

## Lifesavers move up

Extension provides new opportunities

Albany's surf lifesavers are relishing the opportunities provided by their upgraded clubhouse at Middleton Beach.

The extended and refurbished Albany Surf Life Saving Club building was officially opened on 27 July 2013 by the Hon Barry House MLC, representing Premier Colin Barnett.

Mr House conceded that he was not a surf-oriented person, despite growing up in Yallingup, but he held lifesavers in high regard.

"I've always very much admired the activity of surf lifesaving and very much admired the community involvement and contribution that surf lifesaving clubs make all around Australia," Mr House said.

"They are an integral part of what it is to be an Australian. Surf lifesaving clubs are iconic Australian organisations and representative bodies that perform outstanding roles in our communities."

The \$2m extensions were supported by \$987,226 of Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC's Regional Grants Scheme, along with funding from the Department of Sport and Recreation, the City of Albany, Lotterywest and the Jack Family Trust.

GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle said the surf club members had also contributed a great deal to the project through fundraising and in-kind work.



Leading the celebrations at the opening of the Albany Surf Life Saving Club extensions were, from left, club patron and Albany MLA Peter Watson, City of Albany Mayor Dennis Wellington, GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle, South West MLC Barry House and outgoing club President Rob Lucas.

The first stage of the project was the refurbishment of the ground floor of the building. In the next stage, a second storey was added, clad in red cedar timber that is intended to weather over time.

Improved facilities provided through the project include storage space, a function area, a classroom, IT throughout the building and a new junior training room.

Construction work on the second storey extended over the 2012-2013 summer but the club maintained its regular summer surf patrol program.

Contact: Christine Grogan, ph. 9842 4888



Albany Surf Life Saving Club's improved premises at Middleton Beach.



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# Winning ways in NRM

## Medallists explain their projects

Weed control and native plant crops took centre stage at the inaugural GSDC NRM Medallists Field Day on Tuesday 13 August.

GSDC Medallists Dr Geoff Woodall and John Moore explained their work to the field day audience, and demonstrated the projects that had been supported by the medal grant.

The GSDC Medal for Excellence in Natural Resource Management is awarded every two years, and comprises a sterling silver medal and a \$10,000 grant towards the recipient's NRM work.

The medal was formerly awarded annually but it was changed to a biennial award following a review in 2011. In alternate years, medal winners present their work at a field day, held for the first time this year.

GSDC Deputy Chairman Kim Barrow opened the field day, which was hosted by the Department of Agriculture and Food in Albany. The event was attended by 52 people including NRM practitioners, students, environmental consultants, government agency staff and general public.

Dr Woodall, who won the GSDC Medal in 2010, showed the audience the techniques he uses to raise trial crops of edible native plants.

His grant was applied to continuing adaptations of the CommVeg Series II seeding machine, developing specialised features to gain better germination rates when sowing native plant crops.

Mr Moore, the 2011 GSDC Medal winner, emphasised the importance of controlling Sydney golden wattle in the Great Southern.

Sydney golden wattle has the attributes of an invasive weed in the Great Southern even though it does not show the same characteristics elsewhere in Western Australia.

Mr Moore used his medal grant to help develop the HerbiCopter remote controlled spraying unit that can treat weed infestations in inaccessible areas.



*Dr Geoff Woodall explains the features of the CommVeg Series II seeder.*

*John Moore shows a prototype of the HerbiCopter remote controlled spraying unit.*



He also applied some of the grant to support a research trip to South Africa to study biological control of Sydney golden wattle, with promising results that may eventually lead to the introduction of a gall wasp to limit the spread of the plant.

Following the information sessions about the medallists' work, the audience went outside to inspect the CommVeg Series II seeder and the HerbiCopter.

Mr Moore included a short demonstration of the flying abilities of the HerbiCopter, albeit tethered and confined within a shed.

The next GSDC Medal field day will be held in 2015. The 2013 event coincided with WA Museum Albany's National Science Week program.

