



## Funding for Aboriginal rangers delivered

The McGowan Labor Government recently announced the first round recipients of its landmark \$20 million, five-year Aboriginal Ranger Program.

The program is providing 85 new jobs and 80 training opportunities for Aboriginal people, including 47 female Aboriginal ranger positions.

The 13 recipient groups will share in \$8.5 million to employ rangers to undertake land and sea management including conservation, cultural, tourism and education activities across a range of tenures.

Premier Mark McGowan said more jobs and training for Aboriginal rangers across Western Australia would help protect the environment and deliver positive economic outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

Environment Minister Stephen Dawson said the investment would support new initiatives

as well as build on work already undertaken by established ranger groups across WA.

"It was very encouraging to see so many applications for the first round of the program, which reflects the aspirations of Aboriginal people to establish ranger programs to manage their country," he said.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Ben Wyatt said there was a spread of recipients across the State and a mix of smaller and larger projects.

"The social, cultural and economic benefits from employment under this program should not be underestimated. It will help improve community wellbeing and resilience, and build leadership in regional and remote areas as well as support business development."

The State Government will work with the successful recipients to finalise a funding agreement over the coming months. The Royalties for Regions-funded program is being administered by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.



**Top:** DBCA Parks and Visitor Services Executive Director Peter Sharp (left) and Environment Minister Stephen Dawson (2nd right) with representatives of the Esperance Tjalitjaak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation.

**Far left and left:** Recipient group Goldfields Land and Sea Council Rangers working on country at Rowles Lagoon Conservation Park. Photos – DBCA



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## Rottnest from day to dusk

With additional ferries to and from the island, now is a wonderful time to experience the wonder of a summer's evening on Rottnest Island.

Visitors that travel to the island from midday in February will benefit from a discount on admission fees.

- So why not travel later and stay longer? The last ferry departs the island at 8pm.
- Adults will pay half price admission fees (\$9).
- Admission for children under 12 years will be free.
- The discount applies to ferries, chartered boats, the general boating community and planes arriving in the reserve after 12pm.
- The discount applies for day trips only (not extended stay).

Visit [rotnnestisland.com](http://rotnnestisland.com)

## Visitors flock to Rio Tinto Naturescape upgrade



**Above:** Paperpark Waterhole, Rio Tinto Naturescape Kings Park. Photo – J Thomas

An estimated 40,000 people have visited Rio Tinto Naturescape Kings Park since its re-opening in mid-December 2017.

The 6ha space is a bushland area designed to encourage children to connect with nature and learn to appreciate Western Australia's incredible natural environment.

New features of the \$3 million second-stage development include two large aerial walkways, stretching high into the treetops, known as 'The Bungarra' and 'The Python', and an extended waterhole. The new space also features upgraded outdoor classrooms for the Kings Park Education program.

Rio Tinto Naturescape Kings Park is currently closed until 1 March 2018 for maintenance and preparation ahead of school group bookings.

This project is made possible by the generous support of major partner Rio Tinto.

Visitors can find out more, including information on how to book your class into a Kings Park Education program at [bgpa.wa.gov.au/kings-park/area/naturescape](http://bgpa.wa.gov.au/kings-park/area/naturescape)

## Firefighting efforts aided by prescribed burn

The southern bushfire season has kept staff busy responding to a number of bushfires around the State, including a hot intense fire in the Perth hills in mid-January and several long-running fires along the South Coast.

Prescribed burning carried out in State forest was integral to containing the Sawyers Valley bushfire that started in the Perth Hills on Sunday 14 January, according to firefighters who battled the blaze.

The bushfire blanketed Perth in smoke and was managed by Parks and Wildlife Service with support from volunteer bushfire brigades, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, WA Police, Volunteer Fire and Rescue brigades, the State Emergency Service and St John Ambulance.

A total of 290 personnel, as well as 37 heavy machines and appliances, seven water bombers and other aircraft were deployed to the bushfire.

Swan Region manager Benson Todd said low fuel buffers created by recent prescribed burning helped firefighters contain the bushfire and prevented it from impacting communities in the Perth Hills.

"The fire burnt through more than 3800ha of State forest and pine plantation under hot and

dry conditions, which were very challenging for firefighters," Benson said.

