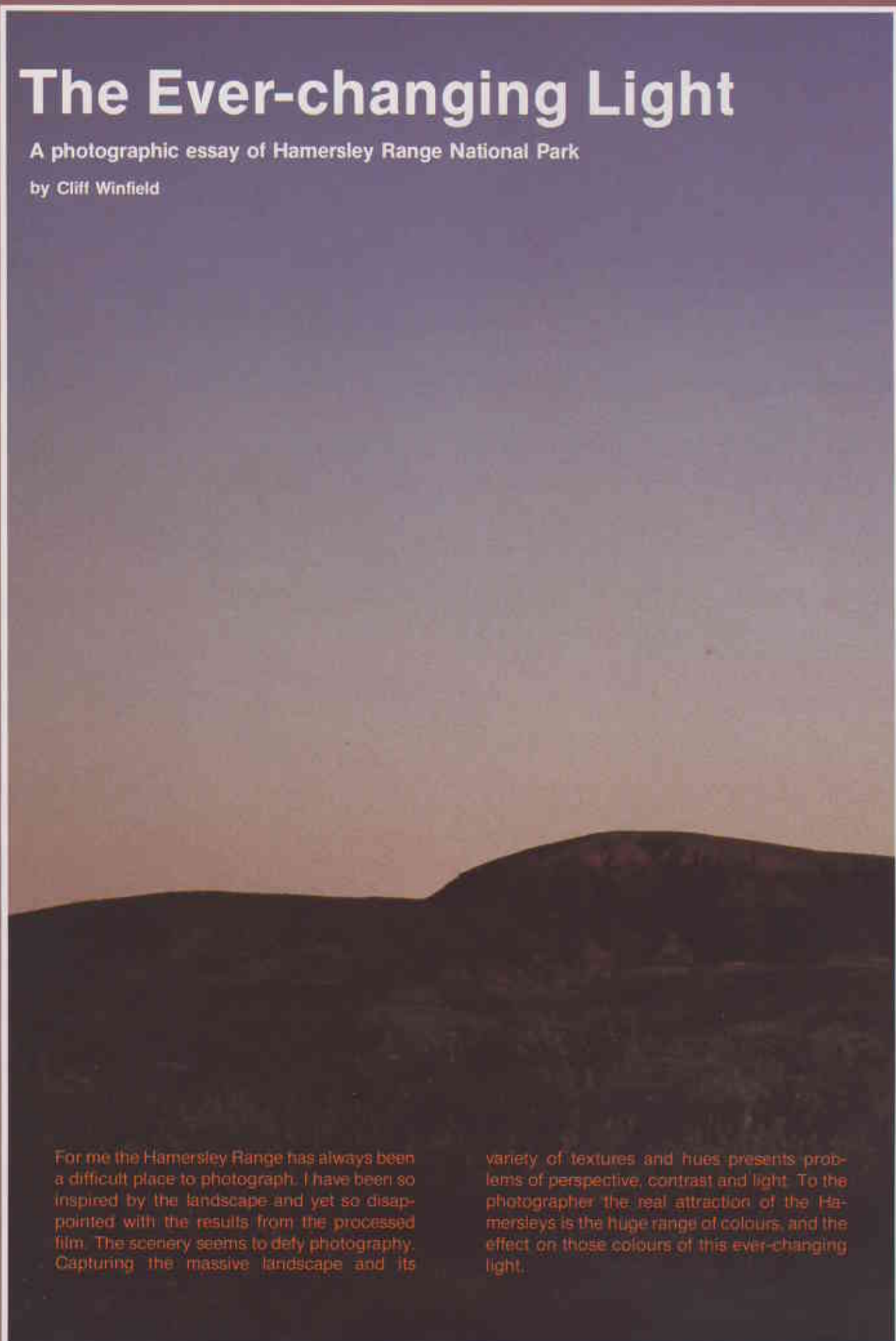


The Ever-changing Light

A photographic essay of Hamersley Range National Park

by Cliff Winfield



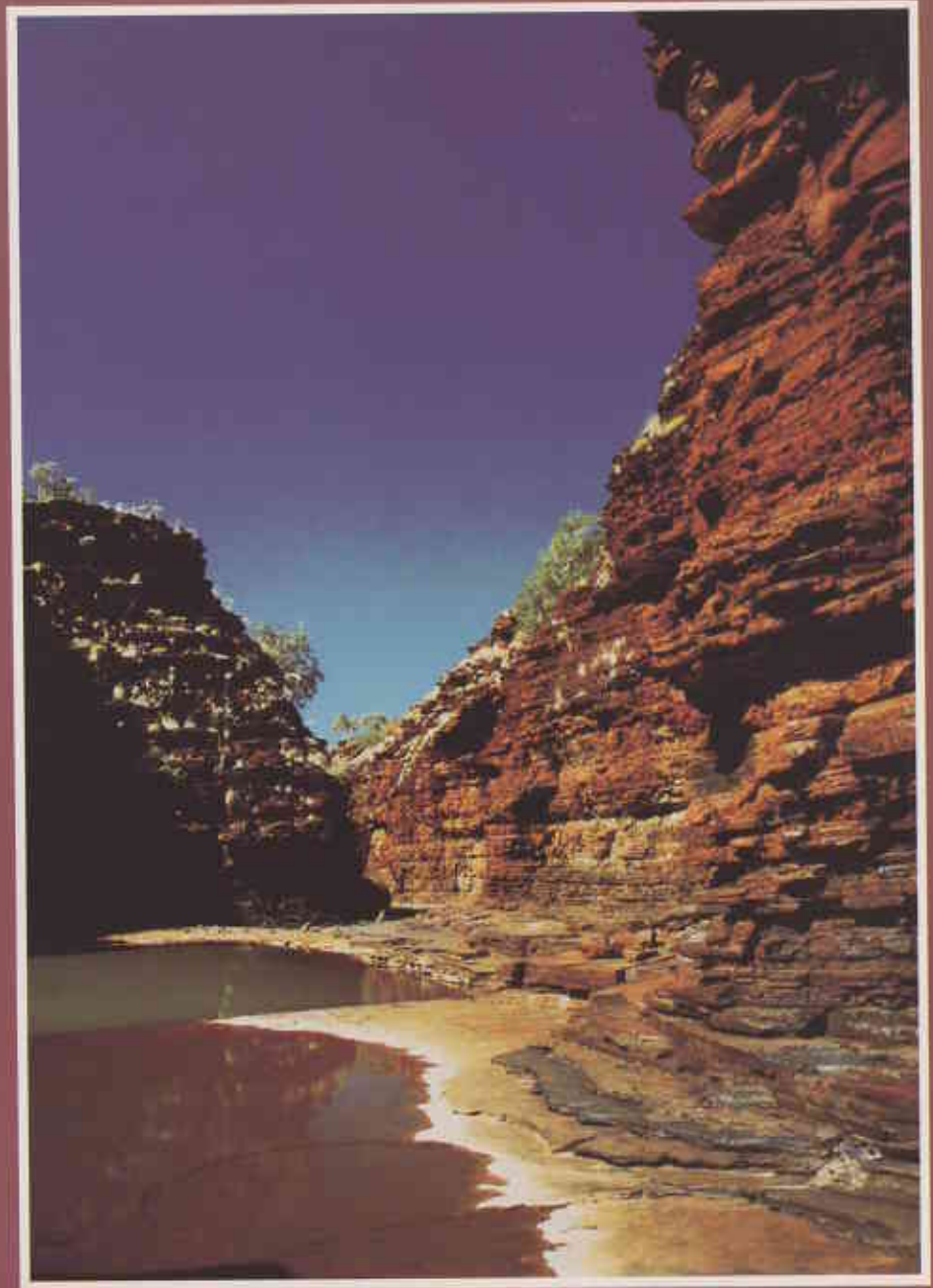
For me the Hamersley Range has always been a difficult place to photograph. I have been so inspired by the landscape and yet so disappointed with the results from the processed film. The scenery seems to defy photography. Capturing the massive landscape and its

variety of textures and hues presents problems of perspective, contrast and light. To the photographer the real attraction of the Hamersleys is the huge range of colours, and the effect on those colours of this ever-changing light.



