



In this issue

- Programs recognised at the Premier's Awards
- PIOs prepare for fire season ahead
- Leon Price wins Wayne Schmidt Award
- Rehabilitation efforts restore Nuytsland Nature Reserve
- With gratitude and appreciation
- Massive litter haul by volunteers
- News in brief

Clock turned back 400 years on Dirk Hartog Island

Wild dogs controlled in the Gascoyne

Taking up the bait

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: Joanna Moore

Contributors: Emma O'Leary, Tania Durlik, Catherine Jack, Samille Mitchell and Rozanne van der Heijden

Design and production: Peter Nicholas

Telephone: (08) 9389 4002

Email: ecn@dec.wa.gov.au

Programs recognised at the Premier's Awards

JOINT land management with the Miriuwung Gajerrong (MG) people, the Waste Wise Schools sustainable education program and the Swan River Trust's foreshore restoration programs have all been named finalists in this year's Premier's Awards.

Held at a twilight ceremony on 22 November, the Premier's Awards were extremely competitive this year with more than 51 applications received for excellence in public sector management.

Creating the first Aboriginal-owned, jointly managed conservation parks in WA earned the DEC and MG partnership recognition in the *Improving Indigenous outcomes* category.

Kimberley Regional Manager Daryl Moncrieff said the partnership with MG people in the region aimed to provide social and economic opportunities through six jointly managed conservation reserves.

"Even though we didn't win, it was a significant achievement for DEC and MG to have our partnership highlighted at this level," Daryl said.

"It's a wonderful achievement for our staff, the park council and the MG Corporation to be recognised for setting a benchmark for others to aspire to."

The Swan River Trust and Waste Wise schools programs were both nominated under the *Managing the environment* category.

About 700 schools and more than 250,000 WA students have been involved in the Waste Wise schools education program over the past 10 years.

Community Education Coordinator Wendy Aspden said the program motivated students to think critically about their consumption and waste production.

"Students from Waste Wise schools get involved in hands-on fun and practical waste reduction projects such as composting, worm farming and zero-waste lunches," Wendy said.

Set with the task of protecting Perth's iconic Swan Canning River system the Swan River Trust has risen to the challenge with a foreshore restoration program that earned them the finalist spot.

Since 2002 the program has restored more than 500,000 square metres of shoreline—the equivalent of 28 Melbourne Cricket Grounds—each year.

Communications Manager Mark Thornley said that in order to fund the needed foreshore rehabilitation the trust also initiated a Riverbank grants scheme.

"The Riverbank grants scheme has contributed more than eight million dollars to river restoration projects since 2002 which has contributed to the planting of 700,000 trees," Mark said.



Park council members with DEC Miriuwung Gajerrong Rangers Vincent Kennedy and Lesley Moore.



DEC Director General Keiran McNamara (second from left) with (from left) Incursion Officer Waste Wise Schools Patrick Hamill, Community Education Coordinator Cara Williams and Community Education Officer Emma Brindal with the finalist award received by Waste Wise schools.

PIOs prepare for fire season ahead

DEC's public information officers (PIOs)—members of the department's pre-formed teams—came together in November to prepare themselves for the fire season.

Some 20 people attended the meeting, where they learned about the role PIOs play as part of DEC's incident management teams.

DEC Senior Fire Training Officer Ross Mead said the meeting covered topics ranging from liaising with DEC's media section to emergency alert procedures, maps and evacuation templates.

He said the meeting placed particular emphasis on updating the PIOs on the latest procedures for providing emergency warnings and information to the community. An important part of that process was how the PIOs link with DEC's media team to achieve this.

"Of particular interest is how we use social media such as Facebook and Twitter to send information to, and receive information from, the community," Ross said.

Ross said the meeting also had a strong focus on interagency

cooperation, particularly with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) and police.

Two DFES staff attended the meeting to share their knowledge and skills in providing information to affected communities, and also to further the working relationship and procedures between the agencies.

The Public Information Section in each of DEC's pre-formed teams comprise employees from across the department who volunteer to step up to their PIO roles in cases of fire and other emergencies.

Ross said their work was crucial in cases of fire.

"Basically we need to do two things in the case of a fire—put it out and inform the public of what's happening," Ross said.

"The Royal Commission into the Victorian fires found it was critical to provide information to the public so they can make informed decisions about protecting themselves and their property.

"The PIOs play a crucial role in disseminating this type of information."

Leon Price wins Wayne Schmidt Award

PARKS and Visitor Services (PVS) Coordinator for the Wellington District Leon Price was this year's recipient of PVS Division's Wayne Schmidt Award.

