



PARKS AND WILDLIFE NEWS

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State Budget delivers new funding

The Department of Parks and Wildlife has received an extra \$20 million for prescribed burning in the State Budget to help reduce bushfire risk in the south-west.

The *Royalties for Regions* funding will be delivered over four years, with an initial allocation of \$3.5 million in 2015–16. This is in addition to the department's annual prescribed burning budget of \$10 million. Parks and Wildlife has a budget for recurrent expenditure in the coming financial year of \$297.322 million, with a capital works program of \$22.489 million.

Director General Jim Sharp said the budget injection would enable the department to extend seasonal contracts to provide a more flexible and expanded prescribed burning program.

"Increasing the mobility of our staff and making machinery and equipment more available will help us maximise opportunities to carry out prescribed burning in key areas," he said.

Other investments announced in this month's State Budget include \$6.25 million in 2015–16 for affordable caravanning and camping as part of the \$21.05 million, four-year *Royalties for*

Regions-funded Parks for People initiative, and an extra \$1.2 million to complete significant upgrades at the Gap and Natural Bridge in Torndirrup National Park near Albany.

In the Kimberley, \$9.51 million will be invested in 2015–16 to establish a five million hectare interconnected network of national and marine parks and other major conservation measures under the \$81.5 million *Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy*. For more information on the State Budget visit ourstatebudget.wa.gov.au/infographic.



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Department of Parks and Wildlife



Corporate support for WA's native wildlife

Private sector support is a significant factor in the delivery of Western Australia's *Western Shield* – an innovative native wildlife recovery program that is actively working to reduce the threat of foxes and cats throughout the State.

Parks and Wildlife recently signed a five-year \$100,000 partnership with nickel producer Western Areas Limited to assist wildlife recovery in the Wheatbelt Region including Dryandra Woodland.

Director General Jim Sharp said Western Areas' support of *Western Shield* would help Parks and Wildlife in the delivery of the next phase of introduced predator control, the control of feral cats.

"It will help fund the department's work in examining the effectiveness of *Eradicat*® feral cat bait and its integration with fox control in this region while also supporting continued native wildlife recovery," he said.

"One initiative of this work is the investigation of new methods for monitoring native animals and predators through the use of remote cameras, which will also provide valuable information on the wider use potential of *Eradicat*®.

"I commend Western Areas for their support in assisting native wildlife recovery."



Top right: Parks and Wildlife Director General Jim Sharp presents a certificate of appreciation to Western Areas Managing Director Dan Lougher.

Above: Jim Sharp and Dan Lougher with Western Shield Coordinator Ashley Millar, Western Areas Environmental Manager Phillip Knapton and Great Southern District Manager Greg Durell. Photos – Karla Graham/Parks and Wildlife



Staff from the department's Aboriginal Heritage Unit with Whadjuk Noongar Elder Theresa Walley (second from left): Tina Bowers, Rhonda Murphy, Belinda Cox and Jayden Miller. Photo – Karla Graham/Parks and Wildlife

Reconciliation Week 2015: celebrating steps forward

Parks and Wildlife celebrated Reconciliation Week this year by unveiling new traditional owner signage and opening a dedicated reconciliation garden, as well as hosting a number of other events and barbecues around the State.

More than 60 new signs acknowledging Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of department-managed lands and waters will be installed at Parks and Wildlife office buildings in coming weeks.

Aboriginal Heritage Unit manager Rhonda Murphy said improving the recognition of traditional owners was a priority within the department's *Reconciliation Action Plan* (RAP).

"The signs are an important symbol of respect, but they are just one of the many great things being done around the department to build strong partnerships and community relationships with Aboriginal people," Rhonda said.

"Parks and Wildlife is progressing well towards meeting the outcomes of the RAP.

"There have been a number of highlights this past year, including the signing of significant Indigenous

land use agreements for the joint management of Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park, and the ongoing effectiveness of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy, which supports economic opportunities for Aboriginal people, as staff members and as external contractors or tour operators."

Staff from the South West Region marked Reconciliation Week with the official opening of Kaatamoodoo Kidji Maambakoort, a reconciliation garden at the department's Bunbury offices.

Parks and Visitor Services regional leader Peter Henderson said the garden, which features artwork by Aboriginal artist and park ranger Ken Ninnette, was designed as a space for staff and community members to yarn, reflect and socialise.

"It represents the coming together of Noongar and non-Aboriginal people," he said.

"It features a rockery and plants that can be used for bush tucker, medicines and ceremonial purposes, along with seating made from timber from the old Seaview fire tower, as a nod to the region's forestry history," he said.

