

Yarning Time

Issue 7, January 2017



Dr Stephen van Leeuwen
Chair
Aboriginal Employee Reference Group

Message from the AERG Chair

Welcome to the seventh issue of Yarning Time, featuring Parks and Wildlife's engagement with Aboriginal people around the State.

The Aboriginal Heritage Unit (AHU) and the Aboriginal Employee Reference Group (AERG) have established *Yarning Time* to:

- provide an update on Aboriginal staff news;
- inform all staff of the developments in Aboriginal affairs in the department; and
- share stories on the department's engagement with Aboriginal people.

Please have a read, enjoy and I hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas and new year.

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Employee news

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

New staff

The department would like to welcome four new Aboriginal staff members. They will be working in the Swan, Warren, South West and Kimberley regions.

Departing staff

Since the last *Yarning Time*, no Aboriginal staff have left the department. This is a great achievement as retention of staff is a huge focus for the Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

Around the State

Public Sector Commission 2016-17 Aboriginal Traineeship Program

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES) supports the commitment to increase the representation of Aboriginal people working in the department. Providing opportunities to trainees is part of the strategy.

In September 2016 the department welcomed six new trainees under the Public Sector Commission (PSC) 2016-17 Aboriginal Traineeship Initiative (ATI). Currently four remain in the program. This is employment-based training that provides young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, 24 years of age and under, with an opportunity to develop public administration skills and competencies through a government traineeship. It is a stream of the full-time public sector Traineeship in Public Administration.

Trainees are hosted by a WA public sector agency for a period of 12 months. On successful completion, the trainees will gain a nationally recognised qualification in public administration entitled Certificate III in Government (Public Administration).

The PSC initiative has established a formal support network for the trainees. This includes PSC Aboriginal Employment Project Officers (mentors) who provide mentoring support through regular visits and liaison with trainees and supervisors. Aspire Performance Training is a Registered Training Organisation that provides academic support, assessment and guidance and supervisors in the workplace who provide training and guidance to achieve their qualifications.

Sue Oakman from People Services and Rhonda Murphy from AHU are developing an internal support strategy for the duration of the traineeship. This will include the trainees meeting regularly, identifying training opportunities, networking of supervisors and the trainees having incursions to gain an understanding of the many roles in the department.

At the morning tea that was held to welcome the trainees to the department, the Director General, Jim Sharp expressed “an eagerness for Parks and Wildlife to provide the opportunity for these bright young people to prosper within the department.” He spoke on the importance of Aboriginal staff in the department.

Meet the Trainees

Zoe Palmer is based in Woodvale in the Science and Conservation Division. Zoe has an advanced diploma in Animal Psychology, Certificate III in Captive Animal Studies and senior first aid qualifications. Zoe has a role in administration. She assists the scientists by entering data of the DNA samples from their recent projects. Zoe said she really likes her work, especially the location. “The reserve I works in is beautiful and I can’t help but feel humble when surrounded by the beauty of nature,” Zoe said. “I feel supported in my work place and my Long term career goal is to be a Psychologist for animals in captivity.”

Veronica Wilson works for the Regional and Fire Management Services Division in the Swan Region, at Crawley. Veronica is a Wongi woman from around the area of Kalgoorlie and was raised in Perth. She has a degree in Conservation Biology and Botany. Veronica is doing a mixture of field work involving plants and some general office work with the River Park unit. Veronica said she is very pleased to be working in this department as it relates to what I previously studied. “My career goal is to gain full-time employment within the department once I successfully complete my traineeship.

Emma Bartlett works in the Corporate Services Division in Peoples Services Branch, based in Bentley. Emma is Wongi woman who grew up in Geraldton for the first few years of her life before moving to Perth. Emma’s a role involves administration, receipting and allocating people to different placements. Emma said she was fairly new to the work force and is excited about her new role. “I think it’s great to be learning and developing a new set of skills,” Emma said. Emma’s career goal is to obtain Certificate III in Government and see where it could further her in the near future.

Tanika Ronan is a clerical officer in the Regional and Fire Management Services Division, Midwest region based in, Geraldton. Tanika is a Yamatji Wadjarri woman from Geraldton. She has a Certificate III in Education Support. Tanika’s main duties include answering phone calls, filing, emailing, and booking flights and accommodation. She loves working for the department as it is very different to her previous job and she is enjoying the change. Tanika’s career goal is to obtain her Government qualification so she can move up into a higher position in her role.

Welcome Zoe, Veronica, Emma, Bonnie and Tanika to Parks and Wildlife. We wish you a very successful traineeship.



