



In this issue

Australia Day Honours List

New campground facilities opened in the south-west

Busy start to the year for DPaW firefighters

New marine emblem for WA

Summer fun in nature

Grevillea project doubles plant numbers

Australia Day Honours List

Three current and former staff members were recognised in the 2014 Australia Day Honours List.

The late Keiran McNamara, former Director General of the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and its predecessor agency the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), was awarded a posthumous Officer of the Order of Australia.

Keiran was recognised for his distinguished service to public administration in Western Australia, to natural resource management and environmental protection policy reform and implementation, and to the community.

His notable contributions to the public sector over 40 years include his leadership of DEC and CALM and a range of other positions at the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Keiran served on a number of Ministerial councils and standing committees and was a respected member of the World Commission on Protected Areas World Conservation Union, International Union for Conservation of Nature and a range of professional scientific societies in wildlife and ecology.

The award was a tribute to his lifetime's work.

Dr Andrew Burbidge was awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia for his distinguished service to the environment as a conservation biologist, to sustainable management practices, and to the preservation of endangered flora and fauna.

He had a distinguished career with DPaW's predecessor agencies, which concluded as the Director of CALM's Threatened Species and Communities Unit. Andrew is the current chair of

the WA Threatened Species Scientific Committee and the Gorgon Barrow Island Net Conservation Benefits Advisory Board.

Over the past 40 years, Andrew has made significant contributions to wildlife conservation including his work with western swamp tortoise recovery, threatened birds and Australian wildlife research to name a few.

DPaW South West Regional Manager Greg Mair was awarded an Australian Fire Service Medal, which recognises distinguished service by members of Australian fire services.

Greg has been involved in fire management activities since he started with the former Forests Department in 1976 and, as an accredited Level 3 Incident Controller for 14 years, has managed many major bushfire incidents for the department.

Published by the Department of Parks and Wildlife's (DPaW's) Public Information and Corporate Affairs Branch

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Department of Parks and Wildlife



New campground facilities opened in the south-west

Two new campground upgrades were recently opened in the south-west by Environment Minister Albert Jacob as part of DPaW's commitment to increasing nature-based tourism facilities for visitors in national parks and reserves.

The \$1.3 million upgrade at Martin's Tank campground in Yalgorup National Park and the

\$1.2 million redevelopment of Wharnclyffe Mill in Bramley National Park are significant additions in providing high-quality, low-cost accommodation facilities.

Acting Director Parks and Visitor Services Tracy Shea said staff had worked hard over two years to complete both projects.

continues on page 2 ...



Environment Minister Albert Jacob, DPaW volunteer campground hosts Wendy and Rod Walsh, Colin Holt MLC and DPaW Acting Director General Jim Sharp at the opening of Martin's Tank campground upgrade.

... continued from page 1

“Originally a pine mill, Wharncliffe Mill now has four new lodge rooms, three new two-bedroom forest cottages, 44 bush and caravan camping sites, plus a cafe, reception, library and commercial kitchen,” she said.

“The popular Martin’s Tank campground has undergone significant changes with the addition of eight tent camp sites, four larger group camp sites, camp kitchen and toilets.”

The Minister said the Wharncliffe Mill upgrade was part of the State Government’s Naturebank program and a joint initiative between DPaW and Tourism WA to assist the development of environmentally sensitive tourism experiences in WA’s most extraordinary locations.

Construction of the new Martin’s Tank campground was funded from the Royalties for Regions Conservation Parks Visitor Infrastructure and Roads Initiative.

Below : Some of the facilities at Wharncliffe Mill.



Busy start to the year for DPaW firefighters

It has been a busy start to the year for DPaW’s firefighters and support crews with numerous fires, including Watch and Acts in the Shire of Denmark and John Forrest National Park, and the recent devastating Perth hills bushfire emergency.

The Perth hills fire, which started Sunday 12 January, began in the suburb of Parkerville and moved quickly through Stoneville and Mount Helena, destroying 56 homes.

Together with firefighters from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), and volunteer fire and emergency services, 30 staff from DPaW’s Perth Hills District responded to the fire initially, bringing with them nine heavy-duty trucks and a front-end loader. A large number of staff from Wellington

and Blackwood districts were also mobilised to the fire and assisted over the following days.

District Fire Coordinator Mike Pasotti said DPaW firefighters played a vital role in fire suppression efforts and assisted in the protection of homes and the establishment of a containment line on the northern flank and the eastern head of the fire.

“Our staff were committed to the full response to the fire, continuing to do patrols and mopping up in the days after the worst of the fire. They were also clearing debris from roads and walk trails in the burnt-out areas,” he said.

“At the same time as the Parkerville fire, DPaW was managing a fire in John Forrest National Park and had significant resources devoted to that.

“I would like to thank all staff involved in the response to both Perth hills fires. Their hard work and dedication in a demanding situation is much appreciated and recognised.”

State Duty Officer Roger Armstrong said 12 January was a difficult day that tested DPaW fire crews’ ability to handle a number of small incidents in addition to managing the fire in John Forrest National Park and assisting DFES with the Parkerville fire.