Described as the 'district manager's perfect officer', Leon has been recognised for his diligent and effective commitment to PVS and the department as a whole.

Having held the role of Wellington District PVS Coordinator for more than 14 years Leon has been part of and overseen the implementation of many significant changes and projects.

Stand-out work from Leon includes the creation and development of Wellington National Park, the total upgrade of the visitor facilities at Leschenault Peninsula Conservation Park and long-term capital upgrades to visitor roads at both parks.

Leon was presented the award at the annual PVS conference.

"I never expected to win the award," he said. "When I was at the conference, I looked around and I could see so many other people who deserved the honour. I never thought that I would win it!"

The award honours the career of Wayne Schmidt who began work with the then Forests Department in 1971 and finished his career with DEC in 2008.

Recreation and Landscape Coordinator Tracy Churchill, a former winner, said PVS designed the award to encourage, support and facilitate staff who have shown outstanding achievement and have a strong involvement with the Parks and Visitor Services output of the department.

"It is also an opportunity to develop, reward and retain knowledgeable and competent staff who have demonstrated exceptional achievement and performance," Tracy said.

Leon received a 12-month placement of a painting for his office and \$3,000 towards the pursuit of an individual or collective career achievement.



Senior Ranger Lindsay Brown (left), last year's recipient of the Wayne Schmidt Award, congratulates Wellington District PVS Coordinator Leon Price.





DEC staff install a sign on the beach in Nuytsland Nature Reserve.

Rehabilitation efforts restore Nuytsland Nature Reserve

A REMOTE south coast nature reserve has received a facelift following a DEC project to rehabilitate bushland in the area and improve safety for visitors.

Nature conservation staff from DEC spent two intensive weeks removing rubbish and an old fishing boat, re-aligning a track and carrying out fire mitigation work in Nuytsland Nature Reserve near Cocklebiddy.

DEC Esperance District Nature Conservation Coordinator Stephen Butler said cleaning up abandoned camp sites and rubble, and mitigating fire risks were important for improving the nature conservation values of the reserve and minimising risks to visitors.

"We removed rubbish that posed a safety risk to visitors, including old drums, corrugated iron, bottles, tins and general camp site rubbish, including an abandoned sheet metal hut on Madura Beach," he said.

"We also removed an abandoned fishing boat, the *St Christopher*, from the beach. The boat was deemed a risk to visitors as the decking was beginning to disintegrate.

"Over the years the boat has become a landmark for travellers on the beach as it was located at the turn-off to the Eyre Bird Observatory. A sign and a historical telegraph pole have now been placed on the dune to mark the turn-off to the observatory.

"At Kanidal Beach another abandoned fisher's camp was cleaned up and buried. The team had an interesting time dodging a mulga snake that had found refuge under the corrugated iron sheeting."

Stephen said a beach track was re-aligned to remove two blind corners and improve the safety of pedestrians on the track, and work to reduce the threat of fire around key infrastructure was also carried out.

"Firebreaks were widened and undergrowth was cleared around the perimeter of the observatory and around the abandoned Burnabbie homestead, to mitigate bushfire risks," he said.

The project was part of DEC's Remote Regions Nature Conservation Program in which DEC conservation employees undertake conservation projects outside their usual workplace. The Nuytsland Nature Reserve clean-up involved staff from the department's Esperance and Swan Coastal districts.

With gratitude and appreciation

THE following letter was recently sent to the Collie Mail and DEC's Wellington District.

*Editor of the Collie Mail
cc: DEC*

As a retired resident of Collie, I would like to pay my compliments and gratitude to our dedicated officers of the Department of Environment and Conservation, formerly known as CALM.

One of these officers is the bushfire overseer, Mr Ron Winfield, who is a Bushfire Team Leader and a person who, along with his team, displays courage and devotion to duty on a daily basis throughout the year. [This is done] in preventing and extinguishing fires, not only in Collie and surrounding areas, but [also in being] called to assist in doing so, throughout the state of WA, at times deliberately lit by unscrupulous people in our society.

We far too often take it for granted, whenever fires occur. We expect these officers who are on call to keep us safe and save our homes and environment from the dangers of fires, to enable us to live a comfortable crime-free lifestyle.

I urge any person witnessing unlawful and or unsocial behaviour, relating to the lighting of fires and or other criminal activities, to report such immediately to our local dedicated Collie police officers on 131 444 or to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

*Alf (Fred) Peschel
Wittenoom Street
Collie 6225*

Fred Peschel is a former NSW Police Sergeant, with 35 years' experience in law enforcement in both NSW and WA. He further noted in email correspondence with Wellington District Manager Drew Griffiths that:

'... the general public and people in our community expect professionals such as police, ambulance, DFES, SES, members of your organisation, also including volunteers... [to] not only to be on call when an emergency occurs, but to carry out their respective duties tirelessly, without fear or favour, at times under such horrendous circumstances ...