Chinese botanists visit Parks and Wildlife

Environment Minister Albert Jacob recently welcomed a group of Chinese botanists to WA as part of cooperative agreement with Parks and Wildlife to develop plant conservation research opportunities.

Five scientists from the Institute of Botany and Chinese Academy of Sciences in Jiangsu province toured Parks and Wildlife facilities and had briefings about the research carried out at WA's Threatened Seed Centre, Herbarium and molecular laboratory.

The group was taken to Rockingham Lakes Regional Park to inspect and discuss on-ground reserve management programs with Parks and Wildlife staff.

"I am delighted to have met the institute's director, Professor Zhuang Yule, and his colleagues to discuss some of their ideas for collaboration with

Parks and Wildlife's Plant Science and Herbarium Program," the Minister said.

"South-west WA and southern central China are two of the world's 25 biodiversity hotspots and have a lot in common.

"The initial five-year agreement signed last year by the State Government and the Institute of Botany and Chinese Academy of Sciences will look at common research goals in plant taxonomy, resources and conservation, and promotion of research which increases plant conservation management effectiveness and awareness.

"This is an important step in developing a relationship that seeks to build on WA's outstanding natural environment and China's growing conservation science capacity."



Above: Senior research scientist Kelly Shepherd with Yin Yunlong, Xu Zenglai, Geng Maolin and Liu Jianxiu. Photo – Jennifer Eliot
Right: Environment Minister Albert Jacob and Premier Colin Barnett with Zhuang Yule, Director, Institute of Botany, Jiangsu Province and Chinese Academy of Sciences. Photo – Peter Nicholas/Parks and Wildlife



Aggressive crocodile trapped in the Kimberley

A cranky crocodile lurking around a popular Kimberley swimming and fishing spot has been trapped and relocated in a successful operation between Parks and Wildlife and local Nyikina Mangala rangers.

A trap and warning signage was installed after the 3.7m saltwater croc had been sighted at Telegraph Pool on the Fitzroy River, about two hours from Broome. A week later, lured in by feral cow bait, the crocodile was secured.

Wildlife officer Peter Carstairs said the crocodile had been getting very inquisitive and too close to people.

"It was quite cranky actually," Peter said. "We can't guarantee it was the same animal which was previously seen at Telegraph Pool, but it's quite likely."

The croc has been transported to his new home at the Malcolm Douglas Crocodile Park, where he is being introduced to several potential girlfriends.

The Nyikina Mangala rangers have reinstalled the trap upstream at Telegraph Pool where at least one more crocodile had been spotted.

Peter said it was important crocodile sightings were reported to authorities.

"Don't just post photos on social media – call your local Parks and Wildlife office."



Above: Nyikina Mangala rangers with the 3.7m crocodile on the Fitzroy River.
Left: The cranky crocodile has now been relocated to Malcolm Douglas Crocodile Park. Photos – Kimberley Land Council



The chuditch, also known as the western quoll, is WA's largest carnivorous marsupial and at maturity is the size of a small domestic cat. Photo – Rebecca Kay/Parks and Wildlife

ParkFinder goes mobile

Planning outdoor adventures in Western Australia's national parks and reserves is now easier with the release of the ParkFinder mobile app for iPhones.

Parks and Wildlife visitor services assistant director Rod Annear said the app featured more than 100 parks and hundreds more sites.

"The app allows you to search by map, park name, find parks near you or filter your search by the activities and facilities that you want," he said.

"People can search for parks that match their needs, and all the data is downloaded to the device, allowing access to park information when the phone is offline or out of mobile range."

Parks can be saved to a favourites list or shared with friends on social media. The app also links to the Parks and Wildlife

Explore Parks website (www.parks.dpaw.wa.gov.au) so park information always stays up to date.

The Parkfinder app is part of the *Royalties for Regions-funded Parks for People* initiative that is expanding camping and visitor experiences in parks and reserves throughout Western Australia.

More online and mobile resources will soon be rolled out to help people get outdoors and enjoy nature, including a camping checklist app for Western Australia, a TrailFinder app and mobile flora and fauna guides.

ParkFinder can be downloaded from the iTunes app store, accessible by scanning the QR code to the right. An android version is being planned and most new apps being developed by Parks and Wildlife will be compatible with Android and Apple smartphones.



WA chuditch to boost eastern populations

A second group of Western Australian chuditch are settling into their new home in South Australia's Flinders Ranges after being relocated to help boost a newly established population.

Thirty-nine chuditch were sourced from Julimar Conservation Park, Fitzgerald River National Park and the Upper Warren region, fitted with radio tracking collars for future monitoring and flown east.

This marsupial disappeared from the Flinders Ranges more than 100 years ago and while they used to be seen over most of Australia, until last year they were only found in WA.