Left: Emma Bartlett, Director General Jim Sharp, Veronica Wilson and Zoe Palmer. Right: Tanika Ronan (Geraldton)

Kalbarri Skywalk Project - Aboriginal ranger assistance positions for Kalbarri National Park

In July 2016, Parks and Wildlife welcomed two new Nanda ranger assistants, Michael Davies and Steven Eley, into the Kalbarri National Park's ranger team. The two new contract positions have been created as part of the Kalbarri Skywalk and National Park Infrastructure Project, which is funded through the State Government's Royalties for Regions Program. Michael and Steven are assisting with a range of park management activities, including specific tasks associated with the Skywalk Project.

Michael and Steven have been long time Kalbarri residents - with strong family connections to the local area and are both relishing the opportunity to live and work 'on country'.

Michael is 18 years old and completed his high school studies at Kalbarri District High School in 2015. He is a keen footballer, having played at Colts and League level for Northampton Football Club. In his spare time, Michael enjoys outdoor pursuits such as fishing, camping and four-wheel-driving with his mates.

At 24 years old, Steven is also a keen sportsman, having played cricket and football at a competitive level. Unfortunately a football injury set back Steven's sporting aspirations but allowed him time to pursue his true passion- fishing. Up river, down river, in a boat or on land, Steven loves his fishing. He is a keen member of the Kalbarri Fishing Club and has even contributed to various fishing magazine articles in his 'younger days'.

Michael and Steven have completed a variety of training courses since working for the department, including: fire training; chemical handling; four-wheel-drive training and traffic management. On-groundwork has included trail construction, facility management, prescribed burning, radio tracking of rock wallabies, weed management and fencing. With Kalbarri National Park currently experiencing a surge in visitor numbers as a result of a stunning wildflower season –the addition of Steven and Michael to the small park workforce has been warmly welcomed by local staff.



Mike and Steven at the Loop with Murchison Gorge in the background.



Mike and Steven speaking with park visitors at The Loop.



Mike and Steven repairing a ladder on the River Trail at Z Bend.

Equal Opportunity Act Section 51 exemption results in Aboriginal Ranger for South West

In August 2016, the Regional and Fire Management Services Division advertised the position of a ranger in Margaret River (South West Region). The region took this opportunity to advertise using Section 51 of the Equal Opportunity Act to increase Aboriginal staff in the South West.

The advertisement for the ranger position was open initially for Aboriginal applicants only. In the event that no suitable Aboriginal applicants could be merit-selected into the role, the position would then have been opened to all interested parties. This course of action would ensure the position was filled however with the merit selection of an Aboriginal applicant as the preference.

The following is the statement used to advertise the position using this exemption allowed by Section 51 of the Equal Opportunity Act.

“As part of our strategy to increase the diversity of our workforce, initially only Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people may apply for this position (refer section 51 of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA), as amended). If the position is still vacant after this initial recruitment activity, then we may readvertise the position without this requirement”.

Ben Tannock, PVS coordinator Blackwood District, said, “The Blackwood District determined that there was a wonderful opportunity to employ an Indigenous person by enacting the provisions of Section 51 of the Equal Opportunity Act in the recruitment process. The provisions of Section 51 of the Act allows for ‘special measures’ to be invoked which in the case of the Blackwood ranger position provided for targeted advertising for Indigenous people in the first instance”.

Through this process, the region was able to successfully employ an Aboriginal person into the ranger position. During the application process, there was a great deal of interest in the position from the Noongar community.

The successful applicant was Iszaac Webb who is a Pibulmen Wadandi man with very strong, ongoing cultural connections to the area. Zac has had a broad background in Natural Resource management and will be a great addition to the ranger team in managing the day-to-day challenges in the Leeuwin Naturaliste National Park.



Iszaac Webb (Blackwood Ranger)

Warralong bilby monitoring

The CSIRO has a program called *Science Pathways*. This program has been developed for Indigenous communities from selected Western Desert community schools. In consultation with elders, the program offers a two-way learning program utilising on-country projects as a context for learning science linked to Indigenous ecological knowledge.

In July 2016 elder, Clarrie Robinson, found a network of bilby burrows in remote bushland on Coongan Station in the Pilbara. The *Science Pathways* team is very excited by this discovery as bilbies are critically endangered animals with a declining population.

