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pilbara echo

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Croc Sighting | Page 11

The Department of Environment and Conservation has issued a warning for people in Port Hedland following the sighting of a saltwater crocodile at popular local swimming hole, Pretty Pool.

Scooter Workshop | Page 14

Four boys from the TTA Scooter program were busy helping Joanie Doran TTA Project officer, all week to set up for the exciting "Pimp my ride" workshop.

Baseball Results | Page 22

Baseball finally got under way in 2012 last weekend following a washed out schedule the previous week

Judy says goodbye to the Pilbara

Most people are lured to the Pilbara for the opportunity to work hard and earn big.

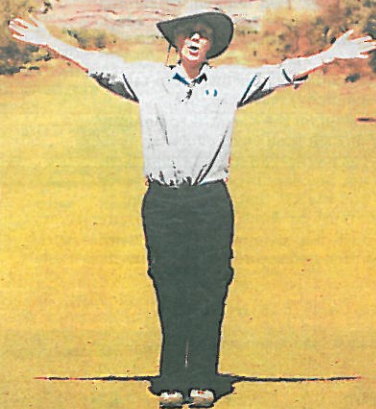
Judy Knowling, however, was drawn to the remote North West in a very different way.

Tiny-framed but enormously energetic, Judy came to the Pilbara nine years ago as a Frontier Services Patrol Minister to provide a source of practical and emotional support for the people who lived here.

Judy is just about to say goodbye to the Pilbara after nine years in this role, but her impact on the region will linger for many years to come.

Pic: Judy has worked in the Pilbara for nine years, providing practical and emotional support for those who really need it.

For full story see page 10



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• Judy provides practical and emotional support to all ages in the Pilbara

Holding it together in the Pilbara

Most people are lured to the Pilbara for the opportunity to work hard and earn big.

Judy Knowling, however, was drawn to the remote North West in a very different way.

Tiny-framed but enormously energetic, Judy came to the Pilbara nine years ago as a Frontier Services Patrol Minister to provide a source of practical and emotional support for the people who lived here.

During this time, Judy has literally clocked up hundreds of thousands of kilometres traversing the rugged desert country of the Pilbara.

She has spent much of her time simply listening to people who face the daily challenges of isolation, providing a reassuring presence and a depth of care and commitment that has helped many families and communities hold it together.

Judy is just about to say goodbye to the Pilbara after nine years in this role, but her impact on the region will linger for many years to come.

Incidentally, when Judy first arrived in the Pilbara, she had no experience of the outback at all.

"I was a city girl," she said.

"I'd never driven a four-wheel-drive or experienced living in a remote area."

However, it didn't take her long to fall in love with the Pilbara's ancient landscape.

"It is stunning. The red desert colours are wonderful. When the rains come through, everything is a beautiful green," she said.

Equally, Judy has become accustomed to the harsh side of the Pilbara environment, from the extreme heat to fierce cyclones, earning enormous respect for those who stay. "The people are incredibly resilient and flexible," she says.

Judy is based in Tom Price, a 5000-strong mining town, 1500km north of Perth.

She has become a part of the fabric of the community and her four-wheel-drive has been a regular sight across the whole of the Pilbara as she has built relationships across the region.

Her impact has been wide and varied, from working as a chaplain at a fly-in, fly-out camp, to getting involved with the local neighbourhood centre, to performing a blessing for one of the area's major roads.

She has attended camps for the School of the Air and was treasurer of the Pilbara branch of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association for five years.

Cindy Parsons, who lives on a remote cattle station two hours from Tom Price, describes Judy as "a fantastic support to us all".

"Nothing is too much trouble for Judy. It is a great comfort to know we have someone we can talk to whenever we need to," Cindy says.

One of the most rewarding and yet difficult parts of her job has been supporting families through harder times.

For many families struck by cyclone and flood, Judy has been one of the first to come and visit.

"It is about spending a day with them, cleaning saddles or doing the gardening; just being there as a support to let them know they are not alone," she said.

Looking back, Judy is enormously grateful for her time in the Pilbara.

"It has been one of those amazing opportunities that came my way," she said.

"It is a huge privilege to be welcomed into people's homes and lives to share some of their journey."



• Judy is always there for a smile or two



• Looking back after driving through the dust storm

Pilbara duststorm takes residents by surprise

By Courtney Bertling

A dust storm with winds reaching 102 km per hour took residents in the Shire of Roebourne by surprise last Sunday.

FESA issued a warning for people to take action within an area bounded by Roebourne to Millstream to Pannawonica to Cape Preston

"This is typical weather for this time of year but could damage homes and make travel dangerous," a FESA representative said.

On Sunday, January 22, 1pm, the temperature in Karratha was at 39.8 degrees, however, in just 20 minutes, it dropped to 31.7 degrees when the 102kph winds were recorded.

At 2pm the Bureau of Meteorology advised there was a severe thunderstorm warning out for heavy rainfall and damaging winds.

At this time the temperature dropped again to 27.1.

People in the warning area were advised that there was a risk of severe thunderstorms during Sunday afternoon.

"At 1.38pm a line of storms was located near Roebourne to Millstream, moving west at around 55 kilometres per hour," FESA said.

"The line is expected to reach Karratha around 2.30 to 2.45pm."

"These thunderstorms may be accompanied by damaging winds and flash

flooding that could cause damage to homes and property."

What to do during a thunderstorm

FESA's State Emergency Service has these tips to help you and your family stay safe:

- Close curtains and blinds, and stay inside away from windows.

- If caught outside find safe shelter away from trees, powerlines, storm water drains and streams.

- If boating, swimming or surfing leave the water.

- If there is flooding, create your own sandbags by using pillow cases filled with sand and place them around doorways to protect your home.

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