



In this issue

- Waste reduction targets set for next decade
- DEC staff awarded for role in nature conservation
- Documentary to highlight Carnaby's cockatoo
- Space debris the focus of summer lecture
- Beach clean-up reinforces anti-litter message
- News in brief
Release of new management plan
Herbarium celebrates rare plant discovery

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Waste reduction targets set for next decade

A major strategy to guide waste management and recycling in WA for the next decade has been released.

Environment Minister Bill Marmion said the strategy had five key themes aimed at reducing waste to landfill.

"The primary focus is on reducing construction and demolition, and commercial and industrial wastes, which represent about three-quarters of waste sent to landfill in WA," Mr Marmion said.



Environment Minister Bill Marmion and Waste Authority Chairman Peter Fitzpatrick.

"Recovery rates for municipal solid waste in the Perth metropolitan region were 36 per cent in 2009–10. This strategy aims to increase the recovery to 50 per cent by 2015 and 65 per cent by 2020. These targets are based on ambitious, but achievable, improvements in current recovery rates.

"The launch of the strategy builds on the state government's recent announcement of a landmark agreement between Main Roads WA and the Waste Authority for a new specification for the use of recycled construction and demolition waste in road base.

"More than one million tonnes of recycled construction and demolition waste could be diverted from landfill and used to build roads under this agreement."

The five key strategic objectives outlined in the strategy are to:

- initiate and maintain long-term planning for waste and recycling processing, including access to suitably located land with buffers
- enhance regulatory services to ensure consistent performance at landfills, transfer stations and processing facilities, including establishing a dedicated inspection and compliance team to monitor landfills

- develop a best-practice incentive program to drive improved waste practices
- use existing economic instruments, such as the landfill levy, to support diversion of waste from landfill
- engage the general public, business and government to change behaviour and promote success.

The Minister said moving to a low-waste society would require a

cooperative effort across all levels of government, industry, community groups, households and individuals.

"Waste managers and waste creators will need to adopt new technologies and behaviours to reflect best practise for reducing waste."

The Western Australian Waste Strategy: Creating the Right Environment is available on the new [Waste Authority website](#).



Mr Marmion addresses guests at the strategy launch.

DEC staff awarded for role in nature conservation

DEC staff have been congratulated for their work in the nature conservation fields, as part of the department's inaugural Director's Excellence in Nature Conservation Awards.

Director Nature Conservation Division Gordon Wyre announced the winners at the last Nature Conservation Service Conference.

"The director's awards are specifically aimed at recognising some of the outstanding contributions made by staff during the past year," Gordon said.

"It is very important to recognise some of the major achievements, given the complexities of delivering biodiversity conservation in an environment with significant competing land uses and pressures."

The Nature Conservation Service is the largest of all of DEC's services, with about 880 staff working towards biodiversity conservation outcomes.

The categories and winners of the inaugural director's excellence awards were:

Excellence in Leadership and Innovation

- Colin Yates, for his contribution in leading scientific research and knowledge on climate change vulnerability and adaptation for WA.
- Corrin Everitt, for her contribution in leading the State Cane Toad Initiative and adapting this program to changing circumstances.

Excellence in Knowledge Discovery

- The Western Australian Herbarium identification team: Robert Davis, Steve Dillon, Michael Hislop and Johan Hurter, for their contribution in taxonomic work and discovering new plant taxa for WA, which now ranks as a world leader in the rate of discovery of new species.

Excellence in Demonstrating Best Practice

- David Pickles, for his contribution in advocating best practice and compliance in environmental impact management of mining activities in the Goldfields Region.

Excellence in Transfer of Knowledge and Communication

- Christine Groom, for her contribution in the research and development of management tools for the conservation of Carnaby's cockatoo.
- Geoff Barrett, for his contribution in fostering and leading an innovative program of active adaptive management projects in the Swan Region.



Director Nature Conservation Gordon Wyre with some of the award winners. Left to right: Christine Groom, Geoff Barrett, Colin Yates, Gordon Wyre, Steve Dillon, Rob Davis, Johan Hurter and Mike Hislop.

News in brief

Release of new management plan

Environment Minister Bill Marmion has released a new management plan for Shannon and D'Entrecasteaux national parks on the state's south coast.

The plan will set the direction for the management of the parks, including protecting conservation values.

The Shannon and D'Entrecasteaux national parks management plan is available on DEC's [website](#).

Herbarium celebrates rare plant discovery

A new and rare plant species has been discovered in the Goldfields. The new species, from the plant genus *Tetratheca*, was found by Southern Cross local Charlie Spencer while exploring some breakaway country south of Coolgardie.

DEC Research Scientist Ryonen Butcher, a world expert on the *Tetratheca* genus, said the new finding invoked great interest at the Western Australian Herbarium.

