



Environment Minister Bob Pearce points out the Houtman Abrolhos Islands on one of the new information panels outside Geraldton's tourist bureau. Left to right are: Bob Pearce; Heather Taylor, General Manager of the Bill Sewell Complex; Pat Rowell, Senior Tourism Adviser; and Elaine Paterson, Chairperson of the Geraldton & Greenough Tourist Bureau and Promotional Directorate.

Minister opens shelter

Minister for the Environment Bob Pearce recently visited Geraldton recently to hand over a new information shelter to the local tourist bureau.

The interpretive panels contained in the new information shelter are an integral part of the overall interpretive plan for the Greenough and Gascoyne regions.

The shelter itself is located in front of the Geraldton Tourist Bureau's Sewell Complex and provides visitors and local people with detailed information on facilities and features in the region's national parks and marine

parks.

An allocation of \$9 000 from CALM's Park Improvement Fund was used to develop and implement the interpretive plan in Kalbarri National Park and the Geraldton Tourist Bureau.

Trailhead signs have been developed for the Murchison River Gorges at the Z-bend, the Loop, Hawks Head, Meanarra Hill overlooking Kalbarri and the Murchison River mouth, and Red Bluff at the head of the coastal gorges, south of the Kalbarri townsite.

The Mushroom Rock Nature Trail will have interpretive panels along its

route, a significant upgrading from the present brochure system.

A further \$45 000 of Park Improvement funding has been utilised to upgrade the Z-bend and Loop walk trails in the Kalbarri National Park.

Both walk trails are constructed using natural materials found in the area and the money has enabled five local people to be employed for a total of eight months.

In addition, four community based offenders were employed through the Department of Community Welfare, for a period of four weeks on walk trail

construction work, and the Department of Employment, Education and Training's three-month training program for people of Aboriginal descent provided one more person to assist with the construction work.

During his visit, Mr Pearce also took the opportunity to launch the new brochure on the Houtman Abrolhos Islands, jointly produced by CALM and the Abrolhos Island Consultative Council, and to present Dieback Resource Packages to students representing their local schools and colleges.

The Mid West and Beyond

The Mid West of Western Australia is a region of contrasts.

Spectacular coastal cliffs and gorges, wilderness that covers the environment, healthy fisheries and a diverse agricultural landscape. Features that attract a



survive at Hamelin Pool. This sediment catching colony of algae survives in the Pool's hypersaline waters that are unsuitable for grazing predators. Some mammals are extinct or endangered on the mainland find refuge on the islands in Shark Bay.

Beyond Shark Bay is Ningaloo Reef, a coral reef that stretches from Anford Point 300km northwards to Eneabba. This barrier reef, one of only two found on the western side of a continent, is only 200m, from the shore in places. Inland the adventurous can discover Mt Augustus, the largest, 100m wide in the world, the Kennedy Range and unshifting semi-arid lands that seasonally storm into a sea of paper dunes.

Department of Conservation and Land Management, W.A.

Kalbarri National Park

Coastal cliffs, gorges carved through 400 million-year-old sandstone, and an extensive sandstone of heathland plants that flower profusely in spring, are features of the 180 000 ha Kalbarri National Park.



The Park, located on the lower reaches of the Murchison River, contains an extraordinary variety of plants, birds, and animals, some of which are found nowhere else. Much of the native vegetation is restricted, but the park also has some of the best during the year.

The Murchison River stretches to 400km inland near Meekatharra. For most of the year the river is a series of pools, but inland rapids associated with cyclones may flood the gorge with up to seven metres of raging muddy water that stains the Indian Ocean at the estuary mouth and for several kilometres offshore.



Cliff face of the Murchison River gorge.

The Murchison River over 400 km long flows out of the 800m gorge that runs through the Park. The red and white sandstone on the coast and in the gorge is part of the Murchison sandstone.

The sandstone is capped with a thin layer of soil. Wind and rain erode the sandstone into the shapes of the park.

