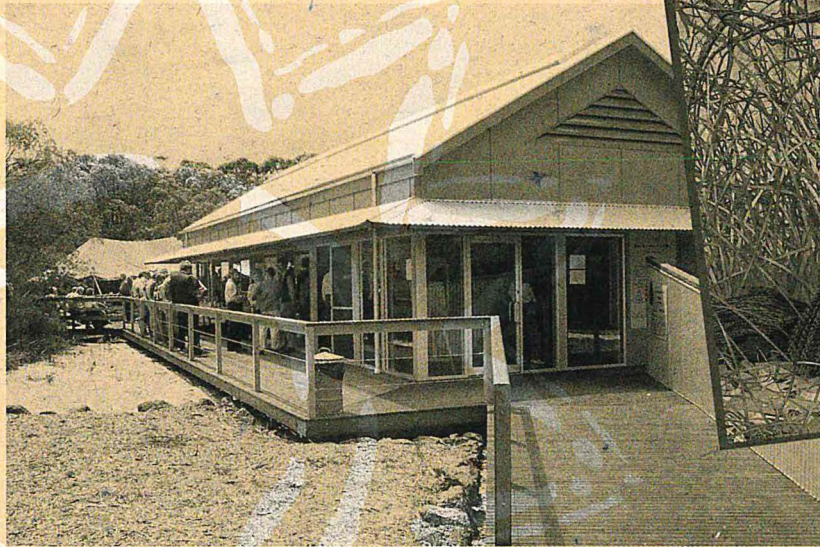


Attractions and facilities



Prints of this painting by Carol Ann O'Connor are available at the Visitor Centre.

The first visitors enjoying the new centre. Photo: Gil Field

TWO PEOPLES BAY VISITOR CENTRE OPENS

A new visitor information centre was opened by Hon. Cheryl Edwardes, Minister for the Environment, on the 3 March at Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve. The Minister reflected on the area's colourful history and high conservation values, which lead to the development of the centre.

The reserve, 35km east of Albany, has been a popular picnic and camping spot for many years because of its stunning coastal scenery. It was not until 1961 that the area's high conservation values were fully realised, when Albany school teacher Harley Webster rediscovered the noisy scrub-bird, which had not been recorded for 72 years and was thought to be extinct.

The total number of noisy scrub-birds in the Reserve has grown from less than 100 to more than 1,500 in the last thirty years due to intensive research and management programs.

More surprises were to come when a student from the University of Western Australia discovered a Gilbert's potoroo while attempting to trap quokkas. The Gilbert's potoroo is a secretive mammal that had not been seen for 120 years and naturally thought to be extinct.

Two Peoples Bay receives approximately 40,000 visitors each year to picnic, fish or simply enjoy the coastal scenery, unaware that the area is one of the most significant conservation reserves in Australia.

This was the catalyst for CALM's South Coast Region to apply for a Commonwealth Department of Tourism Grant under the National Tourism Program to develop a visitor centre.

Displays in the centre highlight the threatened species and their management, and inform visitors of the potentially harmful impacts of particular recreational pursuits. The centre also features an auditorium, which is used to show videos on CALM's conservation and translocation programs in the area and for presentations to groups and tours.

The centre has disabled access and parking areas for four coaches. Paths to the centre also link up with the picnic area and the Baie des Deux Peuples Heritage Trail (or Bay of Two Nations Trail).

The Visitor Centre is open each Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday between 10am and 4pm. Tours can be arranged by contacting the Ranger on (08) 9846 4276.

Attractions and facilities

MOUNT HART HOMESTEAD

An additional homestead has been erected at Mount Hart, increasing the accommodation capacity within this 'Oasis of the Leopolds'.

The decision to provide more accommodation for visitors to Mount Hart comes after three heavily booked seasons at the station. The Homestead is a major stop-off point along the Ibis Aerial Highway and also increasing in popularity for FIT's and tour operators packaging fully accommodated trips along the Gibb River Road.

The new building reflects the design characteristics of the original homestead, so as to maintain a real 'sense of place'. It offers five bedrooms for up to 23 overnight guests.

Further expansions are planned with the construction of a bar and grill outside the dining area. This unique opportunity is a result of refurbishments at the Mangrove Hotel in Broome, who have kindly donated their Settler's Bar & Grill building to CALM's West Kimberley District.

Homestead bookings can be made by telephone/fax on (08) 9191 4645 or by email to mthart@comswest.net.au.

Homestead accommodation is \$105 per person, which includes dinner, bed and breakfast. Mount Hart can be found on the Internet at <http://holiday-wa.net/mthart.htm>.

