

Yarning Time



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



Issue 6: March 2020

Welcome to the sixth issue of Yarning Time for the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA).

We look forward to sharing news and information with you in 2020.

'Yarning' is a term used by Aboriginal people meaning talking and sharing stories.

Yarning Time:

- shares information about the department's engagement with Aboriginal people
- provides updates on the specific DBCA Aboriginal strategies and programs and
- informs the community, our partners and staff of the developments in Aboriginal affairs in the department.

Please have a read and enjoy.



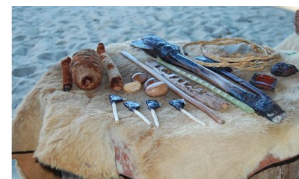
Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters it manages, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community.

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Nyungar Tours at Kings Park

Located at the heart of Perth’s city, Kings Park is many things to many people – an inner city bush setting to explore, a place to bring the kids for some nature play, a stunning setting for a special event or a sacred haven to run, walk or cycle through.

For Whadjuk woman and Traditional Owner Kerry-Ann Winmar, Kings Park is the homeland of her people, and her connection to the area runs deep.

Kerry-Ann is one of three tour operators who provide visitors with an insight into the rich cultural significance of the area, which is known as ‘Kaarta Koomba’, ‘Kaarta Gar-up’ and ‘Mooro Kaarta’ by its Traditional Owners.

Former *LANDSCOPE* magazine editor Rhianna King joined Kerry-Ann for one of her 70-minute tours on a beautiful late-spring afternoon. She shared her experience in the Summer 2019–20 issue of the magazine. You can watch a [summary video](#) on YouTube or read the full story by purchasing *LANDSCOPE* at shop.dbca.wa.gov.au.



Information on the tours is available at nyungar-tours.com.au/

Kerry-Ann Winmar (Nyungar Tours), Kings Park Tour Operator. Photo — Rhianna King/DBCA

Baiyungu woman steps up into newly created Cultural Advisor position

The Parks and Wildlife Service's Pilbara Region held a workshop in May 2019 to discuss the staffing structure for the Exmouth District. From these discussions, it became clear that a piece to the puzzle was missing. A new position was needed... someone with strong cultural knowledge to work alongside the Joint Management Officer, Indigenous Trainee Rangers and all District staff to guide them on the joint management journey of the Ningaloo Coast. This is how the district came up with the idea of a Cultural Advisor.

As of July 2019 Mrs Hazel Walgar was appointed and commenced this new and exciting role.

"My name is Hazel Walgar I am a Baiyungu woman. My traditional country takes in the entire Ningaloo coastline. My connection to this country is through my grandmother Yingagurru. Yingagurru belongs to the Nyingalara clan which is now known as Ningaloo," she said.

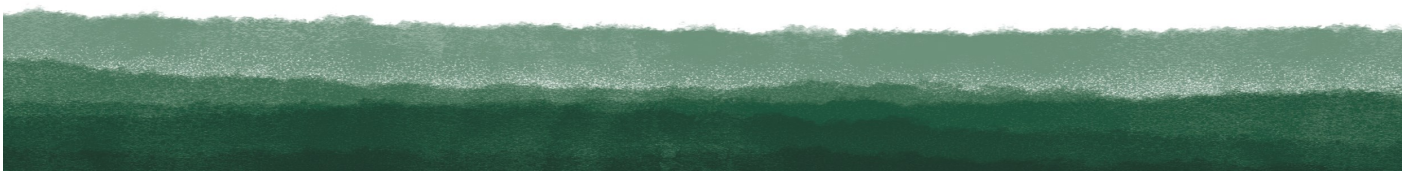
"Many years ago I sat on the veranda at Cardabia Station watching and listening to past elders talk about their vision for protecting our heritage sites, passing down knowledge, preserving our language and looking after and working on country.

"Today we come together to fulfil our past Elders' vision with the Joint Management Agreement between DBCA and Traditional Owners, working together creating opportunities for younger generations through employment, traineeships, learning about cultural values and connecting to country.

