



Adventure West



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Some like to hike further, climb higher, explore deeper.

## *Safety: Our Concern But Your Responsibility*

*by Tony Start*

Despite the antiquity of W.A.'s landform which has allowed the forces of nature to level out much of our landscape, our State is endowed with many rugged and breathtaking scenes. We are also fortunate enough to possess dense forests and a spectacular coastline.

Many people are content with appreciating views from safe vantage points but others like to hike further, climb higher and explore deeper. By doing so they can become one with the grandeur and beauty of their surrounds. They can discover some of its hidden secrets, test their own capabilities and gain satisfaction from their achievements: they are richly rewarded for their efforts, even if they have to nurse stiff and sore muscles when they get up next morning.

CALM staff delight in meeting people who want to explore their State thoroughly. They are always keen to pass on tips and suggestions that might make a visit memorable. They also take care to caution visitors on the hazards of the area.

Regrettably, accidents are inevitable. In many places there are volunteer emergency groups who, with the police, will assist with a rescue, but it is often the ranger's unenviable job to rescue injured people from gorges, caves or the bases of cliffs, because they are often the best trained, if not the only people with the skills and equipment for the task.

CALM places great importance on training personnel in the skills of safe rescue operations appropriate to the national park or forest area in which they are based. The training includes first-aid, rock climbing skills, operating equipment

needed to get rescuers to a patient and lifting the patient (as well as the rescuers) back to safety. The task is a demanding one which requires patience, courage, skill and care if it is to be undertaken without endangering the rescuers themselves and aggravating the injuries of the patient.

The Regional Manager of CALM's South Coast Region, Dr John Watson, completed a study tour of America in 1986. He brought back up-to-the-minute information on safety training and techniques. Safety training courses are held regularly for CALM personnel throughout the State.

Rangers in Hammersley Range National Park, for example, were recently trained in cliff rescue techniques by Adventure West, and are now competent to rescue accident victims from sheer-sided gorges over 100 m deep. They use ropes to descend to the patient with first-aid equipment before lifting the victim in a special, covered aluminium stretcher vertically up the cliff face.

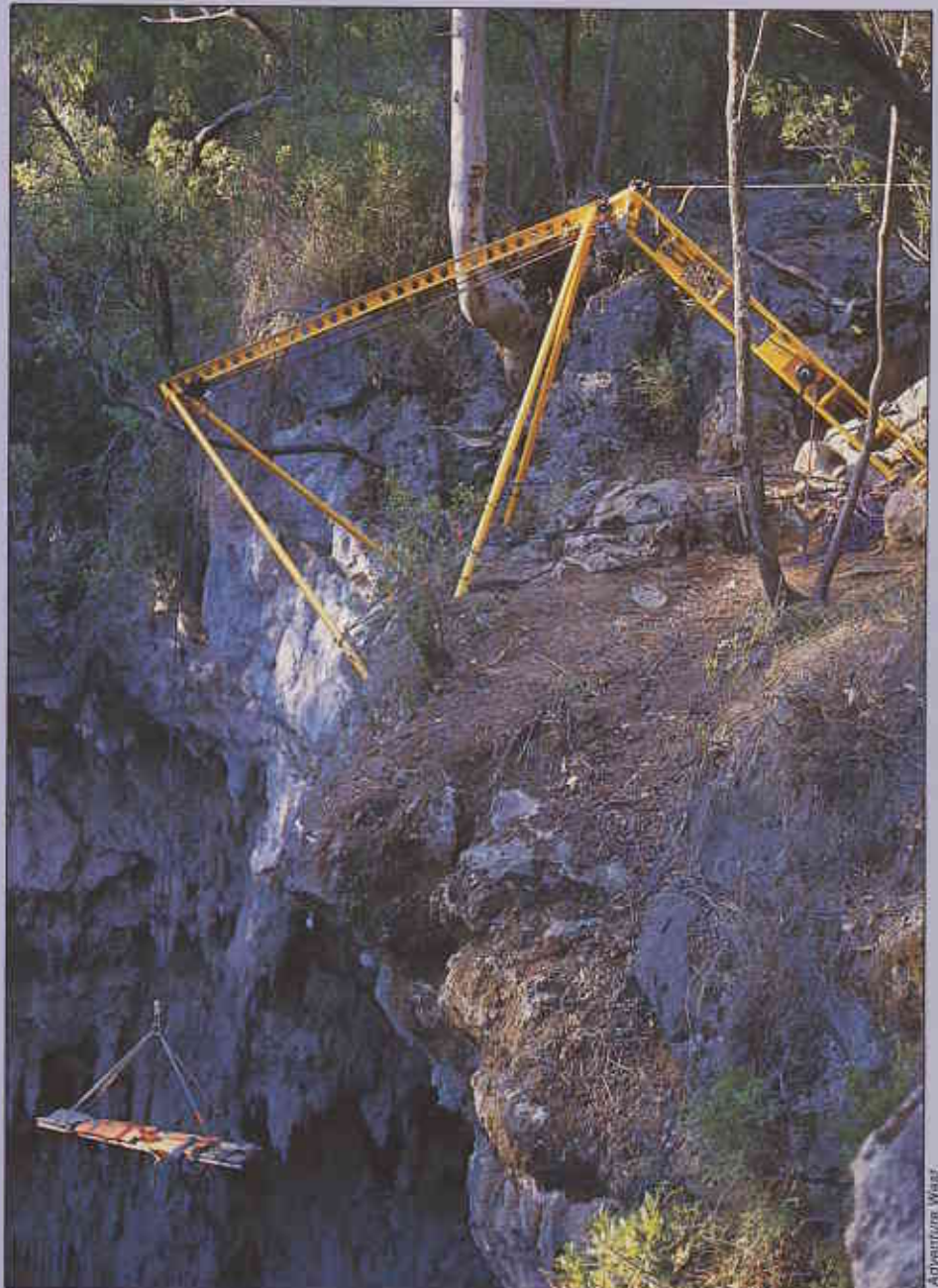
Recently, with the generous assistance of Hammersley Iron Pty. Ltd., the Department has purchased a Crux 2000 for that National Park, and is considering acquiring more for other locations.