Contact: Jessica van der Waag  
Ph. 9821 3211

## Minister appoints Board members

### Representatives from local governments

Two new members are taking up positions on the GSDC Board.

Regional Development Minister Brendon Grylls recently approved the appointments of Kent Shire Councillor Megan Tuffley and Gnowangerup Shire Councillor Fiona Gaze to fill positions for local government representatives on the GSDC Board.

Cr Tuffley was appointed to replace Cr Kerry Stone, whose second term on the GSDC Board expired on 30 June 2013. Cr Tuffley's term started immediately upon Mr Grylls' announcement and will expire on 30 June 2016.

Cr Gaze was appointed to replace Cr Barry Webster, who has decided not to stand in the local government elections due to take place on 19 October 2013. Cr Gaze's term will start on 21 October 2013 and expire on 30 June 2016.

GSDC Board members are limited to a maximum of two consecutive three-year terms. The Board comprises three Ministerial appointments, three local government representatives and three community-nominated members.

Cr Tuffley lives in Nyabing and combines



GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle thanked departing Board member Kerry Stone for her two terms of service on the GSDC Board.

farm duties with occasional teaching and lecturing. She also makes natural skincare products which she markets on-line.

Cr Tuffley has been a member of the Kent Shire Council since 2003 and has served on a range of council and community committees.

Cr Gaze is the Deputy Principal of the Gnowangerup District High School and has a strong focus on enhancing career development and alternatives for at-risk students.

She has been a member of the Gnowangerup Shire Council since 2009

and has served on a range of council committees. She has also contributed through a variety of community groups, with an emphasis on families, youth and leadership.

GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle welcomed the new appointments and acknowledged the contribution of Cr Stone.

At the conclusion of Cr Stone's final Board meeting in May, Mr Rundle thanked her for her contributions to the work of the Board and presented her with a certificate of appreciation.

Contact: Bruce Manning, ph. 9842 4888

## AEC draws solid audiences

### Centre enhances cultural life in southern regions

Great Southern residents are continuing to reap the benefits of the Albany Entertainment Centre (AEC) project.

The \$69 million centre, for which the GSDC held administrative responsibility during construction, opened in 2010 with the expectation that it would enhance cultural life in the Great Southern and beyond.

AEC general manager Garry Snowdon said the centre had become part of a circuit with Mandurah and Bunbury that was making it viable for touring productions to venture into regional Western Australia.

In 2012-2013, the AEC attracted more than 38,000 patrons to 102 shows in the

Princess Royal Theatre. Including other events and functions, the total patronage was more than 42,000 people for more than 170 events.

The AEC's total audience of 1242 for the WA Ballet's three performances of Romeo and Juliet in June was greater than the patronage in Bunbury, Geraldton or Mandurah.

National companies such as Bell Shakespeare and Bangarra Dance performed in Albany, but would not have been able to do so without the availability of the AEC.

Mr Snowdon said economic spin-offs from

the centre's programs included bookings for 1089 bed-nights to accommodate performers and crews.

The Harbourside concert series recently concluded its third successful season and has generated interest from other regional theatres that may adopt the model.

Great Southern residents supported the AEC last year when an appeal raised more than \$132,000 to buy a Steinway Model C piano. The piano is used extensively in the AEC program, including the annual eisteddfod, and recently graced the stage with legendary pianist David Helfgott.

Contact: Christine Grogan, ph. 9842 4888

## Support for Noongar art centre

### Mungart Boodja gains three-year funding commitment

Recent changes at the Mungart Boodja Art Centre have helped the organisation to gain three years of confirmed funding from the Federal Government's Office for the Arts.

Mungart Boodja manager Louise Allerton said the funding had previously been renewed annually but the centre gained a three-year commitment following a visit by representatives of the Office for the Arts.

Ms Allerton said the new funding arrangements followed changes implemented after a GSDC-supported review of the centre's operations in 2011, including relocation of the centre from Katanning to Albany.

The funding will help the centre to meet the cost of wages, materials, accounting and audit fees, advertising and promotion.

Ms Allerton said that having funding certainty for three years would allow the centre to focus on its core business.

