

Supporting our department

Public Information and Corporate Affairs

Public Information and Corporate Affairs Branch delivers efficient and effective services to Parks and Wildlife's external customers and stakeholders as well as internal partners.

This is achieved through public safety information in support of incidents, fire awareness, outdoor environmental education, media relations, websites, photography and video production, customer service, publications and graphic design, public participation planning, events coordination, advertising and social media.

Audio-visual production

The branch continued to produce quality audio-visual products for social and traditional media and for communication and training within the department and with stakeholders. Collaboration was again a focus in 2016–17, through partnering with other agencies such as Perth Zoo to support Government announcements, with external organisations including the Munda Biddi and WA Parks foundations, and with industry and education in the immersive media space. Stunning aerial and on-ground footage was gathered from the Kimberley to the south coast, and used to showcase Western Australia's natural attractions and improve safety messages. Video versions of feature stories, species and park profiles added value to the department's

flagship publication, *LANDSCOPE* magazine, and cameras installed on the department's aerial and ground fleet vehicles captured a new perspective of bushfires and prescribed burning.

Media

The branch's media unit provided communications support through the preparation and delivery of communication plans, speeches, media statements, social media and events; public information training for incident management; communications support for the Minister's office; as well as responding to media enquiries. Unit staff performed a vital role providing public information for incident management during the 2016–17 fire season and continued to work closely with media and communications colleagues at the Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

Education

Nearer to Nature education officers continued to deliver programs for young people to connect with nature at the Perth Hills Discovery Centre (PHDC) in Mundaring, Forest Heritage Centre (Dwellingup), and national and marine parks. PHDC also provides education and camping facilities for entry level campers and students. The facilities are designed to support all abilities, with easy access showers and toilets, wheelchair ramps to all buildings and all-access camp sites. Nearer

to Nature delivered programs focusing on *Western Shield*, forest ecology, fire ecology (with the support of the department's Regional and Fire Management Services Division) and wetland ecosystems, sustainability and Aboriginal culture. A number of these activities were supported by Alcoa. During 2016–17, 23,072 people took part in Nearer to Nature programs. A further 544 community members visited the centre for overnight camping.

Junior Dolphin Watch was delivered to 962 participants in 2016–17 with the support of the department's Rivers and Estuaries Division.

Bush Rangers continued to support the social and educational development of cadets from high schools across the State. During 2016–17 the number of units increased to 65 and cadet numbers increased to 3272, with 25 per cent coming from Aboriginal backgrounds, while 17 per cent have a disability. Bush Rangers has the highest number of participants of the wider Cadets WA program, and the highest rate of Aboriginal and female cadets. The program continues to be strong in the Kimberley and at Aboriginal community schools, where it provides the opportunity for young people to work on country with Indigenous ranger groups and elders.

The River Rangers program for Years 5 to 6 provides education and volunteering opportunities related to rivers and catchments.

The focus of the program continued to expand beyond the Swan River catchment, with two units in Aboriginal community schools in the Kimberley. In 2016–17 there were 739 River Rangers cadets in 18 schools.

Web

During 2016–17, the branch's web and multimedia team continued development of the department's web publishing, communication platforms and services. Collaborative projects with the department's Parks and Visitors Services Division including a virtual reality (VR) tour application continued to be developed by expanding the number of interactive experiences via 360 photography on Google maps (gaining Google Trusted Photographer status), and plans were developed for VR immersive education.

Significant work has occurred to reimagine the department's online e-commerce solution, WA Naturally. The development aims to improve the customer experience and the branch's workflow, introduce the ability to create electronic park passes and consolidate stock management.

Internal web-based projects were completed to improve efficiencies and publishing, including development of a new intranet, digital asset management system and job tracking system.

Social media

Corporate social media accounts for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube are coordinated by the branch. A number of social media accounts are also managed independently in the regions with support and advice from the branch. As at 30 June 2017, 11 Facebook pages, three Twitter accounts and three Instagram accounts from various Parks and Wildlife operational areas were registered. The branch maintains a social media content management strategy, policy and social media toolbox for staff and delivers presentations to internal and external stakeholders about best practice for social media. New techniques have been implemented including Facebook live, increased use of videos and targeting specific times of day to better reach audiences. In 2016–17, the corporate social media accounts experienced significant growth: Facebook 42 per cent, Twitter 23 per cent and Instagram 338 per cent.