A survey was conducted by the *Science Pathways* team with permission from the Warralong community in October 2016. From this, the department was able to confirm a small population of bilbies on Coongan Station. This was confirmed by examining burrows, scats and tracks. A high level of bilby activity was recorded in the area; determined by the variation in the size of the tracks and scats. From this, it was discovered that there were at least several individuals, including juveniles. During the monitoring it was exciting to see a live bilby captured on the motion sensor camera across several nights. Scat samples were collected to be taken back to Perth for DNA analysis. This will determine the exact amount of individuals producing the scats collected.

Parks and Wildlife research scientist, Martin Dziminski, is planning to visit Warralong early in 2017 to work with the community and the school for a week of intensive training in bilby monitoring. *Science Pathways* is planning to work with the Ashburton Aboriginal Corporation (AAC) to facilitate formal training opportunities as part of the Community Development Program (DCP). Feedback from the community regarding bilby monitoring and animal surveys has been overwhelmingly positive to point where community members want to establish a Warralong Ranger Team. CDP employees will be able to work with the school on monitoring and teaching students tracking skills. This will then allow the passing down of many aspects of traditional ecological knowledge.

Students and staff at the Strelley Community School will be taught the methodology of track plot monitoring. They will then be able to complete regular surveys of the surrounding areas to record bilby activity and the presence of other animals including feral cats. Currently, *Science Pathways* is working with the school to implement an integrated two-way science program which will link traditional knowledge (tracking, stories and looking after country) with western science (data collection and inquiry science skills).

Science Pathways is part of the wider indigenous STEM education program funded by BHP Billiton foundation and delivered by CSIRO.



The bilby (Macrotis lagotis) is endangered and faced with extinction



Frank Morris (left) and Dr Martin Dziminski (right) examining a bilby digging



Frank Morris (left) and Fiona Carpenter (right) collecting scat samples for DNA analysis

Eighty Mile Beach and Roebuck Bay Benthic mapping expedition

During October Parks and Wildlife's Indigenous rangers from the West Kimberley have been working alongside internationally renowned benthic scientists. Together they have been monitoring the mudflats of Eighty Mile Beach at Anna Plains and Yawuru Nagulagun Roebuck Bay at several locations including Crab Creek and Broome Town Beach.

This extensive project involved taking hundreds of mud samples from specific sections of the mudflats to analyse the benthic infauna. Benthic infauna are the tiny creatures that live in the mudflats including marine worms, gastropods, bivalves, crabs and other crustaceans. These highly productive and diverse flats support internationally significant numbers of birds, including a number of migratory shorebirds as well as fish species that are important for customary and recreational fishing.

Parks and Wildlife's Yawuru, Ngarla and Nyangumarta rangers assisted scientists by trudging through mud that at times was 'thigh high' to obtain samples. They also assisted with sorting the infauna in the make-shift lab and looking through microscopes for identification. The ranger's involvement in this program was essential as they will be involved in benthic monitoring programs within the Kimberley marine parks in the future. Understanding and monitoring the health of the intertidal communities is vital to ensure the health of marine parks.

Utilising the expertise of scientists and visiting community outreach specialist Angela Rossen, artist in residence at the Oceans Institute University of Western Australia (UWA), an interactive school holiday program was run at Roebuck Bay. The program was for children and families to get involved by sampling mud and looking at their findings under the microscope. Parks and Wildlife's Yawuru Rangers showed the children how to follow crab tracks in the mud and how to take samples to learn about the tiny worms. A school incursion was organised for the Bidyadanga School with Parks and Wildlife's Nyangumarta Rangers. It showed school kids the tiny creatures from the mud and told them about the rich biodiversity of the mudflats and its importance to the health of marine ecosystems.

It was with a rare opportunity for several ranger groups to work across scientific monitoring and school education programs at once. The Karajarri and Nyangumarta Indigenous Protected Area Rangers based at Bidyadanga were also involved in this project.



These pictures show Parks and Wildlife's Yawuru Rangers (Broome) and Nyangumarta and Ngarla Rangers (Eighty Mile Beach) showing children how to follow crab tracks in the mud and how to take a sample to learn about the tiny worms.

Return to Koompkinning

Recently, many Noongar people, old and young, returned to Koompkinning for a weekend of celebration and family reunion. Some refer to Koompkinning as Pumphrey's Bridge, just on the boundary of the Wandering and Cuballing Shires. The area is located on the Hotham River.

The celebration involved a weekend of activities for all ages. One of the highlights was the formal unveiling of a stone plinth memorial. This was to honour the area as the traditional camping grounds of Nabby and Laura Abraham (nee Humes), Sam and family along with the families of Bennell, Hill, Humphries, Jetta, Kelly, Kickett, Little, Turvey, Winmar, and extended family all of whom were camping, born, reared, died and buried in this sacred area. The unveiling also acknowledged the descendants of those families, who are widely spread today.

