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Correction: heck out the latest news from your friendly *Nearer to Nature* team.

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## Issue No. 9

Thursday, 6 December 2018

Hi Lisa Wright

Please note: The newsletter you received recently contained an error.

Correction: *Nearer to Nature* will be offering educational programs out of CREEC in 2019. Overall ownership and management of its day-to-day operations will remain with the [City of Canning](#). N2N apologises for the error and any confusion caused.

## Wanju (welcome)

Welcome to the latest issue of *Nearer to Nature News*, where you can find the latest nature-based education news and events in the Perth area and surrounds.

Wow! What a wet season we had! The forest is looking the best it has been for many years, some wildflowers bloomed the best for many years, there has been lots of good growth and maybe more bird calls than normal? But this is the south-west, and after the rains come the bushfires. It's December now and finally it is warming up! Staff from the Parks and Wildlife Service have had a busy few months undertaking prescribed burns to improve biodiversity and help protect communities from bushfires, and we are prepared for the south-west bushfire season ahead.

## New activities and locations for 2019

As mentioned in the last newsletter N2N has made some changes. We are now offering new excursions and incursions for schools. Plus we will be operating in several new and exciting locations see [New locations for 2019](#).

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The brochure for high schools has been produced and is available at [pws.dbca.wa.gov.au/get-involved/nearer-to-nature/schools](https://pws.dbca.wa.gov.au/get-involved/nearer-to-nature/schools). New excursion and new packages are on offer and in different locations! We're excited about what we are offering you next year. And we have [online enquiries](#) to streamline to process. Crikey, Mr C is being dragged into the digital age!

For primary schools your brochure will be available at the [N2N Schools website](#) in late January. We are planning changes for our primary excursions and incursions so keep a lookout, after you've had a good Christmas holiday.

**Remember, get in early with bookings.** There are only a few weeks left to make the most of our programs. For high schools please do [online enquiries](#) for 2019. For primary schools, an online enquiry system will be operating once your brochure is available.

**Thank you to everyone who has booked with us in 2018.** It's been a big year and we are really excited to continue partnering with you next year to help get your students 'Nearer to Nature'.

Mr C



#### In this issue:

- [Lost native bee species rediscovered](#)
- [Exotics ... not as exciting as they sound!](#)
- [New locations for 2019](#)

Good news! The Douglas's broad-headed bee (*Hesperocolletes douglasi*), presumed extinct since 1994, has been rediscovered in banksia woodland at Pinjar, north of Perth!

The bee, found only on Rottnest Island before it was presumed extinct, has been added to the list of critically endangered Western Australian species.



There are an estimated 2000 species of native bee in Australia. Eight-hundred species occur in WA, occupying most terrestrial habitats, including the arid inland.

Australian bees are extremely diverse in size, form, colour and sociality, with many predominantly solitary. Some species are specialised feeders, visiting only one to a few species of flower. These bees have adaptations and special behaviours to suit their forage plants. If these plants die out, so do the bees.

The European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) is an exotic species introduced to Australia to pollinate plants grown by settlers for food. They are now feral pests throughout Australia. Australian flora evolved without these bees and while some plants can be pollinated by the feral bee many need specific specialised Australian bees.

Feral bees also take over tree hollows preventing our endangered black cockatoos and animals from nesting. Several black cockatoo chicks, honeyeaters and owls have been found stung to death or engulfed by swarming feral bees in hollows.

For more information go to [Feral European Bees - Western Australian Museum](#).

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## Exotics ... not as exciting as they sound!

'Exotic' conjures images of palms, frangipanis, and waves lapping island beaches. In our beautiful jarrah forest, 'exotics' has an entirely different meaning. An exotic plant is a plant occurring in a place where it is not native.

Exotic plants often become weeds; a plant that requires intervention to reduce its harmful effects on the environment.

Weeds impact the forest by outcompeting native species for space, sunlight, water and nutrients. They reduce diversity by smothering native plants, prevent natives from regrowing in disturbed areas, replace plants that native animals have evolved with and rely on for food and nesting, and become fuel that makes bushfires hotter and more destructive.

especially vulnerable to takeover by exotics, especially those from similar climates. South African geophytes (bulbs that persist) such as bugle lily (*Watsonia meriana*) and freesia species. Many exotics have escaped from gardens and thrive in our climate with no natural controls.

**Nearer to Nature offers schools the opportunity to do voluntary community service, which includes exotic weed management.** In return we offer schools a night's free accommodation in our campground. Many schools combine community service with an overnight stay and two of our programs.



More information on weeds can be found at:

- [Parks and Wildlife Service website](#)
- *Western Weeds: A guide to the weeds of Western Australia* by BMJ Hussey et al.
- *'Weeds of the south-east: an identification guide for Australia'* by FJ Richardson et al.

Purchase these and other weed resources online: [Weed Information](#).

*Top right: Periwinkle invading bushland near the Perth Hills Discovery Centre.*

*Above right: Freesias at the base of a grass trees at the Perth Hills Discovery Centre.*

## New locations for 2019

*Nearer to Nature* Schools will be delivering at new locations in 2019, making it easier and more accessible for schools to participate in our programs.

### Piney Lakes Reserve

Off Leach Highway in Winthrop, Piney Lakes was a sacred Aboriginal women's site. It was a place of important women's rituals and the education of children, and is now under the custodianship of the Dijii Dijii women's group. The land was cleared for agriculture, a piggery, horse stables and cattle grazing. In the 1920s more bushland was cleared for a pine plantation. As a result by the 1950s the wetlands dried up.

On 7 February 1965 a large bushfire destroyed much of the plantation. Piney Lakes is now being rejuvenated boasting wetlands and restored bushland, home to black cockatoos, quenda, microbats, migratory waterbirds, frogs and oblong turtles. *Nearer to Nature Schools* will be running the popular Flora and Fauna Biology programs, and the new Dieback program from Piney Lakes.

### Yanchep National Park

Yanchep National Park is 42km north of Perth. The area was an Indigenous hunting site for thousands of years before European settlement. The Aboriginal name for the park is Nyanyi-Yandjip, named after the reeds that fringed the wetlands resembling the hairy main of the Dreamtime Waugal. The park provides habitat for quenda, western grey kangaroo, black-glove wallaby and is within the Northern Coastal Plain Important Bird Area as identified by BirdLife International due to its importance to threatened bird species. *Nearer to Nature Schools* will be running the Fire Geography, Fauna Biology and Dieback programs from the park in 2019.





## Canning River Eco Education Centre

And finally, another exciting announcement! *Nearer to Nature* will be offering educational programs at the Canning River Eco Education Centre, locally known as CREEC. Located on the banks of the Canning River next to the Kent Street Weir, the centre is perfect for

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