

Western Australia

Talking Tourism with the Department of Conservation and Land Management

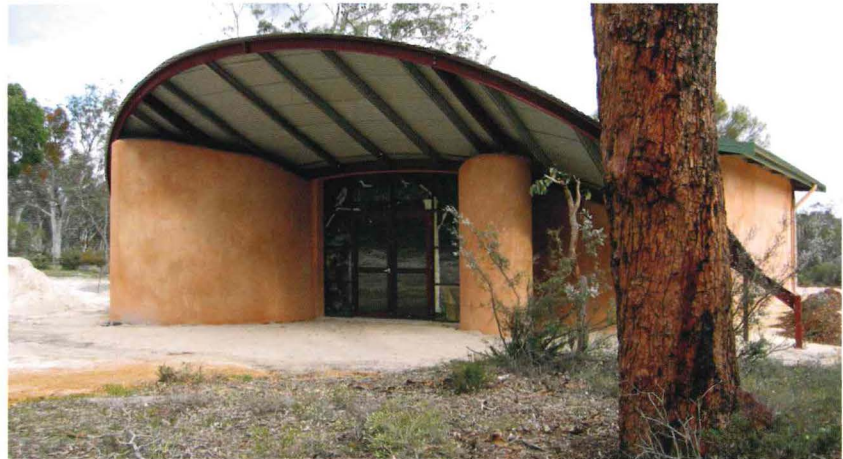
Attractions and facilities

Barna Mia animal viewing enclosure opens at Dryandra Woodland

A new \$350,000 animal viewing facility was officially opened by Environment and Heritage Minister Dr Judy Edwards at Dryandra Woodland in December.

The facility, Barna Mia, is located two hours from Perth and is home to some of Western Australia's most threatened and locally extinct animals such as the dalgylte (bilby), boodie (burrowing bettong), marl (western barred bandicoot), mer-nine (banded hare-wallaby) and wurrup (rufous hare-wallaby).

The centre provides an 'up close' night time glimpse of rare Western Australian marsupials in their natural habitat as well as the opportunity to learn about *Western Shield*,



The straw bale interpretive centre, Barna Mia was constructed by a local builder and craftspeople.

the largest and most ambitious wildlife conservation program undertaken anywhere in the world.

The facility provides a unique nature based tourism experience in the Heartlands Region and with increasing visitors to the Wheatbelt, gives

them another reason to stay longer.

The sanctuary comprises a unique straw-bale interpretive building designed to represent a marsupial burrow and a four hectare enclosure set in a pretty woodland of ancient grass-trees, wandoo and marri. Visitors to the centre participate in a media presentation followed by a guided walk under the stars spotlighting for these small marsupials and observing them as they feed.

Barna Mia is open on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday evenings. Tour sizes are limited and bookings are required. Guided tours, cost \$12 for adults, \$6 for children and \$32 for families, and include the 30 minute presentation at the interpretive centre, presented by trained Departmental staff.

For further information about Barna Mia or Dryandra Woodland please contact Kate MacGregor on (08) 9881 9207 or katemac@calm.wa.gov.au.



Barna Mia was officially opened by Dr Judy Edwards (centre) who was joined by (left to right) Reserves Officer, Kate MacGregor; Katanning District Manager, Bruce Bone; Regional Leader Parks and Visitor Services, Paul McCluskey; Chairman of the Dryandra Woodland Focus Group, Mike Brown and Acting Executive Director, Keiran McNamara.

Around the regions

Pilbara region

Karijini and Millstream-Chichester National Parks

Karijini and Millstream-Chichester National Parks hosted a visitor activities program during the July 2002 school holidays.

The program was developed to enhance the enjoyment of park visitors to this special part of the Pilbara, and help them understand the park's natural and cultural features.

