

Yarning Time

Issue 4, February 2016



*Dr Stephen van Leeuwen
Chair
Aboriginal Employee Reference Group*

Message from the AERG Chair

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Yarning Time, established by Aboriginal Heritage Unit (AHU) and the Aboriginal Employee Reference Group (AERG).

AHU and AERG hope you and your families had a happy and safe festive season.

Please have a read and enjoy.

Dr Stephen van Leeuwen

Moodja (*Nuytsia floribunda*) tree

Earlier this summer the landscape was coloured by the beautiful orange blossoms of the moodja tree, also known as the Australian Christmas tree (*Nuytsia floribunda*).

Moodja could be seen throughout the south-west of WA, spreading as far north as Geraldton and east to Esperance.

The Moodja tree represents the coming of the Birak season for Noongar people, which started around December and goes until about the start of February.

This was a signal for the Noongar people to be close to the coastal areas in preparation for the coming hot weather.



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Photo: Karijini National Park

Partnership with Gnaala Karla Boodja Land Enterprise

The Wheatbelt Region has developed a partnership to support Gnaala Karla Boodja Land Enterprise.

Gnaala Karla Boodja Land Enterprise is a developing business arm for the Gnaala Karla Boodja (GKB) working party that in time will be able to provide land managers such as Parks and Wildlife an opportunity to engage Noongar people (qualified in conservation and land management) to undertake land management activities on a fee-for-service basis.

The department provides in-kind support for the trainees by providing access to suitable teaching sites for 20 trainees to undertake practical and theory learning. The enterprise is facilitated through Muresk College and Graham Ellis Smith is the trainer.

The department will support the trainees with work experience and in providing active learning opportunities.



Photo: Narrogin District Manager Greg Durell with Gnaala Karla Boodja members.



Photo: Dryandra Woodland main entrance.

Biennial Aboriginal Staff Conference



Photo: Aboriginal staff enjoying the Kaarta Gar-up (Kings Park) tour.

The biennial Aboriginal staff conference was held on Monday 12 October– Wednesday 14 October 2015 at the Keiran McNamara Conservation Science Centre, Kensington. Twenty-six Aboriginal staff members came together from across the State to share their achievements and discuss ways to improve the department's engagement with Aboriginal people.

Highlights of the conference included:

Welcome to Country – Trevor Walley

Wadjuk Elder Trevor Walley opened the conference by providing a warm welcome to everyone to his traditional country. Trevor is one of the longest serving Aboriginal staff, having worked in the department for nearly 40 years. It was an honour to be welcomed by Trevor.



Photo: Trevor Walley doing the Welcome to Country.

Director General address

Director General Jim Sharp addressed the staff at the beginning of the conference. Jim spoke of the department's continuing strategic priority to engage with Aboriginal people. This commitment will enable Aboriginal people to become more involved in managing land and sea country through joint management arrangements and using parks and reserves for customary activities.



Jim acknowledged the work being done by Aboriginal staff. He emphasised the department needs Aboriginal staff and their expertise to help move forward and progress positive engagement, involvement and partnerships with Aboriginal people.

Jim also sat in some of the workshops, attended Maitland Parker's presentation and presented Recognition of Service awards to staff.

Photo: Director General Jim Sharp addressing the Aboriginal staff conference.

Keynote speaker Maitland Parker

Banjima Elder Maitland Parker was the keynote speaker. Maitland worked as a ranger at Karijini National Park for 23 years, presented on his career, his experience as a park council member, involvement in native title, relationship with government, the importance of engagement with Aboriginal people and his aspirations for Karijini.

An invitation was extended to all staff to hear the presentation. Approximately fifty people attended. Some of the staff had worked with Maitland in the past so it was a great opportunity to catch up with him.

Maitland also participated in two workshops on Aboriginal employment and engagement. His insight and contribution was greatly valued.

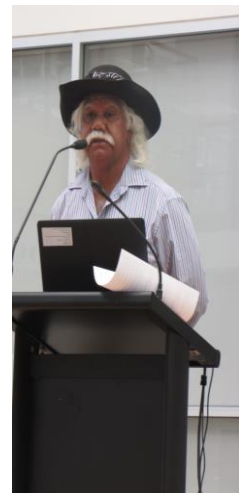


Photo: Guest speaker Maitland Parker presenting at the Aboriginal staff conference.

