



Volume 4 Issue 2

Winter 2001



Talking Tourism with the Department of Conservation and Land Management

Attractions and facilities

TOURISM INDUSTRY EXCHANGE A BIG SUCCESS

One of the Department of Conservation and Land Management's biggest events for the year, the Tourism Industry Exchange held at Burswood in May, was hailed a success by the tourism industry.

More than 120 delegates including indigenous, safari, wildlife, marine and river tour operators, Department of Conservation staff, the Western Australian Tourism Commission, travel agents and airline agencies took part in the Department's third one-day Exchange.

Western Australia's Environment and Heritage Minister, Dr Judy Edwards, opened the Exchange. She indicated the State Government's support of indigenous people establishing nature-based tourism ventures.

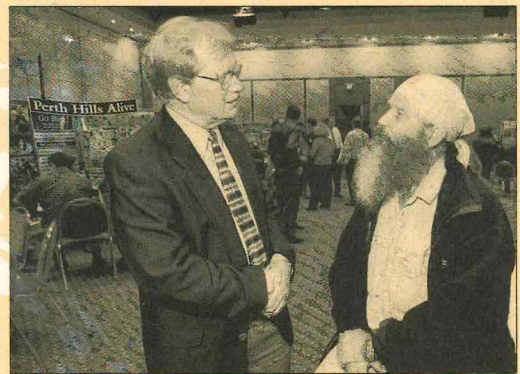
Jim Lewis, chairperson of the newly-established Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators' Committee, said Aboriginal people were taking up the challenges offered in nature-based tourism.

Jim, from the Kidja tribe from Turkey Creek, and his wife Shirley, from the Arrawadi tribe that traditionally owns the Wyndham-El Questro area, have established an Aboriginal Dreamtime tour in the Kimberley.

Dr Edwards said Aboriginal tourism was an important economic advantage for Western Australia because the range and diversity of the natural environment was complemented by more than 40,000 years of indigenous culture.

"Western Australia has the world's oldest culture and land forms. It's appropriate that Aboriginal people are encouraged to be involved in cultural tourism ventures linked to nature," she said.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management has issued 320 licences for tourism activities on conservation lands, 10 of them to operators who conduct cultural activities.



The Department of Conservation and Land Management's Director of Parks and Visitors Services, Jim Sharp (left) talks to licensed Global Gypsies safari tour operator Jeremy Perkins at the Tourism Industry Expo.

"Tourism on land and waters set aside for conservation needs to happen in a way that enables people to interact with nature without harming the attraction they have come to see," Dr Edwards said.

"The growing trend for people to get away from it all means that what, in the past, may have been quiet spots are often no longer so tranquil. Common sense dictates that increased human demand at many locations means services have to change."

The Valley of the Giants' Tree Top Walk and the \$1 million tourist drive around Pemberton to be finished in spring were great examples of effective interaction with nature that catered for big numbers of people, she said.

Dr Edwards launched a compact disk created by the Department, the WATC and the Regional Tourism Association about nature-based tourism. The disk is for the tourism industry and contains a directory of web sites and other information.

For more information contact Kieron Wogan from the Department's Parks Policy and Tourism area on (08) 9334 0371 or kieronw@calm.wa.gov.au

Around the Regions

MID WEST REGION

In March, 10 individuals from Conservation Volunteers Australia worked to define campsites and improve vehicle access at **Kennedy Range National Park**. Spanning five days, their efforts will contain visitor impacts and protect the landscape surrounding the campground.

Volunteer workers removed unsightly camp fire sites, and pruned shrubs and small trees that were previously damaged by firewood collectors. The Department reminds tour operators that camp fires are not permitted in the park.

The projects to restore and protect this remote recreation site were made possible with funding assistance from the Western Australian Tourism Commission.

In **Kalbarri National Park**, Rangers are hosting a six-month Greencorp project to rehabilitate coastal degradation and improve visitor access. Examples of the team's work include rock steps to the beach at Pot Alley, and the walk trail between Mushroom Rock and Rainbow Valley.

For further information, contact Sue Hancock on (08) 9921 5955 or email susanh@calm.wa.gov.au

SOUTH WEST

The **Calgardup** and **Giants Caves** are continually attracting large numbers of visitors interested in seeing the less commercial side of caving. For \$10 per adult and \$5 per child, visitors are equipped with helmets, torches and a few friendly words of advice before beginning their adventurous journey beneath the **Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park**.

The Department's staff continue to improve the facilities and services at both sites, with recent upgrades of boardwalks, steps, rails and ladders for public safety and cave protection. Other scientific operations include measuring humidity, oxygen and water levels.

Calgardup Cave is open throughout the year, but **Giants Cave** opens daily during the school and public holidays. Visitors can book for groups of more than four people by contacting the office at Calgardup.

For further information, please contact the Calgardup Cave Office on (08) 9757 7422 or email calgardup@calm.wa.gov.au



Calgardup Cave

SWAN REGION

The Department wishes to advise readers that Tony Jupp has been employed as Program Leader, Parks and Visitor Services, Perth District.

