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N2N activities for children, Facebook competition announced, Yanchep goes retro, focus on volunteers, plus more.

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April 2014

Hi Lisa

Welcome to the autumn issue of Yanchep National Park eNews. Autumn is a very special time to visit Yanchep National Park – this is the time when you can see large flocks of Carnaby's cockatoos entering the park. And the cooler weather means it's a great time to enjoy a barbecue, picnic or a stroll along one of the walk trails.

The April school holidays are not too far away and Yanchep National Park is proud to announce that the friendly crew from Nearer to Nature will be conducting a range of exciting children's programs including the popular *Adventure caving* plus *Enchanted environment* and *Discovering the six seasons*.

This issue of Yanchep National Park eNews includes some great stories about the park's new geocache trail, a recap of the fantastic new event on the Yanchep calendar, plus information on how Chinese tourism is a huge focus for the park. Also, find out how you can win one of five Yanchep prize packs with our Facebook promotion – Koji the sleepy koala.

All this and more in the Yanchep National Park Autumn 2014 issue.

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Enchantment, caves and Aboriginal culture at Yanchep National Park

Be enchanted at Yanchep National Park these school holidays when it hosts the Nearer to Nature program for school-aged children.

Once again, the park has organised the popular *Adventure caving* activity with two sessions, one for children aged 8 to 10 and the other for children 10 to 14. Participants can enjoy the magnificent world of the underground as they crawl and explore their way through an amazing world in one of the park's wild caves. Both sessions will be held on Thursday 17 April.

On the morning of Wednesday 23 April, discover the magic of Yanchep's caves in *Enchanted environment*, aimed at children from 4 to 7.

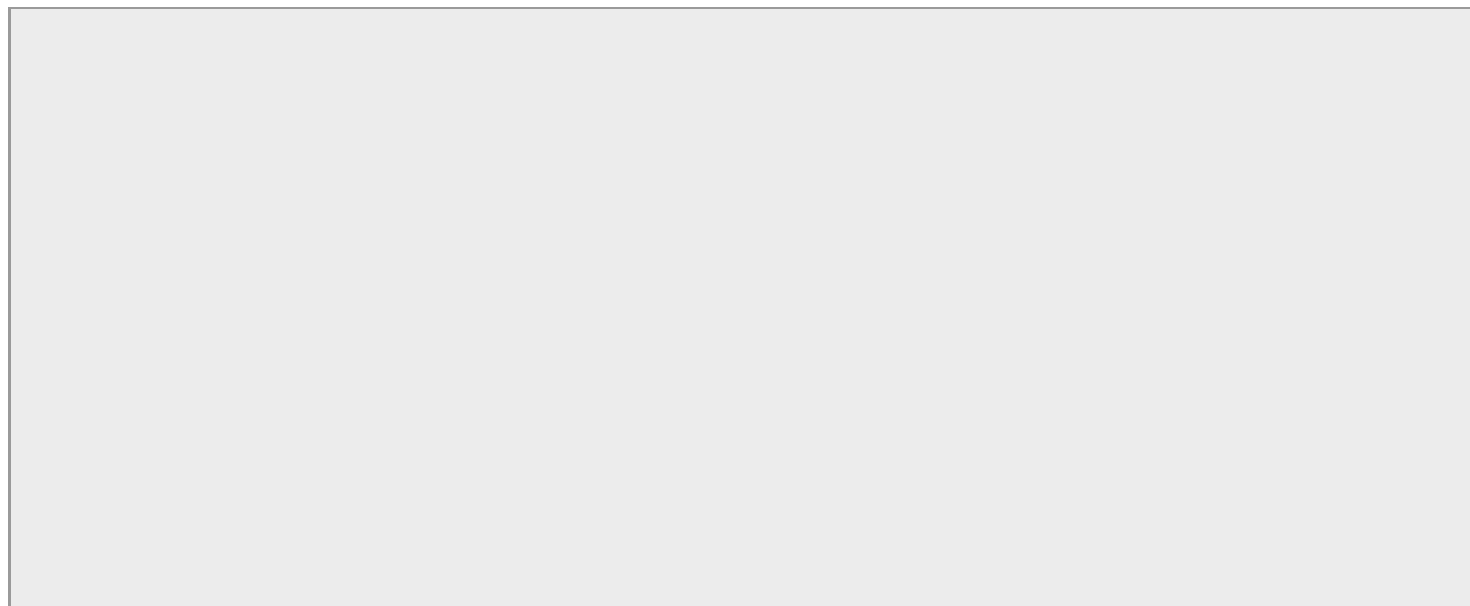
Visitor services manager Peta Bolz said *Enchanted environment* would take children on a journey of discovery to learn about the enchanting world of limestone caves.