Workshops on Aboriginal strategies

During the conference two workshops were held where Aboriginal staff gave input in to the development of departmental strategies and programs:

Review of the *Aboriginal Employment Strategy*

Chloe Sellars and Kathryn Wilkinson from People Services Branch joined Rhonda Murphy to facilitate a session on the review of the *Aboriginal Employment Strategy* (AES).

The AES 2011–2014 has a number of strategies to increase the representation of Aboriginal people in the department workforce. There is a focus on employment targets, recruitment and selection, learning and development, and retention.

The AES has now expired and People Services Branch is undertaking a review of the strategy to see how the department can increase the representation of Aboriginal people across all divisions and employment levels.

Development of 'Engaging with Aboriginal People' training

In July 2015 the Learning and Development Committee endorsed the development of a Cultural Learning Program (CLP). The program will provide a suite of training opportunities for department staff to:

- support the goals of the [Reconciliation Action Plan](#)
- meet the requirements arising from the CALM Act amendments and the related policies.

'Engaging with Aboriginal People' was identified as one of the essential training areas needed in the program. This was influenced by:

- Aboriginal engagement being listed as a priority in the department's [Strategic Directions](#) document
- a staff survey highlighting a strong need for training in engaging with Aboriginal people. A common theme among survey results was how to make engaging with Aboriginal people more successful and meaningful.

The AHU is developing the training and used the Aboriginal staff conference and the inaugural departmental conference to seek input from colleagues into the content of the training.

The AHU facilitated two workshops which explored:

- the value of good engagement
- principles of good practice
- challenges with engagement – both for the department and Aboriginal people
- skills and experiences required to respectfully engage with Aboriginal people.

The key learning outcomes from the workshops will feed into the development of the training. This will equip staff with skills to engage effectively and appropriately with Aboriginal people.

The feedback from the workshops was that Aboriginal staff appreciated being able to have input into departmental business.



Photo: Aboriginal staff getting involved in the 'Engaging with Aboriginal People' training workshop.

Presentations

A highlight of the conference was the staff presentations. It was a great opportunity to hear about other people's roles, experiences and what is being done around the State by Aboriginal staff and the Murujuga Land and Sea Unit.



Photo: Conservation employee Curtis Robinson and Yawuru operations officer Anthony Richardson.



Photo: Karijini National Park ranger Michael Thompson.



Photo: MATES trainee Eugene Park and education project officer Sean McGee from the East Kimberley District.



Photo: Murujuga Land and Sea Unit ranger Nathan Evans and manager Sean McNear.

Recognition of Service Awards

Recognising the achievements and contributions made by the department's Aboriginal employees is a key part of the *Aboriginal Employment Strategy*.

The conference provided an opportunity to present Recognition of Service awards to staff who had worked more than five, 10, 15, 20, 30 and 35 years.

Staff who received the award included:

Five years

Gregory Coonak
Coreen Parker
Dudley Michael
Jai Latham

Wayne Winton
Judith Birchall
Gordon Reid
Gudathada (Zac) Walker

Ten years

Anthony Richardson
Renira Parker
Anthony Aitken
Sonya Stewart

Anne O'Malley
Tina Bowers
John Snowdon
Michael Thompson

Fifteen years

Tracy Robins

Twenty years

Ken Ninyette
Marjorie Hughes
Matt Cavana
Melissa Ford

Thirty years

Henry Corpus

Thirty-five years

Trevor Walley



Photo: Jim Sharp presenting the recipients with their awards.



Photo: Anthony Richardson accepting his award for 10 years' service to the department.

Kaarta Gar-up (Kings Park) tour

Indigenous Tours WA provided a cultural experience for staff in Kaarta Gar-up (Kings Park).

During the 90-minute walk staff heard about the Wadjuk culture, bush food, medicines, tools and the ancient Dreamtime stories. The tour provided a snapshot of Aboriginal life in south-west Western Australia – in particular Perth and also interactions of Wadjuk people with early explorers.

It was an opportunity for Aboriginal staff from different country to hear about the culture of the Wadjuk people, the traditional custodians of Perth.


