

# Surgeon uses toe to replace lost thumb

■ Rose Brennan

A Halls Creek cattle worker whose thumb was chopped off in a tussle with a bull has had his big toe surgically removed and attached to his hand in a remarkable medical feat by a Sydney surgeon.

Bull rider Zac Mitchell, 20, was told the surgery was the best option for returning hand function. The entire thumb was ripped off after a bull kicked his hand and slammed the thumb against a fence on a remote cattle property in April.

Mr Mitchell picked up his thumb, placed it in a towel and his quick-thinking fellow cattle workers stashed the thumb in cool beers in the hope it could be reattached.

He was flown to Perth, where surgeons tried twice to reattach the thumb without success.

At the suggestion of his mother Karen, Mr Mitchell opted to return to Sydney.

He was treated at the Sydney Hospital/Sydney Eye Hospital's specialist hand unit where Dr Sean Nicklin first suggested they needed to cut off Mr Mitchell's toe.

Mr Mitchell is expected to have strong function in the new thumb, allowing him to return to his work as a ringer and get back in the saddle as a bull rider.

The surgery was done on June 30 and Mr Mitchell will need rehabilitation for more than 12 months.



Roebuck Bay Working Group project manager Kandy Curran and Shire of Broome nursery operator Simone Fletcher look at the native plants to be planted in the McMahon walkway. Pictures: Roebuck Bay Working Group



Shire of Broome nursery operator Simone Fletcher and Roebuck Bay Working Group chairman Dr Alexander Watson on the McMahon walkway.

# Bush plant effort to star in short film

■ Glenn Cordingley

A community project to give a Broome walkway and drainage reserve a much-needed makeover will be documented in a short film.

Hundreds of native trees will be planted at McMahon Reserve with a "walkway of pride" featuring edible bush fruit.

The facelift has been made possible through a \$35,895 State Government community action grant through the State Natural Resource Management program and rewards a new partnership between Roebuck Bay Working Group and the Shire of Broome.

Hundreds of local school children and people in juvenile justice programs will plant the bush tucker trail and other parts of the reserve, which includes a stormwater drain.

The council will supply endemic trees and shrubs and carry out the ground works.

RBWG project manager Kandy Curran said it was a positive project involving the community.

"We will see improvements to the footpath in the reserve, reticulation for the new plants and a

**If successful, then this pilot project can be replicated.**

Kandy Curran

short film on the project," Ms Curran said.

The clean-up is under way and planting days are expected to start this month.

Ms Curran said she hoped that over time the perimeter of an on-site stormwater drain would be colonised by native plants, allowing them to absorb the nutrients.

"If successful, then this pilot project can be replicated in other stormwater drains discharging into Roebuck Bay," she said.

Ms Curran said the nutrients fed algal blooms that have been worsening in Roebuck Bay over recent years and efforts to reduce stormwater drainage into coastal waters were good news.

Shire infrastructure director Steven Harding said the council was pleased with the community partnership to make improvements along the path and drain.



**TAFE WA** North Regional



Head to  
**northregionaltafe.wa.edu.au**  
for a complete list of  
what's on offer.

At North Regional TAFE,  
we have more than 200 nationally recognised  
and industry endorsed courses on offer.

# ENROL NOW