Heavy rain over the fire ground assisted bushfire suppression efforts in the following days, together with reduced fuel in areas of forest from recent prescribed burns. An All Clear was issued on Tuesday 16 January.

Parks and Wildlife Service's South Coast Region were also been busy with bushfire activity from November through to January with long-running bushfires that were caused by lightning during summer storms.

Three bushfires were reported on 28 November in Nuytsland Nature Reserve and burnt through 23,500ha before an All Clear was issued on 1 January.

The decision was made to directly attack one of these fires which involved a demanding operation to gear up and get to the site to construct firebreaks. In addition, two Parks and Wildlife Service firefighters spent Christmas protecting the historic Old Telegraph Station from a fire to the east of the facility.

A bushfire in Cape Arid National Park was first reported on 27 December and burnt 16,000ha of bushland, with an All Clear issued for the park on 19 January.



**Above:** Parks and Wildlife Service staff examine the remains of a Bibbulmun Track camp shelter lost in the Sawyers Valley fire. Photo – DBCA

# Community groups share in river funding

Environment Minister Stephen Dawson has announced the first round of grant recipients for its Community Rivercare Program, which will see \$900,000 allocated to community groups over three years.

The \$300,000 funding for 2018–19 will help 17 community groups deliver projects including foreshore restoration and riverbank erosion, reduction of nutrient inflows, native waterbird conservation, native fish habitat protection and restocking of native recreational fish species.

"Community groups are instrumental in protecting and enhancing the natural values of our rivers, and in turn increasing public enjoyment of vibrant recreational areas," Mr Dawson said.

"Congratulations to the 17 groups that have received grants in this first round. I encourage groups to apply for further grants under round two of this program later this year, so we can continue to support these important projects."

Grant projects which received funding in round one include:

- Ellen Brook endangered native fish habitat enhancement
- Bannister Creek and Canning River Regional Park boundary enhancement
- Bardon Park environmental restoration works
- Astley River Park foreshore restoration
- Helena River restoration at north bank
- Helena Valley restoration west of Scott Street
- Attadale foreshore conservation and restoration of riparian vegetation
- Piesse Gully weed control and revegetation.

The full list of recipients is available at [dbca.wa.gov.au/news/media-statements](http://dbca.wa.gov.au/news/media-statements)

**Above right:** Environment Minister Stephen Dawson with grant recipients from the Bannister Creek Catchment Group. Photo – DBCA

**Right:** Volunteers come together to clean the Swan River foreshore. Photo – Grace Milne/DBCA



## Keeping Perth rivers clean

Volunteers helped make a difference to the health of the Swan Canning Riverpark in January as part of Clean Our Rivers.

Volunteers and Community Manager Jason Menzies said the riverside rubbish clean-up was a great way to prevent rubbish and discarded fishing waste making its way into the river system.

"Several tonnes of rubbish such as plastics, shopping trolleys, whitegoods and fishing waste are removed from the Swan and Canning rivers and foreshore areas each year," he said.

"Clean Our Rivers helps raise further awareness of the importance of keeping the river environment clean and healthy."



**Above:** Perth Zoo staff give new cub a health check. Photo – Alex Asbury

## Perth Zoo welcomes red panda cub

Perth Zoo celebrated the birth of a Nepalese red panda cub recently, while an Australian conservation organisation has helped rescue six red pandas being trafficked across international borders.

Perth Zoo keeper Marty Boland said while it was exciting to welcome a new cub to the Zoo family, the rescue of the pandas from wildlife traffickers emphasised just how perilous it is in the wild for these animals.

The pandas were taken into the care of one of Perth Zoo's conservation partners, Free the Bears, after being seized on the border of Laos and China. Tragically only three of the six survived their first night due to severe stress and potential exposure to disease. The Perth Zoo team are consulting with Free the Bears, providing advice on appropriate diets and how to reduce heat stress for the rescued pandas.

"The recent rescue in Laos highlights how vital coordinated zoo breeding programs are for the survival of this endangered species," Marty said.

"It ensures we have an insurance population in place to fight extinction."

Including the new cub, Perth Zoo has successfully reared 19 Nepalese red pandas since 1997.