The CEO of Botanical Gardens Parks Authority (BGPA) Mark Webb gave a presentation on how Aboriginal culture and heritage is valued and integrated into the work being done in the parks managed by BGPA.

This includes:

- language names for streets, venues and events
- Aboriginal culture embedded in educational programs
- war memorial for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander soldiers
- Aboriginal cultural tours
- an Aboriginal art gallery
- celebrating Aboriginal events – including Reconciliation Week
- a Reconciliation Action Plan.



Photo: Indigenous Tours WA tour guide Greg Nannup.



Protecting the Wadjuk cultural values of the Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River) and the Djarlgarro Beelier (Canning River): a presentation by Rivers and Estuaries Division

Rivers and Estuaries Director Rod Hughes and Riverpark project officer Ben Ansell delivered a presentation on the work being undertaken to protect the cultural values for Wadjuk people along the Derbal Yerrigan and Djarlgarro Beelier.

The Swan River Trust (now part of the Department of Parks and Wildlife) initiated a project to enhance the visitor experience along significant sections of the Swan Canning Riverpark foreshore, through offering improved riverfront access, while increasing the community's awareness of the natural and cultural values of the Riverpark.

This project has been in the making for a number of years, forming part of a greater vision of a Riverpark Trail with key interpretation areas, or nodes, across the Swan and Canning rivers.

Fundamental to this project has been Noongar participation and engagement. Wadjuk community members have had significant input, ensuring Aboriginal culture and heritage is embedded, protected and valued in all aspects of the work undertaken. This includes:

- **Noongar name for Riverpark interpretation plan**

The department developed a framework for communicating and sharing the unique cultural values of Perth's iconic Riverpark. This document was named the *Marli Riverpark Interpretation Plan*. Marli refers to the 'black swan' in Noongar. The plan identified key areas for interpretation along the Riverpark.

- **Noongar Advisory Panel**

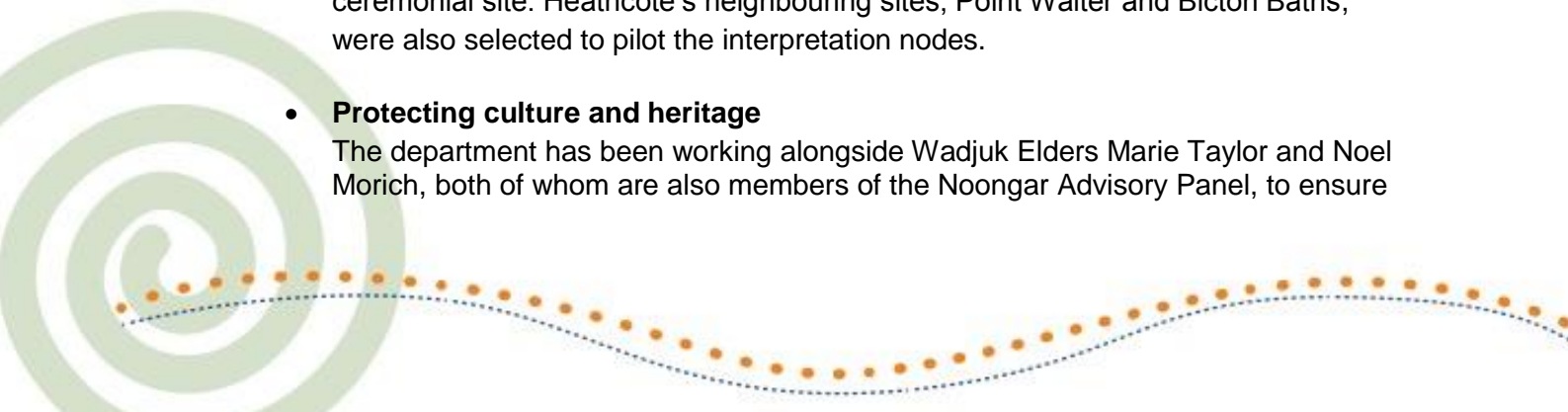
A Noongar Advisory Panel was established to provide heritage information and advice for inclusion in the interpretation plan. The South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) and the Wadjuk Working Group selected the panel on behalf of the department, who awarded two seats on the panel for each of the nine recognised Wadjuk families. The panel guided how messages about the Wadjuk Noongar cultural heritage values of the rivers should be told, as well as identifying the most important themes, stories, and node locations to ensure heritage values are upheld and protected, such as culturally sensitive areas.

