

Kalbarri Open Day

IT IS 8.00 am and about 100 people in 30 four-wheel-drive vehicles are milling about the Kalbarri National Park office gates.

The occasion? Kalbarri National Park Open Day.

A warm welcome from ranger-in-charge Roy Harris is followed by a demonstration of CALM's firefighting equipment before setting off on a tour of the park.

On Meanarra Hill, fire behaviour is discussed and the assembly views the aftermath of the December 1990 wildfire, while enjoying a breathtaking panorama of the town and ocean, thanks to some truly superb weather.

Hub caps engaged

From there the convoy heads for the bush and hubs are engaged for the first time that day, but not the last as some were yet to discover!

Considering the circumstances - hungry sand and a few less than seasoned bush drivers - good progress is maintained and the next stop is near the Betty Crossing track to enjoy another spectacular view and see the regrowth of areas burned in 1987.

The Loop and Z Bend is next on the agenda.

In the last two years, rangers and maintenance workers have constructed walk trails and plinths in both locations, substantially improving public access and enjoyment.

by Gerry Deegan

Unfortunately, not all participants are having as good a time as others.

IC for sore heads

Those who had enjoyed the previous night's fishing club dinner are establishing their own intensive care unit in the Z Bend car park.

Our intrepid travellers now head south and follow the route of the old telegraph line to Junga, stopping along the way to receive a brief talk about the line and the recent fire in that area.

Broken insulators still mark the telegraph route and at times like the present, when fire has cleared the vegetation sufficiently, it is still possible to pick out wheel ruts of the old service track and stock route.

The vehicles wheel about in the old yard at Junga in much the same fashion as the wagon trains of the old wild west.

Southward push

After lunching here, the southward push continues and thanks to little fingers on a few free-wheeling hubs, push becomes an appropriate description of the convoy's progress!

Drivers affected by this turn of events keep their cool rather well, which some say is poor form as it detracts from the entertainment.

Following an inspection of a mallee fowl nest mound, the travellers move on to the abandoned rabbit-proof fence, which marks the southern boundary of the Kalbarri National Park, and stop to inspect the old hut which was formerly used by the workers who maintained the fence.

Feral animal control

Continuing around the south-eastern flank of the park, the rangers describe their burning experiments and research in that area then Tony Farrell, the Agricultural Protection Board officer from Northampton, gives a brief talk about feral animal control.

This is the final episode of the Open Day and there appears to be a smile on every face and talk of doing the same again, perhaps taking in a different part of the park.

Improved finances

The success of the day is measured not only in the obvious enjoyment of participants, but also in a slight improvement in the financial status of the Kalbarri Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade which jointly hosted the outing with CALM's National Park rangers.

A donation of \$10 per vehicle is quickly and cheerfully handed over for new equipment.

"Well worth every cent," one of the drivers is heard to say.





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