

NEW TREE TOP WALK NOW OPEN

A new tree top walk that takes visitors on an enchanting trip through the tingle forest canopy, has been opened in the Valley of the Giants, in Walpole-Nornalup National Park.

Visitors are now able to discover life in the tingle tree canopy, as well as exploring it at different levels and enjoying a variety of views of the shapes, sounds and movement of the forest—an experience that is not to be missed.

Most similar canopy walks in other parts of the world are suspension bridge structures—not for the faint of heart. The Tree Top Walk, however, is a series of sixty-metre, lightweight steel trusses built on steel pylons, which form a secure ramp that rises slowly, while the terrain below falls away to a deep valley. At its highest point the 600-metre loop structure is about 40 metres above the forest floor.

Construction of the Tree Top Walk was part of a redevelopment plan for the Valley of the Giants by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), that includes a ground-level boardwalk through a grove of veteran tingle trees known as the Ancient Empire. This area contains the 'giant trees' for which the forest was named. (At their base, some of these trees are 16 metres in circumference.) The boardwalk meanders around, and sometimes through, the old trees. Throughout, there are quiet places to sit and reflect on the special nature of the tingle forest, and experience its calming effect.

The Ancient Empire boardwalk is designed to protect the trees from the damaging impact of large numbers of visitors. It is thought that before

the boardwalk was built, some trees were in rapid decline as a result of soil compaction around their root systems, caused by vehicles and humans.

The Tree Top Walk and some parts of the Ancient Empire are suitable for physically disabled people.

Walpole-Nornalup National Park is in a high rainfall area of Western Australia. It has spectacular landscapes encompassing estuaries, forested hills dissected by rivers, and extensive areas where there is little or no evidence of human activity.

The park has four endemic species of eucalypt; three of these are tingle tree species found only in the tall forests in the Walpole area, and the other is the red flowering gum, which is also found closer to the coast.

The Valley of the Giants is 430 kilometres south of Perth, and 100 kilometres west of Albany. Take the Valley of the Giants access road, north off South Coast Highway, and continue for five kilometres to the car park entrance.

The Tree Top Walk is open from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm daily between 1 March and the end of November, and 8.00 am to 6.00 pm daily from 1 December to the end of February.

Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2 for each child under 14

years of age, or \$12 for a family pass. (There is no charge to walk at ground level through the Ancient Empire.)

The Valley of the Giants recreation site will be closed on Good Friday and Christmas Day, and during hazardous weather.

For further information, please contact The Manager, Valley of the Giants, Department of Conservation and Land Management, Walpole.

Phone (098) 408 263 or fax (098) 408 132.

Right: Workers put the finishing touches to the Tree Top Walk.

Below: The Tree Top Walk winds through the canopy of tingle trees. Photos - Cliff Winfield





