- **Selection of interpretation node site**

Interpretation nodes are focal points that share the river's valuable natural and cultural heritage through various media, while also improving the local area. The Noongar Advisory Panel identified Heathcote as a priority to trial an interpretation node, due to the site's cultural significance to the Wadjuk community being a men's ceremonial site. Heathcote's neighbouring sites, Point Walter and Bicton Baths, were also selected to pilot the interpretation nodes.

- **Protecting culture and heritage**

The department has been working alongside Wadjuk Elders Marie Taylor and Noel Morich, both of whom are also members of the Noongar Advisory Panel, to ensure



the pilot nodes help improve the connection to cultural heritage and are implemented in a culturally sensitive manner. During the excavation stage of each pilot node there is a Noongar monitor to oversee ground disturbance.

- **Capturing cultural heritage stories**

This project incorporates the Noongar tradition of delivering stories and information orally, following advice from the Noongar Advisory Panel and the Marli Riverpark Interpretation Plan. To do this, four Wadjuk Elders were filmed sharing cultural heritage stories along river. These stories captured the cultural significance of Heathcote, Point Walter and Bicton Baths, achieving a product that benefits the Wadjuk Elders and the wider community, by gathering stories that have not yet been recorded for these sites.



Photo: Riverpark project officer Ben Ansell working with local Wadjuk Elders from the Perth area.

Culture in the parks

Rod Quartermain, manager of the Tourism and Property Branch, presented on the Culture in the Parks program and the opportunities to operate tourism businesses on land managed by the department.

The department is encouraging registrations of interest from traditional owners to conduct Aboriginal cultural events on national and marine parks, nature reserves and other conservation areas.

Currently there are 10 Aboriginal tourism businesses operating on Parks and Wildlife-managed land. The department is working to increase this representation.

In the future there will also be opportunities to manage campgrounds and Aboriginal people will be encouraged to be involved.

Rod and the AHU will be developing a strategy in 2016 to inform Aboriginal people of the opportunities with the department.

Keeping culture strong – getting back on country

Customary activities legislation

AHU programs coordinator Karim Khan presented on the customary activities legislation. As part of the ongoing rollout of the customary activities education program for staff, the conference provided an opportunity to brief the Aboriginal staff in attendance on what the customary provisions are and what it means to them and their community. From this session individuals can take the time to learn more and then share with their family and community. The AHU is here to assist people to do this.

HR roadshow

As part of the conference, staff members from People Services Branch including workforce and diversity coordinator Chloe Sellars, health, safety and wellbeing coordinator Catherine Ynema, and recruitment coordinator Sue Oakman presented information on a variety of human resources topics that have been provided at the concurrent HR Roadshows.

Chloe gave an overview of People Services Branch and who to contact for more information, as well as the department's new induction program which should be released online early this year and the staff Performance Development Plan.

Catherine discussed the department's new Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy which came into effect in May 2015, how it will affect staff and how it will be rolled out.

Eugene Winmar Award 2015

The Eugene Winmar Award was created in honour of Parks and Wildlife's longest serving Aboriginal staff member, Eugene Winmar, who started work at the Forests Department in Jarrahdale in 1971. The award recognises outstanding achievement by an Aboriginal employee.

In 2015 the recipient was Margie Hughes, due to her active involvement in the promotion of Karijini National Park to visitors and maintaining and sharing her cultural connection to the land.

Pilbara Region business manager Sharon Hann said Margie was a great support to other Aboriginal staff at the Karijini Visitor Centre, providing a mentoring role to younger staff.

"This mentoring is an important factor within the team, as it assists with the motivation and willingness of the staff to be working and living on their traditional lands," she said.

Margie has worked for the department for 20 years.

Congratulations to Margie – a very worthy winner of the award.



Photo: Pilbara Regional Manager Allisdair MacDonald talking with the Eugene Winmar award winner Margie Hughes.



Photo: Margie Hughes working at the Karijini Visitor Centre.

Conference photos



Photo: Staff listening to guess speaker Maitland Parkers presentation.