"Aimed at younger ages, this activity will teach children about the importance of our local environment and how we can protect it for generations to come," she said.

At the *Discovering the six seasons* session, children will immerse themselves into Aboriginal culture and gain an understanding of the way the local Noongar people used the changing of their six seasons to guide the hunt for food. The session, held on the afternoon of Wednesday 23 April, is aimed at children aged 7 to 9.

Yanchep National Park marketing coordinator Jennifer Green said bookings were essential.

"We've had a lot of interest in these activities and so to secure a spot contact Nearer to Nature on 9295 2244 during business hours," she said.





Adventure caving.

Yanchep goes retro!

March saw the successful introduction of a new event to the Yanchep National Park calendar when hundreds of revellers danced at the Retro Rewind festival.

More than 4000 people attended the swinging 60s event, which included music from Stratosfunk, Shutdown from Sugardown, and Cottontail Trio and the Supper Club, plus arcade games and a colourful display of hot rods from the Goodfellas hot rod club.

Marketing coordinator Jennifer Green said the atmosphere was electric.

“People came from near and far, and everyone appeared to be really enjoying themselves,” she said.

“This City of Wanneroo event was the first free event in the park and, having witnessed the success of this event, we will hopefully see many more come to us.”

Facebook receives 1000 likes

Yanchep National Park has hit the 1000 mark on its Facebook page! So to celebrate, we will be giving a Yanchep National Park prize pack to five lucky Facebook users.

For your chance to win, 'like' our Facebook page, and underneath the competition poster on Facebook, comment to tell us what you think our sleepy koala, Koji, is dreaming of.

Koji, one of our resident male koalas, was born in the park in 2010. As shown in the photograph, he is laid back and loves to cool down under the sprinklers.

Feel free to share the link with your friends, and encourage them to enter too.

Each prize pack is worth about \$60 and consists of an annual pass to Yanchep National Park, family pass to Crystal Cave, Department of Parks and Wildlife book and free gift.

Open 2 April and closes 9 April at 4pm. One entry per person. Competition is open to Australian residents only.



Win: Tell us what you think Koji is dreaming of and you could win one of five Yanchep National Park prize packs.

Geocache first for Yanchep

Staff at Yanchep National Park worked closely with Bush Ranger cadets from Duncraig Senior High School to develop the first geocache trail for the park.

The geocache trail, a course of hidden containers (called caches) that are located using a GPS or smartphone, is located on the Wetlands Walk, which circumnavigates Loch McNess at Yanchep National Park.

Yanchep National Park manager Julia Coggins said this was a great opportunity for Yanchep to join the latest worldwide craze.

"The Nyanyi-Yandjip geocache trail takes its name from the traditional tribal name for the park and leads people through our stunning Australian bush. On completion, they can share the details of their find to the world online," Julia said.

Bush Rangers WA cadet program instructor Gary Thirlwell worked with cadets at the school to develop the geocache trail for the park.

"I had been introduced to geocaching by my nephew, and thought there was potential to develop a geocache trail with my cadet unit," Gary said.

"Thankfully we received some education funding from BP Australia to develop the trail and, given we were holding our annual orientation camp at Yanchep National Park, thought it would be the best location.

"More than 30 students made several visits to the park to consider locations for the caches. We decided the Wetlands Walk Trail was the perfect place to do so.

"The geocache trail at Yanchep is a fantastic idea that uses technology and encourages people to get active outdoors."

Visitors to the park can hire the geocache receivers and trail guide from McNess House for \$10 plus \$50 deposit. Identification is required.

More information about the Nyanyi-Yandjip geocache trail is available from www.geocaching.com.



Bush Rangers WA cadet program instructor Gary Thirlwell and Yanchep National Park manager Julia Coggins with the GPS receivers for the new trail.