Publishing

The branch coordinated publishing for the department including the production of more than 450 reports, brochures, management plans, banners, newsletters, magazines, manuals, field guides and other information products. The publishing unit supported major departmental initiatives including Statewide conservation and parks programs, *Western Shield*, prescribed burning and marine education manuals for Kimberley

school-aged students. The unit has improved the conversion of publications into digital, interactive formats and designed new publications specifically for an online audience. It produced 12 issues of monthly online newsletter *Parks and Wildlife News* and regular internal newsfeed stories. The branch also supported the WA Parks and Munda Biddi foundations with brand development and in-kind marketing materials.

WA Naturally

In 2016–17, the department's saleable publishing program WA Naturally reprinted four successful Bush Book titles, produced an annual Western Australia calendar plus four issues of *LANDSCOPE* magazine. *LANDSCOPE* – WA's parks, wildlife and conservation magazine – first produced in 1985, continues to appeal to a broad readership through engaging and relevant content and contemporary design.

Customer service

The Kensington Information Unit continued to deliver services to members of the community contacting the department's head office. The unit also supported the department's saleable publishing program through processing of subscriptions and book sales, and the Parks and Visitor Services Division through the sale of national park passes.



Coodanup College Bush Ranger cadets learning about traditional bush tucker with Aboriginal guide Leonard Thorn. Photo – DBCA



Rebecca Warner conducts a Nearer to Nature activity at Trigg Beach. Photo – DBCA

Supporting our department

Legal matters

Freedom of Information

The Office of the Director General managed processes for the department under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*. The department's Information Statement 2016–17 (available on the Parks and Wildlife website) describes the functions of the department and its related agencies, the nature of the information held by the department and its related agencies, and the type of information that is made available to the public.

Parks and Wildlife received 15 valid applications for access to information, with two applicants requesting an internal review of the department's decisions.

Litigation

Information regarding litigation in progress is available in Note 34 of the Notes to the Financial Statements on page 100 of this report.

Prosecutions

The department initiated 16 prosecutions during 2016–17, involving a total of 37 charges covering a broad range of offences including the illegal taking or possession of protected and rare fauna or flora, illegal importation or selling of fauna, illegal exportation of fauna, cruelty to fauna, failure to comply with licence conditions, and offences relating to activities on State forest, nature reserves and national parks.

Finalised prosecutions for 2016–17

Of the 16 prosecutions commenced, 9 were subject to final court determination during 2016–17, including cases relating to the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, *Animal Welfare Act 2002*, Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2000, and the Wildlife Conservation Regulations 1970.

These matters resulted in the imposition of fines totalling \$11,000 and costs to the value of \$1692.

In addition to the 16 prosecutions commenced during this period a further nine were carried forward and finalised from 2015–16.

Prosecutions currently before the courts

As at 30 June 2017, five prosecutions were yet to be concluded and remained before the courts. A further two cases were pending, subject to the evidentiary standard being met, and could result in either prosecution or a letter of warning and four cases are at State Solicitor's Office for advice.

Total reported offences

Between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2017, a total of 820 offences were reported, of which 14 were dealt with by way of prosecution, 23 were pending, 388 were dealt with by infringement notice, 32 resulted in letters of warning, 346 were dealt with by caution notices, 17 required no further action.

Office for Information Management

The Office for Information Management (OIM) provides leadership for information and related technology (IT) and the IT common operating environment which supports the department's geographically-distributed and diverse marine, aerial and terrestrial services across WA.

In 2016–17, OIM further improved the economic and business value of the department's IT ecosystem and aided the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer's public sector programs. Key achievements for 2016–17 include:

- strengthening IT security and protection controls to eliminate or reduce significant threats to business continuity
- furthering the use of open IT ecosystems that are cost-effective, sustainable, interoperable and flexible
- improving workforce productivity and mobility through smarter use of 'hybrid cloud'
- enhancing telecommunications capabilities to support critical frontline operations in remote area 'black spots' which are not serviced by telecommunications carriers or providers, and
- extending the use of remote sensor technologies to automate field observations for situational awareness.

Visitor risk management

The department has a responsibility to consider the personal safety and welfare of visitors to Parks and Wildlife-managed lands and waters. The department aims to manage the potential for misadventure and injuries to visitors in a manner that does not unnecessarily diminish visitor use and enjoyment. The department manages the risk presented to visitors by implementing a Statewide Visitor Risk Management program.