Photo: Aboriginal staff getting involved in the workshop.



Photo: Belinda Cox, Rhonda Murphy and Melanie Edgar enjoying the sundowner.



Photo: PVS Director Peter Sharp and Anthony Richardson at the sundowner.



Photo: Kenny Ninyette, Derek Nannup and Jonnie Saegenschmitter at the sundowner.



Photo: Staff discussing the review of the *Aboriginal Employment Strategy*.



Conference feedback

Staffs were asked to provide feedback on the conference. Generally there were positive responses. The AHU and AERG will use the comments provided when planning for the 2017 conference.

I would like to first thank the Aboriginal Heritage Unit team and the traditional owners- the Wadjuk people for welcoming us all to Perth, for me being a first time attendee to the Aboriginal Staff Conference, I thought it was a great experience! The info sessions were really well presented and well received and I would like to give credit to all the rangers and guest speakers on their presentations it was nice to have an insight of what others are achieving and working towards in the department.

I believe that the AHU have an amazing team and I look forward to all the great things to come.

It was also a good chance to network with our fellow indigenous colleagues and now being able to put a face to the names. Hopefully we get to do this more often.

Melanie Edgar

Being my first attendance at this year's Aboriginal Staff Conference, I thought it was GREAT;

Growth – the opportunity to listen and discuss how Parks and Wildlife can grow together with Aboriginal people around the state as joint managers or reflect them in the custom activities.

Rewarding – being able to participate in such a conference and having the ability to network with other Aboriginal people in the department.

Ensuring – Aboriginal people have a say in the way the department runs its business with Aboriginal people e.g. developing the Aboriginal employment strategy, joint vesting etc.

Acknowledge – Aboriginal customary activities on Parks and Wildlife managed lands and waters, and how to manage.

Too Deadly – look forward to attending the next Aboriginal Staff conference (if my supervisor approves!).

Thanks for the opportunity to present on the Yawuru joint management and what we do on our lands and waters.

Anthony Richardson **Yawuru operations officer**

I did get a lot out of the Aboriginal staff conference. Connection to country, seeing the passion of the senior Aboriginal staff, listening to language, listening to talks about joint management and the opportunities this brings to Aboriginal communities. It is always good to see the young Aboriginal staff coming through to be the leaders of the future. The walk around Kings Park with Greg Nannup telling a creation story and the uses for native flora and fauna by Aboriginals past and present. Well done to AHU for bringing together the Aboriginal staff conference.

John Snowden **Riverpark officer**

Thanks for the time in Perth for the conference I really enjoyed it and great to have had the opportunity to meet you and your team as well as the rest of the rangers from different parks. It was good to get more knowledge on the people from down south and surrounding parks as well.

I hope the conference would be an annual thing so we can catch up more often as a group and get feedback from previous sessions.

Michael Thompson **Karijini National Park ranger**

I felt our recent Indigenous conference was a success, as a team we all came in together participated in all activities and produced some powerful input on relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous personnel.

Curtis Robinson **Yawuru ranger**



Developing partnerships: South West Aboriginal Workforce Development Centre Advisory Group

On 9 December 2015 AHU staff presented to the South West Aboriginal Workforce Development Centre Advisory Group on the opportunities for meaningful engagement with Aboriginal people in regards to strategies in the *Aboriginal Employment Strategy* and the *Reconciliation Action Plan*.

The South West Aboriginal Workforce Development Centre Advisory Group was first established in November 2011. Members are local community and business representatives appointed by the Minister for Training and Workforce Development.

The purpose of the group is to shape the strategy and the operations of the Aboriginal Workforce Development Centre (AWDC) to meet local needs. It aims to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal people in a culturally sensitive way.

Developing relationships with the Aboriginal community is very important to the work the department is doing with Aboriginal people. It was a great opportunity to make connections with a representative group for the south-west to develop ongoing partnerships.

AWDC regional network coordinator Jodie Schroder said the acknowledgement and respect given to the traditional owners of country by Parks and Wildlife was very exciting to hear.

“Acknowledgment of the heritage shows genuine respect and commitment to Aboriginal people,” Jodie said.

“Listening to Rhonda and Karim speak about all that the Department delivers and the opportunities available for Aboriginal people are exciting, we look forward to working closely together and continue to build a solid partnership for the future.”



