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Design and construction

This significant project involved construction by local contractors, as well as the production of high quality stainless steel components, which were fabricated individually and transported to site for installation.

The design, shape and form of the new structures were based on the detail of rock joints and overhangs from a 3D laser site survey creating a dynamic space for visitors that complement the site's natural features. The Gap's lookout platform is more than eight metres wide with a railing 1200mm high providing a broad and safe viewing space. It is supported by five cantilevered beams that are anchored securely to stable rock away from natural faults and joints near the cliff face using rock anchors up to 9m deep. The beams extend over 10m from the fulcrum following the natural shape of the rock surface.

During construction, significant challenges were overcome including selection of materials to withstand harsh conditions. Metal components were constructed from Duplex 2205 stainless steel, offering a higher strength than conventional stainless steel and higher resistance to staining, corrosion and cracking. Fibre-reinforced grated panels provide a lightweight but strong nonslip surface allowing views through the deck to the water and cliff face below.

Overall, the lookout can withstand a weight of 27 tonnes. The equivalent of four African elephants or one adult humpback whale.

Extensive measures were put in place to minimise environmental impact during construction. Existing path alignments and degraded areas were chosen to minimise disturbance.



Vehicle and machinery access was limited to a temporary access track to preserve both the natural rock surface and remnant vegetation. Almost all rock removed for the construction of paths and lookouts was re-used for landscaping within the site. Any vegetation that needed to be removed was retained for rehabilitation. Juvenile plant specimens were stored in a protected area for use in revegetation.

More information

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dpaw.wa.gov.au

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Photos – Babs & Bert Wells, Sally Bostwick and Peter Nicholas/Parks and Wildlife, and Ronel Shephard.

Information current at May 2016.

This information is available in alternative formats on request.