"I'm proud to come on board with DBCA in the Cultural Advisor position to help with this journey together, I call it two-way learning, we sharing knowledge our way their way vice versa."



L-R: Exmouth District Manager Arvid Hogstrom, Joint Management Officer Tom Nagle and Cultural Advisor Hazel Walgar.



Aboriginal Ranger Program Round 3 applications extended

The Expressions of Interest period for Round 3 of the Aboriginal Ranger Program has been extended.

Four million dollars is available in this round for projects up to two years that will be completed before June 2022.

Almost \$16 million has already been invested in 25 projects across the State over the first two rounds of funding under the program, resulting in the employment of at least 180 rangers, with more to come.

Environment Minister Stephen Dawson said valuable work had already been undertaken by successful applicants under the previous two rounds, with rangers being trained in fire management, cultural site management and biodiversity monitoring and research.

“The projects funded under Round 3 will help create pathways for Aboriginal people to develop careers in land and sea management while also contributing to long-term cultural and conservation outcomes,” he said.

Applications close 5pm Friday 27 March 2020.
Visit dbca.wa.gov.au/aboriginalrangerprogram for more information and to apply.



ABORIGINAL RANGER PROGRAM

EOI EXTENDED UNTIL 24 APRIL 2020



Round 2 recipients announced

Funding under Round 2 of the program was announced in September 2019, with 14 projects across the State sharing in \$9.25 million.

The second round of funding has resulted in the creation of 42 full-time or part-time positions for Aboriginal people, including 21 female ranger positions. A further 55 casual positions and 87 training opportunities were created in this round.



Left: Bardi Jawi Oorany Rangers.
Above: Click on the map to view all recipients of Rounds 1 and 3 funding.

Wirra kids take part in live science on Thevenard Island Turtle Camp

In November last year DBCA's Biodiversity and Conservation Science staff teamed up with Wirrpanda Foundation staff to host a reward camp to Thevenard Island (just off the coast from Onslow).

Two groups of school children had the opportunity to see science in action on the beaches of Thevenard Island during the annual nesting season of the flatback turtles. Each year on Thevenard, Marine Science staff undertake a tagging program of female flatback turtles, as well as morning track counts, with the assistance of volunteer groups. The monitoring program is part of the North West Shelf Flatbacks program – a 60-year research, monitoring, education and mitigation program run by DBCA (flatbacks.dbca.wa.gov.au).

This year the partnership with Wirrpanda Foundation meant that Wirrpanda staff, sporting stars and mentors Troy Cook, Josie Janz-Dawson and Dale Kickett accompanied Kindy to Year 3 students from Onslow School as well as students from Wiluna Remote Community School for an action-packed few days of fishing, swimming, beach combing, snorkelling and turtle watching.

“Looking after the natural environment is a responsibility for everyone and we hope opportunities such as these inspire young local kids to be part of ensuring turtles are there for future generations along this coast.” Scott Whiting (Principle Scientist DBCA).

The Wirrpanda Foundation provides education and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. In Onslow the Onslow Family Support Program is aimed at Aboriginal families in Onslow and the Bindi Bindi community with the primary aim of improving school attendance. Wirra Schools is a Remote School Attendance Strategy program run in Wiluna Remote Community School, aimed at improving school attendance in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by working with families to ensure attendance and retention at school. Wiluna-based staff engage local community members and services to work together to overcome barriers to regular school attendance by facilitating rewards-based visits from Wirrpanda Foundation mentors, sporting competitions, hosting community events and supporting families with daily responsibilities.

The first group of students from Onslow were treated to some up-close action from the local snubfin dolphin population who put on an awesome display right in front of the kids on the beach. They heard talks on turtle biology from DBCA Principal Research Scientist Scott Whiting and got to see a juvenile green turtle up close.

The kids had great fun painting and playing with 3D printed hatchlings. These were made by scaling down a 3D digital model based on photographs of a female flatback turtle from a special 360° camera array set up on Thevenard a couple of years ago. Despite their young age the kids were keen to stay up late and get the most of their island experience, watching female turtles dig their nests after dark.



