

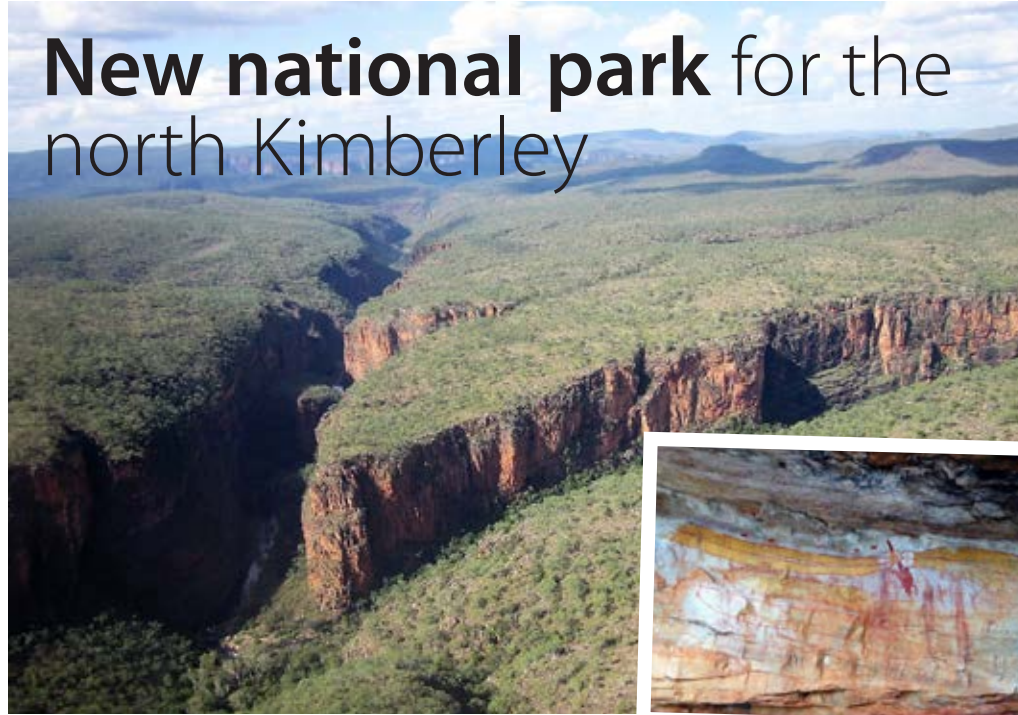


PARKS AND WILDLIFE NEWS

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New national park for the north Kimberley



Above: Environment Minister Albert Jacob and Director General Jim Sharp with Wilinggin Aboriginal Corporation representatives Vincent Bear (Chair), Rona Charles, Pansy Nulgit and Rosita Shaw at the announcement of Wilinggin National Park's creation. Photo – Peter Nicholas/Parks and Wildlife
 Left: Headwaters of Prince Regent River. Photo – Ed Hatherley/Parks and Wildlife
 Inset: Rock art at Munja. Photo – Parks and Wildlife

The State Government will soon establish a new 740,000-hectare national park in partnership with the Wilinggin Aboriginal Corporation, paving the way for the creation of the landmark Kimberley National Park.

The proposed Wilinggin National Park will become part of the Kimberley National Park, which is set to be Australia's largest national park at around two million hectares.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the State had signed a new Indigenous Land Use Agreement with the Wilinggin people for the creation of Wilinggin National Park in the remote north and central Kimberley to protect the area's exceptional cultural

and biodiversity values. The park will be jointly vested and managed with the Wilinggin traditional owners.

South of Wilinggin National Park, the northern part of the existing King Leopold Ranges Conservation Park will become known as the Wilinggin Conservation Park and will also be jointly managed.

"These remote landscapes contain ancient rock art sites, stone arrangements, burial sites, ceremonial sites and important mythological areas immensely significant to the Wilinggin traditional owners, who have continuing connections to their country," Mr Jacob said.

"Wilinggin people will be employed as park rangers and take an active role in park management through a joint management body."

Royalties for Regions is supporting the establishment of new park visitor facilities and developing employment and business opportunities for the Wilinggin traditional owners.