A book was officially launched after the unveiling. This book entitled '*Koompkinning- The Pumphrey's Bridge story book*', was compiled and published by Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management, as told by story teller Mervyn Abraham, Gary Bennell and Christine Collard. There are many interesting stories of the Noongar history of the area, including many life stories.

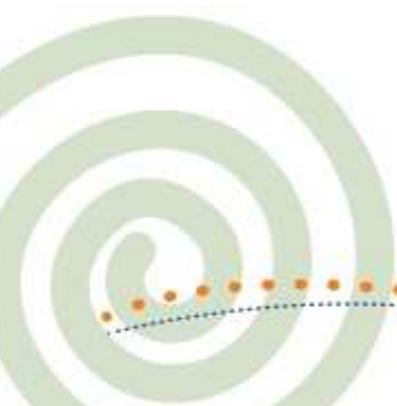
Parks and Wildlife officers from the Wheatbelt provided support to the project. Although Koompkinning is not on lands managed by the department, department staff have been actively encouraging that stories be captured and published so the history can live on and be available to subsequent generations. The Boodjin Story Book (Boyagin Rock) is another example of the collection and publishing of these important stories, with a similar book launch held about 12 months ago. Plans are now underway to capture the stories of Brookton and Kellerberrin

Staff from Parks and Visitor Services Division provided support through the use of the mobile barbeque truck for the day. Everyone seemed to have a great time during the day and enjoyed the evening's festivities including good food, music and song.

A printable copy of the book is available through the Wheatbelt NRM web site at <http://www.wheatbeltnrm.org.au/knowledge/koompkinning-pumphreys-bridge-storybook>.



Unveiling of a stone plinth memorial



Pilbara burning

Prescribed burns at Millstream Chichester National Park in the Pilbara are strengthening relationships between Parks and Wildlife and the local Ngurawaana Rangers. Regional fire coordinator, Owen Donovan said it's important the department works side-by-side with traditional owners and that each understand the other's reasons for putting fire into the country. "It was a shared learning as the rangers got to understand our terminology around the fire command structure and we learnt more about what was culturally significant on their country." Owen said. The most recent prescribed burns were conducted around the Ngurawaana community, the Jirndawurranha pool (next to the Millstream campground and visitor center) and another near the Water Corporation's Millstream headquarters and a culturally significant site. The ranger group has been out with the department burning on many occasions this year as the burning works tie in with the Ngurawaana Rangers weed control surveys and weed control works in the park.



Department Parks and Wildlife staff with the Ngurawaana rangers

Island nature reserves field trip with members of the Yaburara and Coastal Mardudhunera Aboriginal Corporation (YACMAC).

Visiting island nature reserves off the Pilbara coast proved to be a great way for Pilbara Region staff to meet and swap knowledge with Yaburara and Coastal Mardudhunera Aboriginal Corporation YACMAC members.

Using a 24m charter boat, the team visited three islands recording recent hawksbill turtle tracks, nesting seabirds (wedge-tailed shearwaters and two juvenile white-bellied sea eagles) and other marine and island life. Despite the calm boating conditions and being near a popular mainland campground, no recreational boaters were seen. This early liaison is an important part in developing a draft management plan for island nature reserves in the area.

Andrew Magnus and Aaron Shaddock were able to stay on-board for two nights and visited three islands near Cape Preston, south of Karratha. Heysson Lockyer experienced his first night on a boat Kevin Cosmos, Sherona Boona and Michelle Boona joined for a day trip.



*Parks and Wildlife: Exmouth District's Carolyn Williams and Nicole Godfrey and Karratha's Marissa Spiers
YACMAC: Aaron Raddock, Kevin Cosmos, Andrew Magnus, Hayson Lockyer, Sherona Boona and Michelle Boona.*