## Walk the wonderful west end

The final trail markers are being installed on arguably the most picturesque section of the renowned 45km walking trail network on Rottnest Island, the Wadjemup Bidi.

Due to officially open on 1 March 2018, this section consists of new beach access to Rocky Bay and Marjorie Bay, and takes visitors on an exploratory journey around the rugged southern coast, linking Radar Reef to Strickland Bay. The trail also links Narrow Neck to the Cathedral Rocks viewing platform offering a spectacular vantage to watch a colony of New Zealand fur seals playing in the pristine waters.

Three of the five walking trails intersect at Narrow Neck, providing excellent access to the trails for the boating community.

The Wadjemup Bidi is a major tourism and conservation success, managing visitor access to Rottnest Island's beautiful natural, cultural and historical landscapes. Along the way, interpretive and directional signage highlights areas of interest, and audio stations relay cultural stories by Whadjuk traditional owners.

Maps are available at the visitor centre on at [rotnestisland.com/see-and-do/natural-attractions/wadjemup-walk-trail](http://rotnestisland.com/see-and-do/natural-attractions/wadjemup-walk-trail).

**Above:** Newly completed stairs to Rocky Bay along the Wadjemup Bidi, Rottnest Island. Photo – RIA

## Volunteers recognised

Sixteen volunteers and one community group were recognised for their outstanding ongoing contribution to conservation at the 2017 Volunteer of the Year Awards

Volunteer program coordinator Lee Hollingsworth said 2016–17 was another record year, with 5410 people giving 723,508 hours of their time in 300 programs to help Parks and Wildlife Service manage WA's world-class parks and remarkable fauna and flora.

"The Campground Host program alone attracted 98 new hosts and 235 hosts spent about 160,000 hours welcoming visitors in 50 campgrounds across WA."

The Volunteer of the Year Award went to Eddie Seaman for his work at Stirling Range National Park. In his 15 years of active volunteering, Eddie contributed more than 15,000 hours.

He was involved in volunteer work ranging from maintenance, fauna and flora surveys, and campground hosting to helping rescue lost or injured hikers.

Additionally, he mentored younger staff and generously shared a lifetime of practical experience and an exceptional knowledge of the park.

For 2016-17, Lee said the department had introduced a new award – the *Western Shield Award* – to recognise a departmental volunteer who had shown a commitment to on-ground wildlife conservation work to benefit WA native wildlife.

The inaugural recipient of the *Western Shield Award* was Jade Kelly for her involvement in a wide range of fauna monitoring and research projects since she started volunteering in 2012.

Since then, Jade has contributed around 350 hours to the Woylie Conservation and Research Project helping with woylie translocations at Perup Sanctuary and the related post-translocation monitoring.

More recently, she spent 226 hours assisting with camera surveys as part of the Eradicate feral cat bait trial in the southern jarrah forest.

The 2017 Community Group Award went to WA Seabird Rescue. Six volunteers received Outstanding Service Awards and eight received Long Service Awards (20 years or more).

**Below:** The 2017 Volunteer of the Year Awards held in the Keiran McNamara Conservation Science Centre on International Volunteer Day in December last year. Photo – DBCA



**Top:** Environment Minister Stephen Dawson congratulates Volunteer of the Year Eddie Seaman.

**Above:** Environment Minister Stephen Dawson hands the Community Group Award to WA Seabird Rescue president Halina Burmej.

**Below:** Western Shield Award recipient Jade Kelly releasing a golden bandicoot. Photos – DBCA



# Marine wildlife set to benefit from oil spill container

A custom-built shipping container to help in the event of a marine oil spill was unveiled at DBCA's Kensington's headquarters last month.

The Department of Transport provided DBCA with an oiled wildlife response container to support the State's ability to collect, treat and care for wildlife in a marine oil pollution event.

The \$130,000 facility was built by Dwyertec in New Zealand for Australian conditions and is one of seven OWR containers situated around Australia in readiness for immediate deployment.

DBCA Director General Mark Webb said the Department of Transport (DOT) and DBCA had an established collaborative arrangement to manage wildlife in a marine oil pollution event and had worked together to develop oiled wildlife response training modules with Perth Zoo, Murdoch University.