Onslow children and adults watch a flatback turtle dig her nest.



Playing with 3D printed models of flatback turtle hatchlings after decorating them.

Wirra kids take part in live science on Thevenard Island Turtle Camp continued ...

The second group of students from Wiluna travelled for two days, camping at Karijini National Park on the way to Onslow before boarding the boat to Thevenard. DBCA Marine Science staff were impressed by their energy and enthusiasm to head out that first evening to watch the flatbacks come to dig their nests. The group spent the days catching fish, swimming, paddleboarding and snorkelling. It was great to see kids from the bush so at home in the ocean. In the evening they heard talks from Research Scientist Sabrina Fossette and prepared a feast from the fish they caught. They were treated to a couple of visits by female turtles during the day so were able to get some great photos and an intimate look at eggs being laid during the day.

“Seeing the enthusiasm and happiness when kids are discovering and interacting with wild animals is definitely a reward when you work in conservation. Our hope is that such experiences help local kids take ownership of the protection of these animals and their environment,” Sabrina said.

Local engagement, education, job pathways and job opportunities are critical for a successful and long-term conservation program. The flatback turtle program actively encourages collaborative work along the WA coast and is proactive in incorporating educational and participation opportunities into the research and monitoring programs.

Hopefully the kids left with some unique experiences that may encourage them to think more widely about what they may want to do when they leave school. Both DBCA staff and Wirrpanda Foundation staff seemed to expand their horizons as well.

“It was such an amazing experience that we will be talking about for months to come,” said Wirrpanda Foundation’s Josie Janz-Dawson.

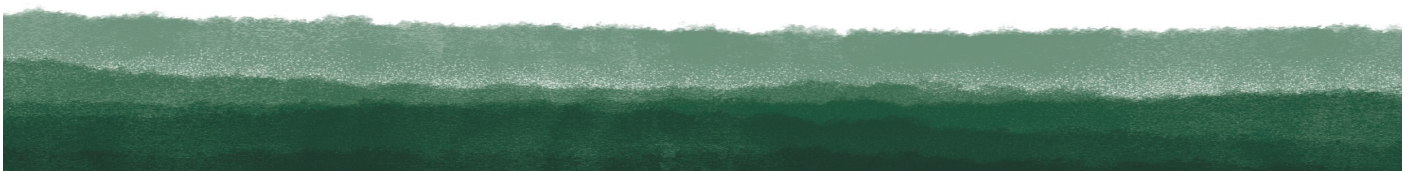
“The flatback team’s great work is paying off in spreading information and valuable knowledge about conserving our awesome Australian flatback turtles and we can only hope that the strategy to look after these beautiful animals is successful for our future generations to see. The talented flatback team inspired us and they did a great job in leading our Wirra kids. We are looking forward to seeing the positive direction in which the North West Shelf Flatbacks conservation program continues to take.”

Principal Research Scientist Scott Whiting said the robustness and longevity of any conservation program requires collaboration, knowledge sharing and job opportunities for local people.

“Our team has learnt a lot from working with the Wirrpanda Foundation and hope that we can continue to work together on shared visions of education and employment.”



Onslow children and Principal Research Scientist Scott Whiting with a juvenile green turtle.



Exploring maritime heritage sites in the Kimberley

In August 2019, Balanggarra Rangers, Kwini Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Service East Kimberley District staff got out on country to explore maritime heritage sites in partnership with archaeologists from the University of Western Australia and the Western Australian Museum. The two-week long survey was focused on locating, excavating, and taking samples from historical Maccassan trepanger (sea cucumber harvesting and smoking) sites. The North Kimberley coast and offshore islands have seen little historical archaeological research, although the region is known to have experienced visitation from Indonesian seafarers (the Maccassans). This fieldwork represents the start of an ongoing management program for North Kimberley Marine Park and joint management partners Balanggarra Aboriginal Corporation – the recording and assessment of cultural heritage within or adjacent to the marine park, with information being used to inform future land and cultural heritage management. The research is especially important given increasing tourism in the marine park and anticipated changes to both sea level and rates of coastal erosion given climate change.

