



Rottnest Island

Rottnest Island has been a holiday favourite for Western Australian locals and visitors for generations. Whether it's for a summer holiday, a winter getaway, special event or a fun-filled post-school celebration, visitors are drawn by the picturesque bays, pristine white sand and glistening blue water. And, of course, there are the endearing quokkas, for which the island is famous. Now, a new conservation and recreation initiative is guiding visitors around the island to discover these attractions and more.

Just 19.5 kilometres offshore from Cottesloe, lies Rottnest Island – an 11-kilometre-long and 4.5-kilometre-wide haven. It is undeniably beautiful and has pristine beaches that are among the most spectacular in the world. In 2016–17 nearly 650,000 visitors explored the natural, historical, cultural and recreational highlights and bused, biked, walked, trained, kayaked, surfed, fished and swam their way around this magnificent island playground.

Catering to these visitors to ensure they are not spoiling the very attractions they've come to enjoy was the catalyst for the Wadjemup Bidi conservation and recreation initiative – an extensive

network of trails that guides visitors around the island. Work on the Wadjemup Bidi project was formally started in 2013 and is expected to be completed in 2018. It is the result of a collaboration between the Rottnest Island Authority and Rottnest Foundation in partnership with companies such as BHP and community groups such as the Winnit Club, the Rottnest Society, Conservation Volunteers and Rottnest Voluntary Guides Association together with a number of grants and support from Tourism WA, Lotterywest and Rottnest Express.

The network, which gets its name from the Nyoongar word for 'trail' or 'track' is designed to pay homage to

Above Enjoying the Gabbi Karniny Bidi – one of the five tracks that make up the Wadjemup Bidi.

Above right A symbol of an osprey guides walkers on the Wadjemup Bidi.
Photos – Rottnest Island Authority

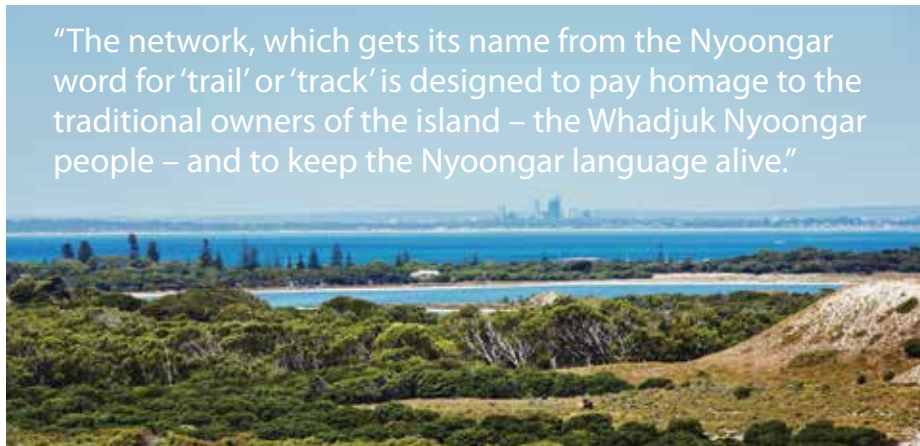
ROTTNEST IS
Wadjemup Bidi

- Toilets
- Drinking fountain
- Surfing
- Fishing
- Snorkelling
- Tennis courts
- Island Explorer bus stop
- Sanctuary Zone
- The Settlement

--- Ngank Yira Bidi (9.4km)
 --- Gabbi Karniny Bidi (9.7km)
 --- Warden Nara Bidi (10km)
 --- Karlinyah Bidi (5.9km)
 --- Ngank Wen Bidi (7.6km)

Bike Rides (via roads)
 See Island map

— Roads - - - Tracks + + + Train Line



“The network, which gets its name from the Nyoongar word for ‘trail’ or ‘track’ is designed to pay homage to the traditional owners of the island – the Whadjuk Nyoongar people – and to keep the Nyoongar language alive.”

Left Rottneest Island is just 19.5 kilometres offshore from Cottesloe.
 Photo – Rottneest Island Authority

the traditional owners of the island – the Whadjuk Nyoongar people – and to keep the Nyoongar language alive. When complete, the trail is expected to generate opportunities for eco and cultural tours and art exhibitions as well as host school excursions and holiday programs, corporate challenge activities, team building sessions and sporting events.