Please accept this as my personal appreciation, praise and recognition of the tremendously hard and dedicated duties carried out throughout the year, by not only Ron, but by his colleagues, and all your other officers. Please pass on my personal appreciation.'

AND in November, the following email was received by DEC's central information email address (info@dec.wa.gov.au) from a member of the public.

Hi!

Today my two children (aged one and two) and I broke down about 10 kilometres on the Katanning side of Badgebup. Three men from DEC turned around and helped us to Badgebup and invited us kindly to join their barbecue. I would just like to say a massive thank you to these kind men for helping us and to everyone else at the barbecue for welcoming us to and offering us food and drinks until my brother could come pick us up. We need more people like this in our world! I think one of the guys names was Frank, I can't quite remember as I was a little stressed!! Please if you can pass this on to them it would be greatly appreciated. Thanks again everyone!

Taylah Reeves, Pingrup

The good Samaritans were Great Southern District Manager Greg Durell, District Nature Conservation Program Leader Peter Lacey and Assistant Operations Officer Jayden Miller.



Massive litter haul by volunteers

THIRTY-FIVE hard working volunteers scoured six kilometres of the Tonkin Highway in late November, picking up 145 bags of litter.

A total of 115 bags (500 kilograms) of rubbish and 30 bags (170 kilograms) of recycling were collected.

The most prolific waste included empty bottles, plastic and paper, while the most interesting find was a bag of suspected stolen goods that included an air compressor and four-wheel-drive parts.

Keep Australia Beautiful WA Council (KABC) Chair Mel Hay said the litter drive was the third in a series of clean-ups organised by KABC, with the help of Main Roads WA. It was carried out on both sides of Tonkin Highway between Horrie Miller Drive and Great Eastern Highway, Redcliffe.

“Unfortunately, roadside litter is still a major problem in Western Australia, with Main

Roads collecting 264 tonnes each year in the metropolitan area at a cost of \$1.5 million,” Mr Hay said.

“Hopefully, through the actions of KABC and public litter drives like this one, we can create greater community awareness of the problem and move to correct it.”

Mr Hay said that while there had been a significant litter reduction in WA over the last six years, the state was still the second worst nationally for littering.

“According to the National Litter Index, Western Australians were discarding 13 litres of rubbish per 1,000 square metres in 2007–08,” he said.

“Last year the volume of littered items had dropped to nine litres per 1,000 square metres, but that was still second only to New South Wales, which recorded 10.7 litres.

“By volume, litter in WA is more than double that of Victoria, which demonstrates that the litter problem here continues to be greater in magnitude than most other states.”

Mr Hay urged members of the public to report litterers.

“Anyone can call the Litter Report Scheme hotline to make a complaint, or even become registered ‘litter reporters,’” Mr Hay said.

“The scheme is backed by the government’s tough new littering penalties.”

To report littering or to register as a reporter call 1300 766 541 or visit www.kabc.wa.gov.au.

DEC provides administrative, logistical and policy support to the Keep Australia Beautiful Council WA. The program is supported by the Waste Authority through the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account.



The volunteers ready to head out for the clean-up.

News in brief

Clock turned back 400 years on Dirk Hartog Island

A groundbreaking and world-class project to restore Dirk Hartog Island in the Shark Bay World Heritage area has been announced by Environment Minister Bill Marmion.

Visiting the island in late November, Mr Marmion said the ambitious program would see the removal of introduced plants and animals; reconstruction of locally extinct wildlife; and implementation of strict biosecurity measures to protect the island.

For more information, see the [full media statement](#).

Wild dogs controlled in the Gascoyne

DEC is continuing with an expanded wild dog control program in the Gascoyne region.

During October, DEC and the Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association carried out aerial baiting to control wild dogs over pastoral properties, Kennedy Range National Park and on several former pastoral leases that are managed by DEC for conservation.

For more information, see the [full media statement](#).

Taking up the bait

Scientists have adopted new technology to help them determine which native species are tempted to eat cane toads by using specially designed baits that are currently being trialled ahead of interactions with real toads.

Remote cameras have been set up throughout the Kimberley Region near Kununurra and Warmun, and in Mitchell River National Park, to track the interest of native fauna in cane toads as part of a series of ongoing trials jointly run by DEC and the University of Sydney.

For more information, see the [full media statement](#).

