Prospector gets OAM for native tree work

Western Australian prospector Denis O'Meara has been awarded an Order of Australia Medal for his work in identifying and propagating native trees in the north-west.

- **Map:** *Broome 6725*

Mr O'Meara began planting trees 45 years ago when he came to Marble Bar as the region's mining registrar.

He established a family tree business which does landscaping for mining companies in the Pilbara.

Mr O'Meara also has a previously unknown desert Acacia tree dedicated to him called O'Meara's Red Mulga, which only exists natively in three or four places in the Pilbara.

He says he is thrilled to receive the award.

"I think it's a tribute to family, the mining industry, prospecting exploration and to the people and communities of the Pilbara who helped us grow these plants," Mr O'Meara said.

Heavy rainfall and the approach of Cyclone Dominic caused Australia Day celebrations to be cancelled across much of the Pilbara.

Events such as the Wickham Twenty20 Cricket Match and a Karratha ceremony had to be postponed amid worsening weather.

Roebourne Shire president Brad Snell says rather than cancelling some of the events they will be held later.

"The ... giving out of the citizenship [and prizes] will happen on Thursday at five o'clock [AWDT] at the council chambers," he said.

"We'll be inviting everyone that's nominated or anyone that wants to attend to come along.

"We're not sure what's going to happen with the community sausage sizzle that was planned for this morning ... no decision's been made on that yet."

Police have praised the behaviour of revellers during Australia Day celebrations in the Kimberley.

Those in Broome gathered for beach parties and fireworks held over Roebuck Bay.

Earlier in the day, hundreds gathered for community breakfasts in Kununurra and Broome, which included the awarding of the Annual Premier's Citizenship Awards.

Broome Shire president Graeme Campbell says he was honoured to welcome new Australian citizens to the community.

"Australia Day celebrations encompass citizenship ceremonies," he said.

"Four people become Australians here today - a lad from Sudan, a lad from India, a girl from Ireland and a girl from France."

Tags: community-and-society, awards-and-prizes, australia-day, broome-6725, karratha-6714, marble-bar-6760, roebourne-6718, roebuck-6725, wickham-6720