Photo: AHU staff Rhonda Murphy and Karim Khan developing relations with the Southwest Region Aboriginal Workforce Development Centre.

Unveiling Moorn – Boornoo

The Blackwood District officially unveiled a traditional painting by ranger and Aboriginal artist Ken Ninnette at Parks and Wildlife's Busselton office on 8 December 2015. The painting is titled MOORN – BOORNOO (Blackwood – from sunrise to sunset), and depicts a Dreaming story of the Wagyl (the Rainbow Serpent).



Photo: AHU program coordinator Karim Khan, AHU manager Rhonda Murphy, Blackwood District clerical officer Holly Bycroft and Blackwood District ranger Ken Ninnette.

The three panels depict the eastern, central and western parts of the Blackwood District as seen today through Ken's eyes.

Ken recounted the story of the serpent as it moved across the land:

From the ocean came the spirit serpent, it carved across our lands that form the Blackwood District, the hills, paths, rivers, swamps and forest; its scales gave colours to our plants and animals. It travelled across the district, disappearing under the sand plains far out east as the culture changes, the salt lake, song lines and our district stops.

The unveiling of the painting and Dreaming story was a special occasion for Ken and the Blackwood District as it preceded a presentation by the Aboriginal Heritage Unit on customary activities and the important enabling legislation that has occurred in that regard which is part of the department's *Reconciliation Action Plan*. The painting is now the showpiece of the Busselton District office and is able to be viewed by the public as they come into the facility.

Yarning with marine park ranger Adrian Lane

Adrian Lane is a Dambimangari Traditional Owner from the Kimberley. He is a marine park ranger and dedicated crew member onboard the joint management vessel PV Worndoom. The name Worndoom has been chosen by Adrian's people in respect for one of the Dambimangari descendants and means 'deep water current'. A smoking ceremony was delivered to welcome the vessel onto country for the first time with its new name. PV Worndoom undertakes remote patrols along the Kimberley coast to deliver natural and cultural resources management for land and sea country including islands. These patrols are usually 10–20 days and cover up to 1000nm. The crew operates the vessel as well as making the living provisions for all personnel onboard including power and water. Adrian has extensive maritime experience onboard a range of vessels up to 96metres including offshore ships. Adrian's maritime experience is complemented with his traditional knowledge that guides daily joint management operations on his traditional country.



Photo: Parks and Wildlife Rangers and Dambimangari Traditional Owners Adrian Lane and Esra Rastus working together to manage the Lalang-garram / Camden Sound Marine Park.

What type of work do you do?

We are the eyes and ears for the family and country, we keep the past and the present connected and educate others so we are all on the same page about how to care for country. We also monitor animals, drive the dinghies and promote safety for all crew on the vessel.

What's the best part of being a ranger?

The enjoyment of being on our homeland and the love of being on country to look after our country so everyone can enjoy it for now and for future years. To embrace our country and love it for what it is. There is something unique about the Kimberley; it's not developed like the rest of the world. There is still a lot to be learned.

What is a good memory from working in the Lalang-garram / Camden Sound Marine Park?

The spiritual feeling that I had within my soul going back to my country, my heart opened up and my soul was free.

What do you like best about working on a boat?

The camaraderie that comes with it; working together with a group of people to achieve one goal: looking after animals and country.

What wildlife did you see in the marine park?

Whales, dugong, turtle, dolphins, sharks, sea snakes and sea eagles!

New rangers for Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park

The West Kimberley District has welcomed four rangers to the Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park team, as part of the Mentored Aboriginal Training Employment Scheme (MATES).

Augustine Badal and Nathan Hunter are Nyangumarta traditional owners, and Steven Brown and Jeffrey Brown Jnr are Ngarla traditional owners, who have all brought a wealth of cultural knowledge and on-country experience to the program.

Since starting in November, Augie and Nathan have been involved in an intensive biological survey of Walyarta Spring, a biologically diverse and culturally important inland freshwater spring, where they helped Parks and Wildlife scientists with flora and fauna surveys and water quality sampling. They also worked with elders and traditional owners to provide valuable traditional ecological and cultural knowledge such as historical information and locations of sensitive areas including a sacred women's business site.

