



Vis-à-vis V.I.S.

• CALM's Visitor Interpretation Section (VIS) Quarterly Update •

FOREST SCIENCE LIBRARY
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Interpretive Training

Based on feedback from Recreation and Tourism Program Leaders and many other CALM staff, the VIS is developing the following training modules to complement the Visitor Interpretation Manual:

- ❖ Sign development and interpretive writing (4 hour module)
- ❖ How to work with and manage consultants (4 hour module)
- ❖ Interpretive planning (12 hour module)

The training will be conducted by VIS staff and will be piloted at the Como Training Centre later this year. Contact Lotte with any ideas you may have about these modules.

An International Perspective on Interpretation

The Visitor Interpretation Section in partnership with Districts and Regions hopes to host international interpretive consultant John Veverka later this year. So far there's been interest from several Regions wishing to make use of his interpretive training and consulting services. We'll keep you posted.

New Publications:

"**Best Recipes for Interpreting Our Heritage. Activities for Tour Guides and Others**" is taking shape. Nominated CALM staff have been asked to prepare or revise an activity they are either reknown for or have previously prepared as part of the Interpretive Activities Design Workshop. The intent is to target tour operators and guides with genuine interpretive activities so they can meet criteria for accreditation. Funding for the publication is from sales of products and services of the Visitor Interpretation Services Section. (VIM; RAP; University lectures; contracts to other agencies etc.)

The VIS Home Page

You won't find it just yet, but we're working on getting a version of the Visitor Interpretation Section's Home Page on line. In the meantime we would welcome your ideas about what you'd like to see included.

Win an Award for Interpretation!

Have you ever worked on anything interpretive which you thought was particularly creative? Clever? Worthy of praise? The Interpretation Australia Association Awards are on again this year and you've got until Friday, 11 July 1997 to enter a submission. It would be great to see CALM receive an award for its interpretation!



Award applications are being sent directly to each Region's Recreation and Tourism Leader. Further applications are available for IAA members (CALM is a corporate member) through the awards coordinator Kate Armstrong (phone (03) 9754-5483 or fax (03) 9754-5441).



Regional Roundup ... What's Happening Around Our State



The Mid West

Paul Brown is the DM in Denham now and has continued a tradition of innovative ideas in interpreting Shark Bay's heritage. Francois Peron NP was once a pastoral station. Gil has been consulting with Paul and Sue Hancock and a proposal has been put together for Peron Visitor Centre in the old station overseer's quarters. Greencorp are re-cladding the building that will also function as the visitor centre for Project Eden. Did you know Project Eden refers to the cartoon character *The Phantom's* island sanctuary? The visitor centre display proposes to incorporate this concept into an old movie poster, along with comic book on CALM's Project Eden. Imagine if we could crack *The Phantom 2* movie being shot at Shark Bay. Move over Crocodile Dundee!

A proposal for a new Monkey Mia Visitor Centre is the basis for the architectural firm Cox, Howlett and Bailey providing a site analysis and concept plan for Monkey Mia. Current thoughts are looking at a number of modules rather than another big building.

Some of you may have seen Kellee's colourful artwork at The Overlander turn-off to Shark Bay. Now a similar hexagonal shelter is being developed for the town foreshore at Denham. Gil, Sue and Rae Burrows from Fisheries Department are jointly scripting it, along with a brochure to launch the marine park zones and the development of a World Heritage Area Communications Plan.

Through the V.I.S. Scott Godley at Moora is coordinating two projects with interpretive consultant Cathy Drake. Grigson's Lookout platform with signs interpreting the landscape and history is on the new Jurien to Green Head coast road. Stockyard Gully signs look at the subterranean river sculpturing and cave safety at this special geological site. Neil 'Sqizzy' Taylor provided specialist advice to Scott from his experiences 'on the Ridge'.



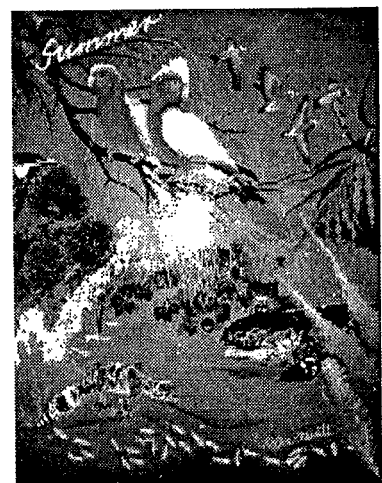
Wheatbelt

Over the past 18 months, Narrogin District have been engaged as a contractor by the Shire of Kondinin to upgrade facilities at Wave Rock. So far, District and Regional staff have developed an interpretive plan, constructed a pedestrian path linking the two main tourist features, erected trailside interpretive signs along the path, and constructed an interpretive shelter. Site plans for the works were prepared by Richard Hammond, and more recently Mike Bodsworth. More infrastructure works are planned, including two redesigned carparks, and a face-lift of the main day-visitor area.