Tragically, during 2016–17, eight visitors died in the extensive areas managed by Parks and Wildlife. Two of these deaths were related to dehydration in hot conditions, one occurred due to a heart attack, two fatalities occurred in a plane crash, while the remaining three were drownings, including one rock fishing-related death.

During 2016–17:

- Parks and Wildlife continued to work on a range of issues regarding visitor safety including remote camping, walk trail classifications and redevelopments and improvements to recreational sites and facilities.
- Thirty-one staff completed a nationally-accredited visitor risk management course provided by the department.
- Forty-seven staff completed refresher training relating to visitor risk management.

- Seventy staff completed induction training for the recently introduced online incident and hazard management reporting system.
- Parks and Wildlife continued to contribute to the Statewide approach to reduce the number of injuries and deaths associated with rock fishing in WA, in conjunction with Recfishwest and other stakeholders.
- In partnership with Recfishwest, 16 angel rings were installed along the Leeuwin-Naturaliste coastline between Dunsborough and Augusta. A total of 54 angel rings have now been installed along the Western Australian coastline between Shark Bay and Esperance, with 36 of these being on Parks and Wildlife-managed land.

Marine operations

The marine operations function within Regional and Fire Management Services Division provides guidance, advice, support and training to departmental staff on the implementation, maintenance and improvement of practices and procedures in relation to marine operations and reporting, in accordance with departmental policies and guidelines.

During 2016–17:

- The creation of the Conservation and Parks Commission (CPC) to replace the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority as the vesting body for marine parks and reserves in Western Australia necessitated a review

of processes for the monitoring, evaluation and assessment of the implementation of management plans.

- Parks and Wildlife continued to work closely with the Department of Fisheries (DoF) on collaborative operational plans which provide the basis for joint works between the two agencies at an operational level.
- The department facilitated cross-authorisation training with DoF for Parks and Wildlife staff.
- Twenty nine staff received refresher training in procedures for large whale disentanglement and euthanasia of large whales.
- Recommended procedures for the safe and efficient removal of whale carcasses from high-use beach areas were revised and updated and Parks and Wildlife staff, relevant State Government agencies and local government authorities were advised. A video demonstrating the step-by-step process undertaken in the successful removal of a 35-tonne humpback whale carcass in the south-west was produced and distributed.
- A new patrol vessel was delivered for Ngari Capes Marine Park and a new passenger ferry for use in Geikie Gorge National Park was completed for commissioning in July 2017.



The department conducts large whale disentanglement training for staff. *Photo – DBCA*



Marine park coordinator Matt Dasey and South West regional manager Bob Hagan inspect a rock fishing anchor. *Photo – Peter Henderson/DBCA*

Supporting our department

Corporate Services Division

The division provided corporate services to the department and other agencies including the Department of Environment Regulation, Office of the Environmental Protection Authority, Forest Products Commission and Waste Authority of Western Australia.

Financial Services Branch

The department's central Financial Services Branch continued to maintain core financial software and manage accounts payable, accounts receivable, asset records, tax reporting and remote area housing. The branch also managed the department's light and heavy vehicle fleets, the Kensington site, and produced a range of statutory and management financial reports.

Corporate Information Services Branch

In 2016–17 Corporate Information Services (CIS) Branch provided recordkeeping services and related training to the departments of Parks and Wildlife and Environment Regulation.

CIS supported the department's Ministerial Liaison Unit in capturing, processing and responding to Ministerial and other types of correspondence.

People Services Branch

People Services Branch continued to provide client-focused human resource services including employee relations, workforce services, recruitment, learning and development, strategic planning, data analysis and reporting, and the management of safety, health and wellbeing of staff.

Geographic Information Services Branch

Geographic Information Services (GIS) Branch provides services, including:

- monitoring of Earth's surface using remote sensing to provide information on the current and historical attributes of WA's natural resources
- using spatial analysis of geospatial information to assist in natural resource management, and
- producing maps and other information products to meet operational and public needs.

The key achievements and activities of the branch for 2016–17 are outlined right.

Remote sensing and analysis

Remote sensing utilising satellite and aerial imagery is being increasingly used to monitor terrestrial and marine environments. Some applications used by GIS are listed below:

- vegetation monitoring for the Dirk Hartog Island National Park ecological restoration program
- targeted fire scar mapping and statistical analysis, and
- vegetation monitoring in the Kimberley region.