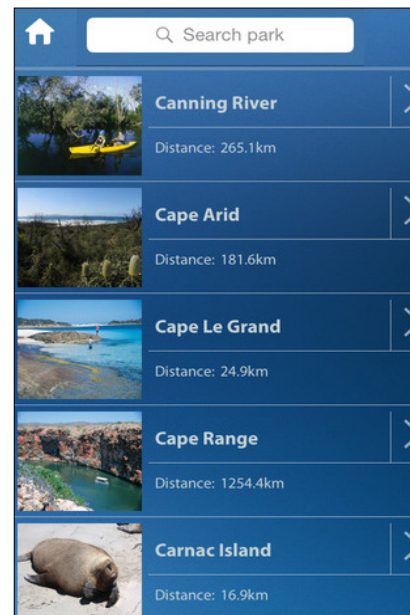
The first translocation to the Flinders Ranges occurred in April 2014

and due to its success a second translocation was given the green light by the State Government.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said he was proud that WA was continuing to lead the way in helping with the recovery of chuditch populations across the nation.

"We hope that through relocations such as this, we can significantly reduce the risk of extinction for chuditch," he said.

The reintroduction project is being led by the South Australian Government and Foundation of Australia's Most Endangered Species in partnership with Parks and Wildlife's *Western Shield* project and Native Animal Rescue.



One of the screens in the ParkFinder app.

Superstar photo shoot at William Bay

The stunning Elephant Rocks at William Bay National Park was the perfect backdrop for Myer ambassador and former Miss Universe Jennifer Hawkins last week, as she visited the area for a fashion shoot.

The star posted this image to Instagram, remarking on the beauty of the area.

The park, located between Denmark and Walpole on the State's south coast, is a popular spot for sightseeing, fishing, swimming and bushwalking. Large granite boulders and windswept headlands surround sheltered bays and sandy beaches, making it a great place for snapping the perfect photo.

Photo – sourced from Instagram



Parks and Wildlife expertise and support for Kings Park burn

Parks and Wildlife Swan Coastal fire operation staff played an important role in a recent prescribed burn undertaken by the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority (BGPA) in Kings Park.

The burn was part of a new scientific research project aimed at managing bushfire risk and conserving the natural environment on the Swan Coastal Plain.

The prescribed burn, the first in 30 years in the park, covered 6.6ha and involved 11 staff and three fire trucks from Parks and Wildlife.

The scientific research is being led by BGPA fire ecologist Dr Ben Miller with the aim of determining the best methods of managing bushfire risks, while protecting the natural environment and biodiversity in urban bushland on the Swan Coastal Plain. Prescribed burning is one of several techniques being tested.

The project also looks at the additional challenges that come with bushfire risk in urban areas close to densely populated areas.

The burn was carefully controlled by experienced staff from BGPA, Parks and Wildlife and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) to ensure the operation met the burn prescription.

Swan Coastal District manager Craig Olejnik said staff were happy to share their knowledge in preparing the burn prescription, providing resources and implementing the burn on the day.

“Collaboration with other agencies is an important part of managing bushfire risk,” he said.

“The scientific research being done is vital to increase our knowledge on how to best manage the interactions between fire, flora

species diversity and weed response, in order to limit potential impacts on biodiversity,” he said.

Swan Coastal District’s involvement was recognised and acknowledged by BGPA CEO Mark Webb who thanked Parks and Wildlife for its staff and resources, which contributed to the success of the burn. An extract from his letter is below.

“Staff from Parks and Wildlife demonstrated a high level of professionalism and inter-agency cooperation with BGPA and DFES staff on the day, which along with their assistance in preparing the detailed prescription, resulted in a successful outcome.

“The BGPA greatly appreciates the planning and operation involvement of the department in these controlled fires and looks forward to continued collaboration in the future.”



Steve Easton (BGPA), Adam Bannister (DFES), Sam Hurd (Parks and Wildlife) and Tony Nicolas (DFES). Photo – Parks and Wildlife

Geotourism forum puts WA parks in the spotlight

Parks and Wildlife staff joined tourism industry colleagues and geologists from a range of organisations last week at an important geotourism conference that highlighted WA’s national parks and reserves.

The 2015 Forum Advocating Cultural and Eco Tourism (FACET) conference, ‘Geotourism – Tourism Down Under’, was held at the department’s Kensington headquarters.

Policy and planning assistant director Tracy Shea said geotourism—tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—was rapidly growing worldwide.

*The Granite Skywalk in Porongurup National Park.
Photo – Parks and Wildlife*

“Western Australia is well poised to take full advantage of this phenomenon as more visitors want to discover the stories that underpin our State’s unique geological features,” Tracy said.