Yanchep gets ready for China

Staff from Yanchep National Park and Chocolate Drops Tea Rooms attended a China Ready workshop on 5 March that aimed to help tourism businesses to attract and cater for the new wave of Chinese visitors to Western Australia.

According to Tourism Western Australia, Chinese tourists made 70 million overseas trips in 2011, spending \$US69 billion, hence competition from tourism regions and businesses for the Chinese visitor is very strong.

The China Ready workshop, organised by Tourism Council WA, provides businesses with an insight into the Chinese visitor, focusing on travel needs and customs.

Marketing coordinator Jennifer Green said the China Ready workshop was the first step in Yanchep National Park obtaining China Ready accreditation.

“There are a few more criteria that we need to fulfil, such as having our website, signage and brochures translatable into Chinese, but once we achieve this, the China Ready accreditation will position the park as a business that Chinese visitors can trust,” she said.

“China Ready accredited businesses display a distinctive red and yellow star logo that signifies quality assurance, cultural awareness, consumer protection and respect for Chinese travellers.

“Yanchep National Park offers everything the Chinese visitor wants—an opportunity to experience Australian

animals, such as koalas, kangaroos and native birdlife in a stunning natural Australian setting, as well as the chance to learn more about our unique Aboriginal history.”



Chocolate Drops supports tourism industry function

Chocolate Drops Tea Rooms, located in Yanchep National Park, was one of the sponsors at the Parliament House Tourism Industry Function held on 18 March.

The function gave representatives from the Western Australian tourism industry the opportunity to meet and network.

Chocolate Drops owner Sue Dash said it was a great opportunity to show off her wares.

“The event allowed us to showcase our range of Australian-made chocolates to the tourism industry. Our staff made chocolate kookaburras, koalas, wombats, echidnas, koalas and boomerangs especially for the event,” Sue said.

New pond returns cave to former glory

Yanchep National Park operations staff installed a new pond in Crystal Cave last month to bring it back to its former glory and to sustain a more natural environment.

Until the 1990s, the tourist attraction held as much as two metres of water, which was sourced from Perth’s largest water source, the Gngangara Mound. However, declining groundwater levels in the mound have

impacted on the cave to the point that natural surface water is no longer visible in the cave.

During the past 14 months, the park has successfully trialled a temporary rectangular pond to maintain moisture in the cave.

The new pond is larger than the trial pond and is more aesthetically pleasing.

Park ranger Phillipa Carboon said maintaining water in the cave was important to the natural environment.

“Moisture in the cave enables tuart tree roots to survive in this environment. The roots create a unique habitat and are an important source of food for the tiny crustacean amphipods that live in the cave,” Phillipa said.

“Moisture also protects the stalactites and stalagmites, shawls and other formations in the cave.”

In addition to the environmental benefits, installing the pond has also enhanced the visitor experience in the cave.

“The pond improves the cave’s aesthetics plus gives visitors an idea of what it looked like many years ago,” Phillipa said.



The new pond in Crystal Cave.

Household goods and industrial waste found in Yanchep Clean Up event

Earlier this month, 20 volunteers from Yanchep National Park participated in the annual Clean Up Australia Day event in the park, targeting an area of bushland used to illegally dump household and industrial rubbish.

Working for just under two hours, volunteers filled almost two 8m² skip bins, collecting items including a washing machine complete with full load of clothes, as well as televisions, tyres and electrical conduit.

Volunteer coordinator Ciara McIlduff said the volunteer team was shocked to see how our beautiful environment had been used as dumping pit.