'Sharing the Dreaming' mobile app

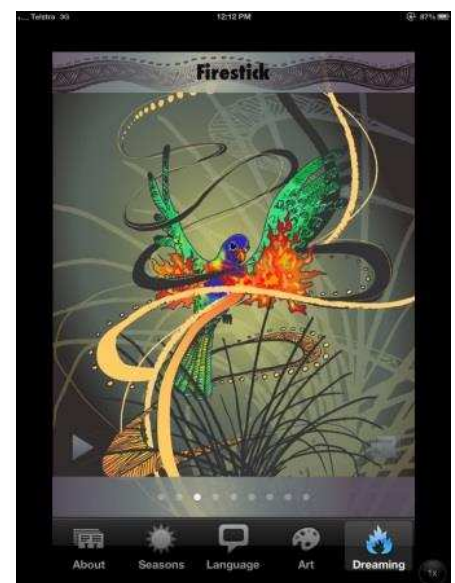
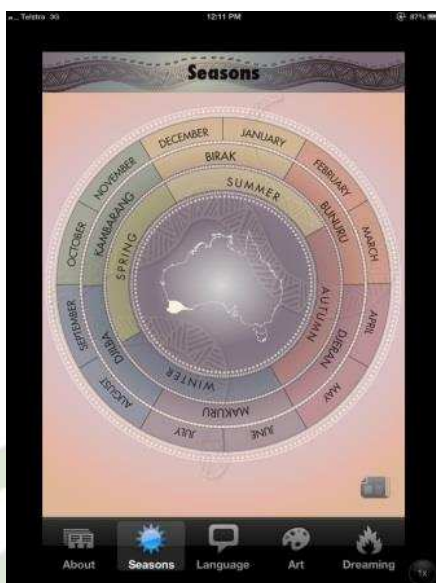
'Sharing the Dreaming' is an education package that was developed more than 15 years ago in consultation with Aboriginal elders by the former Aboriginal Heritage and Training Unit, Trevor Walley (Eco-education Aboriginal officer) and Gill Field (former Manager Interpretation Unit). The artwork was designed and developed by prominent Aboriginal artist, Shane Pickett (Mr Pickett passed away in January 2015; however the family have allowed the department to continue using his art work).

A couple of years ago when mobile apps started to become popular, the Visitor Communications Branch were deciding what material could be turned into a mobile app. Stefanie McBurney (former Visitor Communications Branch staff member) was in charge of making this happen for the 'Sharing the Dreaming' project.

This was achievable through consultation with Aboriginal elders, input from the Aboriginal Heritage Unit and a joint partnership with Zero 41 (app Development Company). The Sharing the Dreaming app has text as well as audio content. The voice on the audio belongs to Trevor Walley (Eco-education Aboriginal officer). Stefanie McBurney worked with Gwendolen Monterio (Design Studio Officer, Interpretation Unit) to input colour into the original black and white designs.

The mobile app is a window to Aboriginal Australian culture, the culture of the Noongar people and the traditional custodians of Australia's south-west. The Sharing the Dreaming app includes an acknowledgement of country, dreamtime stories, the opportunity hear and learn Noongar words and their English language translation, discover the meanings of art symbols used in those and other traditional paintings and learning the six Noongar seasons. This app is only available with iOS, not android. So far the Sharing the Dreaming app is the most popular app that the department has developed with 11,800 downloads.

"My vision was that people would be able to access information about Aboriginal culture via their smartphone so that they can understand and appreciate a little more about Aboriginal (in this case Noongar) culture. I really hope that by providing more information about culture, it helps grow respect and appreciation of the depth and wisdom of Aboriginal culture. Also I hope it helps a little to show that Aboriginal culture is not something in the past, but is just as important and relevant today. I really think it has potential to grow into an app that could deliver Aboriginal cultural information that is location aware – that is if you open the app in the Kimberley it provides locally relevant content, in the Pilbara or wherever. There are many apps that use this approach and with a big interest in Aboriginal culture, the Sharing the Dreaming app has the potential to share this with locals and tourists,"- Rod Annear (Assistant Director Visitor Services).



Screen shots taken from the Sharing the Dreaming App

Bowelling trip (working together)

Recently staff from the Forest and Ecosystems Management Branch in Bunbury informed AHU staff of a potential Aboriginal site they had come across whilst conducting their work as disease hygiene officers. A site visit was organised and the site was confirmed to be what is known as 'lizard traps'. Upon further research it was identified the site had not been registered with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) so another site visit was organised with local Collie Elders to show them and to register the site with DAA to ensure protection measures were put in place. The trip was a great success, with all enjoying a barbeque to top off a special day.

When approaching the traps with the Elders a couple of staff witnessed the traps in action. Upon cresting a rise to where the traps are they spotted a bobtail who then scurried off and hid under one of the traps. This demonstrated the effectiveness of the traps, which are created by propping up large flat rocks with smaller rocks to provide habitat for reptiles to seek refuge when in danger.

This is a great example of the department and community working together to protect and conserve the value of the land for all future generations.

The AHU would like to thank those staff involved and appreciate their acknowledgement of the significance of what they had found and would also like to acknowledge the important work they do in protecting this country.