The statistical analysis of spatial data provides essential information and develops knowledge to assist in natural resource management. Statistical reports and maps have been published both within the department and externally on the Shared Location Information Platform, the open data platform for Western Australia.

Mapping and data capture

- Maps for reserve creation and Indigenous Land Use Agreements in the Kimberley.
- Redesigned the public maps for the department's long trails.
- Prepared maps to support a wide range of departmental activities including the *Western Shield* wildlife recovery program, management plans and mapping products to support fire operations.

Parks and Wildlife-managed lands and waters

Total estate

At 30 June 2017, the total area under Parks and Wildlife's care was 31,480,867ha.

As detailed in the 2015-16 annual report, the department now relies solely on Landgate's statistical data and information systems for terrestrial tenure areas. The department has taken this step to ensure the areas reported are consistent with the information systems used by Landgate as the State's land tenure information custodian.

Tables 10 and 11 on page 67 provide a summary of all tenure classifications.

Table 10: Tenure classification of Parks and Wildlife-managed lands and waters (in hectares)

Tenure classification	Goldfields	Kimberley	Midwest	Pilbara	South Coast	South West	Swan	Warren	Wheatbelt	Total
National park	153,651	1,418,401	570,200	2,437,176	863,414	144,705	117,260	561,539	1257	6,267,602
Conservation park	184,281	558,411	15,643	281,777	677	13,655	24,399	707	4796	1,084,346
Nature reserve	6,290,701	169,274	738,988	259,596	1,578,014	13,182	54,491	86,987	1,076,592	10,267,826
State forest	781	-	-	-	4055	539,911	471,220	265,426	28,363	1,309,755
Timber reserve	28,393	-	26,233	-	5151	26,299	28,745	8317	-	123,139
Section 5(1)(g) & 5(1)(h) reserves	81,998	865,195	65,956	10,265	4415	31,478	34,831	1857	1611	1,097,606
Marine park	-	2,953,779	869,492	343,505	-	123,000	16,391	1446	-	4,307,613
Marine nature reserve	-	-	132,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	132,000
Marine management area	-	-	-	143,385	-	-	-	-	-	143,385
Freehold	-	0.3	1549	-	91	19,904	50	4663	0.8	26,258
UCL - Section 33(2)	28,514	-	89,709	-	-	-	-	-	-	118,223
Crown freehold – department interest	-	-	-	-	-	-	8571	-	-	8571
SCRM Act – river reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	3594	-	-	3594
Totals	6,768,319	5,965,060	2,509,771	3,475,704	2,455,816	912,134	759,552	930,942	1,112,620	24,889,919

Table 11: Lands where the department has a management interest (in hectares)

Tenure classification	Goldfields	Kimberley	Midwest	Pilbara	South Coast	South West	Swan	Warren	Wheatbelt	Total
Crown freehold - department interest			12,761		6201	4083	13,428	1661	4955	43,088
Crown reserve - department interest						2	-	141		143
Unallocated Crown land - department interest	1,920,459	143,364	3,277,763	1,145,531	16,886	5	17	134	43,558	6,547,717
Totals	1,920,459	143,364	3,290,524	1,145,531	23,087	4090	13,445	1936	48,513	6,590,949

Notes:

- 1 Areas are from Landgate cadastral/tenure information systems (30 June 2017).
- 2 Marine areas are provided by the department's Planning Branch.

Supporting our department

Table 12: Area of national parks vested in the Conservation and Parks Commission at 30 June 2017