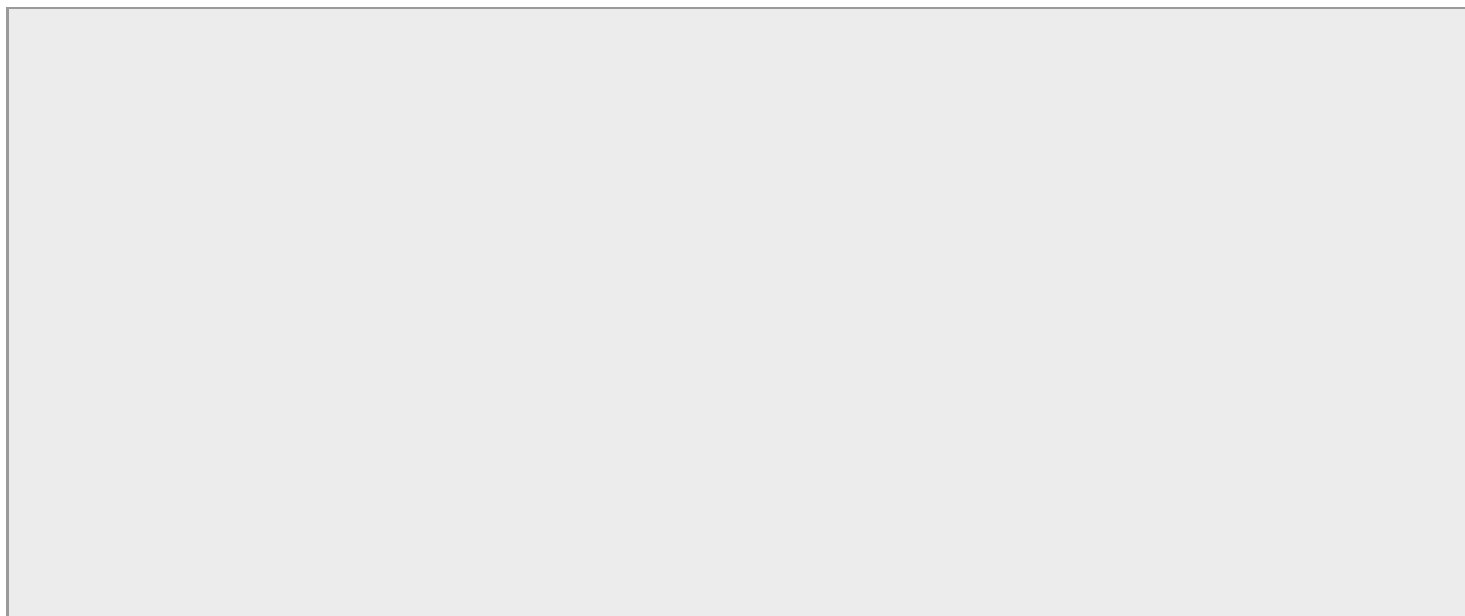
“Not only does illegally dumped rubbish cost a lot to remove and look unsightly but it can also have serious impacts on our natural environment, like contamination of precious groundwater through dumping of chemicals, the spread of weeds and increased fire risk from dumped green waste, as well as hazards from dumped cars,” she said.

Every year volunteers spend approximately 1000 hours collecting rubbish from the bushlands and wetlands of Yanchep National Park.

Illegal dumping can be prosecuted under the *Litter Act 1979* and can attract an infringement fine up to \$5000 for an individual and \$10,000 for a company.

Yanchep National Park supports Keep Australia Beautiful Council's anti-litter message: *Bin it – you know it's the right thing to do*. The park is an official Keep Australia Beautiful Adopt-a-Spot site, which encourages individuals, community groups and businesses to adopt a site in their local community to keep litter-free.

The park is seeking volunteers for its next major clean-up for World Environment Week on Wednesday 4 June, which will target road verges. If you are interested in participating, contact volunteer coordinator Ciara McIlduff on 9303 7759.





Some of the crew who helped with the Clean Up Australia Day event at Yanchep.

Yanchep National Park prepares for nesting season

Staff and volunteers at Yanchep National Park have been busily preparing for the nesting season by installing nesting hollows for Carnaby's cockatoos and roosting boxes for six species of bats.

Yanchep National Park conservation officer Gary Hunton used a 10m high cherry picker, which was already in the park to undertake tree works, to install five artificial nesting hollows for Carnaby's cockatoos and 11 roosting boxes for bats. The boxes, made by Yanchep National Park volunteers Roy Jackson and Terry Berry, will be monitored by various members of the Yanchep National Park Volunteer Association.

The cooler months mark the start of the breeding season for many animals native to the park. While most of the Carnaby's cockatoo population heads to the Wheatbelt to breed, a small population remains in the park over the winter.

Volunteer coordinator Ciara McIlduff said the species is the Noongar totem for the Yanchep area and, although Carnaby's are classified as endangered, they are a common sight in the park.

"The park is known as a Carnaby's 'super roost' site due to the high numbers seen here," she said.

