

# T · O · U · R · I · N · G

## Western Australia

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Talking Tourism with the Department of Conservation and Land Management

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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
AND LAND MANAGEMENT

*I was fortunate to attend and speak at the recent Ecotourism Association of Australia Annual Conference held in Margaret River. Participants came from around the world to discuss the key needs facing ecotourism in Australia, such as establishing and improving partnerships, improving sustainability and maintaining the integrity of the ecotourism product. It is essential that CALM recognise and facilitate these needs, given the continued strong growth in visitation to the natural areas managed by the Department. Opportunities to develop nature-based tourism would not be possible without a strong partnership with the private sector, combining resources to maximise the benefits to both nature conservation and tourism.*

*The increasing demand for nature-based tourism product has seen the establishment of a growing number of commercial tour operations providing a wide range of services. CALM must ensure a balance between the provision of these services and management of the natural environment to maintain conservation values. To ensure that the impact of commercial tour operations is minimised on the lands and waters it manages, CALM issues licences to tour operators.*

*I am constantly aware of government regulations, and various other factors relating to the licensing system that can, at times, inhibit the development of commercial ventures. A new licence application form and Tour Operator Handbook has been developed to minimise the burden on operators while maximising the effectiveness of the licensing process, and will be effective from 1 January 1999.*

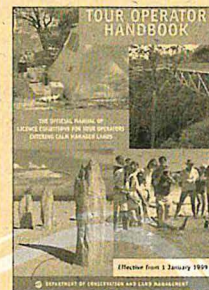
*There are two Tour Operator Handbooks to be released, one for terrestrial activities and the other related to marine activities. The handbooks set out all the licence conditions applicable to operators when applying for a licence or licence renewal for specific parks and activities. These are issued with a licence and must be carried on CALM-managed areas.*

*CALM's internet website NatureBase continues to be a major source of information about national parks and nature-based tourism in Western Australia, receiving more than 16,000 hits per day. The new licensing requirements will be available on NatureBase, and a dedicated email address ([licensing@calm.wa.gov.au](mailto:licensing@calm.wa.gov.au)) has been set up for enquiries. We are also proposing to allow licence holders to renew their licence on-line.*

*The long-term viability of nature-based tourism in Western Australia is very much dependent on maintaining the conservation values of our magnificent natural environment. Although continued guidance and controls are required in managing the use of these natural areas, the opportunities are vast and operators should be encouraged to seek out new nature-based tourism experiences. Some very valuable marketing and business development advice was uttered at the ecotourism conference — 'Be bold, be different, be first' — and I invite you to participate in this challenge!*

*Syd Shea*

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



### ARMY ASSISTS WITH PARK DEVELOPMENT AT CAPE RANGE

Army personnel 'joined forces' with CALM staff to develop a new camping area and day-use site at Bloodwood Creek in Cape Range National Park.

Development at the site also included the construction of toilets and a viewing platform overlooking the Creek, with access roads and placement of timber barriers for vehicle control.

The project provided a successful outcome all round – army personnel had a meaningful training challenge, CALM were able to improve park facilities with a restricted budget and visitors to Cape Range National Park will be able to enjoy this special place.

## Attractions and facilities

### **NEW ABORIGINAL HERITAGE INITIATIVE AT YANCHEP NATIONAL PARK**

The Balga Mia Village has recently opened at Yanchep National Park, coordinated by CALM's Aboriginal Tourism, Education and Training Unit. The Unit recognises the limited opportunities currently available for visitors to experience Australia's indigenous culture and its increasing demand in relation to nature-based tourism.



*Nyoongar guide Kevin Hill showing the group a 'gundar' (Aboriginal for a kangaroo skin bag).*

This exciting new project has been developed to bridge this gap, enabling visitors to gain an understanding of Aboriginal culture during a guided tour of the Balga Mia Village with Nyoongar guide Kevin Hill.

Once inside the Village, Kevin explains the significance of the mia and balga (grass tree) to Nyoongar people, before approaching the gathering area. A demonstration of bush glue making, string making and fire lighting is followed by voluntary participation in glue making to form a 'taap' (serrated-edged bush knife).

The program finishes with a short walk along the Yanjidi trail to discover the Nyoongar 'six seasons' and the availability of natural resources throughout the year. The program begins at 1pm

from Sunday to Thursday at a cost of \$8/adult, \$3/child and concession, or \$15/family pass. Alternatively, the Village is open every day between 8.00–9.45am for tour groups visiting the park in the morning at a cost of \$3/person. For enquiries, please ring Yanchep National Park on (08) 9561 1004.

### **PENGUIN EXPERIENCE ISLAND DISCOVERY CENTRE**

Penguin Island was re-opened in early September following the winter closure for the penguin-breeding season. The Penguin Experience Centre houses a colony of rescued and rehabilitated little penguins, which CALM staff feed while providing commentaries to visitors regularly throughout the day.

Walk trails, board walks, lookouts and the Penguin Experience Centre combine with a magnificent natural coastal environment to make Penguin Island a popular tourism destination which can be sustained. A newly constructed board walk has improved access to the back beach, and plans for the construction of a new jetty and renewable energy power station are continuing to evolve.

