



PARKS AND WILDLIFE NEWS

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New headquarters underway in Bunbury

Premier Colin Barnett, Environment Minister Albert Jacob, Regional Development Minister Terry Redman and Parks and Wildlife Director General Jim Sharp recently visited Bunbury to announce that development of the department's new headquarters would begin soon.

Mr Barnett said relocation of parts of the public service, in this case Parks and Wildlife headquarters to Bunbury, would attract new investment and skills to the region and provide ongoing economic and social benefits.

"The move will initially see 100 staff from Parks and Wildlife located in the new development, generating more than \$25 million per year for the local economy, with plans for the number of staff to increase to 300 within 10 years."

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the development of the new headquarters included the creation of a state-of-the-art visitor gateway for Western Australia's south-west.

"The development is being done over three stages and, when completed, will include a wide range of facilities including a landscaped pedestrian avenue to link the Leschenault Inlet to Koombana Bay, a new lookout, walk trails, a playground and renewal of the mangrove boardwalks," Mr Jacob said.

"The area's rich history and natural environment, including significant maritime values, has been incorporated into the design and will be featured throughout the buildings, landscaping, artwork, interpretative information and boardwalk restoration.

"The project highlights the importance the State Government places on encouraging people to visit



national and marine parks, and other natural attractions of the greater south-west region."

Regional Development Minister Terry Redman said the \$28.9 million project, funded under the Royalties for Regions program, would stimulate the growth of the Bunbury region.

"The relocation of a major government department to a regional centre such as Bunbury is a huge step forward for regional development in WA. On the project's completion, it is estimated the total population benefit to the region will be 1545 people with an economic output of \$75 million per annum – a huge positive impact," Mr Redman said.

To view an animated flythrough of the development visit www.dpaw.wa.gov.au.



Top: Artist's impression of the planned headquarters in Bunbury. Above: Regional Development Minister Terry Redman, Premier Colin Barnett, Member for Bunbury John Castrilli and Environment Minister Albert Jacob breaking ground at the site in Bunbury. Photo – Parks and Wildlife

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Department of
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Above: Gilbert's potoroo. Photo – Dick Walker/Potoroo Action Group

New island home for potoroos

Four Gilbert's potoroos displaced after a bushfire destroyed much of their mainland habitat have been translocated to Michaelmas Island off the Albany coast.

Parks and Wildlife principal research scientist Dr Tony Friend said seven of the critically endangered potoroos were rescued by department staff after lightning sparked a 1230ha fire at Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve last November.

"The rescued animals were held in captivity until a more suitable translocation site could be found and habitat recovered at Two Peoples Bay to allow animals to be returned," he said.

"We are optimistic Michaelmas Island will be suitable because it has no native or introduced predators and at

least one-third of the island meets the Gilbert's potoroo's habitat requirements, including the presence of truffles, which make up 90 per cent of its diet.

"There are always risks associated with managing critically endangered animals but Gilbert's potoroos do not thrive in captivity and it is vital that we continue investigate alternate locations."

Prior to the Gilbert's potoroo rediscovery at Two Peoples Bay in 1994, the marsupial species was thought to be extinct.

Parks and Wildlife has established new populations at Waychinicup and Bald Island.

The species is being helped through the Department's wildlife recovery program *Western Shield*.

Metropolitan and country camping

Campers have two fantastic new places to pitch a tent or park their caravan, with the launch of a camping trial at Yanchep National Park and the opening of the Gnaala Mia campground at Dryandra Woodland, near Williams.

Rookie campers or those not wishing to stray far from Perth can experience the great outdoors at Yanchep, either at the small walk-in camp site in the north-western section of the national park or at one of the 20 sites available at Henry White Oval for caravans, campervans, camper trailers and tents.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the trial was aimed at expanding camping opportunities in the metropolitan area.

"Yanchep National Park is less than an hour from Perth and there's plenty to explore with limestone caves, a koala enclosure, bushwalking, canoeing, cycling and Aboriginal tours," he said.

Dryandra Woodland, where visitors can see endangered species such as numbats, woylies and tamar wallabies in the wild, as well as more than 100 bird species and 50 reptile species, has a new \$600,000 campground with 35 camp sites, a barbecue shelter, toilets, and a fireplace and table for each site.