NETWORKING FOR FUN

The Wadjemup Bidi is a 45-kilometre-network of trails. It is made up of five separate trails, which explore different parts of the island and take in different

attractions and ecosystems. The trails have been designed to integrate with the Island Explorer bus system so users can get between the starting and finishing points with ease.

The Ngank Yira Bidi, a 9.4-kilometre one-way walk, starts at Thomson Bay and follows the south-east corner of the island past the Bickley Battery, before cutting inland to Oliver Hill. Here you can discover the WWII infrastructure, including two 9.2-inch guns and a maze of underground tunnels. There are also guided tours of the area. From here you can catch the Oliver Hill train back to the settlement.

Gabbi Karniny Bidi is a 9.7-kilometre loop that starts at Vlamingh Lookout, a spot that offers some of the best views on the island. This loop takes walkers past some of the island’s swamps, seeps and lakes, which cover more than 200 hectares, and are fed by rainfall and rising groundwater. Visitors have the opportunity to journey along a boardwalk that emulates walking on water, while trying to spot some of the reptiles, frogs and birds that live there. The trail then heads along the northern edge of the island, and past Little Parakeet, Geordie and Longreach bays, which are some of the most beautiful beaches on the island.

The Warden Nara Bidi is 10 kilometres one way and starts at Porpoise Bay where the Ngank Yira Bidi trail heads inland. It climbs Tree Hill for spectacular views of southern coast, meanders through Watson Glade and then arrives at Parker Point. Between Parker Point and Strickland Bay there is Little Salmon and Salmon bays,



Above Walking the Wadjemup Bidi.
Photo – Rottnest Island Authority



Far left The island is famous for its endearing quokkas.



Left Walking is not the only way to explore the island – cycling is also popular.
Photos – Campbell Jones

Fairbridge Bluff and a link to Oliver Hill. The trail goes up past Wadjemup Lighthouse on its way to Strickland Bay. Whip out your smart phone and scan the QR code on the sign to hear about this island's surfing history. You can also admire Peter Farmer's Mammong Dreaming sculpture before the walk continues west to Narrow Neck, where you can board a bus to head back to the settlement.

At 5.9 kilometres one-way, Karlinyah Bidi is the shortest of the trails. Starting 200 metres west of Little Parakeet Bay, the trail ventures past Little Armstrong Bay – a haven for snorkelling where there are species such as western king wrasse, common scalyfin and even Port Jackson sharks and banded wobbegongs. Then the walk traverses the north-west side of the island, past the rugged Ricey Beach and then past the tern courting and breeding site at Stark Bay.

The final leg – Ngank Wen Bidi – will be completed in 2017–18 and will showcase the island's magnificent marine

mammals. The walk takes in the viewing platform at Cathedral Rocks and the West End boardwalk, which are prime spots for viewing New Zealand fur seals, dolphins, and the seasonal migration of humpback whales.

TAKING YOUR WHEELS FOR A SPIN

Of course walking is not the only way to get around the island and, with no car traffic to worry about, visitors can enjoy the freedom of getting on a bike and making their way to one of the many other beaches and coves on the island or visit one of the many cultural, historical and family attractions. A cruise around the settlement will take you past a number of cafes and restaurants that cater to breakfast, lunch and dinner and the all-important mid-afternoon ice-cream, which can be eaten under one of the enveloping Moreton Bay fig trees while enjoying the antics of the quokkas that contentedly hop around the place.



See more of Rottnest Island

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



Do it yourself

Where is it? Rottnest Island is 19.5 kilometres offshore from Cottesloe.

Total area: 1,900 hectares of land and 3,800 hectares of marine reserves.

Facilities: Rottnest Island has a raft of attractions and facilities that cater to visitors who are looking for a range of experiences and opportunities. Visit www.rottnestisland.com for more information.

What to do: Swimming, snorkelling, scuba diving, surfing, beach combing, cycling, walking, wildlife appreciation, playing golf, skydiving, lawn bowling, visiting one of the many cultural, historical and family attractions.

For more details and maps on the Wadjemup Bidi, visit rottnestisland.com/wadjemupbidi. Wadjemup Bidi is also featured on Trails WA (trails.wa.com.au).