



# PARKS AND WILDLIFE NEWS

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## New reserves and plans for the Kimberley

**Premier Colin Barnett recently visited the iconic west Kimberley region to release 10-year management plans for Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park and adjacent Yawuru Birragun Conservation Park, formally recognising the creation of this world-renowned conservation, cultural and ecotourism destination in the waters around Broome.**

The Premier said the new parks would be jointly managed with the Yawuru people, boosting conservation and tourism in the west Kimberley.

"The creation of these parks gives Yawuru people the opportunity to be employed to work on their traditional lands and waters through cultural and heritage tourism opportunities," he said.

The new parks will conserve biodiversity values while continuing to encourage visitors and locals to enjoy activities such as boating, fishing, kayaking, viewing dinosaur footprints, birdwatching, walking and whale watching.

"The marine park will also build upon the State Government's earlier decision to remove commercial gillnetting from Roebuck Bay and ensure the recreational fishing experience is world class and the values of the bay are conserved," he said.



Above: Premier Colin Barnett with Yawuru traditional owners, including park representatives and rangers, Parks and Wildlife District Manager Alan Byrne and Kandy Curren from Roebuck Bay Working Group.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said Roebuck Bay was an internationally significant wetland and one of the most important feeding grounds for migratory shorebirds in Australia.

"Roebuck Bay's biodiversity is extensive and the marine park provides enhanced protection for threatened species such as the snubfin dolphin, flatback turtle, olive ridley turtle and the specially protected dugong," the Minister said.

Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park and Yawuru Birragun Conservation Park are among a number of reserves proposed or created in the Kimberley under the State Government's *Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy*.

Mr Jacob said the Liberal National Government recently created a 230,000 hectare conservation park in the Kimberley, taking the area of reserves created in the region since 2008 to more than 1.1 million hectares.

The Walyarta Conservation Park and five other new parks and reserves have been created adjacent to Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park between Port Hedland and Broome.

The new park and reserves are the result of the State Government's partnerships with traditional owners - the Karajarri, Nyangumarta and Ngarla people.

The reserves were also the first to be jointly vested under recent amendments to the *Conservation*

*and Land Management Act 1984*.

"We have worked with traditional owners to develop Indigenous Land Use Agreements that provide conservation as well as direct employment opportunities for Aboriginal people, in on-ground land management roles and Aboriginal ranger programs," the Minister said.

He said Walyarta Conservation Park protected internationally significant wetlands of the Eighty Mile Beach Ramsar site.

The Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park and Yawuru Birragun Conservation Park plans can be viewed at <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/parks/management-plans/approved-management-plans>

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# Bushfire READY

The 2016-17 'Are You Ready?' bushfire campaign was launched in October, encouraging all Western Australians to be bushfire ready before the coming summer season. The campaign, now in its third year, has been successful in providing the community with information on what they need to do to, and highlighting that preparing for bushfires is a shared responsibility.

This year the campaign features Swan Coastal District officer Valerie Densmore alongside Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Western Power and volunteer bushfire brigade officers and Peel region resident Steve Angel. Mr Angel lost his home in a bushfire in 2007 and then re-built it to a standard that ensured he was bushfire ready. When another fire swept through his area last summer, Mr Angel's new home escaped unscathed, emphasising the critical importance of preparation.

As part of 'Are You Ready', the State Government launched a new Emergency WA website, which provides the community with faster, clearer and more consistent information during bushfires and other emergencies. Parks and Wildlife alerts for bushfires, smoke alerts and park closures due to bushfire will now appear on the Emergency WA website and will no longer be uploaded to the corporate website.

Director General Jim Sharp said that as a department we were well-prepared for the coming bushfire season, with mandatory fire training essentially completed and significant burns accomplished in the Swan and Southwest regions in the past two weeks.

"We are again continuing our comprehensive community awareness campaign to promote the need for prescribed burning to protect communities with press, radio and online ads providing people with information on where to go to view daily burns and what to do if smoke affects them," Mr Sharp said.



## ARE YOU BUSHFIRE READY?

 'Emergency WA'

## Dryandra Woodland to become national park

**One of Western Australia's most important areas for wildlife conservation, Dryandra Woodland near Williams, is set to become a national park.**

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said Dryandra Woodland National Park would be created to ensure it remained a safe haven for wildlife and a major nature-based tourism destination.

"Dryandra Woodland is the largest remaining remnant of Wheatbelt woodland that provides a sanctuary for 10 threatened species, including one of the few remaining wild populations of woylies, numbats and tammar wallabies," he said.