Yanchep volunteers have been monitoring potential natural nesting hollows for several years, in the hope of recording breeding pairs. To date, the main species to inhabit these old hollows have been feral bees and other native bird species, including pink and grey galahs. However as Carnaby's cockatoos have been previously recorded as breeding in the area, there is hope that the new nesting boxes will be used. The nesting hollows were placed in known roosting sites and nearby revegetation sites that mostly comprise

cockatoo feed species.

Six species of bat (Gould's wattle bat, chocolate wattle bat, lesser long-eared bat, greater long-eared bat, white-striped freetail bat and southern forest bat) are also found at Yanchep National Park and face similar nesting challenges to cockatoos as they roost in the hollows of mature trees. Artificial bat boxes provide a place for bats to breed and rest in safety. As urban development pushes closer to the park and nearby bushland is cleared, volunteers hope that the bat boxes will supplement roosting sites already used within the park.

For more information on how you can be involved as a volunteer in Yanchep National Park, contact volunteer coordinator Ciara McIllduff on 9303 7759.



Yanchep National Park conservation officer Gary Hunton installs a nesting box.

Focus on staff and volunteers...

The Yanchep Volunteer Group is a fantastic and dedicated group of individuals. Two of these volunteers, Ray Turner and Dave Mulholland, recently received Outstanding Service awards from the Department of Parks

and Wildlife. Find out more about their story...

How long have you been volunteering in the park?

RT: *I started in November 2011.*

DM: *I started in July 2012.*

(Both Ray and Dave have been volunteering twice a week, contributing a combined 1400 hours since they began.)

What attracted you to Yanchep National Park?

RT: *I was really keen to become involved with the outdoors and on the first visit was 'hooked'.*

DM: *I have enjoyed visiting the park for many years before becoming a volunteer and just love the place. We both generally are passionate about the wellbeing of the park and also the interaction between staff, volunteers and visitors.*

What projects are you involved in?

RT and DM: *We have been and are currently involved in many conservation projects, Keep Australia Beautiful rubbish collections and ongoing pick-ups in the park. Much of our time is spent removing invasive species from the park.*

On many occasions, we have assisted with fauna monitoring through setting up and installing infra-red cameras, hollow knocking for Carnaby's cockatoos and even counting graceful sun moths.

We also spend time maintaining rehabilitated areas in the park and monitor the watering system to ensure new plants survive their first hot summer.

What is your most memorable experience?

DM: *One of my many most memorable experiences would be setting up the cameras for the rakali study.*

RT: *I just really like being a part of all of the projects in the park and sharing knowledge.*

What do you like most about the park?

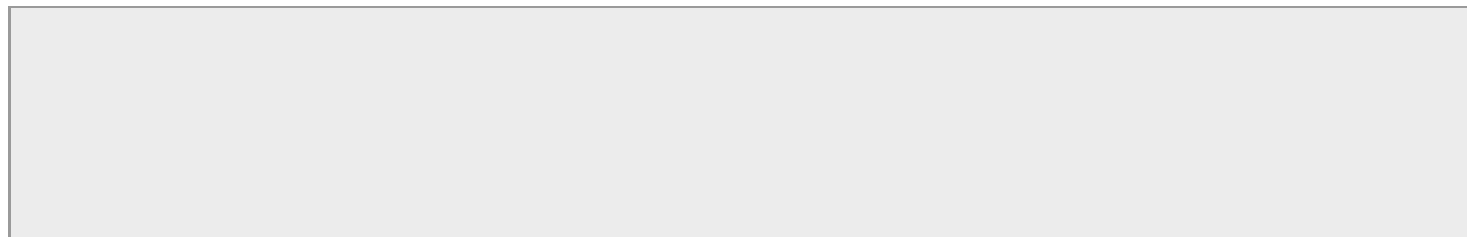
DM: *I love around August–September when the wildlife and wildflowers are out.*

RT: *The past and present history surrounding the park and I feel like I'm always learning more and more.*

What do you like most about volunteering?

RT and DM: *We both feel a highlight of our week. We always look forward to our days spent in the park and when we can't be there, there is a sense of 'missing out'.*

There is a family feel with a relaxed and fun environment. There is such a diversity of backgrounds and information shared with such a great bunch of people. There is a real sense of spirit among the Yanchep volunteers and so a big thank you to our volunteer coordinators Ciara and Naomi who make it happen.





Dave Mulholland and Ray Turner



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