

# Moves to conserve flora strengthened



Students planted almost 4000 seedlings in Chittering Lakes Nature Reserve as part of Arbor Day celebrations this year. Environment and Heritage Minister Judy Edwards and the Department's Acting Executive Director, Keiran McNamara, assisted Chittering students with planting trees. Photo by Ernie McLintock.

**ACTIONS** to conserve threatened flora and ecological communities in the South-West will be put on a more secure footing, with the State Government underwriting a major program targeted at working in partnership with local landowners and organisations.

Environment and Heritage Minister Dr Judy Edwards said the program involved appointing full-time flora conservation officers at eight Department of Conservation and Land Management work centres from Geraldton to Esperance.

"Up until now, district flora conservation officers have usually been appointed on a contract basis and funded from a variety of sources, including the department's annual budget, the Commonwealth's Natural Heritage Trust and income from bioprospecting licence agreements," Dr Edwards said.

"While this has been successful in the past, the State Government believes it is necessary for the State to assume full responsibility and fund the appointments directly through the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

"This will help ensure there is continuity in flora conservation activities, particularly through working with local community groups and landowners. It also will provide greater employment security and stability for the officers concerned."

Dr Edwards said the flora conservation officers would be stationed at Geraldton, Jurien, Merredin, Narrogin, Katanning, Albany, Esperance and in the department's Swan Coastal District which took in the Swan Coastal Plain between Moore River and Singleton (north of Mandurah).

"Flora Conservation Officers perform a wide range of duties in helping to conserve Western Australia's biological diversity," she said.

"These tasks include fencing off threatened species of plants, controlling weeds affecting threatened species and ecological communities, establishing new populations of threatened species in suitable sites and surveying for new populations of threatened flora.

"All of these, along with many other actions, are essential in preventing flora extinctions in this State."

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Dr Edwards said that through their own efforts and through their links with the community, flora conservation officers had been responsible for finding several presumed extinct flora species, including a beard heath (the thick-margined leucopogon).

"Conserving threatened flora and ecological communities in the agricultural areas is an important part of the State Government's salinity strategy," she said.

"A biological survey of the Agricultural Region carried out by

the department and other institutions has revealed that as many as 450 native plant species are threatened by salinity.

"There are 127 native species listed as 'critically endangered', which means they may become extinct within a few years unless recovery actions are implemented in the near future.

"Consequently, there is an increasing urgency to work closely with landowners to implement measures that will combat the salinity menace and help restore the natural balance across the landscape."





























































AS PART OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S  
• **SALINITY STRATEGY PLAN** •  
CHITTERING LAKES PROJECT AREA

1999

- *Melaleuca prestantia*  
(Moonah)
- *Melaleuca teretifolia*
- *Melaleuca rhaphiophylla*  
(Cotton Paperbark)
- *Casuarina sphaerocarpa*  
(Sheep Sheak)
- *Atriplex semibaccata*  
(Berry Saltbush)
- *Acacia microbotrya*
- *Eucalyptus mellii*  
(Flooded Gum)



2002

- *Melaleuca acutata*  
(Woods Riverbush)
- *Melaleuca rhaphiophylla*  
(Cotton Paperbark)
- *Melaleuca binaria*
- *Eleocharis stricta*  
(Sheep Sheak)
- *Dryandra caroliniana*  
(Prang)
- *Acacia saligna*  
(Orange Wattle)
- *Eucalyptus mellii*  
(Flooded Gum)

PLANTING 1999-2002









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