"We are already working hard to protect the woodland's natural values, with a 1000-hectare feral predator-proof enclosure due to be completed by the end of the year to safeguard threatened species, alongside cat and fox baiting under Parks and Wildlife's flagship *Western Shield* wildlife recovery program."

Mr Jacob said the Gnaala Mia campground opened at Dryandra in June, as part of the four-year, \$21.05 million investment in the *Parks for People* initiative, and the woodland was also home to the Barna Mia sanctuary where visitors could interact with wildlife up-close at night.

"Just a two-hour drive from Perth, Dryandra Woodland is already a major drawcard for wildlife enthusiasts, campers and bushwalkers, so it is clear that this is a very special place that needs to be protected for generations to come," Mr Jacob said.

"Dryandra Woodland National Park will be a valuable addition to our network of 100 national parks, in addition to our recent announcement that we will be creating Abrolhos Islands National Park in the Midwest."

Right: Western Shield coordinator Ashley Millar releases a numbat at Dryandra Woodland.





WA Parks Foundation board: Front row L-R Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson AC, board secretary Kathryn Conway. Back row L-R Griffin Longley, Shaun Hardcastle, Dr Tom Hatton, Jim Sharp, Mike Wood. (Absent Eva Skira and Richard Simpson) Photo – Shem Bisluk, WA Parks and Wildlife

## Parks Foundation to support WA parks

High profile advocates for national parks gathered recently to launch the WA Parks Foundation at a gala event hosted by the Governor of Western Australia, Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson AC.

The WA Parks Foundation announced the members of its inaugural Board, led by Her Excellency Ms Sanderson, and official Parks Ambassadors including Nature Play WA CEO Griffin Longley and respected Nyoongar musician and performer Dr Richard Walley.

The non-profit WA Parks Foundation aims to financially support, promote and protect the State's 29 million-hectares of national parks and reserves.

Parks and Wildlife Director General Jim Sharp, an ex-officio foundation board member and ambassador, said the WA Parks Foundation brought together friends of national parks and other reserves to promote the benefits of spending time in parks, raise money for special projects and programs, recruit volunteers and facilitate collaboration between organisations.

"The figures showing more than 19 million visits to Western Australian national parks and reserves in 2015-16 demonstrate the community's appreciation and love for the natural environment," Mr Sharp said.

The launch event at Government House featured guest speakers, a native animal display by Kanyana Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre, a virtual reality immersive experience and a green screen photo booth where participants could have their photo with a WA national park background of their choice.

For more information about the WA Parks Foundation including Board members, ambassadors and how to become a member, visit [www.ourwarparks.com.au](http://www.ourwarparks.com.au)



## Return to 1616 project enters new phase

**Return to 1616, the ecological restoration project at Dirk Hartog Island National Park, has been boosted by Environment Minister Albert Jacob's approval of \$22.5 million stage two funding to reintroduce native animals.**

The funding, part of the \$60 million Gorgon Barrow Island Net Conservation Benefits Fund, will enable 10 locally extinct mammal species and one bird species to be returned to the historic island, once all feral species have been eradicated.

Parks and Wildlife ecological restoration project manager John Asher said the long-term plan was to

return the island's natural ecosystems to how Dutch explorer Dirk Hartog would have seen them when he landed there on 25 October 1616, with thriving native mammal populations.

"This is a significant step forward in the restoration of the island's habitat, which began in 2012," Mr Asher said.

"The department has been working hard for a number of years removing the sheep, goats and feral cats which had degraded vegetation and caused the local extinction of a number of mammal species.

"With the eradication of these introduced animals, native species



Main: Greater stick-nest rat. Insert: Banded hare-wallaby. Photo – WA Parks and Wildlife

such as the western barred bandicoot, greater stick-nest rat, woylie, dibbler and boodie can be re-established on the island in the future."

Rufous and banded hare-wallabies will be the first species to be reintroduced.

The Return to 1616 work on Dirk Hartog - WA's largest island - is considered one of Australia's most ambitious animal reconstruction projects.



# Dibblers released onto south coast island

**Thirty-five dibblers have been released onto feral predator-free Gunton Island off the Esperance coast to expand the tiny population established on the remote island last year.**

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the small carnivorous marsupials, which were captive-bred at Perth Zoo, were released by Parks and Wildlife with funding support from South Coast NRM.