"DBCA has a responsibility to conserve and protect wildlife and ensure the humane treatment, housing and release or euthanasia of fauna in the event of an oil spill incident," he said.

"This facility is a significant tool in helping achieve this and having the container stored at Kensington headquarters will enable hands on training."

In 2017, more than 240 staff from the Department of Transport and DBCA, port authorities and the oil and gas industry, together with volunteer wildlife rehabilitators, were trained in oiled wildlife response.

The oiled wildlife response container is an important part of being able to deliver high-quality training to support oiled wildlife response.

**Right:** DBCA Director General Mark Webb and Department of Transport Director General Richard Sellars at the commissioning of the oiled wildlife response container. Photo – Peter Nicholas/DBCA



**Above:** DOT and DBCA staff viewing the washdown facilities within the container. Photos – Peter Nicholas/DBCA



## Digital park passes available

Park passes to WA's national parks can now be purchased online and printed instantly by anyone with an email account.

Park passes, along with maps, books, prints and *LANDSCOPE* magazine, are available on the department's newly

upgraded online store at [shop.dbca.wa.gov.au](http://shop.dbca.wa.gov.au). Park passes can also be purchased at a range of outlets including Parks and Wildlife Service offices and visitor centres.

## Fire medal for esteemed incident controller

One of Parks and Wildlife Service's long-serving and outstanding fire management officers, Kelly Gillen, has been awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal for his contribution to Western Australia's fire management, including bushfire suppression and prescribed burning.

A qualified biologist, Kelly has more than 30 years of experience as a fire manager in a diverse range of environments and vegetation types. Before recently retiring, he was one of the State's foremost incident controllers, having commanded some of WA's most challenging bushfire response efforts.

The department has been honoured to have had the benefit of Kelly's strong leadership, integrity, expertise and experience. Congratulations Kelly!

**Right:** Australian Fire Service Medal recipient Kelly Gillen. Photo – DBCA







## Yalgorup National Park expansion announced

More than 1,000 hectares of Class A conservation reserve will be added to Yalgorup National Park, near Mandurah.

This reservation in the heart of Yalgorup National Park will ensure the long-term management and protection of critically important banksia and tuart woodlands as well as supporting vital habitat for the endangered Carnaby's cockatoo and the vulnerable western ringtail possum.

Yalgorup National Park is home to the internationally recognised Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar wetlands which boast a diverse range of flora and fauna.

The park provides critical habitat for migratory shorebird species as well as resident species such as the hooded plover.

Environment Minister Stephen Dawson said the expansion will assist in avoiding fragmentation of its landscapes from development.

Yalgorup National Park is the first of a number of conservation reserve expansions planned in the Perth and Peel regions.

**Above:** Environment Minister Stephen Dawson, Minister for Local Government, Heritage, Culture and The Arts David Templeman and Member for Murray-Wellington Robyn Clarke at Martins Tank Campground near Preston Beach. **Inset:** Environment Minister Stephen Dawson, Steve Dutton, Member for Murray-Wellington Robyn Clarke, David Charles, Brett Fitzgerald and Mandurah MP David Templeman at Martins Tank Campground in Yalgorup National Park. Photos – Shem Bisluk/DBCA

## Sustainability plan for Rottnest

With more ferry services than ever before, Rottnest Island saw a spike in visitation this summer with overall visitation increasing by 16 per cent in both November and December compared with the same period last year.

This trend is expected to continue with the third ferry service representing an additional 700,000 seats to the island across the course of a year.

It is now more important than ever to embed sustainable practices on the island, to enhance and conserve the attributes that make Rottnest such a unique destination.

To this end, a plan to manage the island's sustainability has been released.

The *Sustainability Destination Action Plan*, which complements the *Rottnest Island Management Plan 2014–2019*, sets a foundation for the long-term vision of the island to be an internationally recognised, sustainable, must-visit tourism destination.

It provides a strategic framework for the island community to collectively achieve an established set of sustainability objectives and targets over the short, medium and longer term. Performance against these targets will be monitored annually.

In 2016, the Rottnest Island Authority received Silver Certification against the Destination Standard through the internationally recognised EarthCheck Certified Program.

For more information on the new plan, head to [ria.wa.gov.au](http://ria.wa.gov.au).



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