Gnaala Mia is part of the Liberal National Government's four-year, \$21.05 million investment in *Parks for People* under the *Caravan and Camping Action Plan 2013–2018*.

Mr Jacob said a new walk trail originating from the campground added to the network of walking, cycling and driving trails in the woodland.

"It's also close to the popular Barna Mia sanctuary where visitors can see threatened animals up-close at night," he said.

Camp bookings for both Yanchep National Park and Gnaala Mia can be made at www.parkstay.dpaw.wa.gov.au.

Below: Gnaala Mia campground. Photo – Peter Nicholas/Parks and Wildlife





Rangers film rare turtle hatchlings in the Kimberley

Parks and Wildlife and Dambimangari rangers were fortunate enough to witness and film rare olive ridley turtle hatchlings on a Kimberley beach recently.

As 103 of the endangered turtles emerged from their nest adjacent to Lalang-garram / Camden Sound Marine Park and made their way to the water, in a WA first, Parks and Wildlife marine ranger Cameron Smith videoed the event with Dambimangari traditional owner Kieran Bangmorra.

Principal scientist Dr Scott Whiting it was unusual to see hatchlings emerge in a large group.

"It is more common to come across a few single turtle hatchlings," he said.

"This is a significant event. We have only recently discovered olive ridley turtles nest in WA and this is the first time they have been recorded on this particular beach."

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said olive ridley turtles had never been filmed in WA and rarely anywhere else in Australia.

Above: Olive ridley turtle hatchlings head for the ocean. Photo – Cameron Smith/Parks and Wildlife

"An event of this nature reinforces the importance of marine parks, which is why the Liberal National Government under the *Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy* has been establishing an extensive network of marine parks to protect habitat for threatened species," Mr Jacob said.

The olive ridley is the smallest of Australia's sea turtles and only grows to about 70cm long.

Earlier this year an adult olive ridley turtle in poor health was found in the proposed Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park. After rehabilitation treatment at Broome's Chelonia Centre, Dr Whiting attached a satellite tracking device to the turtle's shell and it was released into the wild.

It is the first olive ridley turtle to be tracked in WA waters. Follow the turtle's journey at www.seaturtle.org/tracking/index.shtml?tag_id=158116.

Whale of an effort to remove carcasses

Parks and Wildlife staff and contractors had a busy month during July removing four whale carcasses that washed up on beaches managed by the department.

A 30-tonne, 13-metre humpback whale that washed up on Honeycombs beach in Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park and Ngari Capes Marine Park was removed during a six-hour operation by Parks and Wildlife and local contractors.

Parks and Wildlife Blackwood District operations officer Ed Hatherley said the removal required 10 people, a traxcavator, excavator and skid steer loader in challenging conditions.

"After retrieving the carcass from the shallows, it was wrapped in tarpaulins, netting and chains, and was carefully maneuvered by machinery up an incline, through a narrow gap in the dunes and down to a waiting semi-trailer with a low loader," he said.

"The animal was then firmly secured in the trailer and transported to a landfill facility.

"Moving a carcass of this size was challenging but necessary because it had the potential to attract sharks and was dangerously rolling around in the shallows."

Another 17-tonne humpback carcass was removed after it was discovered on the sandbar at Seal Island in Shoalwater Islands Marine Park. After being guided to a nearby accessible beach, it was removed by district staff and marine rangers, with assistance from contractors, the City of Rockingham and the Department of Fisheries.

Earlier in the month, two pygmy sperm whale carcasses were removed from Parry's Beach near Denmark. Parks and Wildlife Warren Region staff removed the animals in challenging conditions, using heavy earth moving machinery.

Below: A 13-metre humpback whale washed up on Honeycombs beach in Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park and Ngari Capes Marine Park was one of four whale carcasses removed during July. Photo – Parks and Wildlife