“Places like Purnululu and Karijini national parks feature heavily in overseas tourism promotions, while new features like the Granite Skywalk in Porongurup National Park are starting to attract local and overseas visitors.”

About 60 people attended the conference, which has been building awareness and support for nature-based tourism in WA since its inception in 2008.

Speakers from the department included Parks and Wildlife Director General Jim Sharp, visitor services assistant director Rod Annear, Geikie Gorge National Park senior ranger Anthony Aiken and West Kimberley senior operations officer David Woods.

Jim, together with Tourism WA CEO Stephanie Buckland, gave a presentation highlighting the importance of delivering high-quality tourism experiences in natural landscapes to build support for conservation.

Rod’s presentation explored new media, devices and communication methods to help engage and develop the next generation of natural area and geoheritage supporters and protectors.

“Part of the challenge in managing natural areas is continuing to engage visitors who now have a huge range of other attractions, distractions and entertainment to choose from,” he said.

As part of the conference, delegates attended a field trip to Rottne Island, where they completed a geocaching trail, geotourism workshop and listened to a keynote address by NaturePlay WA CEO Griffin Longley.

Record numbers for *Nearer to Nature* this autumn

Nearer to Nature has broken attendance records for its autumn holiday program, with an increase of 48 per cent compared to this time last year.

More than 1150 children and adults participated in activities held at six locations across the metropolitan area.

Nearer to Nature programs coordinator Jill Francis said it was great to see so many people encouraging their children to learn about the environment in a fun and exciting way.

"We kicked off the autumn program on a seasonal note with our Easter Bilby family fun day on Easter Saturday, which saw families get up close with a real-life bilby,

before completing some Easter craft and solving clues on a nature trail," Jill said.

"Our special Mother's Day campfire event on 9 May was also very popular."

Jill said the autumn program was *Nearer to Nature's* most diverse in terms of locations.

"It's a great time of year to hold activities at beach environments such as Woodman Point and Trigg Beach, as well as river, forest and cave environments. This diversity helped attract a wide audience across the whole metropolitan area," she said.

"In addition, we were very pleased to see that 98 per cent of participants had been highly satisfied with the activity they attended."

Jill said the team had also hosted a guided bushwalk for 40 members of the Madjtil Moorna Choir, a local choir that sings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island songs in different languages including local Noongar and English.

Nearer to Nature also caught the attention of Channel 9's *Destinations WA* program, which visited the Perth Hills Discovery Centre to film a couple of reptile and fire-focused activities as part of its school holiday segment for spring.

With the autumn holidays now over, the team at *Nearer to Nature* is busy preparing another great program of activities for the winter holidays, which begins on 4 July.



Children watch on as Greg Hastings plays the didgeridoo at the popular 'Around the campfire' event held for Mother's Day. Photo – Parks and Wildlife



Neville Collard, Eddie Thomas and Chappy Blurton (background) conduct a traditional Indigenous smoking ceremony to mark the beginning of construction of the Brentwood Living Stream and cleanse the site. Photo – Jennifer Eliot

Living Stream springs to life

The Swan River Trust, with the support of the South East Regional Centre for Landcare and the Friends of Bull Creek Catchment, has started works to turn a degraded main drain into a living stream in Brentwood.

Noongar elders Neville Collard and Marie Taylor performed a smoking ceremony at the Kaalitj – ngort Koondaam (Dragonfly Dreaming) site to cleanse and purify the area before it is transformed into a living stream.

Trust senior environmental officer Sonya Stewart said the Brentwood Living Stream project has been designed to improve the quality of water entering the Canning River.

"The works will also help create new habitats for native animals, improve the aesthetics and amenity for the local

residents and provide environmental education opportunities," Sonya said.

Noongar monitors will be present during construction and a traditional owner artist will be used to design totems and artwork for use in interpretation throughout the site.

Sonya said the initiative was an excellent example of Noongar engagement, with the traditional owners being consulted about the design.

"Traditional materials have been collected for use in artwork, ceremonies and tool making, and a sign has been installed which includes a Noongar name for the site."

The Brentwood Living Stream project has been funded by the State and Federal governments, the City of Melville and the Water Corporation.

It follows the construction of the Ellen Brook Nutrient Stripping Wetland, which is due to be operational this winter, and ongoing works at Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary in Bayswater.

Sonya said the construction on nutrient stripping wetlands and living streams was part of the Trust's catchment to coast approach to improve water quality in the Swan and Canning rivers.

The Ellen Brook Wetland, once fully operational, will remove more than 270kg of phosphorous and 33kg of nitrogen per year.

The Eric Singleton Wetland will prevent almost 40 tonnes of sediment and rubbish, 1.3 tonnes of nitrogen and 200kg of phosphorous once fully operational.