"We can carry on and do the most important thing, which is to develop the artists' skills to the very best of their ability, have exhibitions, promote the work and make sales," she said.

Mungart Boodja, at the Albany Business Centre in Chester Pass Road, Albany, is the only Aboriginal art centre serving the south-western corner of the State and supports about 35 active artists.



*Mungart Boodja administrator Louise Allerton with artworks at the Chester Pass Road premises.*

Ms Allerton said the centre mounted a successful exhibition recently at the Albany Town Hall, which featured paintings along with prints produced in workshops that were supported by the GSDC.

"The prints were beautifully framed and all displayed on one wall that caught people's attention," Ms Allerton said.

"A lot of people said it was the best Noongar show they had seen. We are going to follow on and do more prints," she said.

Artists receive 70 per cent of the sale price of works sold through Mungart Boodja and the centre uses the rest to help cover the cost of the facilities and services it provides.

Mungart Boodja's next focus is the Great Southern Art Trail from 28 September to 13 October, during which visitors to the centre can watch Noongar artists at work.

Contact: Jessica van der Waag  
Ph. 9842 4888

## Project improves mobile coverage

### Five new sites for Great Southern

Better mobile phone coverage is now available in areas of the Great Southern following the completion of five new transmitter sites.

Under the Regional Mobile Communications Project (RMCP), mobile phone services were installed at Woodanilling, Rocky Gully, Kendenup, Boxwood Hill and Gairdner River.

The RMCP was a \$40 million program funded by Royalties for Regions to provide 113 sites across Western Australia.

Sites provided in the Great Southern have improved mobile phone reception along South Coast Highway, Muir Highway, Great Southern Highway and Albany Highway, as well as giving better coverage in associated communities.

Woodanilling's site was commissioned in April and the other sites followed over the next few months.

The GSDC monitors the progress of communications infrastructure in the Great Southern as part of its continued strategic approach to development.

Contact: Steve Pontin, ph. 9842 4888

# Festival celebrates spring beauty

Visitors encouraged to check Bloom program

Spring is warming the Great Southern and is drawing visitors to enjoy the region's floral beauty.

Hidden Treasures of the Great Southern is encouraging visitors and locals to make the most of spring by taking part in the third Bloom Festival, the group's celebration of the region's floral abundance.

Wagin MLA Terry Waldron officially opened the 2013 Bloom Festival on Saturday 14 September in Katanning.

At an earlier event in Perth in August, Central Wheatbelt MLA Mia Davies launched the festival program and GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle invited metropolitan residents to make the trip south.

The five-week Bloom Festival, which closes on Saturday 19 October, is supported by the GSDC, Eventscorp and eight Great Southern local governments.

Mr Rundle highlighted the GSDC's involvement with the Hidden Treasures group over the past ten years.

He congratulated the group on its efforts in



GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle and Central Wheatbelt MLA Mia Davies at the launch of the 2013 Bloom Festival program in Perth.

promoting the region and in encouraging tourism visitation during the festival and throughout the year.

"Hidden Treasures has been recognised at State and national levels as a great

model of a partnership between local governments and the community," Mr Rundle said.

Hidden Treasures of the Great Southern promotes the eight shires of the northern and eastern parts of the region: Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup and Woodanilling.

The group's 2013 Bloom Festival program includes 37 events across 13 communities, including wildflower exhibitions, walk and drive tours, open gardens, workshops, photography and art exhibitions, environmental awareness programs, market days and more.

Hidden Treasures committee Chair Di Holly said the group was developing stronger partnerships with the region's Community Resource Centres (CRCs).

"Tambellup and Gnowangerup CRCs provided administrative support for the 2013 program and the committee greatly appreciates their contribution," Mrs Holly said.

Contact: Linsey McFarlane, ph. 9842 4888

# Yacht race generates buzz

New port of call in sailing competition

Ocean racing is set to create a new buzz in the Great Southern in November.

The GSDC, the City of Albany and the Department of Transport have partnered to bring the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race to Albany.