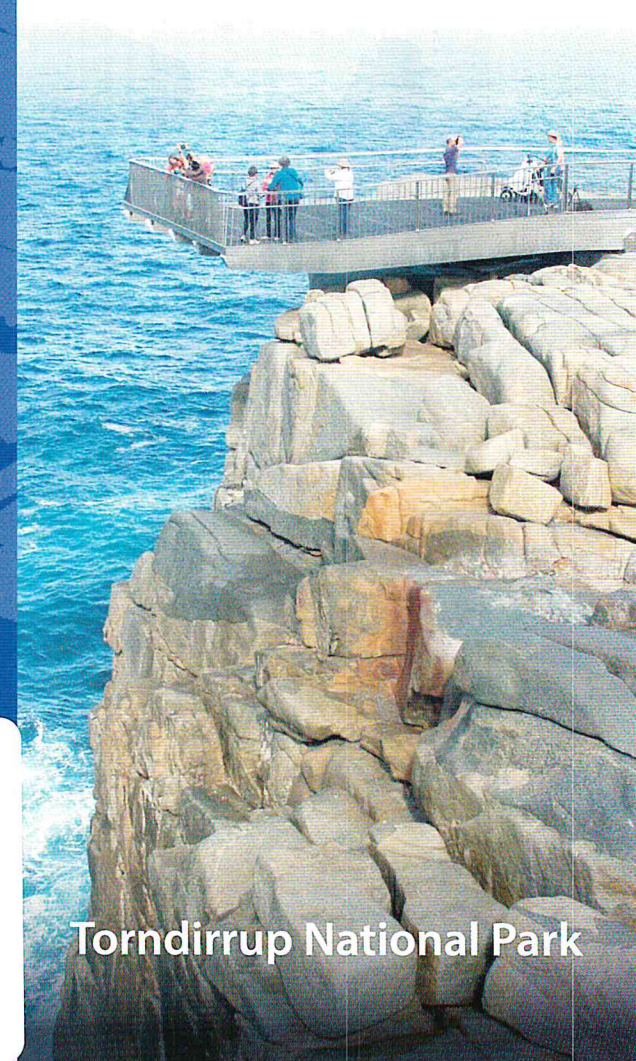


Department of
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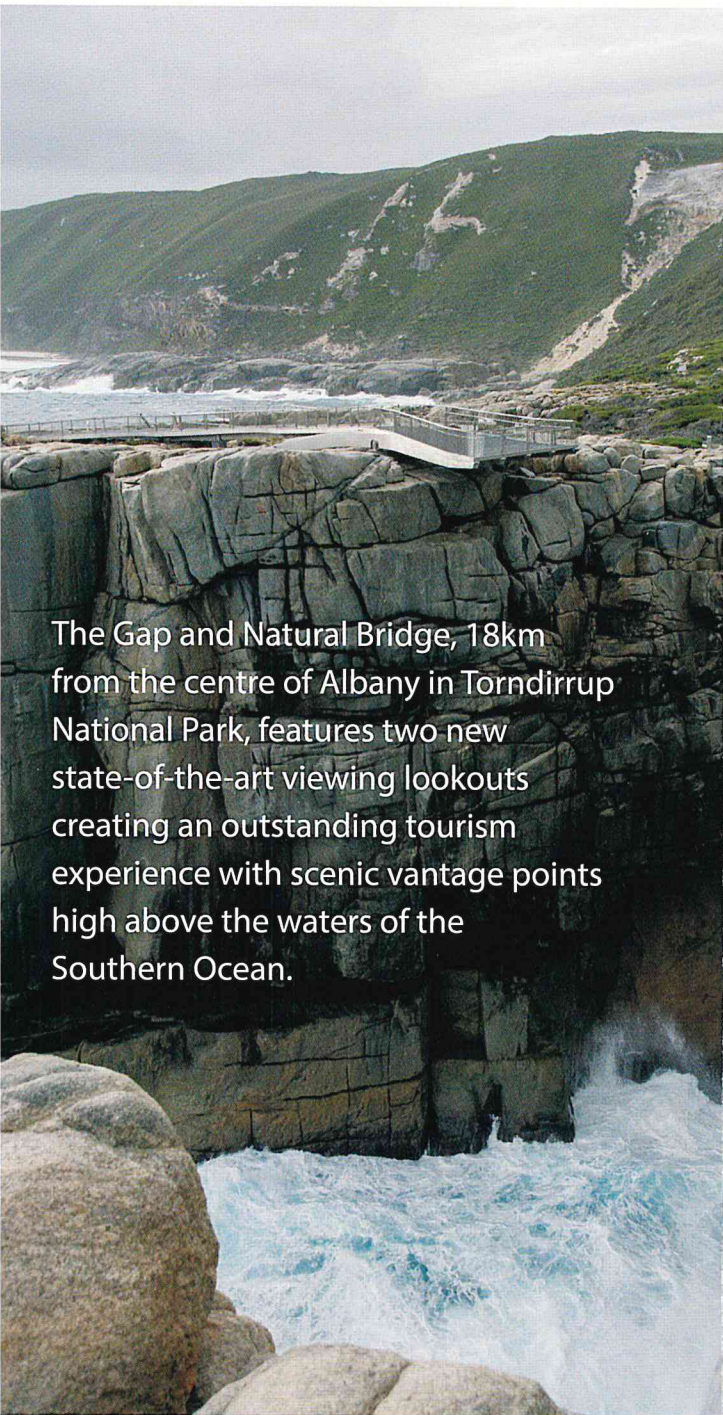
The Gap and Natural Bridge Visitor guide



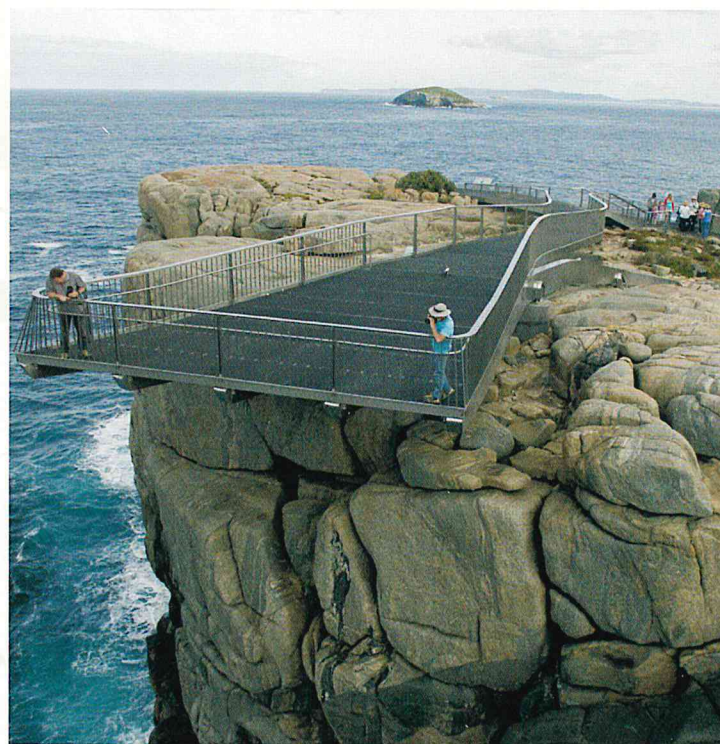
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Torndirrup National Park

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The Gap and Natural Bridge, 18km from the centre of Albany in Torndirrup National Park, features two new state-of-the-art viewing lookouts creating an outstanding tourism experience with scenic vantage points high above the waters of the Southern Ocean.



Visitors can safely experience the awe and excitement of dramatic coastal conditions and spectacular scenery from a platform 37m above the ocean.

The new accessible viewing structures are complemented by paths, picnic area, visitor information and parking capacity for around 30 vehicles.

The development provides unparalleled views of WA's south coast and is an important tourism destination for the Albany region.

A changing experience

Visitors to the Gap can now venture safely beyond the precipice above the ocean to view the outstanding coastal landscapes from two platforms regardless of weather conditions. This experience changes with the weather from the gentle and mesmerising heaving of calm seas to the buffeting rush of wind and spray of winter storms.



The Gap lookout is almost 40m above the powerful ocean swells, which is surrounded by dramatic cliffs.



The solid pathway and viewing area of the Natural Bridge provides a less adventurous but just as impressive window to one of Australia's most exposed coasts. Interpretive signage at the new facilities provides visitors with an insight into the cultural and geological history of the area.

The Gap and Natural Bridge join the Granite Skywalk in Porongurup National Park, the Tree Top Walk at the Valley of the Giants in Walpole Nornalup National Park and the Wilderness View Lookout in Mount Frankland National Park in offering un-surpassed views and nature experiences for visitors.