“Last October we released 29 dibblers at Gunton Island, followed by 12 more in April this year, in a bid to create a new insurance population of this endangered species, with the additional 35 animals taking the total number of dibblers released on the island so far to 76,” he said.

“There are just five established populations of dibblers elsewhere in Western Australia, of which four consist of less than 50 animals each, so this captive breeding and release program is vitally important for the long term survival of the species in the wild.”

Parks and Wildlife scientist Tony Friend said camera monitoring had revealed the dibblers released last year on the 95-hectare island were doing well.

“The animals are persisting at both release sites on the island, and in addition, scientists trapped a male animal which had put on considerable weight since being released, which indicates there is sufficient food present,” he said.

Since European settlement, dibblers declined from their original range in the western and southern coastal regions of WA due to

predation by cats and foxes and reduction of habitat. The species was believed to have been extinct until it was rediscovered at Cheyne Beach, east of Albany, in 1967.

Original dibbler populations persist in the Fitzgerald River National Park on the south coast and on Boullanger and Whitlock Islands off the coast of Jurien Bay. New populations have been established at the proposed Peniup Nature Reserve near Jerramungup and on Escape Island off Jurien Bay.

“We are working very hard to save this species and other threatened mammal species across WA as part of *Western Shield*, with Parks and Wildlife now implementing feral cat baiting using the Eradocat® bait, which is supported by \$1.7 million in Australian Government funding,” Mr Jacob said.



*Main: Dibbler. Insert: Principal scientist Tony Friend with a dibbler. Photo – WA Parks and Wildlife*

# Scientists, rangers and school children explore Roebuck mudflats

During October, Parks and Wildlife staff including Indigenous ranger groups from the West Kimberley have been working alongside scientists to monitor the mudflats of Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park at Anna Plains and Nagulagun Roebuck Bay. This extensive project took hundreds of mud samples from specific sections of the mudflats to analyse the benthic infauna (the tiny creatures which live in the mud).

Parks and Wildlife staff, rangers, scientists, volunteers and children and families trudged through at times very deep mud to obtain a sample to look at under the microscope.

Utilising the expertise of scientists and visiting community outreach specialist Angela Rossen, from the University of Western Australia, an interactive school holiday program and school incursions were organised to help show children and families the rich biodiversity of the mudflats and its importance to the health of marine animals and the bay.

It was fantastic to work with several ranger groups across the scientific monitoring and school education programs.

These pictures show Parks and Wildlife's Yawuru rangers (Broome) and Nyangumarta and Ngarla Rangers (Eighty Mile Beach) showing children how to follow crab tracks in the mud and how to take a sample to learn about the tiny worms. The Karajarri and Nyangumarta Indigenous Protected Area Rangers based at Bidyadanga also supported this project.



**New critical incident peer support team**

**Managing staff stress, particularly during a critical incident, is a priority for Parks and Wildlife. The department has recently established a Critical Incident Peer Support Team to help staff deal with stress during intense, high pressure incidents.**

The 12-member team, led by department Chaplain Steve Bradfield, comprises staff from a range of roles and locations throughout the State. The team recently completed training in psychological first aid enabling them to be better equipped to provide support to employees and volunteers who may have been exposed to a critical incident

or potentially traumatic event in the course of their work duties.

Steve said team members at a critical incident would gather information relating to staff needs and concerns, establish a sense of safety, facilitate access to practical assistance and social supports, provide simple advice on coping, and assess the need for further intervention.

"Critical incident peer responders will work with me to provide quality and timely support in the field in potentially distressing work situations, such as high impact bushfire incidents, traffic accidents, fatalities, serious injuries, formal investigations, and distressing discoveries," he said.

"Unfortunately on a regular basis our employees are faced with situations and circumstances in the line of duty which can at times be distressing and we are working hard to provide quality support services where people need it most."

As of April 2016 the department revised the corporate policy and guideline on 'Managing the effects of critical incident stress', to align to best practice methods as endorsed by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia.

The new program is in addition to the soon-to-be-revised peer support program, which provides support to employees with everyday issues and

does not extend to situations which could be best described as critical incidents or potentially traumatic events. It is a welcome addition to the suite of department support services which include Peer Support, Chaplaincy and the Employee Assistance Program.

Activation requests for the new service will be made through the district or regional manager / duty officer / incident controller, to the program coordinator (Chaplain), as they cannot self-deploy, or be deployed by the local manager. This is to ensure that the activation is coordinated according to department guidelines.