CALM SHOWCASES ITS TOURISM PRODUCT

More than 50 representatives from the tourism industry were invited to the inaugural CALM Tourism Exchange (CALMTEX), held at Matilda Bay Restaurant on 23 March 1999. Eleven CALM tourism sites were presented to a range of industry guests including international and local tour operators, WATC and tourist information centre staff, the RAC and the Office of the Minister for Tourism.

Feedback from the tourism industry was excellent. WATC's Marketing Support Manager for Japan and the Pacific, Jenny Lindsay, said that the Exchange was brilliantly presented. 'I not only learnt a great deal, but found it encouraging to see how enthusiastic CALM officers were about their product. I'm sure I'll now be able to promote the product to greater effect, and it will help us organise a wide variety of impressive itineraries to capture the interest of visiting media and tour operators'.

CALM's Tourism Development Manager and CALMTEX coordinator Rod Quartermain said, 'With the resounding success of CALMTEX and

our display at the Perth Caravan, Camping & Park Home Show, CALM is firmly establishing a high profile in the market place'.

GO BUSH!

The Autumn activity program *Go Bush!* is now in full swing at The Hills Forest Activity Centre.

Nightshift is an exciting evening of spotlighting, with plenty of opportunities to see kangaroos, bronze-wing pigeons, wattle birds and honeyeaters, and also the occasional bat, possum and bandicoot. Group numbers are limited to ensure the maximum opportunity to spot the nightlife.

Another night time activity with a difference which can be booked for any tour group is the daring *Full Moon Abseil*—a unique opportunity to try the exhilarating sport of abseiling with qualified instructors under the light of the silvery moon.

These and many more interesting bush activities are provided in the *Go Bush!* brochure, out for Autumn and available from your local library, CALM office or tourist outlet. 'Phone the Forest' for further information or booking enquiries on (08) 9295 2244.

Around the regions

KIMBERLEY

Geikie Gorge Cruise

The 1999 season for the Geikie Gorge Cruises began on the 14 April. During the 'off season', improvements were made to the cruise vessel *Miss Geikie II*, in conjunction with the Department of Transport and a marine architect, in order to enhance the vessel's stability and minimise bow spray.

Cruise duration in the Gorge has been reduced to one hour this season, so an additional cruise can be offered to visitors at 9.30am each day, while retaining last year's cruise charge of \$17.50 per adult and \$2 for children through to March 2001.

The cruise times for the 1999 season are 8am, 9.30am, 11am and 3pm. These times have been chosen for greater tour flexibility and also to address visitor feedback regarding the length of the cruise, particularly concerning the hotter times of the day.

CALM is keen to seek industry views on the design of the new vessel and feedback on the new cruise departure times. Contact Allen Grosse at the CALM Broome office on (08) 9192 1036.

PILBARA

Plans under way for Karijini Visitor Centre

Woodhead International has been contracted as Project Manager for the development of the Karijini Visitor Centre, with Lancashire Blenheim Design Group undertaking the design and fabrication of displays. The design group is well renowned for its involvement in the Warradjan Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Bowali Visitor Centre in Kakadu National Park.

The concept to be used for the Karijini Visitor Centre is a goanna, and the displays will interpret Aboriginal culture and knowledge, provide information on plant and animal communities and how to care for the Park.

The Centre is to be constructed with weathering steel, and floors to be of polished concrete. The Centre includes more than 400 square metres of interpretive display area, a theatrette, shop and external display area, with a shaded rest area and car park adjacent to the complex.

Construction is due to begin later this year, with completion expected around March 2000.

WHEATBELT

Dryandra Woodland

The Lions Dryandra Woodland Village was recently allocated \$82,500 from the Lotteries Commission to continue improvements to the eight self-contained cottages at Dryandra Woodland. The condition of the cottages was restricting overnight tour opportunities for some operators at Dryandra. The upgrade of the cottages provides comfortable accommodation at a very reasonable charge. More details of the refurbishment can be obtained from the Lions Dryandra Village Chairman Bev Howard on (08) 9337 2120 (after hours), or Stephen White at CALM Narrogin on (08) 9881 1113. For accommodation bookings or enquiries, contact the booking office on (08) 9884 5231.

SOUTH-WEST

Giants & Calgardup Caves

Giants and Calgardup Caves in Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park were re-opened to visitors at the end of last year. Both caves offer visitors a self-guided, unlit cave experience. Guides discuss visitor safety, cave conservation and any other visitor concerns prior to the experience.

Both caves are open daily from 9am-4pm costing \$8 per adult, \$4 for children and \$20 for a family pass. The entry cost includes the hire of a helmet and light. Contact the Calgardup guide hut on (08) 9757 7422 for any enquiries regarding these cave experiences.

Canal Rocks

A new walkway and bridge at Canal Rocks was officially opened by Environment Minister, Hon. Cheryl Edwardes MLA in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park in January. The new \$100,000 facilities replaced the original footbridge built in 1919, which had been closed since 1997 due to safety reasons.