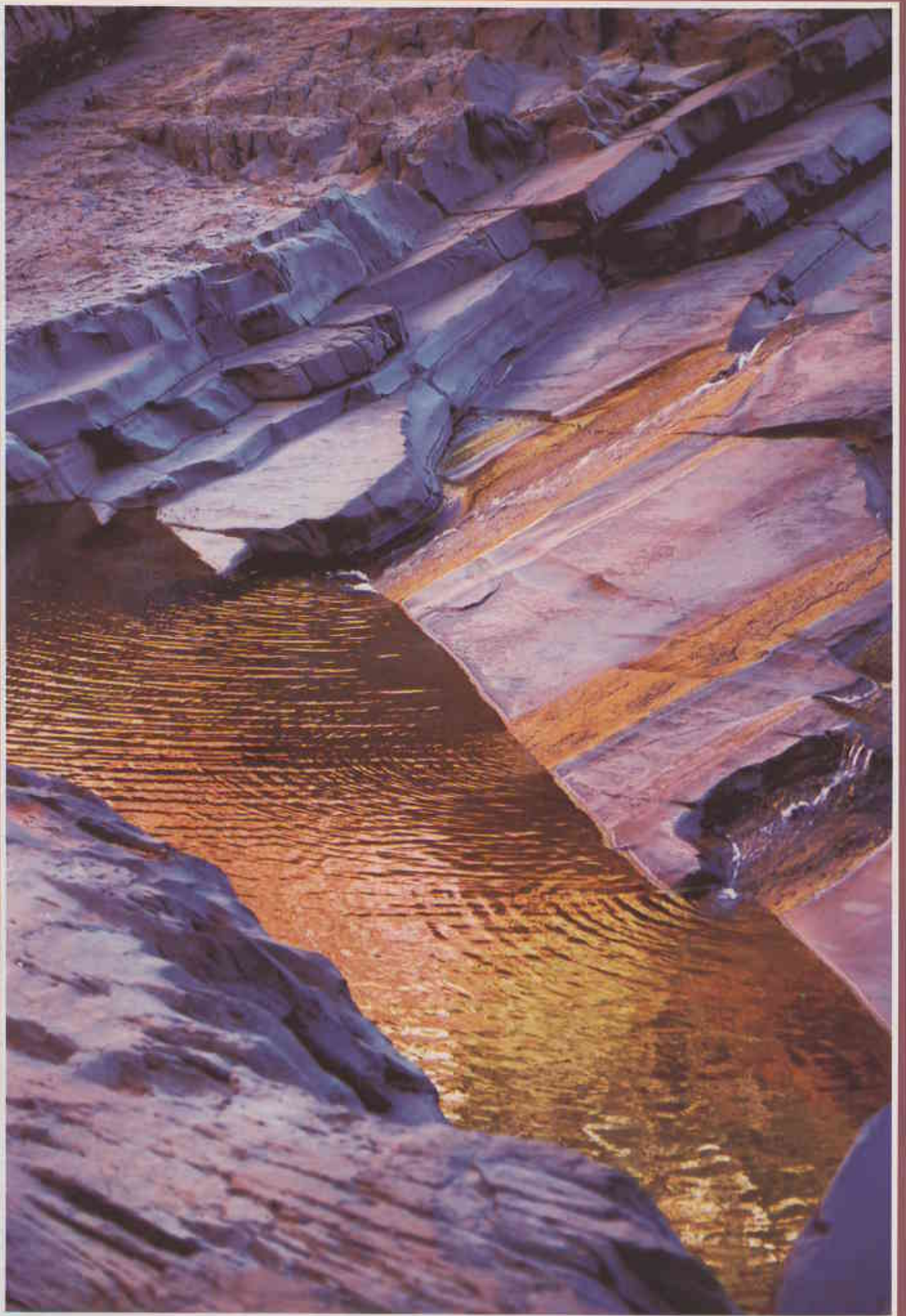
Oblique morning sun highlights the form of the snappy gums (*Eucalyptus leucophloia*) on the ridges. Gradually light on the eastern slopes illuminates the red rock hills. On the plains the pastel pink mulla-mullas (*Ptilotus rotundifolia*) contrast softly with the harsh ground.