"Thank you for the opportunity to go out to Bowelling and look at the lizard traps and be shown and taught a little of your knowledge. It was a great day. I learnt a lot yesterday and really appreciate your passion for country and your culture. It made me realise that we are all working together to protect country, which is something very dear to me." Peter Batt (disease hygiene officer)



Lizard traps



Left to right Philip Ugle, Julie Cox and Peter Batt

Noongar Elders welcome western swamp tortoises to the Warren Region

Back in August 2016, on what was a very cold and wet day in Northcliffe, Noongar elders Sandra Hill and Gwenda Chapman assisted by Daryl Hill and Martin Scrimgeour welcomed the western swamp tortoise (WST) Recovery Team members, staff and some new inhabitants to country.

Parks and Wildlife had approved the trial introduction of the critically endangered western swamp tortoise into an area south west of Northcliffe. The trial was seen as necessary due to the continued restriction and suitability of the western swamp tortoise habitat further north.

Sandra Hill made a fantastic Welcome to Country for the 12 tortoises to be released and spoke with great emotion in retelling her experiences and love for the western swamp tortoise and how exciting it was to be involved in their introduction to a new site.

Gwenda outlined how important it was to have traditional owners involved in the day, not only the elders, but to have the young people like her son Martin involved. "It is important to pass on our knowledge and to show the young people that we can work together for the benefit of the animals and the land," Gwenda said.

Brad Barton, regional leader for Conservation and Forest Management in the Warren Region said it was fantastic to have the opportunity to engage and involve the traditional owners and elders in a project relating to the conservation of a species. "This was a great opportunity to for the region to work closely with the traditional owners, to build relationships and networks for future conservation planning and works," says Brad.

The tortoises were all fitted with radio tracking devices and GPS devices so that their movements within their new home could be tracked. The animals will be monitored fortnightly by UWA students and Parks and Wildlife researcher, Gerald Kuchling. They will check things such as the animal's weights measure the size of the animal to see if they are growing and undertake some stomach content tests to see what they are eating.

At the end of the twelve-month trial the tortoises will be caught and held in captivity until the data and information collected during the trial can be analysed. If the trial is deemed successful it could mean that the swamps and lakes to the south west of Northcliffe become a permanent home and help secure a future for this species.



Noongar Elder Sandra Hill and Daryl Hill with western swamp tortoises ready for release



Sandra Hill and Gwenda Chapman perform a Welcome to Country



Gwenda Chapman and Martin Scrimgeour about to release western swamp tortoises

Wadjuk Dreaming exhibition – River Guardians

Atwell Arts Centre and Gallery recently ran an exhibition showcasing the talent of local artists who interpreted life and cultural connections with the beautiful Swan River.

Staff members from Parks and Wildlife's *River Guardians* program were invited to provide a display within the gallery of Riverpark fauna with the inclusion of a 'Creature Feature' display set amongst the incredible artwork.

The exhibition ran from 24 to 30 October as part of a new event called the 'Wadjuk Dreaming Festival' which celebrates the Wadjuk Dreaming Trail of the Swan River and the creative spirit of nature. The festival was structured around the idea that art centres along the river, symbolically representing the colours of the rainbow serpent and the creative spirit of nature through the art works exhibited.

Lance Chad was the main featured artist whose fantastic dreamscape paintings lit up the gallery and David Mitchell's vibrant work reflected the stages of life as a journey along the river. Artists from DADDA were also showcased at the exhibition. DADDA is a not-for-profit community arts and cultural development (CACD) organisation that focuses on creating significant, positive, social change and opportunities for people with a disability or a mental illness.

Atwell Art Centre and Gallery is run by Melville Community Arts Association Inc. (MCAA) and has an idyllic riverside location in Alfred Cove. The festival was supported by the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Heathcote Gallery, Maailup Gallery, the Freight Gallery and Fremantle Arts Centre.



Wadjuk Dreaming Exhibition

Culture in the Park

Parks and Wildlife welcomes Aboriginal people to celebrate and showcase the diversity of Aboriginal culture to visitors in parks.

The *Culture in the Park* program encourages Aboriginal people to be licensed for commercial opportunities to conduct Aboriginal cultural events and tourism businesses on land managed by the department.

These can be carried out on country in national parks, marine parks, nature reserves and other conservation areas.

Establishing quality Aboriginal tourism operations provides unique Western Australian experiences and a point of difference to other destinations.

Parks and Wildlife is participating in and organising events to inform the community of the tourism opportunities available to Aboriginal people on its conservation estate.

Warlu Way-Destination Pilbara

More than 100 people from 40 different businesses and organisations attended the Business Centre Pilbara's Warlu Way Destination Pilbara event in September held in Karratha.

