

CALM and Notre Dame collaborate on Freo eco-tours



CALM Katanning District wildlife officer Tony Zidarich on the One Hit Wonder Walk Around Fremantle with Notre Dame University student Joy Horwood and course co-ordinator Gil Field. The photo was taken by course participant (and Edith Cowan University eco-recreation lecturer) Peter Baker

AN innovative collaboration between CALM and the Fremantle-based University of Notre Dame recently saw twenty-one students present the innovative annual ecotour program, *Footloose in Freo*.

The ecotour program formed part of the University's seven-week winter term course—Environmental Interpretation and Management and required students to design a variety of themes and tours to appeal to adults and families alike.

CALM senior interpretation officer Gil Field, wearing 'his other hat' as course co-ordinator of the University's four-day

Designing Interpretive Activities Workshop, provided the students with the basic concepts of interpreting ecotourism.

He also supplied lashings of encouragement to brainstorm for ideas—then find ways of putting the best of them into effect.

"There was an interesting mix of participants from the tourism, and natural and cultural conservation industries, as well as environmental interpretation students like myself," said Jenelle Taylor.

"This 'mind mix' provided fresh or novel points of view that motivated people to 'think the unthinkable', then look for ways to incorporate

the ideas into our tours.

"And, of course, the hands-on experience helped me find out if tour guiding, or some other aspect of the industry, would be what I really wanted to pursue as a career," she said.

Former CALM ranger-in-charge of Geikie Gorge Gerry Deegan (now Whiteman Park operations co-ordinator) said that for 13 years he had been interpreting the natural environment for tourists.

"I found the course and the input from other participants highly stimulating, and learnt a lot about the environment created by human hands, such as heritage buildings, muse-

ums, transport system and so on," Gerry said.

"And, of course, this ties in beautifully with the work I'm doing at Whiteman Park.

The imaginatively conceived tours were matched with equally creative titles, such as *More than Buildings, Books & Brains*, a tour that invited visitors to the University of Notre Dame to see curious places, mysterious spaces, a coin weighing more than a brick, and a chance to walk on water!

Tales of a Town was the name of a tour during which visitors could discover among Freo's folklore, scandals, sagas and myths at key sites around Fremantle.