Name	Area (ha)	Name	Area (ha)	Name	Area (ha)	Name	Area (ha)	Name	Area (ha)
Alexander Morrison	8500	Eucla	3815	Karijini	624,675	Mount Roe	127,828	Walpole-Nornalup	18,547
Avon Valley	4366	Fitzgerald River	302,561	Karlamilyi	1,283,805	Murujuga*	4919	Walyunga	1809
Badgingarra	13,110	Forest Grove	1373	Kennedy Range	142,274	Nambung	19,268	Wandoo	46,415
Beelu	4617	Francois Peron	53,145	Kingston	21,086	Neerabup	973	Warren	3088
Blackwood River	20,487	Frank Hann	68,708	Korong	6346	Peak Charles	39,959	Watheroo	44,480
Boorabbin	28,153	Geikie Gorge	2554	Lake Muir	9633	Porongurup	2678	Waychinicup	3976
Boorara-Gardner	11,008	Gloucester	8785	Lawley River	17,319	Preston	12,663	Wellington	17,427
Boyndaminup	5439	Goldfields Woodlands	66,146	Leeuwin-Naturaliste	21,987	Prince Regent	584,834	West Cape Howe	3736
Bramley	3895	Goongarrie	59,352	Lesmurdie Falls	57	Purnululu	243,833	Whicher	6345
Brockman	51	Gooseberry Hill	33	Lesueur	27,238	Scott	3322	William Bay	1746
Cape Arid	277,086	Greater Beedelup	19,280	Midgegooroo	2491	Serpentine	4284	Wiltshire-Butler	11,645
Cape Le Grand	31,200	Greenmount	202	Millstream Chichester	238,592	Shannon	52,626	Windjana Gorge	2080
Cape Range	49,964	Gull Rock	2107	Milyeannup	18,698	Sir James Mitchell	173	Wolfe Creek	
Collier Range	235,277	Hassell	1136	Mirima	2066	Stirling Range	113,633	Meteorite Crater	1460
D'Entrecasteaux	118,759	Hawke	14,043	Mitchell River	117,949	Stokes	10,033	Yalgorup	13,154
Dalgarup	23,378	Helena	12,263	Moore River	17,253	Tathra	4322	Yanchep	2860
Dirk Hartog Island	62,929	Hilliger	16,986	Mount Augustus	9176	Torndirrup	4022	Yelverton	729
Dordagup	6378	Jane	6867	Mount Frankland	37,250	Tuart Forest	2045		
Drovers Cave	2593	John Forrest	2700	Mount Frankland North	22,053	Tunnel Creek	91		
Drysdale River	447,675	Kalamunda	397	Mount Frankland South	42,314	Un-named	1571		
Easter	2988	Kalbarri	183,163	Mount Lindesay	39,558	Un-named	81		
								Total	6,243,833

* Freehold land managed as national park under Section 8A of the CALM Act.

Marine reserves

The area of marine parks at 30 June 2017 was approximately 4.3 million hectares.

This represents an increase of more than two million hectares during the financial year as a result of the gazettal of Lalang-garram / Horizontal Falls Marine Park, North Lalang-garram Marine Park and Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park.

The area of marine reserves at 30 June 2017 was approximately 132,000ha. There were no changes during the year.

Marine management areas

The area of marine management areas at 30 June 2017 was approximately 143,000ha. There were no changes during the year.

Table 13: Marine reserves vested in the Conservation and Parks Commission at 30 June 2017

Name	Area (ha) approx
Barrow Island Marine Park	4169
Barrow Island Marine Management Area	116,616
Lalang-garram / Camden Sound Marine Park	673,000
Lalang-garram / Horizontal Falls Marine Park	248,000
Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park	181,000
Hamelin Pool Marine Nature Reserve	132,000
Jurien Bay Marine Park	82,376
Marmion Marine Park	9500
Montebello Islands Marine Park	58,375
Muiron Islands Marine Management Area	26,769
Ngari Capes Marine Park	123,000
Ningaloo Marine Park	263,313
North Kimberley Marine Park	1,670,000
North Lalang-garram Marine Park	109,000
Rowley Shoals Marine Park	87,807
Shark Bay Marine Park	748,735
Shoalwater Islands Marine Park	6545
Swan Estuary Marine Park	346
Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park	1446
Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park	41,000
Total	4,582,997

Area figures are approximate only. Quality of mapping of marine reserve boundaries is variable – improved mapping of watermark boundaries and historical boundaries may result in revised area figures in the future.

Changes of note during 2016-17 were:

Section 5(1)(g) and 5(1)(h) reserves

The area of land reported for the s5(1)(h) and s5(1)(g) of the CALM Act tenure category has increased because the department no longer reports on land classified as a miscellaneous reserve. Changes to the CALM Act now categorise Crown reserves vested in the Executive Body as Section 5(1)(h) reserves. Previously these reserves were classified as miscellaneous reserves.

Conservation parks and nature reserves

In September 2016, 231,358ha of new conservation parks and 5697.94ha of new nature reserves were created along the Eighty Mile Beach coastline and Mandora Marsh, south of Broome. The conservation reserves are jointly vested and jointly managed with the Aboriginal determined native title holders in this area.

Supporting our department

Conservation land acquisitions

During the year Parks and Wildlife, on behalf of the State Government, purchased seven parcels of land of high conservation value covering a combined total area of about 2360ha for future addition to the formal conservation reserve system.