The two-day conference aimed to start a conversation and inspire ideas to expand the Pilbara tourism industry.

Representatives of Parks and Wildlife, Tourism WA, the Western Australian Aboriginal Tourism Council (WAITOC), the Pilbara Development and many more, gave talks and presentations over the course of the conference.

There was a strong focus on the importance on Aboriginal tourism opportunities, with many Aboriginal organisations attending.

Rod Quartermain and Rhonda Murphy gave a presentation on the *Culture in the Park* program.

Rod announced the department would waive licensing fees for merging Aboriginal tourism businesses in the first year of operation, which was well received.

Sharon Hann, business manager from the Pilbara Region, also attended the conference. The department jointly manages Murujuga National Park with Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation- which- was represented by staff and board members at the conference.

Clinton Walker who is Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi operates Ngurrangga Tours in the West Pilbara region. This includes taking people on trips to Millstream-Chichester and Murujuga national parks.

Clinton said he can proudly educate and promote an understanding of his culture and country through his tourism business.

The conference was a great opportunity to network and inform delegates on the Departments commitment to Aboriginal tourism.

Left to Right: Sean McNear (Murujuga Land and Sea Unit), Rhonda Murphy (AHU), Murujuga Rangers (back) William Hicks, (front) Mariah Reed and Sharon Hann (Business Manager)



Rod Quartermain (Tourism and Property Branch Manager) Presenting at the Warlu Way-Destination Pilbara

Culture in the Park

Community Information Forums

Parks and Wildlife is working in partnership with WAITOC (Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council) to inform the Aboriginal community of the opportunities in cultural tourism.

In November 2016, a forum was held in Bunbury and another one is planned for the metro area in March 2017. Additional forums are planned in other regions throughout 2017.

South West Forum

The South West Forum consisted of presentations on the department's commitment to Aboriginal engagement in the South West Region and support for tourism, information on the program and the process of gaining a commercial licence and the support available from WAITOC. Troy Bennell, a local Aboriginal tour operator (Ngalang Wongi Aboriginal Cultural Tours) shared his experiences.

After the presentations, participants were involved in an activity to explore what could be done in parks. This resulted in some good discussion and great ideas around cultural protocols, site preservation and youth. Some of the ideas were events such as art in the parks, healthy camps, and movie and theatre nights.

A forum is set to be held in the metro area in early 2017.



Culture in the Park Lunch / Discussions



Group discussion with Aboriginal Tour Operator Troy Bennell

Dryandra/Noongar Rangers workshop

A recent workshop was held in Dryandra with the Noongar Rangers associated with Wiilmen Pty Ltd to assist them in developing cultural tours in the area.

The AHU in partnership with WAITOC representative, Angelique Fransen, met with the Rangers in Dryandra on 27 October. Here, a workshop was held to explore opportunities and ideas as well as providing the practical skills involved with running a tour operation.

The workshop involved Parks and Wildlife staff giving their experience in tour guiding, tool or artefact making and general ideas on what could be done in Dryandra. Dryandra offers a variety of different opportunities for Aboriginal people wanting to participate in cultural activities. The Noongar Rangers aim to be offering tours in 2017.



Parks & Wildlife staff member Ken Ninnette (National Park Ranger) showing different cultural tools and artefacts.

Conferences

Indigenous Desert Alliance – Herbarium tour

The Western Australian Herbarium opened its doors to 30 members of the Indigenous Desert Alliance (IDA) in November as part of their third annual conference. The IDA is an organisation bringing together desert-based land managers working on indigenous lands across Western Australia, Northern Territory and South Australia. Many of the traditional owner ranger groups that Parks and Wildlife works with are part of the IDA.

The ranger groups all gave a presentation of the work they are doing on their country. The department, through joint management, works with the Karajarri Rangers, Nyangumarta Warrarn Aboriginal Corporation, Goldfields Land and Sea Council Management Rangers and the Spinifex Land Management. They all spoke positively of the support and partnership with Parks and Wildlife.

Conference attendees took a break from workshops and presentations at the University of Western Australia to visit the Herbarium and Threatened Flora Seed Centre at Parks and Wildlife's headquarters in Kensington. Herbarium curator John Huisman and research scientist Ryonen Butcher gave the group a tour, explaining the process of collecting, quarantining, processing and studying plant specimens. Research scientist Andrew Crawford from the seed centre also gave attendees an introduction to the preparation of seed for long-term storage.

