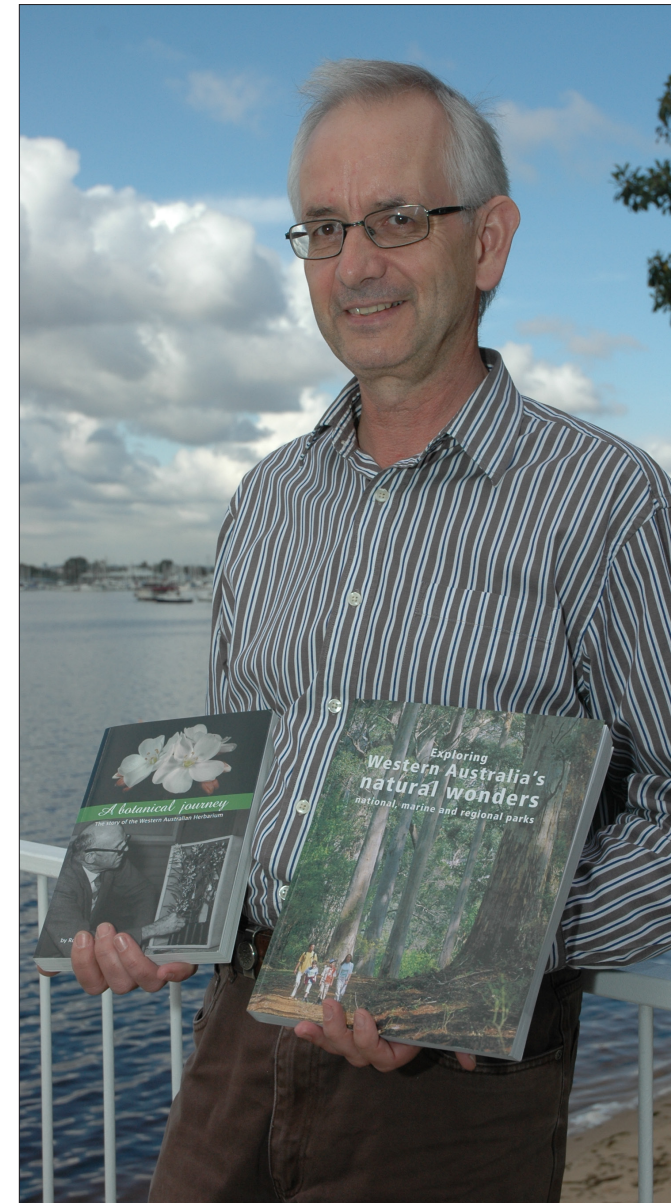
“It is both a useful tool for planning your next holiday and a beautiful coffee table book.”

Gooitzen said working on both books had been a satisfying process and one which brought staff together from different areas of the department.

WA Herbarium Curator Kevin Thiele congratulated all those who worked on *A botanical journey*.

“It’s a great result, and very worthy for the work that went into the production,” he said.

Both books are on sale through DEC’s Kensington Information Centre on (08) 9334 0437 or (08) 9334 0481, the Atrium library, DEC retail outlets and offices or via our online shop at [www.dec.wa.gov.au/shop](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/shop). A 20 per cent discount applies to staff purchases.



Senior Graphic Designer Gooitzen van der Meer with the two award-winning books.



# 'Trash My Ad' competition a success

**AN animated crab called Kevin with a powerful message about marine litter has helped his creator, Robbie Reid, secure \$1,000 prize money in the third annual 'Trash My Ad' competition.**

The Keep Australia Beautiful (KABC) competition, which is open to people 25 years or under, challenges entrants to create either a 30-second anti-litter TV commercial or radio advertisement with an anti-littering message targeting their age group.

The winning TV ads and finalists were screened on 3-4 September during Rottfest, a short-film, comedy and music festival on Rottnest Island. Staff from KABC also held a clean-up on the Sunday morning,

with volunteers from the festival helping to remove litter from the island.

KABC WA Chair Mel Hay said there were more than 50 entries in this year's 'Trash My Ad' competition.

"The entries showed a clear understanding of the litter problem and the creativity used to come up with fresh ways to get the anti-litter message across is impressive," he said.

"There are quirky songs, clever slogans, powerful images and original ideas—every bit as good as what you can see on YouTube.

"It's not surprising the public involvement was fantastic—there were more than 1,000

online votes in the People's Choice category, which is good for the creators of the ads and for getting the anti-litter message across."