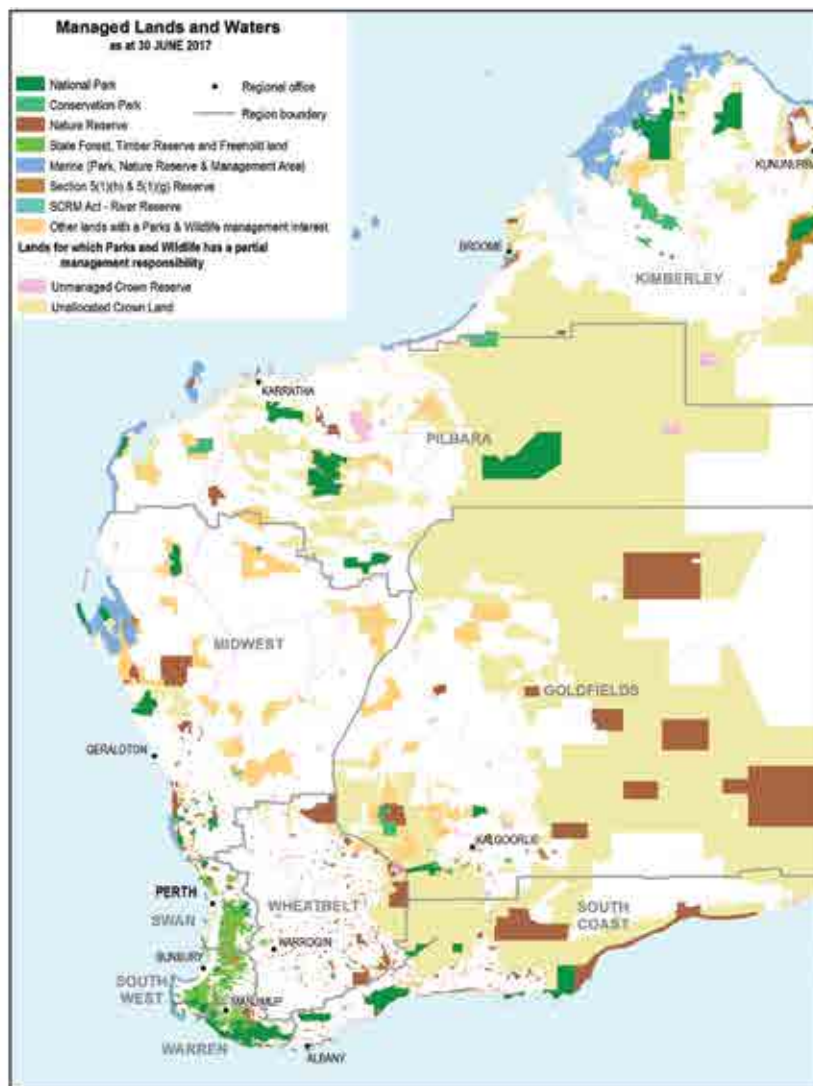
The department's priorities for purchases are areas containing ecosystems not adequately represented in existing conservation reserves, areas containing threatened species and ecological communities, or additions to existing reserves that will greatly improve their diversity or facilitate their management.

The purchases were mainly funded from environmental offset funds (provided from a variety of sources as a result of approved development projects and land clearing). The total expenditure was \$5.021 million.

Purchases finalised during the year were:

- 64ha property in the Shire of Wickepin
- 647ha property in the Shire of Chittering
- 22ha property in the City of Mandurah
- 601ha property in the Shire of Dandaragan
- 602ha property in the Shire of Dandaragan
- 408ha property in the Shires of Beverley and Brookton
- 16ha property in the City of Swan.

