

The Hills Forest gets thumbs up from Ric



Ric Althuisen, left, and Stev Slavin discuss future modifications at The Hills Forest. Photo by Wayne Schmidt

IF you ask Ric Althuisen what he thinks of the wheelchair facilities at The Hills Forest Activity Centre, be prepared for a glowing report.

Ric, who carries out the important tasks of assistant budgeting officer in the Budget and Management Reporting section of Corporate Services Division, is a 'wheelie' and a member of CALM's Disability Services Committee, so he was ideally placed to put the facilities to the test.

The amphitheatre, and the showers at the campsite impressed Ric most of all.

"In the amphitheatre, you can sit alongside your friends, rather than being stuck out in front, which is what happens at other entertainment venues," Rick said.

Pleasant surprise

"And the showers at the new campsite, which is still under construction, were a pleasant surprise.

"In fact, The Hills Forest Activity Centre as a whole and the overall organisation shows that a lot of thought and sensitivity has gone into the planning, and most people, with varying degrees of disability would be able to join in and enjoy themselves there."

The Hills Forest Manager Stev Slavin said the campsite was designed to have non-segregated full access for people with a range of intellectual, sensory and physical disabilities, including multiple sclerosis and cerebral palsy.

"It's the first in Australia, and will be a model for other campsites throughout Western Australia," Stev said.

Full access

"The Hills Forest Activity Centre, Information Office and Resource Centre have all been designed for full access, and they are complemented by ensuring that activities in the Go Bush Program are designed to be enjoyed by a range of users, including those in wheelchairs.

"Ramps allow ease of access throughout the centre, and paths are to be laid around it and the adjacent campground, so that wheelchair and other less mobile visitors can move out into the neighbouring forest and enjoy it with ease."

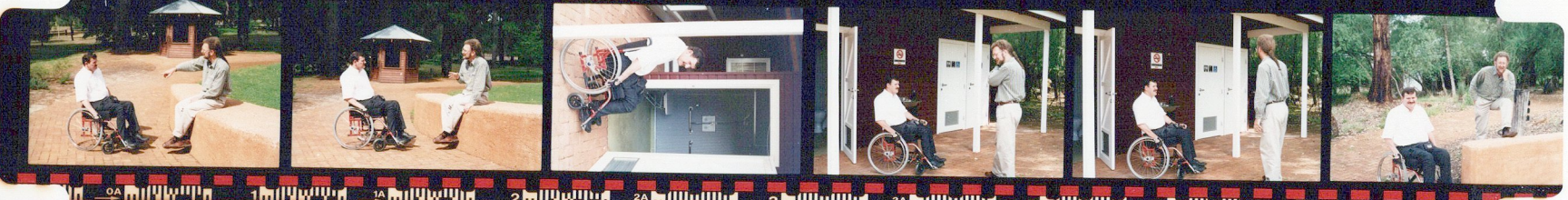
CALM NEWS readers will soon be hearing more from CALM's Disability Services Committee, which plans to run workshops in providing for the needs of people with disabilities.





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