Assistant Director of Science Stephen van Leeuwen said the tour was a great opportunity to show the IDA members how their work on country relates to work being done at the Herbarium. "We talked about ways the department can work with ranger groups on the collection, recording and naming of plant species," Stephen said, "Many people in the group were particularly interested in viewing the plant samples from their areas and about naming conventions for newly discovered species". Attendees were shown a collection of desert plant vouchers, most of which were familiar to the group as bush tucker or medicine plants or favoured food for the ninu (bilby).

One voucher of particular interest was from a new species of spinifex to be named shortly as *Triodia birriliburu* in recognition of the Birriliburu People from the Little Sandy Desert on whose country the spinifex occurs and who provided support for the botanical survey that collected important specimens. "We also talked about the ways we are improving *FloraBase* to include traditional names of plants and the addition of a search function by language group boundary," Stephen said.



Assistant Director Science Stephen van Leeuwen shows members of the IDA some plant specimens from the desert which was familiar to many.



Muru-Warinyi Ankkul ranger Gladys Brown from Tennant Creek (front) and Nyangamarta (80 Mile Beach) Indigenous Protected Area ranger Lynette Wilridge enjoyed their visit to the Threatened Flora Seed Centre.



Research scientist Ryonen Butcher explains the specially designed boxes for keeping specimens dry and dust-free. Ranger Gladys Brown from Tennant Creek (front) and Nyangamarta (80 Mile Beach) Indigenous Protected Area ranger Lynette Wilridge enjoyed their visit to the Threatened Flora Seed Centre.



Members of the Indigenous Desert Alliance (IDA) visit the WA Herbarium and Threatened Flora Seed Centre.

Updates

Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

In September 2016, the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group (RWG) completed and submitted a final RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia to finalise the 2013-15 RAP. Since then, the RWG has met to discuss the draft of the 2017-19 RAP. The plan is undergoing extensive consultation with people and groups from within the department. It is anticipated to launch the 2017-19 Reconciliation Action Plan during the 2017 Reconciliation Week (27 May – 3 June).

Cultural Learning Program (CLP)

The Cultural Learning Program (CLP) was created as a learning opportunity to help staff gain a better appreciation of Aboriginal history, culture, and contemporary social issues. This gives context to Aboriginal affairs, policies and strategies in the department. By staff attending these sessions, the department is becoming a more culturally competent work place.

Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training (ACAT)

Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training has now been successfully delivered in across WA to 952 people since 2014.

Sessions have been rolled out for camp ground hosts at Kensington, and attended by the Forrest Products Commission in both Manjimup and Bunbury.

The AHU team and Learning and Development have worked together in partnership to facilitate and deliver this training and have started to plan for ACAT in 2017.

ACAT Karratha group activity



AHU Murujuga cultural induction

In September 2016, the AHU team travelled to Karratha to deliver ACAT to regional staff. Staff travelled from as far as Karijini and Millstream. The AHU team were welcomed by the Murujuga Rangers as they were visitors to this country. As part of this welcome, the team completed a cultural induction at the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation before heading out to see the ancient sites of Burrup and Murujuga national park.



AHU staff Rhonda Murphy, Karim Khan and Belinda Cox (with their completed Murujuga cultural induction certificates.

Engagement training

Parks and Wildlife staff are in a unique position to create a new way of working with Aboriginal people. The opportunity for shared ownership, joint management as well as the changes to the CALM Act paved the way to work together to care for country.

In the development of the ACAT, staff identified the need for training around engaging with Aboriginal people. The AHU is coordinating the development of this training.

At the 2015 departmental conference staff members were invited to attend workshops to provide input to form the content for the new engagement training.

The AHU team have put together a draft framework to enable staff to develop a set of skills based on experience and best practice. Staff can be confident in their ability to use this knowledge to better engage with the Aboriginal community to establish positive and lasting relationships.

The engagement training is hoping to be rolled out early in 2017.

Customary activities

Since 2013, revision of the original Customary Activities Guidelines has been completed. Some additional appendices are now included, such as Appendix 6 '*Guidance Note on Aboriginal Customary Activities in Marine Parks and Reserves*'.

These documents can be read in conjunction with the revised 'e-guide' to Aboriginal Customary Activities which can be found on the department's website.

https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/parks/aboriginalinvolvement/guide_to_aboriginal_customary_activities_booklet_print.PDF

Printed copies are available and the department is in the process of distributing copies of these to regional and district offices for the public.



Dryandra customary activities camp



Thanks!
for your
Support!!

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This newsletter is produced quarterly. Please contact Rhonda Murphy if you would like to contribute to the **next edition: May 2017**

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