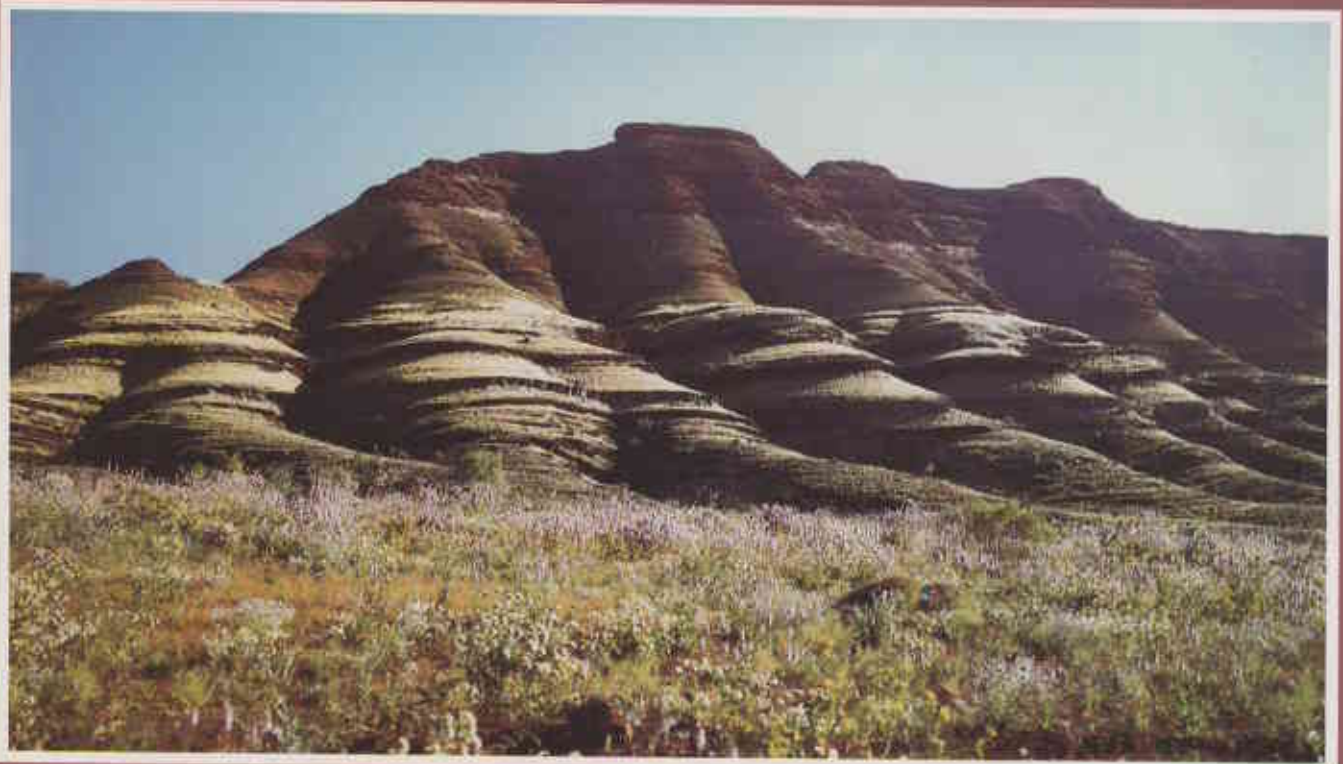


As noon approaches, the walls and floor of Kalamina Gorge are a spectrum of colour. A rock fig (*Ficus platypoda*) clings tenuously to its stony ground.