The new Chawn Mia—meaning good food—Lakeview Tearooms and Kiosk are finished at **Yanchep National Park**. Western Australia's Environment and Heritage Minister, Dr Judy Edwards, officially opened the tearooms on June 14.

A mural painted by Aboriginal artist of the year, Nellie Green has completed the Wangi Mia Shelter. This complements the recent upgrades to the Balga Mia Aboriginal Experience.

Staff have completed major upgrades to the visitor centre, including the removal of the old kiosk, and the inclusion of a large range of souvenirs and books. Visitors and staff have mentioned that these improvements have made a fantastic difference.

For further information, contact Phil Smeeton on (08) 9561 1004 or email philsm@calm.wa.gov.au

SOUTHERN FOREST



KARRI FOREST EXPLORER TOURIST DRIVE UPDATE

The \$1 million **Karri Forest Explorer Tourist Drive** (funded under the Regional Forest Agreement) will be completed in September and winds through some of the south-west's most magnificent karri forest.

Tourists will be able to take in the sights and enjoy local arts, crafts and wineries as they drive the 86 kilometres between the **Beedelup, Warren** and **Gloucester** national parks.

From Pemberton tourists can take a day trip, stopping for a picnic at **Big Brook Dam**, climbing 58 metres to the **Gloucester Tree** lookout, seeing **Beedelup Falls** from the suspension bridge, going bushwalking or fishing, or just take in nature.

Visitors can go wine tasting, visit a cafe, enjoy a gourmet meal, or visit a gallery or craft centre.

Bibbulmun Walking Breaks are all-inclusive self guided walking and accommodation packages and are available by phoning 9321 0649 or emailing friends@bibbulmuntrack.org.au

The **Big Brook Dam's Rainbow** and **Tramway Trails** to Channybearup Road have been widened for two-way traffic.

The Department has created two new recreation sites adjacent to the **Tramway Trail**. Interpretive information along the boardwalk and throughout one site will enhance visitor perceptions of the Warren River cedar. This site will become a must see on your next visit to Pemberton.

New picnic shelters and car parks are available at Big Brook Dam.

Improvements to the **Heartbreak Trail** continue in **Warren National Park**. Once complete, the Trail will have carparks and visitor facilities.

The Department has built a new information bay at the beginning of the Heartbreak Trail. Staff expect day use and camping capacity to increase. Plans include the creation of new boardwalks, jetties, camp kitchens and walk trails.

Departmental staff have built two new gas barbecues at the popular Gloucester Tree recreation site in **Gloucester National Park**.

Development is progressing at the spectacular **Point D'Entrecasteaux**. The latest addition is a new composting toilet. The site provides some of the most spectacular views of the area. The toilet is located at **Tookalup**, which is about 1km from the point.

The new **coastal drive** is open for the public to enjoy. Staff are erecting interpretation signage.

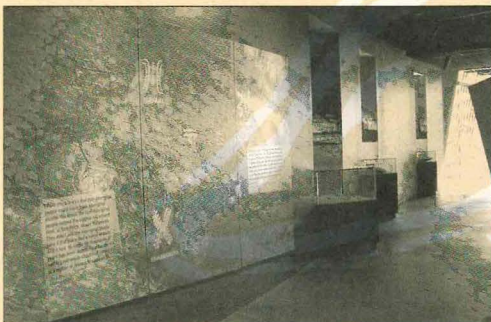
Staff redeveloped **Mount Chudalup** to cater for extra visitors. The construction of the new carpark will cater for buses and provide more parking. Staff have constructed a new walk trail linking the summit. Plans include more facilities such as toilets and information shelters. Make sure you visit this site on your next visit to Pemberton and Northcliffe.

For further information, contact David Meehan on 9776 1207 or email davidme@calm.wa.gov.au

PILBARA

The new **Karijini Visitor Centre** is open to the public. The displays are complete so staff are encouraging visitors to come and enjoy this magnificent \$4 million centre.

For further information, please contact Judymae Napier on (08) 9143 1488 or email judymaen@calm.wa.gov.au



Karijini Visitor Centre's language map display

The Department has contracted Exmouth Shire to seal the roads into **Turquoise Bay** and **Mangrove Bay**. The increasing number of tourists visiting these sites meant maintenance costs were high. The sealing will result in reduced costs and comfortable travel for visitors.

Cape Range National Park Rangers and **Ningaloo Marine Park** staff have been preparing for the tourist season. Their extensive efforts include upgrading the beach access and walk trails, improving signs and replacing ageing facilities such as toilets in many campsites.

The Department and members of the Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) have almost completed the first stage of constructing the **Turquoise Bay Shade/interpretations platform**. This large platform will provide access for all visitors to a large shaded structure overlooking the magnificent **Turquoise Bay**. It will have detailed information about **Cape Range National Park** and **Ningaloo Marine Park**, coral protection and visitor safety in the **Turquoise Bay** area.