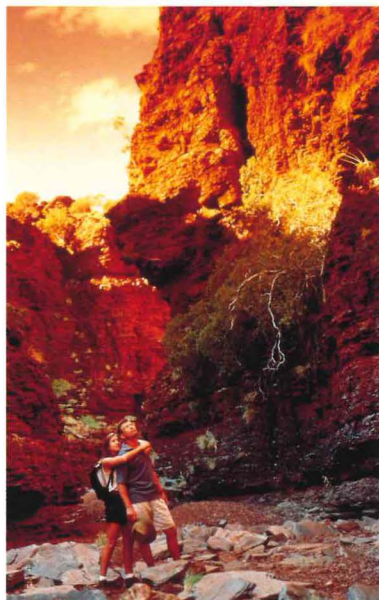
Activities were promoted through Pilbara Visitor Centres in Karratha, Exmouth, Tom Price, Port Hedland and Newman, as well as the National Park Visitor Centres.

The theme for 2002 was 'Caring for Country'. Activities included nature walks and talks, looking at geology, hydrology, flora, fauna and history. Participants also took part in Aboriginal cultural activities, visitor centre tours, gorge adventure tours, children's activities and star gazing.

The Department's Pilbara Regional Office is planning the 2003 activities program. If you would like more details, or would like to take part in or contribute to the program, contact Judymae Napier at the Department's Karratha Office on (08) 9143 1488 or email judymaen@calm.wa.gov.au.

New visitor facilities at Karijini and Cape Range National Parks

New visitor facilities have been established at Karijini and Cape Range National Parks to enhance visitor experience at the parks' most popular sites. There are now new facilities and additional parking at the Turquoise Bay day use area in Cape Range, self composting toilets at Kalamina (also to be installed at Dales Gorge early this year) and new coach and car parking facilities, picnic facilities and on-site information at Dales Gorge and Kalamina recreation sites in Karijini.



Savannah Campgrounds

The first stage of the new Savannah Campground development in Karijini National Park will be open for the 2003 tourism season.

A total of 70 new campsites plus a designated camping area for commercial tour operators is now complete. Companies operating in Karijini are invited to visit the site and discuss its current and future use.

A full-time manager is based in the campground, with a new manager's residence and public shower facilities to be constructed in 2003.

The Savannah project was undertaken in partnership with local Aboriginal leaseholders, Gumala Enterprises, which will manage and develop the campground in accordance with the national park's environmental and cultural guidelines. Gumala Enterprises intends to offer an indigenous experience as part of the campground's attractions.

A date is still to be announced for the campsite's official opening. Please note that Weano and Joffre Campgrounds have now closed, with park rangers enforcing the no camping at Weano Day Use Area.

For further information please contact Jamie McQualter at Gumala

Enterprises on (08) 9188 1600 or David Whitelaw at the Department's Karratha Office on (08) 9143 1488 or email davidw@calm.wa.gov.au.

Mid west region

François Peron redevelopments

Further redevelopments have been completed at Cape Peron in the François Peron National Park including the installation of picnic tables at Cape Peron and extensive rehabilitation of the area.

The northern 4WD access road towards Cape Peron has been realigned and the walk track between Skipjack Point and Cape Peron has been completed, with interpretive facilities now being built. The boardwalk between the Skipjack Lookout and the carpark is also complete.

For more information contact Carl Beck at the Department's Denham Office on (08) 9948 1208 or email carlb@calm.wa.gov.au.

Goldfields region

Karlkurla Bushland Park

A three year community-driven conservation program conducted by the Kalgoorlie Boulder Urban Landcare Group (KBULG) to develop Karlkurla Bushland Park has been completed.

The 200 hectare site of natural regrowth bushland on Kalgoorlie's northern border is already proving to be an invaluable interpretive tool as well as a popular tourist attraction.

The park, set to become an A class reserve, is the culmination of support from community groups including volunteers and Work for the Dole participants, with management by KBULG. Funding was provided by the City of Kalgoorlie Boulder, Centenary of Federation WA, the Department and other sponsors.

Around the regions



Karlkurla Bushland Park gives visitors a self guided environmental education and recreational experience along a four-kilometre gravel base walk trail featuring signs for 50 plants. The walk also boasts a hexagonal lookout with excellent views of bushland, the city and nearby mining areas. Picnic facilities have been constructed for those wishing to spend more time in the park.

Small groups are encouraged to experience Karlkurla's educational and recreational bushland opportunities. For further information please contact Kylie Payne at KBULG on (08) 9091 6233 or email kbulg@emerge.net.au.

