



Nearer to Nature  
Schools

## Nearer to Nature South West Schools Programs

### Schools programs

*Nearer to Nature South West* offers education programs for schools and other groups at the Wellington Discovery Forest near Bunbury and at RAC Margaret River Nature Park. These venues offer accommodation for school camps and are areas of outstanding natural beauty displaying great biodiversity. We also offer some great programs at Mangrove Cove close to the centre of Bunbury and various locations in the Margaret River region. Many excursions can be delivered by arrangement at other suitable locations convenient to schools, subject to adequate health and safety standards being met.

**Standard day excursions run from 10am to 2pm. On-camp activities to suit your timetable.**

**For a full list of current programs and excursion prices please contact us or visit: [dbca.wa.gov.au/nearertonature](http://dbca.wa.gov.au/nearertonature)**



### Conservation and education in the outdoor classroom

Our excursions work by engaging children's natural curiosity in the environment to develop deeper understandings of biodiversity, ecosystems and conservation. There are many benefits to exposing children of all ages to meaningful outdoor experiences. Research has shown that children display better learning habits, improved behaviour and are much more likely to develop a life-long conservation ethic.

In addition to examining the features and inter-relationships that allow our flora and fauna to thrive in our region, excursions educate participants in human impacts and important conservation programs such as *Western Shield*, all while encouraging children to engage their senses to explore the world around them.



### Indigenous cultural learning

The Noongar people of the south-west have lived on and managed the land for at least 60,000 years. Traditional knowledge encapsulates an understanding of the rhythms and relationships of the environment. We have partnered with local Indigenous leaders to offer a range of cultural excursions giving an insight into traditional knowledge and lifestyles. Singing, dancing, didgeridoo and crafts are combined with a bush tucker walk to provide an insight into the unique connections that Indigenous people have to the land.





## Nearer to Nature Schools

### Teaching for sustainable futures

Management of our natural environment is a complex and multi-faceted task. Our forests and other natural areas are managed for a range of values and activities. Throughout our excursions we raise awareness of many issues including human impacts, natural resource management and the particular challenges facing our conservation estate.

#### Fire

Bushfires are a natural part of our environment and an inevitable part of our life in the south-west, impacting on ourselves and our communities in a range of ways. Our fire education programs are suitable for students from Upper Primary to Year 12 and cover a range of age-appropriate topics to help prepare for bushfires and develop an understanding of the importance of fire management for protection of life, property and biodiversity.

#### Water

Changing land cover and a drying climate have an effect on water catchments and water quality. We offer a range of educational opportunities to learn about the health of catchments, rivers and wetlands using water quality testing and other field observations such as monitoring of aquatic macroinvertebrates. Throughout many of our excursions, the mutual dependence of healthy forests and water are highlighted along with management techniques to maintain a healthy water cycle.

### Conservation

A healthy forest, with its natural interdependencies between plants, animals and abiotic components produces ecosystem services essential to human wellbeing. The importance of biodiversity conservation is woven through all of our excursions in addition to hands-on activities focussing on specific conservation programs such as *Western Shield*. We can also facilitate hands-on conservation activities, in particular for camps and *Bush Ranger* groups.

### Incursions

When a whole day excursion is not possible or you would like our specialised knowledge to enhance your teaching program, we offer a range of incursions based around many of these themes for years PP – 12 which may be delivered as standalone sessions or as an extension to a booked excursion. Our knowledgeable leaders can come into the classroom or to a natural area on or near the school grounds to deliver curriculum-linked activities. From a storytelling session and our ever-popular touch table to fire awareness and biodiversity activities we can guarantee an informative, interesting and engaging session for your students.

### Curriculum links

All programs are linked to the Western Australian Curriculum. Within HASS and Geography we address issues of sustainability, natural resource management and land use change at a range of year levels including valuable geographical fieldwork skills. Within the Science learning area we look at features and adaptations of living things, biomes and ecosystems, and threats to and conservation of biodiversity.