The trailside signs are unusual in that they are mounted on to small granite rocks. Given that the interpretation along the trail focuses on the life story of a granite outcrop, this seemed quite appropriate. The signs blend into the landscape until visitors are almost upon them.

The interpretive shelter includes two large murals by Kellee Merritt, depicting the four seasons at the Rock. These proved a great hit and have attracted a lot of positive comment. It certainly helped to have the feedback from paying customers even as the team were installing them.

While there have been a few hiccups along the way, the end results have been pleasing for both CALM and the Shire. Works so far have certainly lifted the landscape amenity of the area, and provided visitors with a far greater understanding of the Rock, how it was formed, local history and the environment. It has all added up to making Wave Rock more than a five minute wonder, and no doubt has greatly increased visitor satisfaction.



The "Summer" section of a four season mural
(apologies for the state of the scanned image)

Como/Fremantle

Notre Dame University

CALM has been contracted by NDU again to conduct our Interpretive Activities Design Workshop at the end of July as a 'module' within the Environmental Interpretation and Management course. CALM staff wishing to attend the workshop with the students and others should contact Denise Griffith and she'll see you get the flier with details for booking through Notre Dame University.

Sharing the Dreaming

CALM's Aboriginal Tourism, Education and Training Unit's schools, tours and special events promotional fliers have been prepared by Denise Griffith. Aboriginal artist Shane Pickett's artwork purchased by CALM will be used to gloss-up the fliers when they go to Corporate Relations for printing. Shane's art will also be used in other materials produced for the Unit such as the 'Dreaming stories' that Trevor and Noel use with various audiences.

Central Forest



Peter Henderson and Gil have been working with Don Spriggins on Wellington Discovery Forest. A second interpretive walk with trailside signs is currently in production; a concept plan has been prepared for the visitor centre (the building was refurbished last year); panels for the new rammed earth shelter behind the proposed visitor centre have been identified, now it's time to prepare the text.

Swan Region

Moore River

A new information shelter, panels & walk trail have been installed, so far no vandalism has occurred and lots of people are using the walk trail. MRD have put in car park, picnic facilities and a toilet will be installed in the near future.

Penguin Island

A touch pool was held on the Island during Seaweek. New portable interpretive panels have been produced in conjunction with Western Mining. Work is currently under-way to implement a cave risk signage system.



Hills Forest

The *Go Bush* and *Get Adventurous* programs for autumn/winter are now being promoted continuing the tradition of making many and varied activities readily accessible to all. Training was recently held for new volunteers for the *Go Bush* programme.



John Forrest

The Rangers have now moved into the old tearooms allowing the office to also become an information area for visitors.

Yanchep

A diverse and large number of activities have been developed for the park which include *Adventure Caving*, *Koala Kapers*, *Wonder Walk*, *Back to the Dreamtime*, *Taste of Yanchep*, *Animal Crackers* and *Get Lost* to name a few.

There are approximately 22 activities that have been developed by Rangers and casual staff with most aimed at specific audiences.

The program offers a wide variety to the public and packaged activities have proved very popular with school groups as they are flexible enough to cater for particular subjects and financial requirements.

Some of the casual staff have attended the interpretive activity planning workshop conducted by Lotte and Gil and are now developing their own activities.

For those who know John Wheeler, he has trained the koalas to tap dance and for a small fee he can arrange a photograph of you with a koala! These sessions have been financially successful and the koalas are still the most popular drawcard to the park, with the twin koalas Euca and Lyptus stealing the show.

The interpretive team consists of two rangers, one marketing and promotions officer, ten casual staff and two volunteer groups. In addition to conducting interpretive activities, casual staff sell tickets at the entry station, carry out tours of Crystal and Yonderup Caves and assist with shopping centre displays.

A training course for cave guides has been accredited and the lesson structure is being finalised by assistant training officer Megan Hughes and senior ranger Ron Shimmon.

McNess House has been reopened after the fire.

The Sun & Stars festival was very successful with close to 2,000 people attending.

The Bibbulmun Track



The Track will, of itself, be an interpretive experience of the environment of the south west of Western Australia, traversing as it does almost the whole range of topography, landforms and vegetation types of that area and their associated wildlife.

So as not to detract from this experience for the walker, the only signage on the actual track will be low-key directional signs in the form of the distinctive and recognisable Waugul. These are placed at a sufficient distance apart to give the walker some feeling of security without being intrusive.

Opportunities for the use of visual interpretive materials are given by the huts, the trail heads which are located where the Track passes through towns and at the northern and southern termini.