The Crux 2000 is a state of the art device that is used on cliff tops to lift people and equipment from below. It is portable, stable and easily operated by two people, but its greatest advantage over other equipment is an arm which extends beyond the edge of the cliff. This obviates the need to negotiate the lip of the cliff, which has always been a difficult and hazardous part of any rescue.

Another way in which CALM is involved is in the provision of Expedition Skills courses, in conjunction with the Education Department and the Department of Sport and Recreation. These courses are for anyone who wishes to gain competence in bushwalking leadership. 'The course emphasises correct pre-planning,' says one of the course co-ordinators Drew Griffiths, 'as well as how to have minimum impact on the environment'. The five-day courses, conducted several times a year are open to anyone, and are particularly suitable for teachers and youth leaders. The cost is \$80 per person, inclusive. If you are interested, contact Drew on 364 0777. □



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If you had the misfortune to be stuck at the base of a cliff as three men were recently, the Crux 2000 (right) would be a welcome sight.

# LANDSCOPE

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## COVER PHOTO:

Stark silhouettes evoke the spirit of our remote  
regions. This photograph was taken near  
Quairading by Hans Versluis.

## EDITORIAL

Public participation in land management sounds like a great idea: the community has a chance to study and comment upon the government's proposals. The scientists and managers can keep their fingers on the pulse of public demand. But sometimes good ideas are hard to put into practice.

Last April the Department of Conservation and Land Management released draft management plans for the south-west forest regions, and a draft timber strategy for W.A. The release of the plans was accompanied by a series of workshops and public meetings, and extensive media releases. Four hundred and thirty-five letters offering briefings and speakers were sent out. Ninety groups responded. Public comment on any aspect of the plans and the strategy was invited.

4070 responses were received. This included 3505 proformas (from 30 organisations) and 565 substantial submissions, some up to 200 pages in length. Many submissions endorsed the plans in their entirety; some rejected them out of hand; others suggested hundreds of minor changes.

How can so many, and such varied, views possibly be integrated simply and sensibly into a final plan? What weighting should be given to the views of different groups or individuals? Who decides what is 'right' when pure value judgements are to be made and values are in conflict? How should one resolve an issue when the views of a large section of the public are quite different from those of a small group of scientists working closely on the problem? These questions represent the sharp end of public participation. It's a relatively new game for W.A.'s land managers, and one in which the rules are still unwritten and ill-defined.

What is certain is that the Department's policy and planning staff have a big job ahead of them, and a job which must be done to the highest possible professional standard. It is important that the final plans for our south-west forests reflect the tremendous thought, effort and interest shown by the community; and it is essential that there are efficient mechanisms for public involvement in conservation and land management, because these processes will be the norm, not the exception in years ahead.

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