



# Program to restore historic WA island

A PROGRAM to restore Dirk Hartog Island in the Shark Bay World Heritage area to the way it was before colonisation has been announced.

WA Environment Minister Bill Marmion visited the island late last month to inspect introduced fauna and flora species which will be eradicated.

He said the program, which could take up to

20 years, would not only remove introduced species, but rebuild locally extinct wildlife populations and result in strict biosecurity measures being introduced.

WA's biggest island at 63,000ha, Dirk Hartog was the site of the first European landing in WA in 1616.

"Almost 400 years ago the island was pristine and there were at least 13 ground-dwelling native mammal species," Mr Marmion said.

"In the past 150 years the island has been used by pastoralists, recreational fishers and campers and, by the late 20th century, weeds, sheep, goats and feral cats were well established, leaving just three small mouse-sized native mammal species on the island."

In 2009, the island became a national park, which provided the Department of Environment and Conservation the opportunity to restore its natural en-



**A banded-hare wallaby at the Peron sanctuary at Shark Bay.**

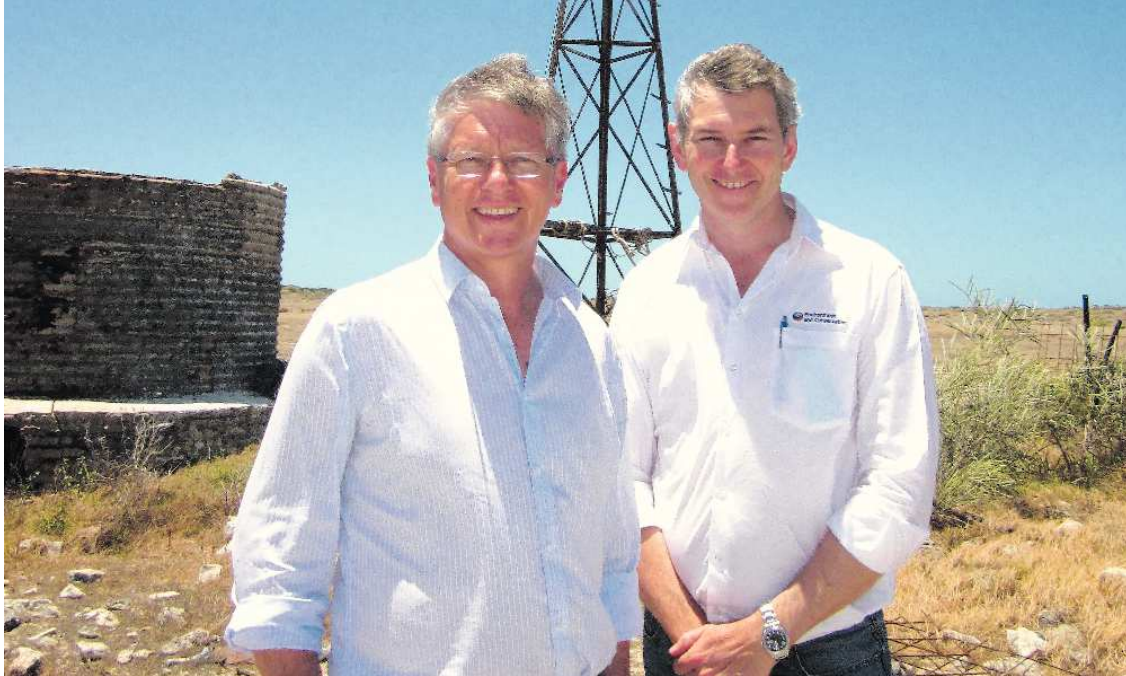
vironment in partnership with the island's other land managers.

DEC has received \$8.5 million over seven years from the Gorgon Barrow Island Net Conservation Benefits fund to deliver the first stage of the project and will contribute another \$4.8 million to the first stage.

Mr Marmion said the program would involve one of the most extensive feral animal eradication attempts in the world.

"Alongside weed removal, the first pillar of the restoration will involve the removal of sheep, goats and feral cats from the island," he said.

"This will be followed by the re-introduction of at least 10 species of mammals to the island, including the boodie, woylie, western barred bandicoot, chuditch and brush-tailed mulgara."



**WA Environment Minister Bill Marmion and Shark Bay district manager Brett Fitzgerald.**