The creation of the parks is part of the *Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy*, the State Government's \$103.6 million initiative successfully protecting and enhancing the Kimberley region's unique natural assets.

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Editors Mitzi Vance and Karla Graham

Contributors Heather Quinlan, Emma de Burgh, Lauren Emmerson, Sophie Lisle-Williams and Grace Milne

Design and production Mandy Pike and Lynne Whittle

Telephone (08) 9219 9000

Email pwn@dpaw.wa.gov.au



Department of Parks and Wildlife



Whale swim trial to continue in 2017



Tourists in Ningaloo Marine Park watch a humpback whale swim by. Photo – Parks and Wildlife

A second year of the swimming with humpback whales trial in Ningaloo Marine Park was announced by the State Government earlier this month.

Preliminary results from the inaugural trial from August to November 2016 were encouraging, with 1644 people experiencing swimming with the ocean giants.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the trial boosted nature-based tourism in the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area, with a significant increase in whale shark tour passengers on the back of interest in the humpback swimming tours.

“More than 27,500 people took part in whale shark tours at Ningaloo, up from 20,834 in 2015 indicating the growing public awareness of Ningaloo and interest in the trial,” Mr Jacob said.

Exmouth District conservation officer Dani Rob said a continuation of the humpback swimming trial would allow the department to gain more valuable information about the environmental sustainability of the activity and refine risk management procedures.

“Parks and Wildlife has a number of conditions in place with the tour operators to minimise the risk to swimmers and disturbance to humpback whales. We learnt a lot from the interactions that took place in 2016,” she said.

“A visitor satisfaction study carried out as part of the trial revealed most visitors found the experience amazing.”



Proposed Dryandra Woodland National Park. Photo – Lynette Carroll/Parks and Wildlife

Dryandra predator-proof fence complete

A new 1000-hectare, predator-proof enclosure at the proposed Dryandra Woodland National Park will help numbats and other endangered species survive in the wild.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the 1.8m high, 14.7km fence had been completed and work would now start on removing feral predators from the site.

“The \$550,000 enclosure is designed to protect numbats, woylies and other threatened native species from predation by foxes and cats,” Mr Jacob said.

“Parks and Wildlife will now start removing feral predators from inside the fence prior to the translocation of native animals.

“This work will be conducted as part of the *Western Shield* wildlife conservation program.”

The Minister said an area within the enclosure had already been surveyed for key baseline information about numbats.

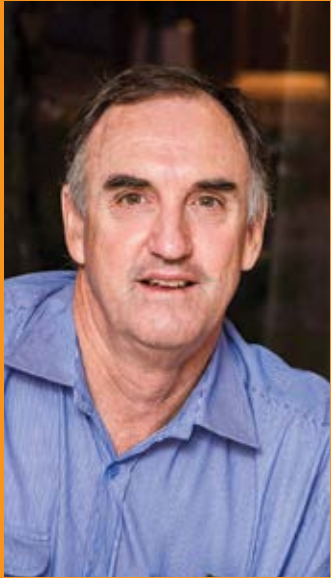
“As a haven for one of the last remaining wild populations of numbats, it is important we learn as much as we can about their distribution in specific areas of Dryandra Woodland so we can track changes once the sanctuary is operational,” he said.

The numbat diggings survey was conducted by Parks and Wildlife with the assistance of community action group Project Numbat, whose volunteers were trained in identifying the distinctive digging holes left by numbats feeding on termites.

“Project Numbat’s help with the numbat survey at Dryandra and at annual surveys at Boyagin Nature Reserve near Brookton has provided invaluable support for the department – community collaboration is an important part of the conservation of this iconic Western Australian species,” Mr Jacob said.



Numbats at the proposed Dryandra Woodland National Park. Photo – John Lawson



Left to right: Ian Kealley OAM, Bruce Maslin AM and Norm McKenzie AM. Photos – Parks and Wildlife

Staff recognised in Australia Day honours

Three current and former Parks and Wildlife staff were recognised in this year's Australia Day honours list, two as Members (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia and one with a Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia in the General Division.

Ian Kealley OAM was recognised for 'service to conservation and the environment in Western Australia'. Ian was an outstanding Goldfields regional manager for more than three decades and the cornerstone of our successful engagement with local Aboriginal groups.