Three coastal sites were targeted: Niiwalarra, Lungananna and Klembei. At each site, extensive clearing works were undertaken to remove surface vegetation and excavate the uppermost layers of sand. Several days were then spent painstakingly removing underlying layers of sand and soil, slowly exposing the Maccassan-built stone hearths. Soil, pottery and charcoal samples were collected for pH testing and radiocarbon dating, so the age of the sites can be determined. Aboriginal artefacts were also catalogued, with some of the sites showing clear interactions between Maccassan and Aboriginal people, for example the co-location or overlay of shell middens underneath the trepang rock hearths. Traditional Owners were able to recount histories of interaction and provide insights into the collection and smoking of trepang, Aboriginal interaction with the trepangers and Aboriginal artefacts found at the sites.



Trowelling to remove sand layer, Lungananna.



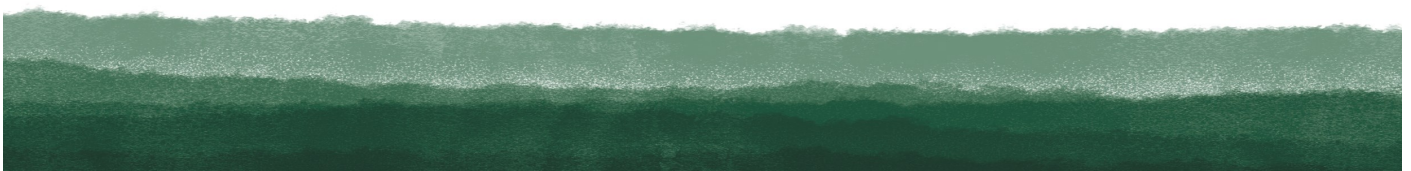
Capturing video footage recounting Aboriginal history, and discussing joint management, with Kwini Traditional Owner Matthew Waina.



In the trenches with Balanggarra Head Ranger James Gallagher and Kwini Traditional Owner Charlie Bundamurra.



Lungananna site overlooking North Kimberley Marine Park.



Exploring maritime heritage sites in the Kimberley

The research offered many challenges - the work was hot, dirty and the spinifex plentiful. Transport to the sites each day was via boat and the sparkling blue waters of the marine park were incredibly inviting after a long day's work - apart from the presence of a large saltwater crocodile. Engines failed, water pipes burst and tinnies were stranded. It was incredibly rewarding however to work together as a team, drawing on local knowledge to uncover and document sites expected to be of local, regional and international significance. The group was also incredibly successful at catching themselves a feed. Research into this maritime archaeological heritage will continue over the next few years, and the WA Museum will work with Kwini Traditional Owners to develop a dedicated community engagement program. The final program will include exhibition of material and/or research outputs from the sites as well as pictures, and videos from the work.

Photos by East Kimberley District Technical Officer Sean McGee



Traditional Owner Matthew Waina excavating a site on Niiwalarra Island.



WA Museum maritime archaeology curator Corioli Souter discussing pottery found with Traditional Owner Bernadette Waina.



The research team enroute to field sites - 30-60minute boat transfers were a twice-daily occurrence.



The research team with the second hearth formation excavated at Klembe. The first hearth formation can be seen in the foreground and a third formation in the background.



Excavation showing different soil layers and the formation of trepang smoking hearths, Klembe.



Traditional Owner Dorothy Djanghara discussing the excavations with WA Museum staff Annie Carson.



Balangarra Head Ranger James Gallagher and Parks employee Stookie Stieg excavating top sand layers from a rock hearth formation, Klembe.



Research team excavating trepang rock hearths, Klembe.



Traditional Owner Beatrice Cheinmora fishing, Klembe.

