

Canopy capers

by Lauren Emmerson

An exciting new experience at Lane Poole Reserve is offering thrillseekers of all ages a completely different perspective of the forest. And a whole lot of fun.

It had been years since I'd worn a harness (flashback to abseiling at school camp) and as I put my legs through the sturdy fabric loops, tightening at the thighs in a triumph of safety over beauty, I was ready to channel that inner child. We were about to endeavor navigation of the high ropes course known as Trees Adventure – a matrix of zip-lines, suspended bridges, cargo nets and other challenges, high in the canopy of hundreds of pine and jarrah trees, 16 metres above Lane Poole Reserve.

I listened as intently as possible to the safety briefing, blaming any lapses in concentration on forgetting to pack a pillow when we camped at nearby Nanga Mill the night before, but excited about spending a two-hour session in the trees.

My respect for the Swiss family Robinson grew as we walked towards 'Home Tree' – a thick-trunked mother tree skirted by a complex system of handcrafted platforms and ladders.

Trees Adventure's Liam Hicks explained that Home Tree was the base

from which each colour-coded ropes course begun. I suppressed my childlike urge to hug Home Tree like she was a secret-keeping aunt as Liam showed us the locking system that would keep us safe.

The level of thought that has gone into balancing safety with fun became increasingly obvious as we looked up to the elevated playground and the long, steel cable running throughout.

"The best thing about our system is that once you lock on to the cable, you're 100 per cent safe and you don't need to have one of us looking over you the whole time," Liam said.

"We're down on the ground, we're always there to help, but you get to have your own unique experience."

"Each colour represents a different degree of difficulty. Start with the green course, then work your way up to blue, red, black then extreme black if you feel up to it."

In a moment of unjustified confidence we chose to skip the green level and go



straight to blue, and spent the next few hours going from tree to tree through a range of obstacles that challenged our bodies and our problem-solving skills.

We wobbled our way over suspended wooden bridges, gave Miley Cyrus a run for her money with the wrecking ball, tried to look as cool as possible on the mid-air skateboard, gave a pretty good impression of a spider trying to crawl across the cargo net, zip-lined up to 100 metres and hoped nobody noticed the slight shake in our knees just before the freefall jump.

Exciting. Heart pumping. Challenging. Completely addictive.



Do it yourself

Where is it? Lane Poole Reserve, Nanga Road, Dwellingup WA (100 kilometres from Perth) (08) 9463 4063

Facilities: Day-use and camping areas, toilets, barbecues, tables.

Camping: You can camp at one of several campgrounds. Fees apply.

For more information: about the Trees Adventure visit www.treesadventure.com.au/lane-pool-park

Nearest Parks and Wildlife office:
Dwellingup office, Banksiadale Road, Dwellingup, phone (08) 9538 1078 or Perth Hills District Office, 275 Allen Road, Mundaring, phone (08) 9290 6100.



Trees Adventure in Lane Poole Reserve opened to the public in mid-December 2015 and is the newest course in Australia, with three other high ropes parks operating in New South Wales and Victoria. Liam helped establish the Victorian incarnation of Trees Adventure and journeyed across the Nullabor in a truck loaded with a specific type of wood fit for purpose, to build the course in Western Australia.

"I love the outdoors, I love climbing and that's all culminated in me being over here in WA helping to set up this park," Liam said.

"We spent two and a half months in the trees, getting covered in soot, slogging it up here with the flies building this beautiful course and it's pretty awesome to see it full of people."

There is even a children's course, which is a mini version of the adults playground where kids can navigate their way through the obstacles and zip-lines two metres above the ground using a simplified safety system.

Given it's only an hour from Perth, you can visit Trees Adventure and be home in time for lunch, or incorporate it as part of a road trip, camping adventure or weekend getaway.

Trees Adventure is managed under a lease by Parks and Wildlife and is open year-round from Tuesday to Sunday, including public holidays and school holidays.

Above left The course offers challenges for people of all ages, skills and abilities.
Photo – Trees Adventure Park

Left Zip-lining between trees.

Above and top The course incorporates a range of climbing and balancing challenges.
Photos – Lauren Emmerson/Parks and Wildlife

Get a tree swinger's view of the Trees Adventure

Scan this QR code or visit Parks and Wildlife's 'LANDSCOPE' playlist on YouTube.



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