Bruce Maslin AM was recognised for 'significant service to botany, particularly in Western Australia, as a research scientist, and as an author'. Bruce was instrumental in retaining the scientific genus name *Acacia* for Australian wattles.

Norm McKenzie AM was recognised for 'significant service to science, and to the environment, particularly to biological surveys, to conservation and planning, and as an author'. Norm was the driving force behind the Pilbara and Kimberley surveys which continue to help inform decision making.

Director General Jim Sharp said all three honourees continued a proud tradition of department staff being recognised for their contribution to the government, people and nature of WA.



Work starts on new Bunbury headquarters

Construction of Parks and Wildlife's new Bunbury headquarters has started.

Contractor BCL Group Pty Ltd began the first of three stages of construction last week.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the project at Koombana Bay would create hundreds of jobs as part of the Liberal National Government's commitment to decentralise public sector agencies and stimulate economic growth in regional areas.

"The construction phase alone will create 135 direct and indirect jobs and when the building becomes operational, 100 Parks and Wildlife staff will permanently move to Bunbury. Within 10 years, the number of Parks and Wildlife staff in Bunbury is expected to be 300," Mr Jacob said.

The first stage of works includes landscaping, creation of a corridor to link Leschenault Inlet with Koombana Bay, walkways, car parks, interpretive works, a new lookout and an education centre.

Regional Development Minister Terry Redman said the development, made possible by a \$28.9 million investment from Royalties for Regions, would be significant for locals as well as visitors to the region.



Top: Environment Minister Albert Jacob and Director General Jim Sharp at the site of the new Parks and Wildlife headquarters in Bunbury. Photo – Emma de Burgh/Parks and Wildlife

Above: See the plan for Bunbury headquarters [here](#).



First all-female aerial ignition team

Aerial incendiary operations supervisor Jess Newman, incendiary bombardier Vicky Reynen and aerial incendiary supervisor Emma Atkinson. Photo – Parks and Wildlife

In a first for Parks and Wildlife, and possibly the State, an all-female aerial ignition crew are taking to the skies to perform fire mitigation activities this fire season.

Parks and Wildlife officers Jess Newman, Vicky Reynen and Emma Atkinson are called in when the aircraft is requested as part of prescribed burning activities.

Fire crews on the ground first light the edges of the prescribed burn area with hand-held drip torches to secure the boundaries and the aerial ignition crew drops flammable capsules into the unburnt centre of the fire from the air.

Aerial incendiary operations supervisors Jess and Emma use a navigation system called SATLOC to track the burn and tell incendiary bombardier Vicky when to drop the capsules.

The capsules are potassium permanganate (Condi's crystals), which go through an incendiary machine

that Vicky operates where they get injected with glycol, causing a chemical reaction resulting in heat. By the time the capsule reaches the ground it catches fire and lights the ground where it is monitored by ground crews.

Other agencies and groups perform aerial ignition activities such as the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Kimberley Land Council, WWF and traditional owner groups.

Fire aviation services officer Mark Giblett said there are females involved in aerial ignition around the State but after a bit of investigation, he was led to believe this may be the first time the entire crew has been female.

"Our female officers perform back-burning operations for bushfires and are very hands-on," Mark said.

"It was only a matter of time before they were commanding their own aircraft in an aerial ignition operation."

New scheme recognises bushfire expertise

South Coast regional manager Greg Mair was formally recognised recently for his role as a certified level three incident controller.

The qualification is a result of the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council's (AFAC's) Emergency Management Professionalisation Scheme program to credential emergency management practitioners and formally recognise their skills, abilities and experience.

The scheme recognises individuals as experts in Incident Control, with substantial experience in managing high-impact, high-consequence and complex emergencies.

"The scheme is a new initiative specifically designed to recognise emergency management as a formal profession," Greg said.

"There are a number of steps in the process. Once I had been assessed as potentially suitable based on my submission documents, I went before a national assessment panel of AFAC members and undertook a presentation and interview process."