Children and Nature Conference a first for WA

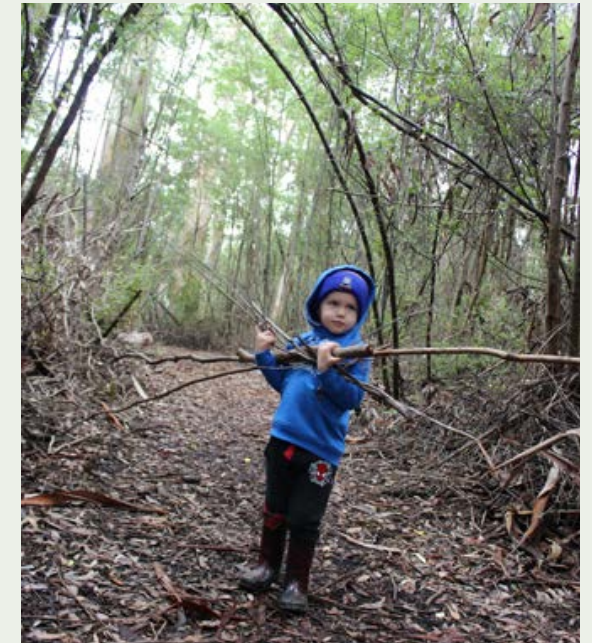
The inaugural Children and Nature Conference, hosted by Nature Play WA, will be held in Fremantle this August with some of the world's pre-eminent speakers on the impact of nature on children's health, development and education presenting at the one-day event.

The conference is the first event of its kind held in WA and is for educators, health professionals, parents, conservationists, land managers and anyone with a keen interest in reconnecting children with nature for the benefit of our community and the environment.

Among the speakers are leading researcher of allergy and early immune development Professor Susan Prescott, Canadian researcher and consulting science writer Dr Alan Logan and the former Chief Scientist of WA Professor Lyn Beazley.

For more information visit www.natureplay.wa.org.au.

Below: The inaugural conference will focus on the impact of nature on children's health, development and education. Photo – Nature Play WA



Fire exchange program continues

Parks and Wildlife's international exchange program with the United States National Park Service is continuing, with the departure this month of the second WA representative bound for Grand Canyon National Park.

Swan Coastal District senior works coordinator Tim Gregson will spend four weeks with US counterparts in the 480,000ha park, trading information and experience in fire management.

The exchange program began in 2015 based on the similarity of the two agencies' responsibilities to manage fire over large areas in sometimes densely populated areas.

Each year, one employee from each agency will travel across the globe to build relationships and exchange information and ideas.

Tim said he hoped the trip would give him a new perspective on fire management.

"I'm particularly interested in the techniques the US staff use in the operational side of bushfire suppression," he said.

"I understand most of their crews work with hand tools at bushfire incidents while we work mostly from a truck – I'd be keen to see if they rely much on firebreak installation by machines, and learn more about combatting fires in hillier terrain than we're used to."

Tim said he was very humbled to be selected to represent the department this year.

"I am not only fortunate that my district manager put my name forward for the trip but extremely lucky to be the one chosen by the panel when so many other people could have been more than capable of working over there."

Tim will work with Grand Canyon chief of fire and aviation Jay Lusher, who visited WA in February this year under the same program. Jay spent time in various Parks and Wildlife districts and regions, including Perth Hills District, Swan Coastal District and Warren Region, as well as the department's headquarters in Kensington.

Jay said the experience and exposure to the WA south-west fire season had been beneficial.

"Both Parks and Wildlife and Grand Canyon National Park face similar challenges related to bushfire management. I felt I could bring back some valuable lessons that may be implemented locally and possibly nationally within the National Park Service," Jay said.