A public petition to have the footbridge rebuilt was started with local companies offering assistance. The Minister said the bridge is a tribute to CALM staff and local businesses, who worked together on the project.

SOUTH-COAST

The Valley of the Giants, on the scenic south coast, is proving that it has much more to offer than simply the world famous Tree Top Walk.

The Valley of the Giants ran its first Easter Activities program during the April school holidays, with an action-packed nature-based program. Visitors were treated to an array of activities including mountain bike adventures, BBQ cruises, canoeing and **Breakfast with the Birds**. The most popular of the activities was the **Tree Top Walk's Forest By Night**, where people flocked to walk over the magnificent structure enhanced by the moonlight.

The Family Blues Concert was a first of its kind to be hosted by the Valley. Guests were entertained by local bands The Recliners and Billy & Frank, in the Old Site of Valley of the Giants, which provided a spectacular natural amphitheatre with sensational acoustics.

Free activities during both the Easter and Summer holiday periods have been extremely popular. **Music in the Forest**, held in the Ancient Empire, had visitors delighted to chance upon local musicians playing a range of instruments. Free face painting has also been a big hit with a jungle of animals on faces all around the Valley!

The Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk Activities programs successfully involve many commercial operators in the district under one marketing banner promoting the entire Tingle Region. As professional operators, they are increasing the profile of the area as a top tourist destination.

The Valley of the Giants is keen to continue as a provider of exciting and different tours for a wide range of people. Please contact the Activities Coordinator on (08) 9840 8263 to discuss your specific tour needs or activity ideas for the next holiday program.

In Short

DESIGNING TOUR ACTIVITIES

CALM conducted a *Designing Tour Activities* workshop from 23–26 March in conjunction with the Gascoyne Development Commission and Gascoyne Business Enterprise Centre in Carnarvon. The workshop was part of a Building Better Business program for small business operators in the Gascoyne.

Participants at Carnarvon braved the cyclone (which postponed the workshop by one day) and the flooding Gascoyne River to attend. They designed an interesting and diverse range of interpretive activities for the Carnarvon Heritage Precinct, town environs and beyond, involving natural, cultural and built environment components. Brochures for individual activities and composite programs were produced, along with completed Interpretive Activity Plans and draft scripts. Hopefully, more tour operators and guides will get a chance to participate in some of these activities in due course.

The four-day workshop is conducted by CALM generally once or twice each year for nature-based tour operators, guides, students and others, to help them interpret our natural and cultural heritage. CALM's Senior Interpretation Officer, Gil Field, has written, conducted and refined the training program over a number of years. The course involves lecture material, workshop experience and tour activities, providing participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to design and present interpretive activities that enrich visitor experience.

The workshop meets National Tourism Industry competency standards and is recognised by the Australian Travel and Tourism Review Panel (ATTRP). Participants who successfully complete the course receive a certificate of endorsement from the ATTRP.

The next workshop is to be conducted with the University of Notre Dame from 19–22 July. Contact the UND on (08) 9239 5630 if you are interested in attending.

FACET GOLDEN GUIDE AWARD

FACET, (Forum Advocating Cultural and Ecotourism) has successfully negotiated the inclusion of a new award into the State Tourism Awards.

In 1998, FACET set about establishing an award for individual tour guides to help improve the recognition of tour guides and the important role they play in delivering quality experiences for tourists.

President of FACET, Mrs Pat Barblett, said an important aim of the organisation was to encourage the tourism industry to provide tourists will authentic cultural and ecotourism experiences.

The new award has been accepted by Tourism Council Australia as part of the State Tourism Awards. The Award will help improve guiding and establish benchmarks for achieving excellence in tour guiding.

The first FACET Golden Guide will be announced in May at the State Tourism Awards.

Inside CALM

Rod Quartermain has been appointed Tourism Development Manager in the Park Policy & Tourism Branch. While he will maintain his role in marketing, he will also be responsible for overseeing and identifying tourism opportunities in CALM.

Rod Hillman has joined the team at Yanchep National Park as Business Manager, after a successful term managing the Valley of the Giants. Rod's position recognises the increasingly important role of Yanchep National Park as a quality tourism destination.

Gae MacKay has joined CALM's Swan Region as Recreation & Tourism Program leader. Gae was formally a Victorian National Park Ranger before managing a Sport & Recreation camp in Western Australia.

Two Nyoongar Yorgers (women), **Delvene Cornwall** and **Kerry-ann Winmar** have joined the Aboriginal Tourism, Education and Training Unit as Heritage Officers. They will be helping the team to conduct Aboriginal heritage programs to schools and community groups, focusing mainly on cultural issues relating to 'women's business'.

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).