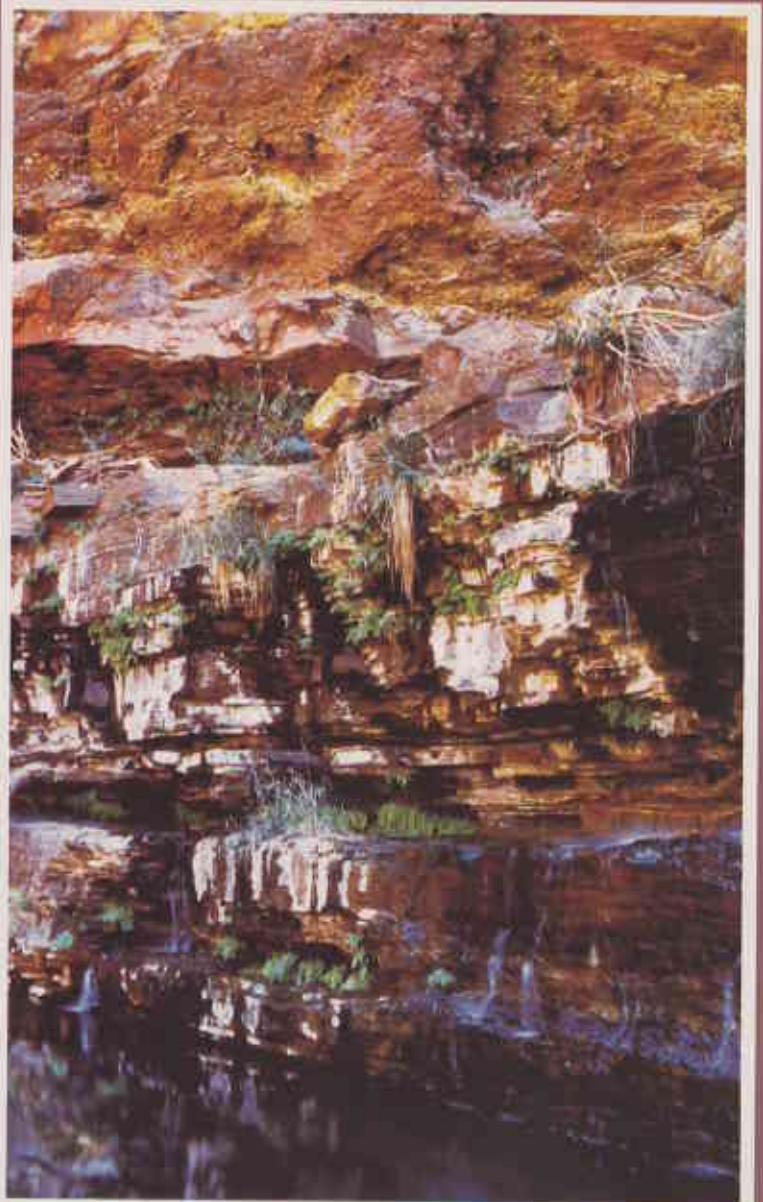


Hamersley Gorge becomes an eldorado, its stream reflecting the dark blue sky and the golden stone chasm.