Twelve 21m racing yachts and 240 crew members will sail into the Great Southern port at the end of a 7500km Southern Ocean leg of the race.

The Clipper race started on Sunday 1 September at London's St Katharine Docks, with stops at Brest, Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town before the start of the Albany leg.

From Albany, the yachts race to Sydney, Hobart and Brisbane, then continue to Asia and North America, through the Panama Canal and back to London.

Hosting the Clipper race is expected to boost the Great Southern economy by about \$1 million, and bring international exposure.

Clipper racers compete in identical yachts, each skippered by an experienced ocean sailor. Crew members pay to participate in the race and can sign up for single or multiple legs of the competition, or complete the whole race.

Albany will be a changeover port for crews

and, over 7 to 10 days, will host about 350 international crew members with visiting friends and families.

GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle said the region would welcome the event.

"The Clipper race is expected to visit every two years and will be an important adjunct to promoting the Great Southern before and after Albany's Anzac commemorations," Mr Rundle said.

Clipper races began in 1996 and more than 3000 people have taken part in the eight subsequent races.

Contact: Linsey McFarlane, ph. 9842 4888

# Housing option for Walpole seniors

Joint effort with South West region

Walpole has taken an important step towards better care for its senior citizens with the completion of the first stage of the Jarrah Glen Lifestyle Village.

Jarrah Glen's first stage provides six accommodation units for Walpole seniors, aided by Royalties for Regions funding including \$160,000 through the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) and \$125,000 through the South West Development Commission.

Both Regional Development Commissions contributed to the project because improved facilities in Walpole provide benefits to residents of both the South West and the Great Southern.

A further \$1 million of Royalties for Regions funding through the Department of Regional Development and Lands, and \$439,000 of Country Local Government Fund money through the Shire of Manjimup supported the \$1.9 million first stage.

Three different designs are used in the complex, but all units include two bedrooms, a bathroom, a second toilet, a study or craft room, an open plan kitchen and lounge and a laundry.

Each has a single garage that opens from



A new unit for seniors at Walpole.

the front and rear to allow parking for a boat or caravan in the back yard.

The units have heating and cooling, solar panels, carpets, window furnishings and wide doorframes suitable for mobility aids.

GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle welcomed the completion of the development.

"Facilities such as accommodation for seniors are part of the glue that holds small communities together," Mr Rundle said.

"Without appropriate accommodation,

seniors eventually move away from their home communities and that can also draw away their children and grandchildren, to the detriment of the community.

"Jarrah Glen is a significant contribution to sustaining a strong community by providing for all generations," he said.

The Jarrah Glen development is an initiative of the Walpole and Districts Seniors Accommodation group and has the potential to expand to 12 units to meet future needs.

Contact: Christine Grogan, ph. 9842 4888

## New staff for GSDC

Rachel and Ros join the team



Rachel Robinson



Ros Loxton

New staff members Rachel Robinson and Ros Loxton are the latest to add their skills to the GSDC. Ms Robinson was appointed as a project officer and Ms Loxton is the friendly face of the GSDC reception.

Ms Robinson grew up in Denmark and completed her schooling in Albany. She graduated with a double major in Arts and Commerce from Curtin University, studying Communication and Cultural Studies, and Public Relations. She worked in Perth and Karratha before moving back to Albany three years ago.

Ms Loxton is originally from Kukerin and spent some school years in Katanning. She has been in Albany for 20 years and has worked in various customer service roles, including in banking and the motor vehicle trade.

## Science on show

### Regional research in the spotlight

An engaged audience filled the Kalyenup Studio at the Albany Entertainment Centre on Thursday 8 August to explore the region's latest developments in science.

Great Southern Great Science, opened by Winthrop Professor Peter Davies, is the Great Southern Science Council's annual conference showcasing regional research.

The conference is supported by the GSDC and presented by the University of Western Australia's Centre of Excellence in Natural Resource Management (CENRM) with the Western Australia Chief Scientist and the WA Museum Albany.