"When the plant specimen was brought to the herbarium, we were thrilled to confirm that Charlie had discovered a new, highly restricted and rare species from the Goldfields," Ryonen said.

Ryonen said the new species would be given the scientific name *Tetratheca spenceri* in honour of Mr Spencer.

Read the full media statement on the DEC [website](#).



Documentary to highlight Carnaby's cockatoo

A documentary following the life cycle of a family of Carnaby's cockatoos and DEC's work to protect the threatened species will air tonight.

The documentary—*On a Wing and a Prayer*—was made by Sea Dog TV International in conjunction with DEC, and filmed under a special permit.

Award-winning cameraman and producer Leighton De Barros said he hoped the documentary would make viewers think about the way we use land and resources, and the ramifications it has on native wildlife.

"The film conveys the highs and lows of the people working with these magnificent birds and also the emotion as we follow the small Carnaby's family struggling to survive in the wild," Leighton said.

"I also hope that it inspires people to support the amazing work that a small band of dedicated

people are doing to ensure these incredible birds survive and can be enjoyed by future generations."

DEC Senior Wildlife Investigator Rick Dawson, who features in the documentary, supervised the filming team from early planning right through to the end of the project.

Rick said it was a pleasure to be part of a documentary that accurately reflected a year in the life of a Carnaby's pair.

"The documentary is beautifully filmed and a credit to Sea Dog TV International," he said.

"By the end of the film the community will certainly have a better understanding of the plight of this wonderful cockatoo."

The documentary will air on ABC 1 tonight at 8:30pm.



DEC Senior Wildlife Investigator Rick Dawson with Harmony, the cockatoo that features in the film.





LAST month 180 people gathered on the lawn of DEC's Perth Observatory to listen to astronomy expert Dr John Kennewell present the observatory's annual summer lecture on artificial space debris.

Acting Government Astronomer Ralph Martin said Dr Kennewell explained the consequences of collisions and explosions of orbiting satellites. He said the chances of anyone dying from space junk falling on them were remote, however the speed of orbiting debris—about 10 kilometres a second—made things we would normally consider benign into dangerous projectiles.

"John spoke of a fleck of paint creating a one-millimetre crater in the toughened windscreen of a space shuttle, and said this was not a rare occurrence," Ralph said.

Dr Kennewell told attendees that collisions with debris larger than one centimetre had resulted in the destruction of one satellite and serious damage to several other satellites. He said ground-based telescopes were attempting to monitor the estimated few-hundred-thousand pieces of dangerous debris and issue warnings to affected satellites.

This pool of dangerous space debris is continually growing because of debris collisions and the explosion of space vehicles.

Dr Kennewell is associated with two separate groups that use WA as a base to monitor space debris: a joint Australian/American collaboration

that has telescopes at Learmonth Solar Observatory and a Western Australian/French collaboration that uses the Zadko telescope at Gingin.

Ralph said these groups aim to catalogue debris that is 10 centimetres or larger, and to better refine it's orbit to allow for improved warnings of possible impacts with operational satellites.

"Our society is now dependent on the services that space-based industries provide and anything that can be done to protect them is worth doing," Ralph said.

Ralph said the annual lecture was always a popular event on the Perth Observatory's calendar.

"It was great to have such a large turnout once again."

Space debris the focus of summer lecture

Beach clean-up reinforces anti-litter message

AS part of Clean Up Australia Day, Environment Minister Bill Marmion joined more than 35 volunteers and staff from DEC, Keep Australia Beautiful Council (KABC) and the Department of Fisheries to remove litter from Hillarys beach.

Mr Marmion said it was fitting for a clean-up to take place at the beach, as it was also the start of Sea Week.

"The theme of Sea Week is marine debris, and the clean-up along the beach highlights how community action can help the marine environment," he said.

KABC Community Education Coordinator Maureen Maher said the enthusiastic volunteers removed 49 bags

of litter, which included bottles, cans, food wrappers, bait bags and fishing line.

"Following the clean-up, volunteers enjoyed morning tea and shared stories about commonly littered items. We found that individual mint wrappers were a frequent find in the sand dunes, while many other items—including bottles, cans and bait bags—tended to pool in the shallow water at the base of the rock wall," Maureen said.

"KABC plans to highlight these issues with local restaurants surrounding the beach, as well as with fishing stores in the area.

"Volunteers also listened to presentations by Don Poynton from

Friends of Marmion Marine Park and Paul Sharp from the Two Hands project, who highlighted the importance of keeping marine environments litter-free."

Maureen said the day was a great success, with a fabulous turnout of volunteers.

"I was pleased to see a number of family groups and kids getting involved," she said.

The clean-up event was coordinated by KABC and DEC in partnership with the Department of Fisheries.

This year marked the 22nd anniversary of Clean Up Australia Day. Since 1990, volunteers have collected more than 237,500 tonnes of rubbish.



The Minister with volunteers at the Hillarys beach clean-up.