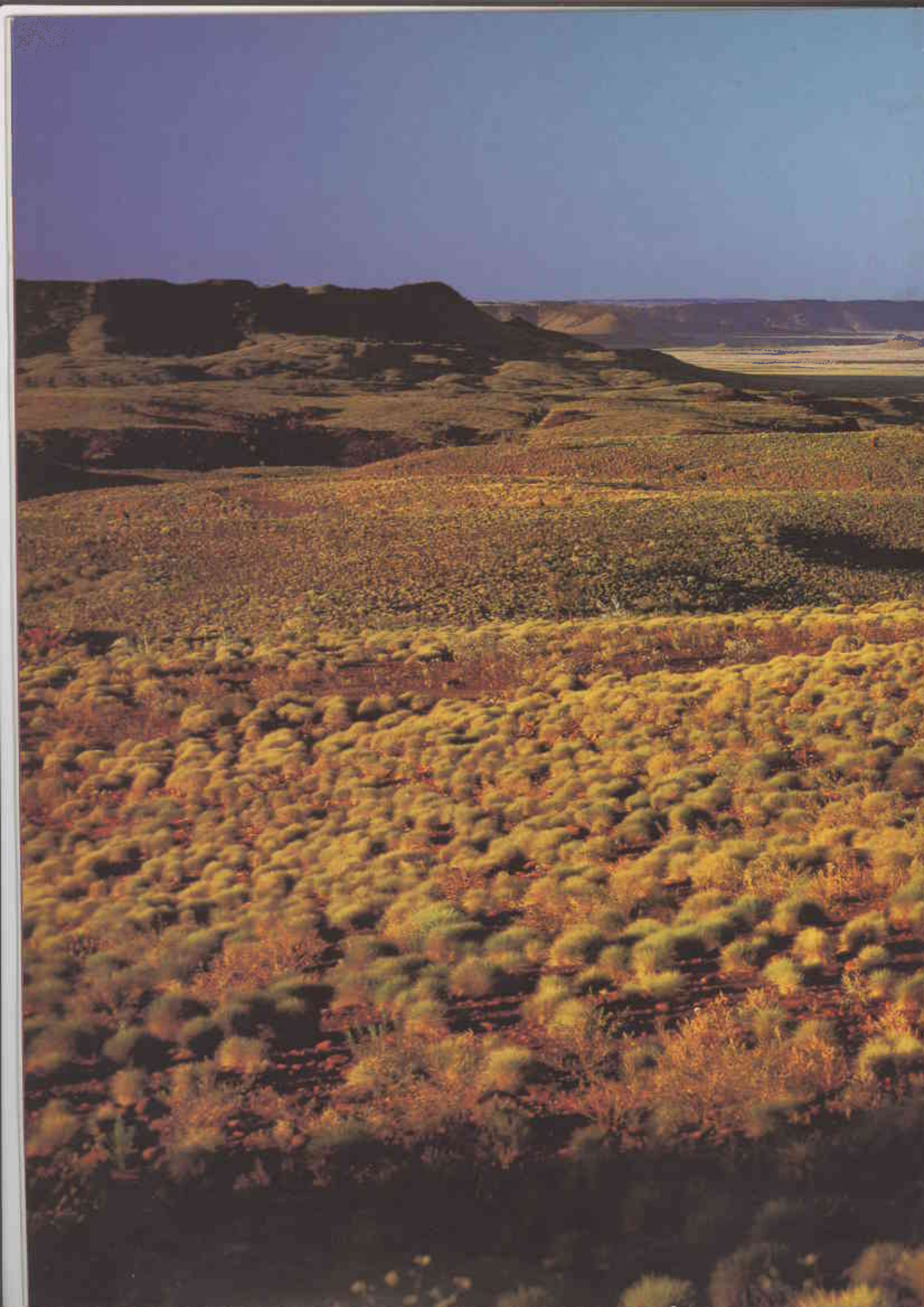
The afternoon glare accentuates the layered scree slopes and backlights some Sturt peas (*Climacium formosum*) that escape encroaching shadows.

