

*Touched by nature*

# Home to Cape Arid

*Jacqueline Pemberton has spent much of her adult life sharing her love of the natural environment with others – first as a ranger's wife, working in the tourism industry and now through her beautiful botanical art.*

*by Tracy Shea*







**I**t's 6am and Jacqueline is following a narrow track through coastal sandheath over a dune and rocks to her favourite place on Earth – the beach where the Southern Ocean waves meet the dunes of the majestic Yokinup Bay. With her sketchbook and camera in hand, salt air in her nose and the sweet aromas of the herbaceous plants she has just walked through on her clothes, she knows she is truly 'home'.

This is Cape Arid National Park on Western Australia's south coast – a rugged and beautiful wilderness which, together with Nuytsland Nature Reserve and Eucla National Park to the east, forms an almost continuous nature conservation corridor area to the South Australian border.

## MATTERS OF THE HEART

Jacqueline first came to Cape Arid National Park as a young ranger's wife in the 1980s. Alongside her husband Richard Pemberton, a national park ranger for 15 years, she cared for the park and its incredible biodiversity. It was important to them both that visitors took away marvellous memories and a love of being immersed in nature. Although Richard's work took them to many national parks along the south coast of the state, including West Cape Howe, Porongurup, Torndirrup, Fitzgerald River and Cape Le Grand, it was the magic of Cape Arid



that got under Jacqueline's skin, and is the place she and Richard return to whenever they can.

Greatly inspired by her friend and art mentor – local pioneer, naturalist and artist Mrs Amy Crocker (nee Baesjou), who grew up in the area – Cape Arid is the place that provided the inspiration for Jacqueline to start on a lifetime journey as a botanical artist. Today, her love of the natural environment is evident in her detailed botanical works, which capture the very essence of her subjects through coloured pencil, graphite and watercolour.

Jacqueline spends as much time as she can each year returning to the south coast collecting inspiration and drawing sketches from which she produces finished botanical paintings from her home studio in Mandurah. She also teaches botanical art when she has time.

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**Main** The beautiful, and inspiring, Cape Arid National Park.

**Inset** Jacqueline and Richard Pemberton on Christmas Day at Cape Arid National Park in the 1980s.

**Above left** Yokinup Bay, Cape Arid National Park.

**Above** Jacqueline Pemberton and her beloved poodle, Miss Molly.

*Photos and artwork – Jacqueline and Richard Pemberton*

## GETTING OUT THERE

Currently, time is a rare commodity as her passion for nature and the outdoors has seen Jacqueline complete her Commercial Coxswain's ticket. She now skips boats and provides tour guide commentary for Mandurah Cruises, bringing smiles to the faces of locals and international visitors alike, who delight in the antics of the bottlenose dolphins and amazing birdlife in the Ramsar-listed Creery Islands wetlands and canals around Mandurah.

Although Jacqueline 'graduated' from a qualified tour guide to being the Captain of boats, she still revels in the interaction with people that comes from tour guiding. In the early 2000s, while Richard was studying aquaculture in the north-west of WA, Jacqueline worked as a tour guide and manager at Willie Creek Pearl Farm in Broome, which saw her nominated

for the Forum Advocating Cultural and Eco-Tourism (FACET) Golden Guide Award in 2003.

In 2012, Jacqueline was awarded a Diploma of Botanical Illustration (with distinction) from the Society of Botanical Artists in the UK and has exhibited and sold works in England, at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne, as well as at galleries in NSW and WA. Her artwork has appeared in *Flora of the South West*, which was published by the then Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) in 2002, and *The Handbook of Plant Forms for Botanical Artists* by Margaret Stevens. She has also published a DVD on the techniques of botanical illustration and is a member of the Botanical Art Society of Australia, Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and Botanical Artistry.

## GIVING BACK

Jacqueline and Richard's contribution to the environment has not all been through paid employment or professional association. Before embarking on his 15-year career as a national park ranger in CALM, Richard was a volunteer with the National Parks Authority in the 1980s. During and since then, both he and Jacqueline have continued to volunteer in various roles throughout the State. As an original 'end to ender' – completing her journey in 1979 – Jacqueline was a voluntary volunteer coordinator in the Albany district for the Bibbulmun Track Foundation. Richard volunteered on voyages for *STS Leeuwin II*, as natural history advisor, while Jacqueline regularly acted as a volunteer crew member on deck.



In 2008, Richard and Jacqueline took on the challenging role of volunteer wardens at Eyre Bird Observatory, and during regular visits back to their beloved Cape Arid National Park they have remained registered volunteers.

## FOLLOWING A CALLING AND BACK AGAIN

Jacqueline says that she's a lifelong naturalist who loves sharing her passion for the environment with others.

"I'm so fortunate to have had the opportunity to experience first-hand the beauty of nature at its finest. Translating that to my art and tour guiding has enabled me to share it with others and hopefully has helped other people discover a love of nature along the way," she said.

In quoting Albert Einstein who said "Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better", Jacqueline says: "Through art and interaction with people, my aim is to leave a legacy for future generations in the hope they too will understand everything better". And – 30 years after she first settled in Cape Arid National Park – as her pencil glides across the pages of her sketchbook and her hand and eyes follow the contours of the flower before her, Jacqueline feels as at home in this unique spot as anywhere on Earth.

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**This page**  
 Jacqueline's beautiful botanical art.  
 Artwork – Jacqueline Pemberton



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