Aspects of many other learning areas are also covered including English, Mathematics, Outdoor Education, and the cross-curriculum priorities of Sustainability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures. We are happy to adapt any of our standard excursions to your particular needs.

To assist in planning, curriculum linking documents are available for all of our excursions on our website or by request.



## Summary of programs

For a full list of excursions and further details please visit our website.

### Busy in the forest (Years PP-1)

A treasure hunt in the forest and a blindfold rope trail offers a fun and interactive sensory encounter with nature.

**Curriculum:** Science (F-2), English (F-2), HASS (F-2)

### Investigating the forest (Years 2-4)

Collect clues to your mystery plant including surprising information about how they are used by humans present and past, and other inhabitants of the forest.

**Curriculum:** Science (2-4), English (2-4), HASS (2-4)

### Incredible invertebrates (Years 3-5)

(Also available as a 2-hour program for secondary groups.)

This day of exploring will look at different habitats, relationship with other animals and plants, and why invertebrates are important for a healthy environment.

**Curriculum:** Science (3-5), English (3-5)

### Living with fire (Years 5-6)

Students learn why fire is a natural part of our environment, how we can manage it, how bushfires impact on communities and the importance of being prepared. The excursion includes hands-on experience with a range of firefighting tools and equipment.

**Curriculum:** HASS (4-7), Science (3-6), English (4-6)

### The Noongar way (Years 1-10)

Build knowledge, skills and understanding of Aboriginal culture in relation to food collection, tool making and roles played by different family members. Learn how Aboriginal people used land and resources in a seasonal and sustainable manner.

**Curriculum:** Science (1-10), English (5-9), HASS (5-9)

### Back from the brink (Years 5-12)

Find out how *Western Shield* is saving native wildlife and practice scientific methods used to monitor wildlife including trapping and data collection.

**Curriculum:** Science (5-10), English (5-10), HASS (9-10), Biology (ATAR Unit 1, General Unit 4), Geography (ATAR Unit 1, General Unit 3), IS (ATAR Unit 2, General Unit 3)



## Geography (Years 11-12)

WA is a place of ancient landscapes, hosting some of the highest biodiversity in the world. Land use change and other human impacts create threats to this biodiversity. Students take part in a guided walk and hands-on fieldwork activities, using geographical thinking and skills, to investigate the unique adaptations of the flora and fauna and explore issues surrounding forest uses and values past, present and into the future.

**Curriculum links:** Geography (ATAR Unit 3, General Unit 1), EES (General Unit 2)

### Fire – a force of life and a natural hazard (Years 10-12)

Students consider the impacts of fire on the ecosystem and human communities. They learn about fire behaviour and how fire management is not only used to protect life and property but also to protect and enhance biodiversity.

**Curriculum links:** Biology (ATAR Unit 1, General Unit 4), Geography (ATAR Unit 1, General Unit 3)

## Biology (Years 11-12)

Understand conservation in our forests through biodiversity and population studies.

Students will explore the adaptations of plants and animals in dry sclerophyllous forest and the scientific methods used to measure and monitor forest health. Conservation biology will be highlighted with management processes and strategies practised.

**Curriculum links:** Biology ATAR Unit 1, Biology General Unit 4

### Aquatic ecosystems (Years 4-12) (2 or 4 hours)

Can also be done as an incursion at a wetland close to your school.

Students investigate the health of aquatic systems by surveying the plant, animal and invertebrate communities then conduct tests of water quality to relate that to the non-living environment. They also consider how those creatures are adapted to this unique environment and human impacts on wetland ecosystems.

**Curriculum:** Science (4-10), Geography (ATAR Unit 3, General Unit 1), Biology (ATAR Unit 1, General Unit 4), Integrated Science (ATAR Unit 2, General Unit 1)



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### Camp activities

#### Sense-ational night life (Years 3–12) (2 hours)

While exploring with spotlights, students will see how the forest comes alive after dark and learn about the adaptations required for a nocturnal life. Students will also explore the forest blindfolded along our rope trail using the senses of smell, touch and hearing. This experience can be a highlight of your school camp.