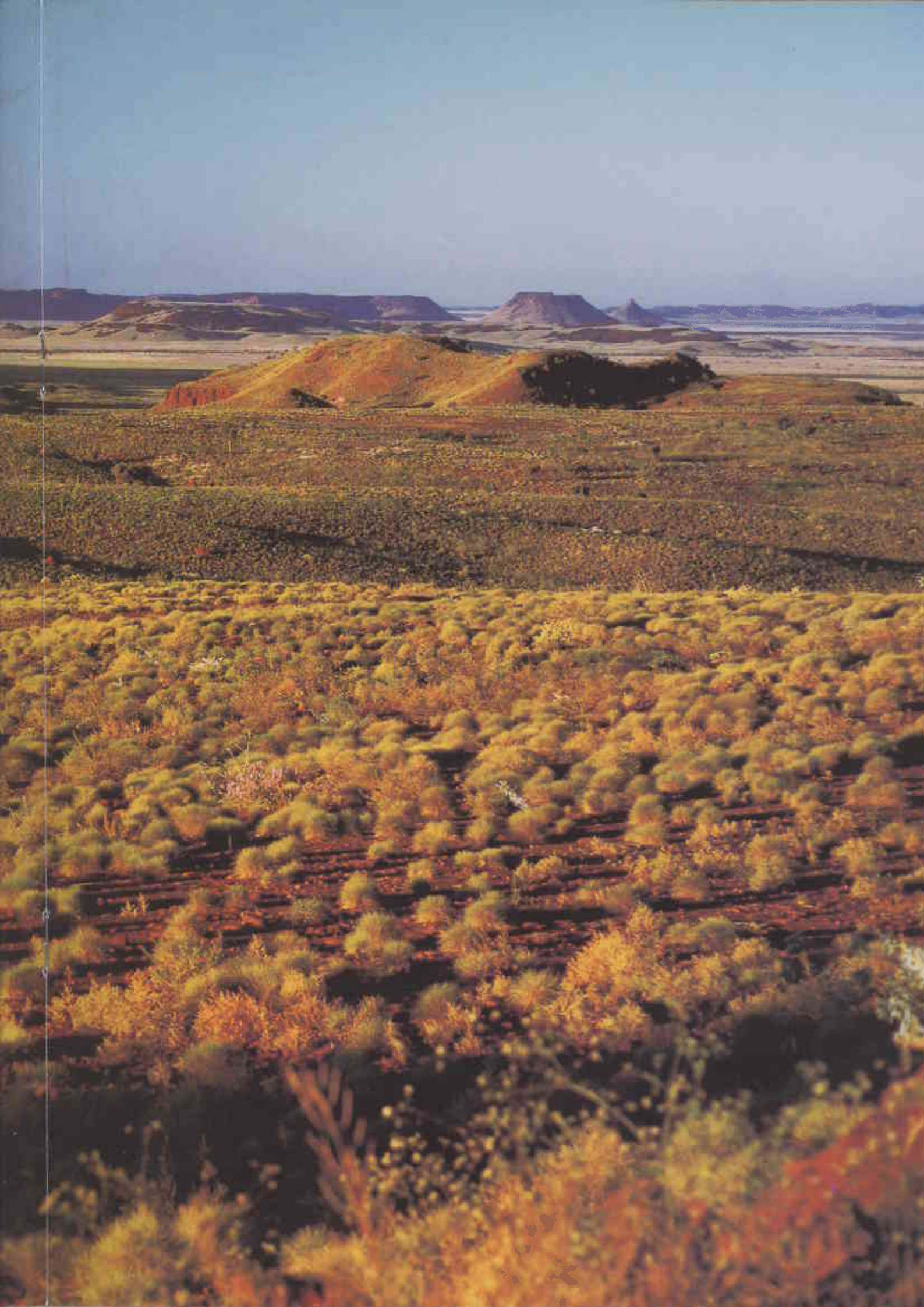
Some of the deepest gorges occlude all direct sun and create a moist environment. Delicate ferns inhabit the wet walls of Circular Pool in Dales Gorge.



Centrefold

There are three national parks in the Pilbara. This photograph from Mt Herbert lookout in the Millstream Chichester National Park was taken by Cliff Winfield from the Department of Conservation and Land Management.





Park Profile

Hamersley Range National Park

Size and Location

The park is large, occupying an area approximately 100 x 60 kilometres (618,000 hectares) in the central Pilbara of Western Australia. The nearest towns are Wittenoom, 10 kilometres outside the northern border, and Tom Price 10 kilometres outside the western boundary.

Access

The most popular method of access to the park is by road in conventional vehicles. Although all roads into the park are unsealed, the surfaces are usually passably smooth except after rain. There is very little permanent water in this region and there are great distances between service points. Motorists are advised to be relatively self-sufficient. Many tourist coaches visit the Hamersleys, and commercial flights are available to Wittenoom.

Attractions

The Hamersley Range is the remnant of a 2,000 million-year-old plateau. Over time, heating and cooling and water have eroded and cracked the hard rock, and sculptured deep gorges and canyons into the landscape. The spectacular colours of the rusty scree slopes contrast with the vegetation in the moist valley floors of some of the deeper gorges; shaded from the hot sun, delicate ferns grow beneath cadjeputs and river gums. Many of the gorges have permanent pools of fresh cool water which become streams after heavy rains and cascade over the strata of rock. The park is rich in wildflowers but their abundance varies from month to month and according to the amount of rain received.

Accommodation

There are four campsites within the park, all with toilet facilities, barbecues, tables and seats. Campers are charged a nightly fee. Outside the park, hotel/motel accommodation is available at Wittenoom and Tom Price.