In October, Stephen and Jeffrey assisted Bunuba rangers with a crocodile survey at Windjana Gorge where they learnt how to capture the crocodiles and record important biological information such as the length, weight and the sex of individuals.

All four rangers have recently played an integral role in the Eighty Mile Beach flatback turtle monitoring program, where activities included helping Parks and Wildlife scientists to attach satellite trackers to individual turtles, using cyber trackers to collect important data from the turtle tracks and nests and taking visitors out at night time to watch the turtles nest, educating and creating an amazing visitor experience.

All rangers have well and truly progressed in their MATES training, completing units such as how to operate and maintain a chainsaw, spraying for weeds and occupational health and safety units.

Congratulations to all four rangers for the progress of their skills so quickly and welcome to the Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park team.



Photo: Eighty Mile Beach rangers attach a satellite tracker to a flatback. Left to right: Erina Young, Steven Brown, Jeffrey Brown Jnr, Augustine Badal, Craig Williams and Nathan Hunter.



Photo: New rangers monitoring flatback turtle tracks.



Photo: Walyarta Springs

Yawuru ranger achieves education milestone

The Yawuru joint management team, including four trainee Yawuru rangers based in the West Kimberley District, have been undertaking their Conservation and Land Management (CALM) studies as part of Parks and Wildlife's Mentored Aboriginal Training and Employment Scheme (MATES) as it relates to the Indigenous Land Use Agreement for the Yawuru Native Title determination.

Curtis Robinson is the first of the Yawuru rangers to complete his CALM Certificate IV, with several others due to follow in late 2016. Curtis has undertaken a number of practical activities during his studies to add to his on-the-job experience of being a Yawuru ranger and working on country.

This is a significant achievement for the Yawuru rangers, for both their personal and professional development. This qualification is the starting point for the career Curtis has ahead of him it is also a momentous occasion for the joint management partnership between Yawuru and the department.



Photo: Curtis Robinson and district manager Alan Byrne signing off on his Certificate IV.

District manager Alan Byrne said the district is committed to training and employing Aboriginal people.

"It is extremely rewarding on many levels to see the progress the rangers have made over the past five years. Some of them, like Curtis, are at the point of specialising in specific areas of expertise and interest. Curtis is now focusing on fire management across the Yawuru conservation estate," Alan said.

Curtis says his most memorable work experiences included working at Purnululu National Park, Geikie Gorge National Park and Silent Grove campground as well as actively participating in fauna management at Adele Island off the Kimberley coast. He also listed highlights as undertaking fire management training and supporting bushfire efforts in the southern districts in 2015 (Blackwood, Swan Coast, Perth Hills, Pilbara).

"I'm a Nhanda – Kariyarra man. I want to thank Yawuru for giving me the opportunity to be part of their ranger program. I work and grew up in Broome (Yawuru), I have a Yawuru partner and children and would like to thank them for their support over the years. As a ranger I've been blessed to have great fellow rangers and supervisors that helped me over the line with completing my Cert IV. I'm looking forward to helping the other rangers with their studies and improving our ranger program," Curtis said.

"My career with the department has been a big highlight of my life but the most memorable part of my career was participating with the West Kimberly prescribed burning program as an aerial bombardier over the King Leopold Ranges for a week.

"I've been with the department for five years and looking forward to the next five. Thanks to everybody that helped me over the years," he said.

MATES training coordinator Patrick Foley has supported all the trainee Yawuru rangers through their certificates II, III and IV. The certificates take four to six years to complete and are linked to the on-country works programs. The practical experience and knowledge developed in the first two certificates is applied in a leadership and project management perspective to achieve Certificate IV.

Patrick has worked with Curtis for the past five years.

“In that time Curtis has shown through his completion of three CALM certificate qualifications that he is willing to work hard to achieve set goals,” Patrick said.

“It hasn’t always been an easy road for Curtis but this shows that he has a strong character and will to succeed. He has shown good leadership qualities and is someone people trust. Curtis has completed the assessment work on time and to a high standard, he has been able to accept constructive feedback, complete extra work with a positive attitude, willing to assist other Yawuru rangers and staff in their studies and general works. I wish Curtis and his family all the best and look forward to working closely with him in other Parks and Wildlife programs.”