CENRM plant conservation biologist Professor Stephen Hopper AC focused on Charles Darwin's contributions to science to show that even great thinkers can take occasional diversions that are later corrected by the eventual progress of science.

Professor Hopper related Darwin's opinions on Albany and Western Australia's south coast as 'dull and uninteresting', when in fact the region was rich in biodiversity and would have rewarded close study.

Professor Hopper traced the evolution of his own work on species of kangaroo paws, revealing that he had recently identified new species and sub-species through DNA sequencing.

Dr Catherine Spaggiari and Dr Ian Tyler from the Geological Survey of WA gave an overview of a much longer time span, describing the geological development of the Great Southern over three billion years.

Other topics at the conference included sperm competition and the evolution of frogs, translocating noisy scrub birds, restoring Lake Ewlyamartup near Katanning, and managing introduced predators in south coast reserves.



Professor Stephen Hopper addresses the science conference, focusing on the work of Charles Darwin.

Students from Albany Senior High School and North Albany Senior High School also contributed presentations from their science education.

Contact: Jessica van der Waag, ph. 9821 3211

## Bright prospects for homeless

### Suburban house provides support

Almost 50 homeless men have turned their lives around with the help of a house in Albany's suburbs and the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Prospect House, which opened in 2011, is a five-bedroom residential home which provides homeless men with stable accommodation for between three and six months.

Residents at Prospect House work with mentors and take part in programs on finding employment or work experience,

securing permanent accommodation and overcoming personal issues to break the cycle of homelessness.

The \$146,313 project was supported by the GSDC with \$15,000, including \$10,000 of Royalties for Regions funding through the Regional Grants Scheme, providing house furnishings, gym equipment and computers.

From the Prospect House opening to 30 June 2013, 32 men secured employment, six undertook work experience and 40

engaged with mentoring. Permanent accommodation was secured by 47 men, and 18 undertook training to help gain employment.

Vincent Care has also acquired the home next door to the original Prospect House to set up as mid-term accommodation for families.

The organisation is considering options for expanding the program.

Contact: Michelle Dayman, ph. 9842 4888

# Screen time for malleefowl

## Yongergnow birds on show

Yongergnow Malleefowl Centre's resident birds are becoming screen stars and may soon feature on-line.

With the support of GSDC funding, the Ongerup centre recently developed new marketing activities that included placing three webcams inside the aviaries. Live footage from the cameras is displayed on a screen inside the centre.

Administrator Vicky Bilney said the screen show had drawn positive comments from visitors to Yongergnow.

"People see it as a good idea to have vision of the aviaries accessible from inside the centre," Ms Bilney said. "It's especially good for people with mobility issues."

Ms Bilney said the presence of the 'fowlcams' in the aviaries had not stressed the birds at all.

"However, we need to keep watching the birds and adjusting the direction and the angle of the cameras," she said. "The vision is on display continuously in the



*Yongergnow volunteers Barry Savage and Tim O'Neill dig cable trenches for the fowlcams installation inside the malleefowl aviary. Photograph by Vicky Bilney.*

centre, but a lot of the time we are seeing vegetation, not birds.

"We are working on collecting footage of the malleefowl that will be posted on the website. Eventually we could look at putting up a live feed to the website," Ms Bilney said.

The funding provided through the GSDC also helped the centre to improve its website and provided support for the production of new brochures and branded water bottles.

Contact: Jessica van der Waag  
Ph. 9821 3211

**Albany:** Pymont House, 110 Serpentine Road, Albany WA 6330

Phone: (08) 9842 4888 Fax: (08) 9842 4828 Email: [gfdc@gfdc.wa.gov.au](mailto:gfdc@gfdc.wa.gov.au)

**Katanning:** 10 Dore Street, PO Box 729, Katanning WA 6317

Phone: (08) 9821 3211 Fax: (08) 9821 3334 Email: [jessica.vanderwaag@gfdc.wa.gov.au](mailto:jessica.vanderwaag@gfdc.wa.gov.au)

**Web:** [www.gfdc.wa.gov.au](http://www.gfdc.wa.gov.au)



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Albany WA  
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