South coast region

Major redevelopment in the Stirling Range National Park

The car park and trailhead for the Bluff Knoll access path is about to undergo a major redevelopment. *This will require the road into the bluff to be closed for six weeks from February 3.*

Former South Coast Regional Leader of Parks and Visitor Services, Peter Bidwell, said the \$600,000 project will create a larger carpark surrounded by raised steel walkways to three new viewing platforms, a picnic shelter and an interpretive shelter.

The Department initiated the work – outlined in the 1999 Management Plan – to cater for increased numbers of walkers and day visitors, and for the two thirds of visitors who reach the carpark but do not climb to the top of the bluff. The carpark provides people with panoramic views of other peaks in the Stirling Range plus extensive views of farmland.

As well as the establishment of an interpretive shelter, the carpark will be expanded to cater for 50 cars and three long coach bays. A new composting toilet block will replace the old flush toilets.

Mr Bidwell said the project would hopefully be a forerunner to the possible establishment of a visitor centre for the park on Bluff Knoll

road. Updates on the project will be available on NatureBase in the 'What's On' section.

For more information contact Martin Lloyd at the Albany Regional Office on (08) 9842 4500 or email martinl@calm.wa.gov.au.

Swan region

Walyunga, Avon Valley, John Forrest National Parks

The campgrounds in the Walyunga, Avon Valley and John Forrest National Parks will be closed until 30 April 2003 because of a high fire danger and other environmental factors such as ticks and dust.

Contact the Hills Forest Discovery Centre on (08) 9295 2244 for more information.

Munda biddi trail



The Munda Middi trail.

December 2002 saw the use of the first section of Stage One of the State's first long distance off road bike track, the Munda Biddi Trail.

The newly opened section extends 182 kilometres from Mundaring to Dwellingup, winding through national parks and State forest via a network of bush tracks and old railway lines.

The trail is the culmination of industry, community and State government support, being developed and coordinated by the Department and designed to cater for a wide range of ages and abilities in cycle rides ranging from half day rides to journeys over several days.

Shelters are situated a day's ride apart (35 to 40 kilometres) and comprise a shelter that sleeps 20 to 25 people, self-composting toilet, water tank, bike storage shelters and picnic tables.

For further information visit www.naturebase.net, contact the Department's Tracks and Trails Unit on (08) 9334 0265 or email mundabiddi@calm.wa.gov.au.

Maps of the trail are available from a number of departmental offices, the Munda Biddi Trail Foundation (at www.mundabiddi.org.au) and selected retail outlets.

Info updates for tour operators

T Class licensing process

After endorsement from the Conservation Commission of WA and the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority and approval from the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, the Department can now process many T Class licence applications much more quickly than before.

It is anticipated that if the application is for activities and parks that

are consistent with the commercial Tour Operator Handbooks, and all supporting documentation is supplied, an unrestricted commercial tour operator licence can be processed within seven working days.

If an application, renewal or endorsement is not consistent with the Handbook, it will take the normal six to 10 weeks to be processed.

Tour operators will benefit from this opportunity, as the turnaround time

for most T Class licences will be greatly reduced, minimising the risk of operating without a licence. The Department also benefits with improved licence management from both an administrative and field perspective.

For further information contact Kerry Troeger on (08) 9334 0119 or email kerryt@calm.wa.gov.au.

Your questions answered

Why is the T class licence charge the same regardless of business size?

All T class licences are charged a set licence fee of \$300. Restricted E class licences are charged a fee on a case by case basis to reflect the cost of monitoring and managing the activity, which may be a set fee, per head cost or a percentage of turnover. Both T and E class licences are charged a \$50 application fee.

The T class licence charge contributes to the cost of administering licences only and does not contribute to monitoring and park management costs. As the cost of administering a T class licence is the same no matter how big the licence holders' business or passenger capacity is, the cost is the same across the board.

Instead, contributions towards meeting monitoring and park management costs are derived from fees for entry or camping where they are applicable. Therefore, operators who carry more passengers or visit parks more frequently, collect more fees from those passengers, which in turn, assists in park management, including the improvement of visitor services and facilities.

For further information about licence fees and charges please contact Rod Quartermain on (08) 9334 0562 or email rodq@calm.wa.gov.au.



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 (rodq@calm.wa.gov.au).