#### Monitoring marsupials (Western Shield trapping) (Years 5–12 – Wellington Discovery Forest only)

A unique opportunity to be part of *Western Shield* research. Students mix bait, set traps on a transect, and return in the early morning to measure and release animals. The session is split into two 90-minute sessions (afternoon and the next morning). It may in certain cases also be possible to conduct marsupial surveys on private lands.

The program is available eight nights per year during autumn and spring.

### Other venues

*Nearer to Nature* South West now offers tailored environmental education programs to school groups at a range of other venues including campsites within Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park.

#### Combine natural and cultural history at Ellensbrook House

*Nearer to Nature* South West has teamed up with the National Trust to offer a new experience at the historic Ellensbrook House. Join us for an excursion that will offer insights into changing lives and technologies and take you through Indigenous and European significance of the Naturaliste region while exploring the natural features and outstanding biodiversity which has made this area so unique and valuable.

### The Treasures of Mangrove Cove

Mangrove Cove, located in Leschenault Inlet near Bunbury, is home to Western Australia's most southern population of grey mangroves (*Avicennia marina*). This ancient mangrove population plays an important part in local coastal ecology but also faces threats from human activity. It supports more than 60 species of waterbird, is an important habitat for invertebrates and crustaceans and acts as a nursery for fish, which then move out the ocean when they are old enough.

Mangrove Cove includes a *Nearer to Nature* education pavilion, located across Koombana Drive from the Dolphin Discovery Centre adjacent to the lookout tower and overlooking the mangrove boardwalk. With a large grassed area it is a great venue for individual groups or whole school events. We offer a range of programs focussed on locally relevant conservation issues covering the importance of mangroves, food chains, nature conservation, geology and indigenous history of the area.



### Accommodation

#### Wellington Forest Cottages

The cottages are set in the Jarrah forest of Wellington National Park and make a great venue for metropolitan and country school camps. It is a two-hour drive from Perth and a short distance from Wellington Dam and Bunbury. The adjacent Wellington Discovery Forest Centre offers a wealth of curriculum-linked programs for kindergarten to year 12 students.

**Facilities:** Cottages, hall for hire, public telephone, barbecues, laundry, playgrounds and cafe. catering available by arrangement.

**Capacity:** Eight cottages (each accommodates eight people). Some camping is available by arrangement.

**Booking/enquiries:** Wendy and Ben Perdon phone (08) 9728 3043

**Email:** perdon@westnet.com.au

**Web:** [wfccc.com.au](http://wfccc.com.au)

#### RAC Margaret River Nature Park

Set within beautiful Wooditjup National Park close to world class mountain bike trails and a short walk from the town centre, RAC Margaret River Nature Park is a fantastic venue for metropolitan and country school camps, especially for geography and biology students and primary school groups.

**Facilities:** dormitories, four self-contained cottages and camping site accommodation available, huge undercover area, kitchen, barbecues, rope play, universal access ablution block (showers and toilets) and a large grassed and nature-play area adjacent to the karri forest. rock climbing, caving, surfing, canoeing and other activities offered by external suppliers nearby.

**Capacity:** Dorms (50 people), cabins and safari tents (80 people) camping (100 +people).

**Booking/enquiries:**

**Phone:** 9758 8227, freecall 1800871570

**Email:** [manager@racmargaretrivernaturepark.com.au](mailto:manager@racmargaretrivernaturepark.com.au)

**Web:** [parksandresorts.rac.com.au/margaret-river/](http://parksandresorts.rac.com.au/margaret-river/)

### Visit *Nearer to Nature* at [dbca.wa.gov.au/nearertonature](http://dbca.wa.gov.au/nearertonature)

#### Bookings/enquiries:

Phone: 9725 4300 or 9725 5944

Fax: 9725 4351

Email: [swecoed@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:swecoed@dbca.wa.gov.au)

Office hours: 8.30am to 4.30pm



Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions



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