The world's biggest species of fish, the **whaleshark** will begin to gather in the protected waters of **Ningaloo Marine Park** following the coral spawning on **Ningaloo Reef**. Local tour operators provide visitors to Exmouth with what they consider the opportunity of a lifetime, snorkelling with these magnificent creatures, which can grow up to 18 metres.

It is expected that there will be up to 13 **Department-licensed tour operators** offering whaleshark tours during the season. Tours to swim with these gentle giants will depart daily from Exmouth and Coral Bay.

For further information, please contact the Department's Exmouth Office on (08) 9949 1676.

CENTRAL FORESTS

The creation of a National Park around **Wellington Dam** has called for the development of a management plan for the new **Wellington National Park** and surrounding reserves. The drafting of this plan is underway with public workshops planned for mid May 2001. The draft plan should be available for public comment by February 2002.

For further information, contact Allison Driscoll on (08) 9734 1988 or email allisond@calm.wa.gov.au

Secure abseiling points have been added to the beginners' slope at the **Wellington Dam quarry**, providing a abseiling for the beginner and the experienced. The **Mornington District** plans to upgrade the facilities at **Honeymoon Pool**.

For further information, please contact Leon Price on (08) 9734 1988 or email leonp@calm.wa.gov.au

The Department would like to advise visitors of the new interpretive trailhead and information shelter located next to the **Collie Tourist Bureau** on the **Bibbulmun Track**. The shelter provides information and a rest point. There are designated areas for people to leave messages at trailheads along the **Bibbulmun Track**.

For further information, contact Peter Morris on (08) 9734 1988 or e-mail petermo@calm.wa.gov.au

Why the Department of Conservation and Land Management licenses tour operators

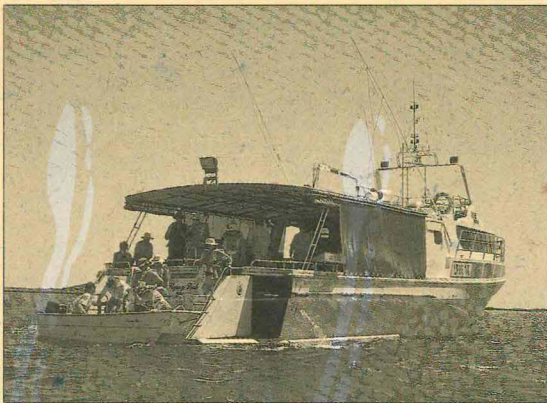
One of the most frequently asked questions is "Why do commercial operators need to be licensed on Department of Conservation and Land Management-managed lands and waters?"

To protect our natural resources and achieve ecological sustainability, the Department issues licences in accordance with its Act. Commercial activity licensing helps the Department to monitor and manage the use of protected areas so people can return to the same location and find it in its natural unspoiled condition.

The licensing partnership between the Department and tour operators will minimise the impacts on protected areas.

Licensing offers a range of benefits to tour operators including:

- an annual subscription to the Department's award-winning *LANDSCOPE* magazine,
- a listing on the Department's Naturebase web site that attracts 50,000 hits a day,
- the quarterly *Touring Western Australia* newsletter which updates information from around the regions and communicates the latest Departmental news, and
- regular email updates on licensing and park issues.



*Flying Fish Charters is one of the companies licensed to operate in marine conservation areas.
Photo - Daphne Edinger*

Licensing applies to anybody selling goods or a service on land or water managed by the Department. The definition of 'Sell' includes bartering, exchanging, supplying or performing for profit, or letting on hire. The definition of 'Service' includes supplying transport, information, instruction or supervision.

For details about licensing commercial operations, contact Sean Bryce on (08) 9334 0119 or Rod Quartermain on (08) 9334 0562.

NEWS FLASH

All operators are well aware of the price of obtaining public and product liability insurance and the increasingly litigious nature of the tourism industry. Liability can be spread throughout the distribution chain from the retail outlet, wholesaler to the operator from personal injuries through to misrepresentation of product. Recently a State Motor Accidents Insurance Board rejected claims on the basis that the claimants did not hold valid permits to operate in the area managed by that State's conservation agency.

This could not only be a costly exercise in relation to any damages that may arise from the incident, but also places at risk future business if suppliers find out that the operator is acting illegally and therefore placing their clients at risk of being uninsured. The consequences of this to an operator's business could be catastrophic.

LONGER TERM LICENSING

The Department would like to advise readers that staff are developing and evaluating methods for issuing long term commercial activity licences. These will link to operators attaining the Ecotourism Association of Australia Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program, and the Tourism Council Western Australia National Tourism Accreditation Program. Details will follow shortly.

YOU WERE WONDERING?

Touring Western Australia is a newsletter produced by the Department of Conservation and Land Management to keep the tourism industry informed about developments that affect the industry. If you have a query regarding any of the Department's tourism policies, activities or developments, we would be pleased to answer these in future editions of the newsletter. Enquiries can be sent to *Touring Western Australia*. Fax: (08) 9334 0253 or email (kieronw@calm.wa.gov.au).