Curtis in action:



Photo: Curtis inserting stakes into the ground. Credit – Jennifer Eliot/Parks and Wildlife



Photo: Curtis working with colleagues to line up the stakes evenly. Credit – Jennifer Eliot/Parks and Wildlife



Photo: Mopping up after a fire.

Employee news

Parks and Wildlife is committed to increasing the representation of Aboriginal employees working within the agency at all levels, occupations and locations.

New staff

The AERG would like to welcome five new Aboriginal staff members to the department, Murray Riley, Rocky Williams, Steven Brown, Augustine Badal and Nathan Hunter. Murray and Rocky will both be working as conservation employees in the Great Southern District. Steven, Nathan and Augustine will all work in the West Kimberley District.



Photo: Rocky Williams with Jason Smith.

Rocky Williams and Murray Riley are two local Narrogin Noongar men who have been employed by the Wheatbelt Region after completing their Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management. Both Rocky and Murray are employed as conservation employees on a casual basis.

This employment opportunity will provide the men with an insight into the Parks and wildlife workforce and to gain experience and further training. The two men will be assisting the region in delivering the parks for people camping and caravan program with Gnaala Mia campground, along with assisting in other operations such as recreation maintenance and fauna trapping activities around the Wheatbelt.

We wish you all the best with your career in the department.

Departing staff

Since the last Yarning Time, Lennard Ward has left the department. The department would like to thank Lennard for his service and contribution to the department. We wish him all the best.

Customary activities

The customary activities (CA) education program continues to be rolled out. These sessions have been combined with presentations on Aboriginal affairs in the department which gives us the opportunity to showcase the department's commitment to engage with Aboriginal people.

The latest sessions include sessions for: Aboriginal staff who attended the staff conference in October; a presentation at the inaugural whole-of-department staff conference; staff in Shark Bay on 22 October, the Merredin community on the 12–13 November; and Noongar rangers in Narrogin on 18 November.

Shark Bay was a great opportunity to explore the CA provisions with the staff and to look at how it affects their operations. It was recognised the district has a strong relationship with the local Aboriginal community and have established local area arrangements. The AHU would like to thank the district for their hospitality.

The Merredin community engagement session was attended by eight community people, three district staff, one shire ranger plus two AHU staff. Community reps were a mix of ages with some good discussions on particular topics that took their interest, for example there was strong interest in the fee-for-service opportunity. This training coincided with an opportunity to explore Aboriginal tourism with one of the participants and is a work in progress.

The Narrogin session was conducted at Dryandra where we delivered to 10 Gnaala Karla Boodja Land Enterprise trainees. This training was done with the full support of the Great Southern District but unfortunately none of the staff were able to attend because of fire commitments. A barbecue was held afterwards where some social conversations took place.

The AHU also met with Peter Henderson to plan the South West Region's Aboriginal engagement strategy, part of which is to coordinate training for staff on the CA provisions in the near future and looked at the community training for 2016.

The AHU would like to acknowledge the regions to their ongoing commitment to engaging and supporting Aboriginal people in their area.



Photo: AHU and Merredin District staff with members from the Merredin community.

Update on Aboriginal strategies

The Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training (ACAT) rolled into Malgana country (Shark Bay) in October, with the last ACAT for 2015 held in December.

Records show 543 people have attended ACAT training since the first session on 2 April 2014 through to the last session on the 3 December 2015. The AHU has delivered a total of 31 sessions over two years and has travelled to eight regions.

Partnerships have been formed with staff in the regions and divisions, which has resulted in collaborative and working partnerships with the AHU.

The AHU is meeting with Learning and Development to plan for the 2016 Cultural Learning Program. This will include the continued rollout of the mandatory ACAT and the development of the Engaging with Aboriginal People training.

The AHU would like to thank Learning and Development and regional staff for their support in providing ACAT this year. It is greatly appreciated and we look forward to continuing to deliver the training in 2016.



Photo: ACAT in Manjimup.



Photo: ACAT in Exmouth.



Photo: Presenting to staff in the Great Southern Region.



Photo: ACAT training in Bunbury.

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Thanks!
for your
Support!!

This newsletter is produced quarterly. Please contact Jayden Miller if you would like to contribute to the next edition.

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