Greg has more than 40 years' experience in fire management and bushfire suppression, including 10 years as an incident controller at



AFAC- certified level three incident controller Greg Mair (centre) with Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Wayne Gregson and Parks and Wildlife Director General Jim Sharp. Photo – Department of Fire and Emergency Services

complex bushfires including Bridgetown, Bremer Bay, Margaret River, O'Sullivan (Northcliffe), Lower Hotham (Boddington) and Waroona-Yarloop.

Director General Jim Sharp joined Greg at an award ceremony late last year where Greg was presented with his letter of formal advice, certificate and badge.

Greg is the first Parks and Wildlife employee to have been certified by AFAC, with other experienced officers set to complete the process in the near future. Several Department of Fire and Emergency Services officers also received certification.

Have your say on Kimberley and Pilbara reserves

Public comment is being sought on the draft 10-year joint management plan for conservation reserves in the south-west Kimberley and north-west Pilbara.

The plan covers Kurriji Pa Yajula (formerly Dragon Tree Soak) Nature Reserve, Walyarta Conservation Park and the Eighty Mile Beach coastal reserves.

The remote but important reserves protect internationally, nationally, and regionally significant wetlands.

They will be jointly managed with the area's traditional owners, the Karajarri, Nyangumarta and Ngarla people.

View the [Parks and reserves of the south-west Kimberley and north-west Pilbara draft joint management plan 2016](#). The plan is open for comment until 31 March 2017.



Prescribed burning in the Great Victoria Desert

Parks and Wildlife staff and the Spinifex rangers prepare to carry out a prescribed burn. Photo – Parks and Wildlife

Parks and Wildlife rangers teamed up with Spinifex rangers for the first time to conduct a series of prescribed burns in the Great Victorian Desert during the Spring 2016 prescribed burning season.

Goldfields regional fire coordinator Ryan Butler said one of the key benefits of the burn was to expand the department's relationship with the Spinifex people and increase joint management of the Great Victoria Desert Nature Reserve and surrounding lands.

"The program was a good indicator of the great benefits and challenges of working with traditional owner groups, and how over time, trust and engagement will benefit all parties with future joint management programs," he said.

The burning took place near Ilkurlka Roadhouse with members from the Tjuntjuntjara community.

Parks and Wildlife provided a plane, pilot, fire truck, equipment and experienced staff members to participate in both aerial and ground-based burning.

Ryan said the aim was to create finer-scale mosaic fire scars in the landscape in order to reduce the size of large bushfires in summer.

The rangers worked together, discussing each morning where the aerial burning should take place, taking into account weather, wind speed and direction. An elder and cultural advisor accompanied the crew to provide guidance on the location of the culturally significant sites.

They used the Fulcrum app as a means of recording and storing biodiversity information and to identify ideal sites for future burns.

Expanded camping facilities for Lucky Bay visitors



Lucky Bay campground. Photo – Parks and Wildlife

The expansion of camping at Cape Le Grand National Park's Lucky Bay, rated among Australia's best beaches, will continue this year with more visitor facilities following the creation of 62 new camp sites.

Premier and Tourism Minister Colin Barnett said the Stage 2 redevelopment of the campground would include establishment of eight to 10 premium camp sites with their own deck or verandah, ablutions block and camp kitchen.

The total investment in the Lucky Bay campground Stage 2 is \$3.9 million, with \$2.95 million from Royalties for Regions through the \$198 million Goldfields Esperance Revitalisation Fund, plus \$950,000 from Parks and Wildlife.

"Lucky Bay, in Cape Le Grand National Park, is one of the most beautiful areas in WA and this is a significant boost to tourism in this region," Mr Barnett said.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the recently opened Stage 1 camp sites overlooked the spectacular white sands of Lucky Bay and were complemented by a larger day-use area, sealed roads within the campground, new paths for beach access, a bore and water supply tanks, two new barbecue shelters and a toilet.

"The Government has committed to significantly increasing affordable camping opportunities by providing 450 new camp sites throughout WA and so far we have completed 420 of these, a wonderful outcome for the community," Mr Jacob said.

Swan River clean-up underway

Community members and Parks and Wildlife staff are coming together this week to take part in the department's annual Clean Our Rivers event, held from 30 January to 5 February.

Volunteers and community manager Jason Menzies said people were being encouraged to gather their friends and take part in a riverside rubbish clean-up.