Joint management plan for the Walyarta people — conservation reserves in the Pilbara and Kimberley

A new management plan for conservation reserves in parts of the Pilbara and Kimberley has been released.

The plan covers Walyarta Conservation Park, Kurriji Pa Yajula Nature Reserve and a strip of coastal parks and reserves located directly adjacent to Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park.

The area contains nationally and internationally significant wetlands, important ecological communities, endemic wildlife and threatened species like the greater bilby (*Macrotis lagotis*).

Together with DBCA, the Karajarri, Nyangumarta and Ngarla people will jointly manage the parks and reserves within their country.

The area has special significance to traditional owners, with recognition of their spiritual connection to country and their cultural aspirations being key features of the joint management plan.

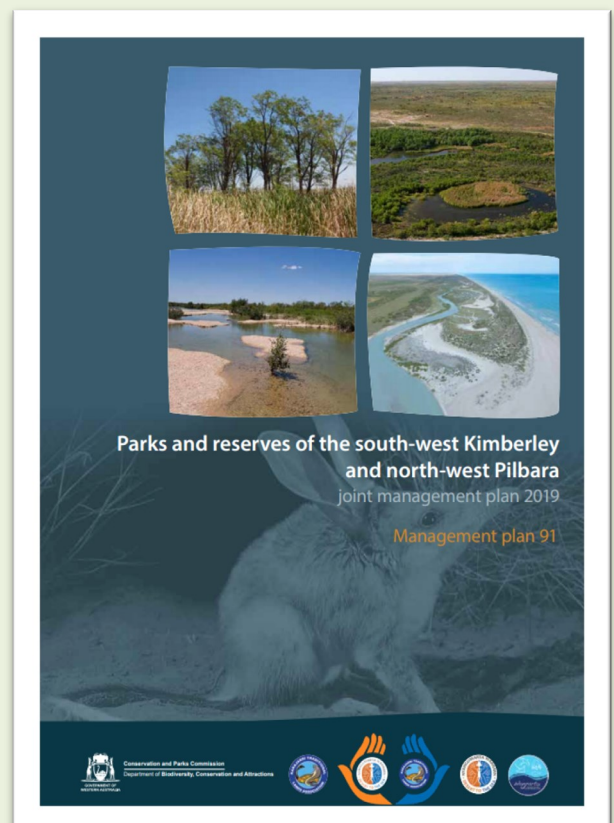
Environment Minister Stephen Dawson said the release of this final plan was an important milestone in the management of conservation estate across the Kimberley and the Pilbara, and a great example of collaboration between joint management partners.

"The McGowan Government is committed to building more joint management and employment arrangements with traditional owner groups, through key initiatives like the Aboriginal Ranger Program and Plan for Our Parks," he said.

"This plan addresses existing pressures on the values of the parks and reserves, such as weeds, bushfire and introduced species like camels, donkeys and feral cats. This plan supports the involvement of neighbouring land managers to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of landscape-scale conservation efforts."

The plan was developed by the Conservation and Parks Commission and its joint vesting partners, the Nyangumarta Karajarri Aboriginal Corporation, Karajarri Traditional Lands Association, Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation and Wanparta Aboriginal Corporation.

The plan is available to view at:
pws.dbca.wa.gov.au/parks/management-plans/approved-management-plans



Cultural pop-up shop draws a crowd at Tree Top Walk

A Noongar pop-up cultural art show and shop at the Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk opened on 13 January 2020 and ran for a week during the busy holiday season. The pop-up shop is hopefully the first of an annual event to create an enticing space to be immersed in local Noongar culture and for local artists to make a profit from their work.

