

NEW FACILITIES PROTECT NATURAL HERITAGE

A new \$100,000 visitor centre at Purnululu National Park in the Kimberley is providing a focal point for visitors seeking information on the area's nature conservation and cultural values.

The park's strong Aboriginal history and spectacular scenery have seen visitor numbers increase significantly since it was gazetted in 1987. Almost 20,000 people visit the park each year and this is expected to increase with the growth of nature-based tourism in the Kimberley. It was this continuing growth in visitor numbers that made it imperative that the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) build a new visitor

centre to ensure that people had full access to information about the heritage, conservation and cultural values of this high-profile national park.

In the last five years, walking tracks, roads, signs and camping areas have been provided so tour operators and their clients, along with independent visitors, can gain access in a way that protects the natural environment and is consistent with the Purnululu National Park's Management Plan.

The visitor centre aims to enrich the experiences and knowledge of visitors to the park through educational literature, displays and staff contact.

As well as catering for



visitors, the new building serves as a point for park administration and communications, visitor registrations, payment of park fees and merchandising.

Revenue from the sale of publications and souvenir items helped to fund the centre and will continue to support the management of the park.

For most of the busy dry season, the new visitor centre

has been operated by CALM staff, with the valuable assistance of the park's volunteers.

The centre has been designed to blend harmoniously with its natural surroundings. It already has proved to be popular with tour companies, and their clients, school groups, and visitors, all of whom are looking for a very special brand of ecotourism.

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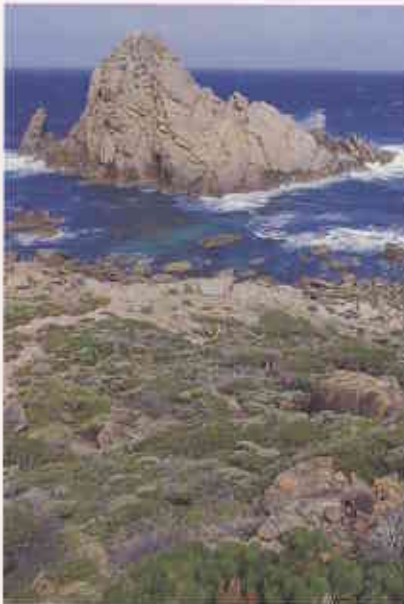
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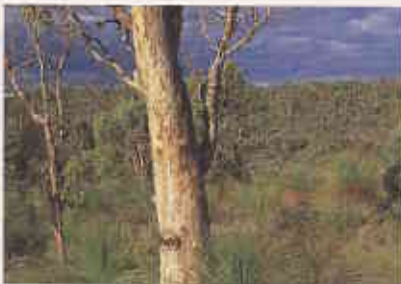
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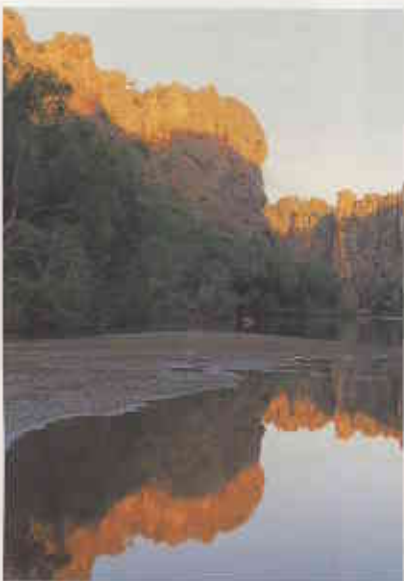
Sugarloaf Rock is just one of the many features that make Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park the most visited park in WA. (See page 10.)



Premier Park: John Forrest National Park is Western Australia's oldest park, celebrating its centenary year. (See page 22.)



Pinnacle of Parks: These unusual formations make Nambung National Park well known the world over. (See page 36.)



Windjana Gorge National Park holds important clues to the evolution of fish. See 'Old Fossils' on page 28.



William Bay National Park displays a miniature version of karri forest flora. (See page 42.)

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COVER

With 67 national parks spread across the State, park rangers are often the first contact that visitors have with the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). Apart from providing visitors with information and guidance, they perform a vital role in the day-to-day management of their local environment.



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