Best Time to Visit

From April to September the weather is mostly very pleasant with comfortable day temperatures (around 30°C) and cool — sometimes cold — nights.

Wildflowers are most prolific from June through August, so this period attracts the most visitors. May and August school holidays are particularly busy.

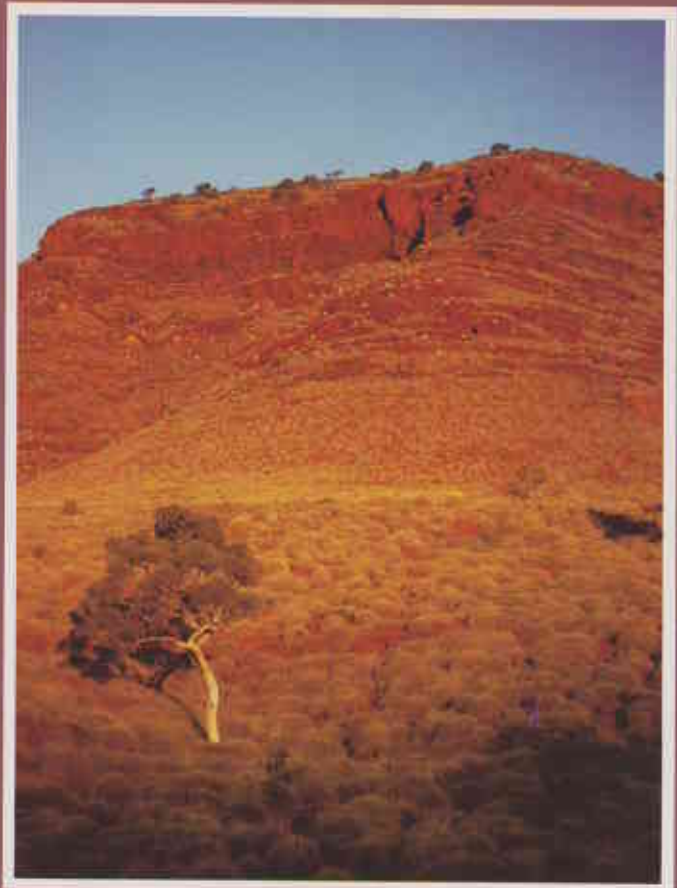
Further Information

A brochure and park map are available from: Department of Conservation and Land Management offices at —

PO Box 119
Karratha WA 6714
Phone: (091) 86 8291

PO Box 104
Como WA 6152
Phone: (09) 367 6333

OR
Ranger
PO Box 73
Wittenoom WA 6752



Top:
The sunset enriches spinifex slopes with bold reds.

Above:
Last light: blue creeps over the eastern horizon and beckons nightfall.

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Front Cover

Wildlife is a term that applies to both fauna and flora in their native environments, and includes the smallest insect, the largest mammal, the daintiest flower and the tallest tree. Co-ordinated land management will keep our wildlife everlasting, like these everlastings *Helipterum craspedioides* and *Helichrysum davenportii* which, every spring, carpet the semi-arid regions of Western Australia in profuse colour. Photo: Cliff Winfield

Minister's Message

Western Australia's land is among the most ancient in the world, and because of our isolation and climate, much of our flora and fauna is unique — evidenced by the 8000 plant species that are indigenous to this State.

The Western Australian Government has a responsibility to protect our unique landscape for our current use and, in particular, for the use of future generations.

To help us achieve our objective the Government has amalgamated the Forests Department, the National Parks Authority and the Wildlife Branch of the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife to form the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

The new Department will co-ordinate the functions of its predecessors and will utilize the combined resources at its disposal to encourage effective and lasting land management practices in Western Australia.

To operate effectively the Department of Conservation and Land Management will encourage public participation in its operations and at the same time will keep the public informed of its practices.

The publication of this magazine — Landscape — will play an important role in keeping the public and staff informed about the valuable scientific work being carried out in Western Australia by the Department.

The publication of this, the first issue of Landscape, indicates the success that can be achieved through the combined efforts of people who were previously employed by the amalgamated Departments.

I commend them on the success of this magazine and I look forward to reading future editions.

Ron Davies
Minister for Conservation and
Land Management
Western Australia