We welcome the new owners of Penguin and Seal Island Cruises, Graham and Leanne Deague. The Deagues are committed to providing a highly professional, quality service for visitors to Penguin Island and the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park, and are eagerly revamping cruise facilities and services. A number of bay and snorkel cruises are offered, giving customers an opportunity to enjoy the spectacular coastal scenery and marvel at its marine life. Cruises depart regularly from Mersey Point, which also houses a cafe and souvenir outlet. There is ample parking close to the departure point, with provision for coaches and the disabled.

For ferry bookings and further information, contact Penguin and Seal Island Cruises on (08) 9528 2004 or fax (08) 9592 2826. Park information can be obtained from CALM's Marine and Coastal District office by telephoning (08) 9432 5111, or fax (08) 94305408.

## Around the regions

### **KIMBERLEY**

Aerial access to **Purnululu National Park** during the wet season has been approved following a trial earlier this year. In the past, Purnululu has been closed to all visitors from January to March.

Guidelines have been developed to ensure the safety of visitors and to minimise impacts on the

Park. Vehicular access to the park remains prohibited from 1 January to 31 March due to heavy rains making roads impassable.

The Bungle Bungle Range can be accessed during the wet with one of CALM's licensed helicopter or fly/drive tour operators. For further information, contact the CALM Kununurra office on (08) 9168 0200.

## **PILBARA**

A draft Recreation and Tourism Master Plan for the **Burrup Peninsula** has been released for public comment. The Plan has been prepared by CALM in partnership with the Burrup Aboriginal Council and the Burrup Advisory Committee. It recognises opportunities for nature-based recreation which are compatible with the preservation of the peninsula's natural qualities. Copies of the plan are available for \$10 from CALM's Karratha office, or can be viewed at the Karratha Tourist Bureau, the Shire of Roebourne or Karratha Community Library. The closing date for public comments is Monday 14 December 1998.

## **MID-WEST**

### **Proposed Visitor Centre for Nambung National Park**

Consultants have been engaged to assist CALM in developing plans for future visitor facilities near the Pinnacles. The consultants will explore the potential for a visitor centre to interpret the Pinnacles' landscape and other natural attractions in the region.

Future strategies for managing access through the Pinnacles Desert will also be considered, as increased visitation is anticipated when the coast road between Lancelin and Cervantes is constructed.

If you wish to discuss or make comment on this project contact Sue Hancock at CALM's Geraldton office (08) 9921 5955 or Tracy Churchill at CALM, Como office on (08) 9334 0374.

### **Shark Bay Terrestrial Reserves Draft Management Plan**

Environment Minister Cheryl Edwardes recently released the draft management plan for CALM-managed lands in the Shark Bay World Heritage Property. The draft plan recommends management strategies for Francois Peron National Park, Shell Beach Conservation Park, Zuytdorp Nature Reserve, Bernier and Dorre Islands Nature Reserve and the many small island nature reserves.

Tourism strategies focus mainly on Francois Peron National Park, where opportunities are identified to:

- ❖ Develop the Peron homestead precinct with a range of facilities and services which interpret the former station's history and the Park's World Heritage values.
- ❖ Upgrade all coastal camping and day use areas and explore the potential for a commercial safari camp near Cape Peron.

Public comment on the draft plan is encouraged and submissions should be lodged by 29 January 1999. Copies of the plan may be viewed, or purchased for \$5, at CALM's offices in Denham, Geraldton or Perth. For more information contact the Plan Coordinator, Sue Hancock, on (08) 9921 5955.

## **Peron Homestead Precinct, Francois Peron National Park**

The old Peron homestead bore drilled in 1923 has given up the ghost. A new bore is currently being drilled, however, and the popular hot tub should be back in action in the New Year.

Renovations on the Peron homestead are still to be completed, though the homestead already provides basic bunkhouse-style accommodation for student excursions and special interest groups. For further information contact Keith Cunningham at CALM's Denham office on (08) 9948 1208.

## **New arrival at Monkey Mia**

The Melbourne Cup was upstaged this year in Shark Bay with the birth of a bottlenose dolphin calf – the fifth to be born during the past six years to regular beach-visiting dolphins at Monkey Mia. Visitors will be asked to keep out of the water when the mother, Nicky, and her new calf are inshore for the next few weeks, to allow the calf to adjust. Although this will mean less public interaction, viewing should not be affected.

## **PERTH**

### **Sensational! Summer Nights**

Grab your didgeridoo, lagerphone or tapping sticks to join in on the unique experiences being offered during summer when the Sensational! Summer Nights activity program gets under way at The Hills Forest Activity Centre.

Sensational! Summer Nights is a great combination of evening performances, ranging from bush bands, Dreamtime performances by the Wadumbah Aboriginal Dance Group, yarn spinners and storytelling featuring bush poet, Henry Lawson.