The benefits of the competition were confirmed by a follow up survey of voters on the site. Of those who completed the online survey:

- eighty per cent said they were more aware of litter issues as a result of viewing and rating the ads
- fifty one per cent said their attitude had changed regarding the effect of littering on the environment
- seventy two per cent said they were now more inclined to dispose of their litter responsibly
- seventy four per cent said they had discussed litter issues with others
- ninety five per cent said that creating anti-litter ads was a good way to engage youth in a discussion about litter issues.

"I congratulate all the entrants in the 'Trash My Ad' competition and our winners and I look forward to sharing

the ads with the Australian public and spreading the anti-litter message," Mel said.

The category winners of this year's 'Trash My Ad' competition are:

- **TV – 18–25yrs** (\$1,000 prize)  
This is Kevin – Robbie Reid, Carine, WA
- **TV – Secondary school** (\$1,000 prize)  
Littering 'Aint Cool – Alexie Ymer-Welsby, Greta Giovinazzo, David Meaney and Mairead O'Connor, Northcote, Victoria
- **Radio – Secondary school** (\$500 prize)  
Reduce Rubbish – Sarah Hogan and Emily Rozic, Kellyville, NSW
- **People's Choice – TV** (\$250 prize)  
Feel It – Aaron Dowson, Floreat, WA
- **People's Choice – Radio** (\$250 prize)  
Gill the Garbage Can – Jeremy Gorniak, Sandy Bay, Tasmania

For more information or to view all the entries visit [www.trashmyad.com.au](http://www.trashmyad.com.au). Community events or groups that would like to use the ads can contact Keep Australia Beautiful WA on 6467 5339.



Finalists Lilly O'Sullivan, Emily Rostato, Jordan Daroch, Ashley Miller, Anthony Vallejos with winner Robbie Reid in front.

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# Warning against picking wildflowers

**WILDFLOWER season is upon us once again, but reports of flowers being taken illegally has prompted DEC to issue a timely warning.**

People in the Midwest and visitors to the area—which is home to a spectacular array of wildflowers—have been urged against picking or damaging native flora.

DEC Geraldton District Flora Conservation Officer Alanna Chant said DEC was investigating reports that wildflowers were being taken illegally from the Perenjori, Morawa and Coorow areas in the Midwest.

“These reports suggest that people have removed and possibly sold wreath Lechenaultia plants, which are endemic to the area, very striking and attract a large number of tourists to see them,” she said.

“DEC reminds people that taking protected flora is illegal, and can carry a penalty of up to \$4,000, or up to \$10,000 for threatened flora.

“We are experiencing one of the best wildflower seasons in years, and it is great to see so many people visiting our national parks and reserves to appreciate our unique and spectacular flora.

“DEC and the local community works hard protect these incredibly diverse and beautiful wildflowers and for people to cause damage to native plants or take them illegally is not acceptable.

“We ask that the community be vigilant and report any suspicious activity to their nearest DEC office, and note any details, including vehicle registrations and descriptions of vehicles and people involved.”



## Kimberley schools strive to become Waste Wise



*Teachers enjoy the great outdoors during the Waste Wise workshop.*

**SCHOOLS in Broome and Kununurra are on their way to gaining Waste Wise accreditation after Regional Coordinator Jennifer Weston recently conducted professional learning workshops for teachers in the Kimberley.**

The Waste Wise Schools Program actively encourages schools to complete professional learning together. Participants can consist of teachers, principals, registrars, cleaners, gardeners, canteen managers, parents and guardians or any other school staff member.

Jennifer said it was fantastic to have new Waste Authority Board Member and Broome local Jennifer Bloom on hand to speak at the Broome workshop.

“Jennifer is very passionate about reducing waste and was able to share upcoming initiatives with the teachers to address local waste issues and improve the current kerbside recycling system,” she said.

“The teachers who attended were amazed by how much waste was produced in Australia and the workshops inspired them to make changes in the classroom.

“Most teachers will start by conducting a waste audit with their students—this is also a great way to send the message home to parents by publishing audit results in the school newsletter,” Jennifer said.

“The Waste Wise program will also work closely with Kimberley bush rangers who will take on leadership roles within

schools, and assist with the design and maintenance of school wise gardens which incorporate worm farms and compost systems.”

Jennifer also travelled to Valentine Springs near Kununurra where she met with teachers from Derby and Wyndham who were taking their bush ranger cadets through a survival skills course.

“Recycling options are limited in Kununurra so teachers need to be very creative with their reuse and reduce activities,” she said.

“By becoming Waste Wise, your school will be fostering positive behaviour change in your school community.”

For more information about Waste Wise contact Jennifer on 6467 5141.

