

# Waterlogged!



**Rain has been a significant sight in Newman this month and Wendy Hagan advises keeping the 'brolly' handy...**

EVEN before the middle of the month had been reached Newman had received a whopping 123mm, already exceeding the February total of 83.4mm averaged between 1972 and 2006.

This year, to date, the wettest day has been February 6, when 49.6mm of rain fell as reported by the Elders web page based on data received from the Australian Governments Bureau of Meteorology.

But it is not only Newman that received a drenching; Perth had its wettest February day since 1992 on the 7th, according to the Weatherzone. A welcome 30mm fell on the city, keeping the temperature well below average. The maximum was just 22 degrees, nine below normal for this time of year.

The recent return of the wet season has seen roads cut off and deliveries delayed. On February 8 the Department of Main Roads advised that all other main roads and highways in the mid-west region are open to all traffic however with widespread rain falling over much of the area caution is advised at all floodways.

But with a tropical low heading east towards the Pilbara coast, one can only imagine how much more rain could arrive in the coming weeks. Satellite images shows that the monsoon across northern Australia is producing heavy showers and storms and with sea temperatures around two degrees above average in waters north of Australia conditions are primed for tropical cyclone development over coming days.

Last Sunday saw two tropical lows with a cyclone watch in place for coastal areas from Mardie to Kalumburu. Computer models indicate a good chance of a cyclone forming off the northwest coastline early next week, which could bring more heavy

rain to town. Cyclone advice and State Emergency Service community alerts are available on 1300 659 210 and forecast maps are online at: [www.bom.gov.au/weather/cyclone](http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/cyclone)

## Insects get 'antsy'

RECENT weather is not just for ducks and mud baths. Much to the annoyance of Newman residents, the wet and warmth has produced swarms of flying ants.

They're harmless and are the common black ants just out for a 'good time' albeit not a long time.

The ants' breeding ritual usually begins on a humid day following a period of heavy rainfall when they all leave the nest at the same time and mate in the air. (The very same stuff we all breathe!)

The males quickly die and the females shed their wings after mating which is why you will see a lot of them on the floor. *WH*



A waterlogged town and highways. Photos left taken by Peter Dunston as he negotiated his way around Newman during the deluge. Above: the just reopened Meekatharra - Kumarina road last week. Photo: Jeanette Schaer. Geologist Dean and his offsider Billi explore Weeli Wolli Creek which is close to their work site. The men said that the area is usually very dry but the recent storms have set the water flowing.



Neville Knight confuses podium with dance floor!

## To Rotto in record time

BREAKING records hasn't just been about rain in town... What began as a 'wellness initiative' for about four people, turned out to be a major fundraising event called 'Virtual Swim from Perth to Rottne' involving 45 swimmers and up to 62 volunteers.

Neville Knight from G Crew decided to expand the idea of having just four swimmers doing the laps over a comfortable period of time to all the swimming done on one night. And it didn't take all night because the 395 laps were completed in an awe-inspiring, record-breaking 25 minutes.

What also made the night a special one were the volunteers counting laps,

manning the BBQ, providing cheer squads and assisting with the fundraising. A sweepstake consisting of contributions from local businesses through to donations from as far away as Geelong was raffled off to raise money for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Four weeks of fundraising and the night of swimming raised approximately \$10,000 and this amount will be boosted by an additional donation

from BHP Billiton. A great big thank you also goes out to the other sponsors: Skilled Group, Big Sky Credit Union, Home Hardware, Blackwoods, RST Mining Solutions, United Tools and Ray Long Tackle Shop (both from Geelong), AC Auzcorp Diner, Tred-

ways Shoe Store, MAMs, Caterpillar, Otraco Tyres and Red Sands Tavern.

"We wanted to do what we could for the community and everyone had a great time," Neville said.

Congratulations; an annual event in the making perhaps? *Wendy Hagan*



The skilled G-Crew team up to raise money for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Photos: Brydie-Lee Sheen



## MAP charts career course for students

LAST week was an historic one for Newman Senior High school with the signing of the Mining Academy Program (MAP) agreement with BHP BIO. This significant partnership paves the way for selected NSHS students to enter eventually into resources industry careers. NSHS's MAP is the only specialist mining program in WA and is one of only three gifted and talented programs in country areas and one of only 30 in the entire state.

NSHS's inaugural MAP students Lynette Lockyer, Monique Hammond, Staven Hancock and David Hampton with (at back) Information and Communication Technology program coordinator Cara Finch, Principal for Sustainability, mining operations Arron Minchin, NSHS Principal Michael Morgan and Mining Academy program coordinator Sharon McCawley. Photo: Brydie-Lee Sheen

## Statewide review

THE Federal Government has launched an independent review of telecommunications in WA. The Regional Telecommunications Independent Review will assess telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote Australia and identify regions with the biggest deficiencies and the greatest need for telephone and broadband services.

"With WA's vast land base and widely dispersed communities, we are a prime example of the isolation people can experience and the danger that can be faced without a form of reliable communication," said Industry and Enterprise Minister Francis Logan. "WA has a lot to gain from this review, so I encourage Western Australians to participate and provide feedback about the telecommunications services in their area."

Prospective participants can find out more at [www.rtrc.gov.au](http://www.rtrc.gov.au)