The Project team has decided, that all visual Bibbulmun Track interpretive material should have a distinctive and identifiable style. This style or theme should be carried over a range of materials from panels to maps and guides which will, in the future, be immediately identifiable as being related to the Bibbulmun Track. To this end we have been offered the services of third year design students from the Central Metropolitan College of TAFE. They are currently working on a brief to come up with an overall concept for all Track related graphic material as part of their course assessment. We hope to be able to develop a theme from their work with the help of the Visitor Interpretation Sign Design Studio.

The Federation of WA Bushwalkers obtained a grant from the Gordon Reid Foundation to construct seven huts and to provide interpretive panels for each of these. Annie Keating, our Special Projects Coordinator, will

spend time in April collecting information and writing the stories for these. It is hoped that we will then be able to use these panels as the prototype for our overall Bibbulmun Track theme.

Feedback for VIS...

Remember last year (and continuing this year) copies of the Visitor Interpretation Manual were distributed to CALM staff? Well, we've received some excellent feedback verbally from those of you who use the VIM quite a bit and it is much appreciated.

What the Section is also keen for is *written feedback* which we can address specifically in training workshops and/or new versions or chapters of VIM. Attached is a copy of the feedback form which appears on the last page of each VIM. Please take a moment to write down your thoughts.

Editorial ...

This editorial section is an exciting new feature of **Vis-à-vis V.I.S.** Here we invite your candid, off the cuff, impassioned and/or esoteric contribution on interpretive experiences.

Off the top of my head!

As budgets get tighter year by year, and ideas to improve recreation and tourism opportunities seem to increase even faster, thoughts inevitably turn to recoup work to fund these pet projects. How many of you have thought along these lines, or even attempted recoupable work for other agencies or groups?

If you haven't, read on. If you have, perhaps the following rings true.

I was part of a district team that undertook a contract with an external client to prepare site plans, interpretive facilities, walk tracks, carparking, etc. We were approached because they saw CALM as having all the expertise they needed. The loosely-written contract looked ideal - we could determine variations without argument, add things where we wanted, and the contract appeared pretty much open-ended. In other words, there was a great opportunity or so we thought! Here's a quick rundown of where things differed from our expectations:

- ❖ The steering committee was made up of a group of conservative land managers who didn't know much about recreation facility design or interpretation. Small, incremental steps were the norm, and if it ain't broke, don't fix it was the attitude we confronted.
- ❖ Some of these people had been involved in management of the site for years, hence certain facilities had sentimental attachment. Ever tried to design a carpark around a 1970s-style information shelter, complete with rust, faded lettering, etc?
- ❖ There was a major concern that acknowledgement of the Aboriginal culture in the area would lead to land rights claims. While this may seem to be a valid issue in these times of uncertainty it proved a great loss for interpretation.
- ❖ Our clients assumed that visitors wanted a certain experience. But as far as we knew, no market research had ever been undertaken to back up their claims. So despite what CALM knew from our experience at other sites, visitors *had* to be told about "...local sporting facilities, entertainment in the local community and farming methods." The topic of the environment managed to squeeze in there somewhere, and eventually Aboriginal history was acknowledged, but trying to work in their requests severely compromised the interpretive story.
- ❖ The expectation was that most things should be done yesterday, even with regular changes in the design. Prostituting principles was hard enough, but when they still expected deadlines to be met, it made it harder again. So be prepared to add at least a 50% time contingency!

- ❖ There may be an assumption that you are being paid a fortune. None of the Steering Committee really knew, as the purse strings were controlled by the Shire. The Shire was unaware that the Steering Committee kept asking for alterations. It was once suggested that we were being paid \$80/hr, whereas we actually undertook the work at cost recovery level. In hindsight, \$80/hr would not have even covered costs!

There are dozens more things that made the projects difficult along the way, but the therapy has helped me forget. However, we are still committed to complete the project, but at least the worst is over. We now know the process. All I can say is be wary. If you are considering trying recoupable work outside CALM, and you'd like to know more about our experiences, contact the Visitor Interpretation Section - they can pass on the message. We'd be glad to cry on anyone's shoulder!

Newsletter Contributions

Your contributions to **Vis-à-vis V.I.S.** are welcomed. We'd be interested in short blurbs (up to 200 words) on what's happening with interpretation in your area, tips for staff, notices of training, new ideas etc. Send copy by e-mail (to **Vis-à-vis V.I.S.** Designer, Karen Shaddock), snail-mail (VIS, Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre, 6983) or fax 09/334-0583.

NEXT COPY DEADLINE IS Friday 4TH July 1997

Lotte Lent
Editor **Vis-à-vis V.I.S.**

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and are not necessarily the views of the Visitor Interpretation Section. All names have been changed to protect the innocent.



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Signs, Signs Everywhere There Are Signs

Examples of signs recently produced for Burswood Park, artwork and design by Kellee.

