

Tiny bilbies star in WA's biggest native fauna release



The bilbies won't have the protection of predator-proof fences. EPA Qld

Around 40 bilbies and 15 possums have been released in Western Australia's biggest native fauna release project to restore wildlife and healthy ecosystems in the rangelands.

More than \$3 million has been invested in the project, led by the WA Department of Environment and Conservation. If successful, the bilbies' release onto the Lorna Glen-Earaheedy site, 560 000 hectares and

1000 km north-east of Perth, could see it become home to one of the most diverse mammal assemblages in arid Australia, according to project leader Keith Morris.

'Lorna Glen has an incredible diversity of landscape types – vegetation and landform – and is very attractive to conserve a wide range of biodiversity,' says Morris. It also straddles two of Australia's bioregions – the

Gascoigne and Murchison – and contains spinifex grasslands, wetlands, and eucalypt and acacia woodlands.

Once pastoral leases, the site was acquired by the WA Government in 2000 and is now jointly managed with the local Wiluna Aboriginal community. It was then de-stocked, all artificial water sources closed off, and a new fire regime and feral animal control program implemented.

The bilbies and possums were released first as they are most likely to be able to co-habit with the existing number of feral cats, which baiting has reduced.

'Elsewhere in arid Australia bilby releases have occurred behind predator-proof fences,' says Morris.

Lorna Glen already hosts a healthy population of small mammals and reptiles so the program will focus on medium sized fauna, whose burrowing and digging also improve ecosystem function.

Up to 11 species will be part of the reconstruction including boodies (burrowing bettong), mala (rufous hare wallaby) and chuditch (western quoll). Perth Zoo will assist with breeding some of the species.

Taking carbon into account

Leading financial accountancy association CPA Australia has warned that lack of preparation for a carbon emissions trading scheme could cause significant financial reporting issues for Australian business.

CPA Australia has written to Australia's accounting



standards boards urging immediate action and warning of the risk of divergent financial reporting practices.

'Under the current standards, it's not clear how organisations would account for emissions,' says CPA Australia Chief Executive Geoff Rankin.

'For example, without new or revised standards in place, some organisations will show carbon credits as a net position, while others will show them as a gross position.

'Failure to act now could result in a scheme coming into place before these issues are adequately resolved.'

Meanwhile, the Australian Federal Police has issued a warning against financial internet scams that could exploit carbon trading's vulnerability as a 'derivatives or futures market'.

More meaningful 'day at the office'

Another day at the office may turn out to be a lot more interesting for employees of companies signing up to Conservation Volunteers Australia's new 'Partners in Conservation' program.

Through the new program, a partnering company can place its employees on volunteer experience in any of more than 2000 environment projects.

Projects range from protecting waterways and wetlands, to conserving the habitat of rare and threatened species and creating 'carbon forests' to offset greenhouse gas emissions. Most companies run the day as a team-building exercise for staff.

Conservation Volunteers Australia is the largest 'hands on' not-for-profit conservation group in Australia. It assists in more than 2000 priority conservation projects and its achievements include the planting of more than 1 million trees each year.



A team of volunteers hard at work on a Sydney-based conservation project. Conservation Volunteers Australia