“Nevertheless, we were able to provide significant input to the Parkerville incident that was critical in containing the fire,” he said.

Photo – Leigh Sage/DPaW



New marine emblem for WA

The whale shark has been named Western Australia's new marine emblem.

Premier Colin Barnett made the announcement at Forest Crescent Primary School in 2013.

The Premier said the whale shark was famous for gathering every year during autumn and winter off the coast of Exmouth and Coral Bay in the spectacular Ningaloo Marine Park.

"The whale shark is a significant attraction for those visiting WA and reflects the diversity and beauty of the state's marine life," the Premier said.

The whale shark is the world's biggest living fish, growing up to 18 metres in length, however individuals at Ningaloo Marine Park are commonly in the three to 12-metre size range.

In the most recent season, a record 20,698 visitors came to swim with the whale sharks at Ningaloo. More than 1,100 tours were conducted.

In November last year, DPaW released a new *Whale shark management program*, which set guidelines for whale shark interactions, monitoring, research and management to ensure that a healthy and natural whale

shark population is maintained, and a world-class and sustainable tourism industry is supported.

In recognition of the Premier's announcement, DPaW Senior Graphic Designer and artist Gooitzen van der Meer completed an impressive painting of a whale shark.

"Being asked to paint the official marine emblem of WA was a great privilege," Gooitzen said.

"The painting was completed over an intense two days, using a photograph and a pencil sketch as references.

"In this piece, the key was getting the light and shading correct to show that the whale shark was underwater, with light streaming in from above."

Gooitzen's artistic talent has been gracing the covers of *LANDSCOPE* magazine for three years, while his illustrations have been published inside the magazine for many more.

The whale shark will join the flower emblem (red and green kangaroo paw), bird emblem (black swan), animal emblem (numbat), and fossil emblem (Gogo fish) as the state's symbols.

DPaW Senior Graphic Designer and artist Gooitzen van der Meer with his whale shark painting.

Photo – Peter Nicholas/DPaW



Bailey Smith enjoys Wonders of the wildlife ark.

Summer fun in nature

DPaW has run another successful series of summer holiday activities for children.

Children in the Perth metropolitan area had a wide range of activities to choose from.

Nearer to Nature Program Coordinator Jill Francis said the highlight of the holiday program was a family event – *Wonders of the wildlife ark* at Yanchep National Park.

"This activity saw children and adults interacting with a variety of animals including lizards, snakes, stick insects and other exhibits," she said.

Yanchep Marketing Coordinator Jennifer Green said the holiday program at Yanchep was always popular, and this summer was no different.

"Children had the opportunity to squeeze and slide through tight spaces in our adventure caves, plus learn about Aboriginal culture with the *Coolangar Dreaming* session. Here, kids learnt how to hunt and gather, make bush jewellery, decorate boomerangs, and even had the chance to throw a spear," she said. Children in the south-west of the state were treated to a range of activities offered within the Walpole Wilderness and Denmark region. DPaW's Frankland District coordinated the program, which featured a number of new activities, including the *Family bike ride* along the recently completed Munda Biddi Trail.

Grevillea project doubles plant numbers



DPaW has led the recovery of a critically endangered shrub through a seed germination and translocation program.

Grevillea brachystylis subsp. *grandis*, listed as threatened flora in 2002 due to severe habitat fragmentation, is found south-west of Busselton, with just 195 plants remaining in eight, small roadside populations.

Staff from DPaW's Blackwood District worked closely with land managers, controlling weeds at the site and surveying suitable habitat for new populations.

Conservation Officer Ben Lullfitz said more than 1,000 seeds were collected from existing populations

of *Grevillea brachystylis* subsp. *grandis* between 2009 and 2012.

"A small number were germinated by DPaW's Threatened Flora Seed Centre to determine their viability and these were then grown on at the Kings Park and Botanic Gardens nursery to produce seedlings," Ben said.

"We were able to plant 92 seedlings in 2012 and 172 in 2013 at a secure site within a nature reserve close to the existing populations, after receiving funding through the Commonwealth's Caring for our Country program."

Ben said the translocation had been very successful, with 97 to 99 per cent of the plants surviving after the first

two years, 95 per cent of them flowering and 80 per cent bearing fruit.

"This translocation has more than doubled the known number of plants of *Grevillea brachystylis* subsp. *grandis* and will help ensure the conservation of the species into the future," he said.

"The new population has 260 healthy young plants, which represent genetic material from seven of the original eight populations.

"These will be used as a source of seed to establish new populations, along with further seed from the existing populations, and will further enhance plant numbers."



Above: DPaW's Ron Howes preparing the site for planting.

Top left: A healthy *Grevillea brachystylis* subsp. *grandis* seedling.

Far left: The volunteers from the Bunbury Regional Herbarium who planted seedlings as part of the translocation project.

Left: Kings Park and Botanic Gardens staff preparing seedlings for collection at the nursery in Perth.