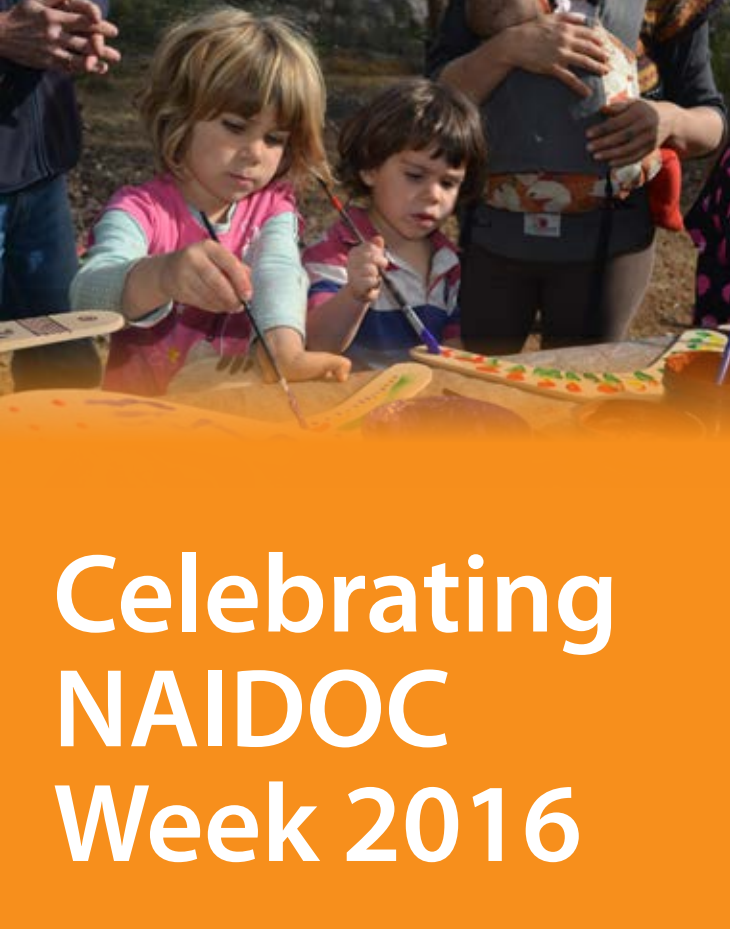
Jay identified Parks and Wildlife's strengths as its mapping systems, recruitment and training program for succession planning, public education on prescribed burning, and the appointment of a chaplain to help staff deal with high-pressure situations.

"Throughout my visit I was able to spend time with fire ecology staff to learn about the fire science and research portion of the department.

"I feel we could learn from some of the issues they are researching and the methods they use to find answers.

"I am excited that we are able to continue on such a great program."

Top left: Grand Canyon National Park's chief of fire and aviation Jay Lusher during his visit to WA in February. Top right: Swan Coastal District senior works coordinator Tim Gregson is the latest Parks and Wildlife employee to make the trip to the United States under the exchange program. Photos – Parks and Wildlife



Celebrating NAIDOC Week 2016



Above left: Children take part in the Nearer to Nature NAIDOC Week activities. Photo – Jill Francis/Parks and Wildlife. Above: Parks and Wildlife Nyangumarta and Ngarla rangers helped out with a NAIDOC-themed school holiday program at Eighty Mile Beach Caravan Park. Left to right: Augustine Badal, Jeffrey Brown, Nathan Hunter and Stephen Brown. Photo – Miecha Bradshaw/Parks and Wildlife

Parks and Wildlife staff around the State celebrated NAIDOC Week this month with a range of events to acknowledge the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In Yanchep National Park, a number of events were held throughout the week, including a guided bushwalk and NAIDOC-themed sports carnival for Yanchep District High School, but the centrepiece was a special NAIDOC Day celebration on Saturday 9 July.

Park manager Julia Coggins said even a hailstorm did not deter a crowd of nearly 200 people from enjoying the day.

“Visitors enjoyed a bush tucker barbecue and free activities including sand art, traditional face painting, artefact display, and Dreamtime storytelling. A warming fire was lit in the Wangi Mia and our staff and

volunteers had a great time helping to share Aboriginal culture with such an enthusiastic group of people,” she said.

In Kensington, about 30 staff members came together for a team-building activity to learn about and practice Aboriginal art techniques. Artist and Yamatji woman Beverley Egan from Creative Native Aboriginal Art Gallery brought in five pre-sketched canvases, shared the stories behind each painting and helped staff as they completed them.

The department’s West Kimberley District hosted a number of educational and celebratory events for NAIDOC Week. District staff joined forces with Broome Whale Watching charters to offer 20 young local Aboriginal people a free whale watching cruise off Roebuck Bay. Four organisations – Red Cross, Headspace, Nyamba Buru Yawuru, Broome Families and Youth Hub – were thrilled to nominate five

deserving young people to attend the whale watching charter. Norie Fronda from Headspace said it was a great way to acknowledge the young people who had shown leadership and positive focus on working towards their goals.

Also in Broome, Parks and Wildlife Yawuru rangers hosted a NAIDOC afternoon tea with staff from Parks and Wildlife, Yawuru Land and Sea Unit and Shire of Broome.

The department’s youth-focused educational program *Nearer to Nature* offered special Aboriginal-themed activities free of charge for members, including Coolangar Dreaming and Totem Tales. The activities were designed for children aged between seven and 12 and included role play of traditional hunting and gathering techniques, Dreamtime stories and craft activities to help them better understand Noongar culture.