

Opening the Valley of the Giants



Smiles and laughter were the norm for all those who ventured on the Tree Top Walk. More photos of the Valley of the Giants official opening can be seen on page 3. Photos by Simon Westlake.

THE Valley of the Giants project—one of the most significant nature-based tourism and conservation projects ever to be undertaken in Western Australia—was officially opened by Premier Richard Court in September.

The tourism icon provides a unique means of interacting with nature for thousands and thousands of visitors, while protecting the ecosystem of the sole tingle forest in the world.

Mr Court said the Valley of the Giants was an excellent example of the successful integration of the conservation of our natural environment with tourism.

by Mitzi Vance

"Western Australia is world renowned for its natural attractions and its abundance of rich resources," he said.

"It is in the enviable position of being able to capitalise on the growth of the nature-based tourism market through its combination of natural advantages and the skills and expertise of its people."

Mr Court said the 600-metres-long Tree Top Walk, which reached a level of 40 metres from the forest floor, combined with the Ancient Empire, a family barbecue area and the

information interpretive 'Tingle Shelter' centre, promised a tourism facility of great value.

"The Valley of the Giants will generate huge social and economic benefits for surrounding towns, while, more importantly, redressing the decline in the health of the tingle forest."

The project and its facilities are designed to accommodate the 100,000 plus tourists who visit the Valley of the Giants each year.

It is the culmination of almost three years of research, planning and hard work that required the commitment, support and dedication of a variety of government departments, local com-

munities and local government bodies.

CALM Executive Director Dr Syd Shea commended all those involved in the planning, design and construction of the project for their excellent support and work.

They were ably led by the Valley of the Giants planning and design team—Tracy Churchill, Cliff Winfield, Gary Muir, Bill Cuthbert, Greg Mair and Kevin Vear.

All those attending the opening were impressed by the project. The majority, including those with a fear of heights, braved the winter elements to experience the Tree Top Walk

and its breathtaking views.

The Premier said he was delighted to be able to view and experience first hand the project in its final form.

"Two years ago, I was invited to inspect the site and I saw the damage being done to the tingle forest floor by visitor pressure, I then had the pleasure of announcing the concept stage six months later."

Dr Shea said the Valley of the Giants was one of a series of projects undertaken by CALM to provide eco-tourism facilities throughout the State.

"CALM has embarked on a

visionary plan to provide the people of Western Australia and tourists with unique experiences only available in this State," he said.

"In the past two years, a number of major conservation and recreational facilities, such as the Hills Forest Activity Centre in Mundaring, the Forest Heritage Centre in Dwellingup and the Wilderness Lodge in Perup, have been opened."

"All these facilities promote tourism, but, at the same time, help sustain our wonderful natural attractions for future generations," Dr Shea said.

Valley of the Giants (cont'd.)



A strong supporter from the concept stage, Premier Richard Court voices his enthusiasm for the project.



Environment Minister Peter Foss commends all involved in the Valley of the Giants project.



The Tree Top Walk was particularly enjoyed by Sir David Brand Special School student James Dunitro and his teacher-assistant Val Collins. James's father is CALM senior finance officer Stefan Dunitro.



Visitors from throughout the South-West look on as the Premier officially opens The Valley of the Giants.



