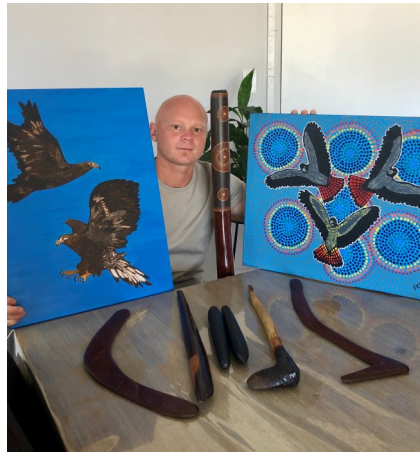
Djina Bina, meaning 'star light' in Noongar, is a group of Aboriginal family artists from the Goreng and Menang language groups in the South Coast that specialise in landscape and Dreamtime art. Art has become a way of expression for the family artists and has always been a way of sharing Dreamtime stories with young people and the wider community.

They showcased some great art while at the same time sharing cultural knowledge for the area. Along with some amazing large paintings that told stories from the local area, the artists also sold a range of small contemporary pieces including dream catchers, earrings and keyrings made from local materials. Some of the best-selling pieces included artefacts such as tapsticks, boomerangs and various tools used before European settlement.

The Parks and Wildlife Service's Warren Region would like to thank Djinda Bina and its five artists including Treasy Woods, her three daughters Fiona, Cheryleen and Elsie and grandson Graeme, and look forward to more great collaborations to come in the future.



Emu art



Artist Graeme Simpson with some art and artefacts.



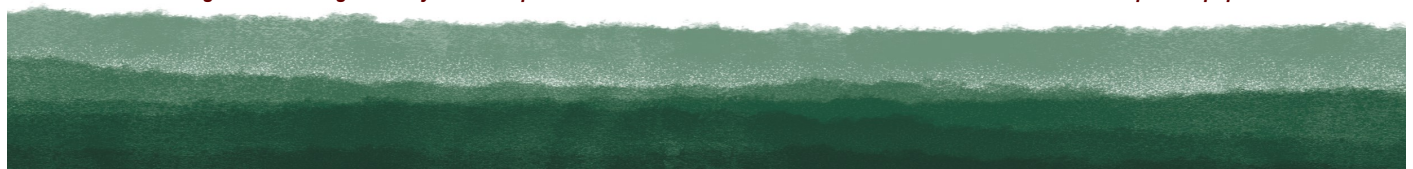
Part of the pop-up shop.



Amazing artwork telling the story of fish traps.



Colourful artworks made the shop walls pop.



Blackwood District recruits get stuck into southern fire season

For the 2019-20 southern bushfire season the Parks and Wildlife Service's Blackwood District specifically targeted Aboriginal engagement within the Conservation Employee workforce. While initially only offering two positions, the district was able to fill three seasonal roles through this process. The successful applicants were Jake Sibosado, Clinton Yarran and Linton Ugle.

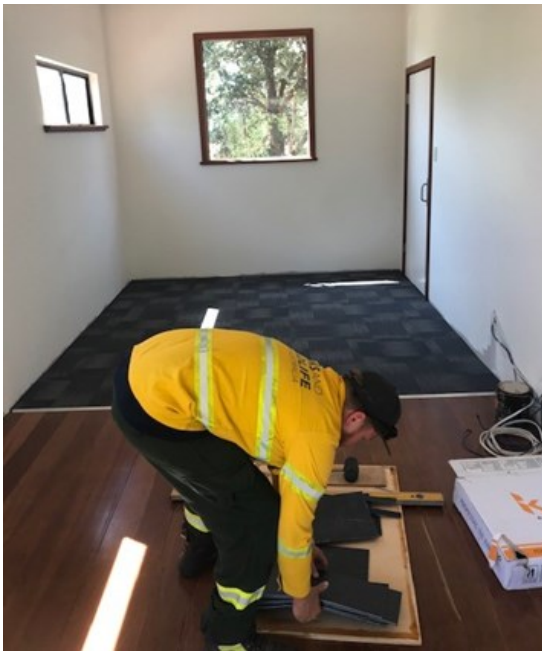
Undertaking their Fire Fighter Crew Member Training in early October, the recruits immediately put this new knowledge into practice at several prescribed burns. The burns were carried out to achieve a variety of outcomes including biodiversity management, bushfire fire risk management, plantation protection and silviculture. Jake, Clinton and Linton helped out not only within the Blackwood District but also within neighbouring Donnelly and Frankland districts.