The Bush Variety Show with 'Lucky Lizard' and music from the Southern Cross Bush Band is specifically designed for all the family, including the Hills Forest's version of line dancing – bushscouting!

The summer program also offers 'Night Shift', an evening walk every Wednesday with experienced leaders to explore the local jarrah forest for some spotlighting of native animals and find out more about the night forest when it really starts to come alive!

With plenty of humour, music and dance, Sensational! Summer Nights offers people of all ages the opportunity to enjoy the warm summer nights outdoors. So pack a picnic, cushion and blanket and bring along a group. Brochures for Sensational! Summer Nights are available from your local library, tourist outlet or CALM office. 'Phone the Forest' for further information on (08) 9295 2244.

## SOUTHERN FOREST

### Updates on Redevelopment

The popular Beedelup Falls recreation site at **Beedelup National Park** and the Point D'Entrecasteaux precinct in the **D'Entrecasteaux National Park** are to be upgraded. Access roads and car parks will better cater for coaches, caravans and trailers. Other facilities include walking trails and visitor interpretation, and the Beedelup recreation site will feature a new composting toilet and wheelchair-accessible pathway leading to the Falls.

Works may affect access to these sites during January to March 1999. Further information or access details can be directed to CALM, Pemberton office on (08) 9776 1207.

## SOUTH COAST

**Cape Le Grand** is one of the most popular national parks on the south coast, with 73,000 visits last year. Situated 45km south-east of Esperance, the Park attracts visitors for its wide sandy beaches, unique flora and impressive chain of peaks. Many visitors walk to the top of Frenchman Peak to view the large cave and surrounding sand plains which support a variety of flora and wildlife. Other walks include the coastal trail which links Cape Le Grand Beach with Hellfire Bay, Thistle Cove, Lucky Bay and Rossiter Bay.

There are two camping areas in the park, at Cape Le Grand Beach and Lucky Bay, which both provide flush toilets and showers. The recently completed camp kitchen at Lucky Bay is proving most beneficial to campers at meal times!

Tour operators can now organise for the Park Ranger to accompany their tour, providing information on the history of the park, the unique flora and fauna of the region, or simply responding to any queries. Contact the Ranger in Charge on (08) 9075 9022 or by fax (08) 9075 9027 for further information or fee details associated with this service.

## Hot Off the Press

**Best Recipes for Interpreting Our Heritage: Activities for Ecotour Guides and Others** is a book designed to help guides design and deliver quality interpretive activities. The book provides 23 interpretive activity plans relating to a range of topics such as landscape and natural processes, animals, plants, ecology and Aboriginal culture. There is also an interpretive activity planner for readers to design, present and evaluate their own activities.

## YOU WERE WONDERING?

*Touring Western Australia* is a newsletter produced by CALM to keep the tourism industry informed about developments affecting the industry. If you have a query about any of CALM's tourism policies, activities or developments, we would be pleased to answer these in future issues of the newsletter. Enquiries can be sent to *Touring Western Australia*. Fax: (08) 9334 0253 or email (kateh@calm.wa.gov.au).

This guidebook costs \$25 (plus postage) and is an essential resource for operators and others interested in improving their quality of service as a nature-based tourism provider. To order a copy, contact CALM's Visitor Interpretation Section on (08) 9334 0564.

**Western Australia's Threatened Flora** (\$29.95) is a 220-page guide which provides an extensive list of the threatened flora within different regions around the State. Each plant species listed offers information relating to their distribution, habitat, status, description and botanical name, along with a colour photo or drawing.

**Bugs in the Backyard** is the latest of CALM's Bush Books, describing some of the invertebrates found in the garden or home, such as the huntsman spider and the clover blue butterfly.

Please contact Estelle de San Miguel on (08) 9334 0296 for further information or to order either of these publications.

## Inside CALM

**Rod Quartermain** has been contracted by CALM with the role of implementing the Department's Tourism Marketing Strategy, which was initiated earlier this year. Rod's principal responsibilities will involve marketing of the park pass system, establishment of a merchandising program, tourism industry liaison and the development and delivery of CALM's tourism product.

Rod has a broad experience base in the tourism industry, with extensive involvement with the Peel Regional Tourism Association, WATC Gascoyne office and experience as a commercial tour operator. Rod can be contacted on (08) 9334 0562 or email (rodq@calm.wa.gov.au).

### INFO UPDATES FOR TOUR OPERATORS

Fisheries WA is proposing to license all aquatic charter operators (both fishing and nature-based tourism operators) that conduct tours outside marine reserves. This proposal will complement CALM's commercial activity licensing system. Fisheries WA are intending to call for expressions of interest from tour operators for the issue of licences before the end of the year.

Commercial charters that do not catch fish, and are currently operating only within a marine reserve, will not be required to obtain a Fisheries licence under this new proposal. If you have further enquiries about licensing of commercial tour operators, contact Elena Anière or Matt Sapsworth at CALM's Park Policy & Tourism Branch on (08) 9334 0207. For further information on the licensing of aquatic charter operators by Fisheries WA, contact Randall Owens on (08) 9482 7386.