"This is a great way for Perth river users to help prevent rubbish and discarded fishing waste making their way into the river system," Jason said.

"We're hoping lots of people can get involved with this initiative, which is in its second year."

Jason said Parks and Wildlife removed several tonnes of rubbish such as plastics, shopping trolleys, whitegoods and fishing waste from the Swan and Canning rivers and foreshore areas each year.

To be a part of Clean Our Rivers, just participate in a clean-up at a favourite riverside spot between now and Sunday 5 February 2017. Gloves and rubbish bags can be collected from 20 local governments, or simply bring your own.

For more information and participating local governments visit www.riverguardians.com/how-you-can-help/whats-on#event-224.

Clean our rivers
30 January – 5 February 2017

Clean up your favourite riverside area and make a difference to protect our wildlife

Show everyone the difference you've made by sharing your before and after photos to the River Guardians Facebook page [facebook.com/RiverGuardians](https://www.facebook.com/RiverGuardians) or email them to guardians@dpaw.wa.gov.au.

Don't forget to use the hashtag #cleanourrivers

Rubbish bags and gloves are available for collection from one of the 20 riverside councils from 23 January 2017.

For more information visit: www.riverguardians.com

Logos for Department of Parks and Wildlife, SWAN CANNING RIVERPARK, WILDCARE helpline (08) 9474 9885, and CLEAN MARINE are also present.

Monkey Mia **dolphin** calf named



Monkey Mia's newest dolphin visitor has been named. Dizi was born in early January to mum Piccolo, a second generation bottlenose dolphin being monitored as part of the world-renowned Monkey Mia research program.

Monkey Mia business manager Cath Roberts said the name Dizi – a type of Chinese flute – was chosen to continue the musical theme of her mother, brother and sister's names; Piccolo, Piper and Flute.

"Both mum and calf were doing well and regularly visiting the beach at the Monkey Mia Dolphin Experience, where tourists can get up close with the dolphins," Cath said.

"The past few weeks have been critical for the calf's survival. Unfortunately there is a high mortality rate for dolphin calves born in the wild, but Dizi has been gaining weight and swimming well, so signs are looking good.

"Parks and Wildlife staff will continue to monitor the calf's health.

Above: Bottlenose dolphin calf Dizi with mother Piccolo and grandmother Puck. Photo – Khayla Wordsworth/Parks and Wildlife



Dolphin rescues in Albany and Rockingham

Rockingham Volunteer Sea Rescue members and volunteers with the striped dolphin. Photo – Rick Dawson/Parks and Wildlife

Parks and Wildlife staff rescued two dolphins in separate strandings this month at Albany and Point Peron near Rockingham.

In mid-January a team of eight Parks and Wildlife staff and two volunteers rescued a bottlenose dolphin that had become stranded in Albany's Princess Royal Harbour.

The team captured the dolphin quickly, used a sling to load it onto a trailer and released it into more open waters of Frenchman Bay, where it swam away strongly.

Later in the month, a striped dolphin stranded near Point Peron boat ramp was also rescued.

Parks and Wildlife staff joined community members and the Rockingham Volunteer Sea Rescue Group to capture the distressed dolphin and load it onto a sea rescue boat, before navigating rough seas to a suitable release site in deeper waters. Again, it was a happy ending with the dolphin swimming away swiftly.



Boosting bushfire communications

Parks and Wildlife has developed two high-tech mobile communications vehicles to assist with bushfire management, particularly in remote locations.

The trucks are fitted with internet capability and telephones powered by a rooftop satellite dish, computer screens delivering weather, mapping, emails and other information, VHF radios and a printer for essential colour maps.

Regional fire services coordinator Murray Mitchell said the vehicles had been designed and fitted out by department staff to replace two ageing and less-equipped mobile control point buses.

"The need for optimum communications during bushfires is paramount and these new trucks give us greater flexibility and operational support for firefighters than the old buses," Murray said.

"Increased communications capability is a significant benefit, with many of the bushfires we respond to occurring in remote or regional locations."

One truck is currently stationed in the Perth hills and second at Manjimup. They can be moved throughout the State for large incidents.

Left: One of the new mobile communications trucks. Photo – Parks and Wildlife