Over the course of the summer they have also been engaged in a range of works from weed control to pruning firebreaks, maintaining park infrastructure to Visitor Risk Management remedial works, installing culverts to building bridges, using both existing skills and learning new skills along the way. They have also assisted with bushfire suppression efforts across the State including Collie, Katanning, Yanchep and the Stirling Range.

Jake Sibosado said his experiences so far this year have been eventful and fun. "I have really enjoyed working on Country," he said.

Margaret River Work Centre Coordinator Simon Gray said Jake's previous experience has enabled him to turn his hand to all types of conservation employee works, from helping install barbecues at Sue's Bridge to undertaking a challenging task of reinstating a dune system at North Point, Boranup.

"Jake has taken to life as a Conservation Employee with real aplomb and is an excellent addition to a diverse team in Margaret River."



Above: Jake applying his previous trade skills as part of the Margaret River Work Centre entry point improvement works.



Above right: Jake installing a new fence at Three Bears recreation site in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park.



Right: Clinton on deployment in Frankland District assisting with prescribed burning.



Far right: On the fireline.

Noongar Boodja Mentored Traineeship Program

In September 2019, the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) was announced as one of the successful applicants for second round funding from the State's Aboriginal Ranger Program, with an additional offer of \$1.32m in funding.

This funding will allow SWALSC to continue the paid training partnership with DBCA that has created 12 full-time paid traineeships for Noongar people in a range of locations across Noongar Boodja for a further 16 months.

Since the second round of the SWALSC program began, there have been two 'block training' events held:

Supervisor workshop

The first was held 2-6 December 2019 at Wellington Mill, tailored at the supervisors of new and existing trainee rangers.

Supervisors were able to network with each other and gain valuable mentoring insights from Nudge (a non-for-profit company who have been contracted to be the pastoral mentors for the trainees). They were also able to gain nationally accredited training which will assist them to gather evidence for their Trainee Rangers who are completing Certificates II & III of Conservation and Land Management.

Trainee block training

The second block training event was for the new and existing trainee rangers who are currently working out of Jurien Bay, Perth Hills, Collie, Narrogin, Albany, Manjimup and Busselton, plus two other MATES trainee rangers from Bunbury Regional Parks.

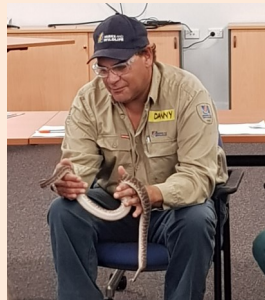
The trainees built strong connections with each other during the week, where they stayed in Pemberton being hosted by the Donnelly District. During the week the trainees completed snake handling with Bob Cooper training, internal 4x4 accredited operational training with George Laws, internal quad bike operational training with Rob Young and GPS internal training with Chris Schroder. The successful week was a lot of fun for everyone involved and allowed the trainees to gain valuable skills and knowledge that they will be able to put straight into practise back at their home districts.

Perth Hills District Trainee Elisha Jacobs-Smith said the training was fantastic.

"I was a really great opportunity to increase my skills and knowledge of work readiness preparation, handling of snakes, riding quad bikes and using GPS devices," he said. "A highlight for me was meeting the new trainees and learning that we all share the same goal to learn as much as we can during this traineeship to better care for the land."



Noongar Boodja Mentored Traineeship Program continued



Trainees completed quad bike training, four-wheel drive training and snake handling.

- Next edition:**
- ✦ Perth Water Buneenboro Precinct Plan
 - ✦ Perth Observatory MOU
 - ✦ Kalbarri Skywalk
 - ✦ Successful scholarship applicants
 - ✦ Reburials with Hutt River Claim Area
 - ✦ Aboriginal Engagement Strategy
 - ✦ Aboriginal Business Expo
 - ✦ Acknowledgement signs

We hope you have enjoyed reading Yarning Time