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Tuesday, 20 March 2018

Hi Lisa

Welcome back to another school year. 2017 was a busy year for us, particularly at Wharnccliffe Mill and more generally in the Margaret River region. Over the last few years we have developed a number of flexible options to offer environmental learning at a range of locations around the Geographe region to fit in with school camps and other school needs.

Once again we were involved with some great activities including the Dunsborough Primary School Bay 'OK Day' and the 'Bioblitz' in conjunction with Nature Conservation Margaret River (previously Cape to Cape Catchments group). We also visited many schools throughout the region to deliver incursions covering subjects such as endangered species, fire management and healthy waterways.

While this bushfire season has been quieter than previous years, it remains vital,

west. This year we will continue to offer Living with Fire incursions free of charge to primary schools in the region. The incursions are interesting and informative and well suited to years 4-6. I would encourage you to get in touch and take advantage of our specialist knowledge in this area.

John Anderson

Project officer

*Nearer to Nature South West*

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

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## Geography ATAR Unit 3

In 2017 we developed a new program to address fieldwork and theoretical components of Geography ATAR Unit 3, in particular the impact of land cover change on biodiversity and strategies to identify and mitigate these threats. This unit asks students to consider the pressures applied to ecosystem services as a result of societal needs and to evaluate a range of drivers of land cover transformation.

address the impacts of land cover transformation. Strategies examined include the use of appropriate silviculture to achieve diverse outcomes, application of desirable fire regimes, the *Western Shield* wildlife recovery program and a range of flora conservation and re-vegetation programs.



Fieldwork is an important part of the Geography curriculum.

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This summer, *Nearer to Nature* education officer Julie-Anne Oliver headed out to Australind Public Library to provide several school holiday activities for local kids. The theme was invertebrates and children looked at form and function, camouflage and the important roles invertebrates play in our ecosystem. They then had a chance to use what they had learnt to create an invertebrate garden and make a colourful 'Christmas spider' to take home with them.



Invertebrates play many roles in the forest ecosystem.

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## Noongar programs at Wharncliffe Mill

Over the last few of years a number of schools have had the opportunity to engage in an Indigenous cultural experience at the Wellington Discovery Forest with Troy



dancing. We have worked with Troy to move further afield and now also run these excursions at Wharncliffe Mill in Margaret River.



Students work with Troy Bennell to create artwork that tells the story of their camp.

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## Forest education professional learning day

In January, 47 staff from Coinda Primary School came to the Wellington Discovery Forest as part of a professional learning day organised by the Leschenault Timber Industry Club. The day offered teachers an opportunity to learn about a range of timber production issues including the management, harvesting and processing of plantations, and native hardwoods.

desirable outcomes in conjunction with the production of timber. Teachers were also introduced to the range of excursions addressing forest conservation and management offered to students of all ages at the centre.

For more information regarding a Forest Learning Day for your staff, please contact Brad Barr at Wespine ([BradB@wespine.com](mailto:BradB@wespine.com)) and for a range of useful resources go to [www.forestlearning.edu.au](http://www.forestlearning.edu.au).



DBCA principal research scientist Lachie McCaw discusses fire management with teachers.

During Term 4 2017 the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup brought a large group of experienced hands to the Wellington Discovery Forest Centre as part of their Seniors Week program.

Activities included a short bushwalk, some informative videos about bushfire and conservation programs, and a great deal of interesting discussion, drawing on the wide experiences of days past and present. It just goes to show that you are never too old to learn something new!



**Above** Our taxidermy room is fascinating for old and young alike.

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*E yokoso Wellington Discovery Forest.*

(Welcome to Wellington Discovery Forest.)

In October 2017 we were pleased to play host to a group of councillors from Setagaya, Bunbury's sister city in Japan. The visiting dignitaries learnt about native forest ecology, bush tucker and other traditional uses of native plants, and had an opportunity to look at our extensive taxidermy collection to meet some of the inhabitants of the forest. It was great to have an opportunity to introduce visitors to Bunbury and its incredible natural environment.

**Below** A dignitary from Japan samples a 'bush lolly'.



For any enquiries and bookings for excursions or Professional Learning, please contact *Nearer to Nature* South West at Parks and Wildlife Service's South West Regional Office:

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