Figure 6: Parks and Wildlife-managed lands and waters at 30 June 2017



Acropora corals in Dampier Archipelago waters.
Photo – Shannon Armstrong/DBCA

Significant issues and trends

- The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions will build on the work of its predecessor agencies by using partnerships with Aboriginal communities, volunteers, conservation organisations and the private sector to help manage the State's terrestrial and marine parks and reserves.
- An Aboriginal Ranger Program will be established to capitalise on the economic and social benefits that employment provides in remote and regional WA communities, and to protect the environment. This five-year \$20 million program will employ Aboriginal people through direct employment and fee-for-service contracts, carrying out work such as biodiversity monitoring and research, management of tourism and cultural sites, weeds and feral animal management, prescribed burning, fencing and environmental protection works. It will be a tenure-blind program.
- A new Fitzroy River National Park will be created and managed jointly by the department and traditional owners to protect the environment and culture of the Fitzroy River area and surrounding lands. The park will extend the existing Geikie Gorge National Park along the Fitzroy River to the north and along the Margaret River to the east.
- A park and reserve network will be established on the remote islands and fringing reefs of the Buccaneer Archipelago. As part of this project, the department will negotiate Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) with multiple traditional owner groups and prepare management plans, which will facilitate employment of Indigenous rangers for park management and opportunities for Aboriginal people to create sustainable economic enterprises.
- ILUAs will also be negotiated with traditional owner groups beyond the Kimberley, with the goal of generating productive joint management arrangements that benefit Aboriginal people through employment and connection with country.
- As part of joint management arrangements with traditional owners at Murujuga National Park on the Burrup Peninsula, the department will assist the development of a Living Knowledge Centre and park infrastructure in collaboration with Woodside and Rio Tinto. Consultation will also be undertaken with Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation and other stakeholders to consider the nomination of the Burrup for World Heritage listing.
- In Broome, almost \$4 million will be invested to jointly manage Yawuru terrestrial reserves with traditional owners. In the northern Goldfields, total funding of \$2.5 million provided by BHP will enable negotiation of an ILUA and joint management agreement with Tjiwarl traditional owners relating to land tenure changes at Wanjarri Nature Reserve.
- Public recreation and joint management arrangements for the Ningaloo Coast will continue, with a draft management plan developed by the department and the Gnulli people to be released for comment in 2017. The project includes new and improved visitor infrastructure including roads. A final plan is due to be completed in the first half of 2018.
- Visitation to department-managed lands and waters is maintaining a strong upwards trend, with 20 million visits in 2016-17 and visitor satisfaction at 92.5 per cent.
- There will be increasing engagement and reliance on volunteers to assist the department undertake conservation and park management activities. The value of volunteer contributions for Parks and Wildlife exceeded \$24 million in 2016-17.
- Investment in park infrastructure and facilities continues. This includes a \$3 million, three-year project to develop Lake Kepwari, near Collie, as a tourism precinct with a focus on water skiing, wakeboarding, tubing and jet skiing. Additional works will create a 75km, three-to-four-day walk trail loop from Collie around Wellington Dam, connecting to the Bibbulmun Track.
- The department will examine a proposal to expand Wellington National Park with a view to enhancing the potential tourism and recreation opportunities in the area.



Barking gecko found in Bindoon during annual pitfall trapping. *Photo – Rebecca Kay/DBCA*



Native conservation operations officer Emma Atkinson with a chuditch trapped during a survey. *Photo – Christine Fleay/DBCA*

Significant issues and trends

- The Kalbarri Skywalk and National Park Tourist Infrastructure Project will continue with a \$20 million total project budget, including developing two new lookout structures overlooking the Murchison River gorge in Kalbarri National Park.
- Priority will be given to developing regulations, in consultation with stakeholders, to support the full proclamation of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, which will replace the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* and *Sandalwood Act 1929*.
- Western Australia's unique and highly significant biodiversity faces threats and complex challenges, requiring integrated multi-disciplinary approaches to conservation and management that is underpinned by high quality science.
- Adaptive management strategies will be developed to assist in meeting the challenges of climate change impacts, particularly in response to reduced rainfall and hotter conditions predicted for the south west.
- The department will continue to undertake an active fire management program in an increasingly complex operating environment, exacerbated by drying conditions in the south-west of the State. A comprehensive prescribed burning program to reduce the risk of damaging bushfires will be maintained.
- The State's forests will continue to be managed to conserve plants and animals, protect water catchments, for recreation and tourism, for a sustainable timber industry, for mining and other public uses under the direction of the Forest Management Plan 2014–2023.
- Invasive pests, weeds and diseases will continue to be managed. The department will maintain the *Western Shield* fauna recovery program in partnership with industry and the community, including expansion of trials of the Eradicat® bait for feral cats.
- Increased funding has accelerated major Riverpark shoreline restoration projects, while reviewed and streamlined statutory planning policies have improved the processing times of Riverpark development applications, licences and permits. The first report for the Swan Canning River Protection Strategy has been prepared, demonstrating improved coordination across Government for multi-agency river management initiatives.



Murujuga National Park. Photo – Rick Dawson/DBCA



Sanderlings, Margaret River. Photo – Christine Fleay/DBCA