

Interpretation matters

Issue 4 | SUMMER 2013

... when sharing a sense of place



In this issue : your mission should you choose to accept it | 17 years and still going strong | it's all about the sauce | bazza's fish tales |

Welcome to the Summer 2013 edition of 'Interpretation matters', the Interpretation Unit's newsletter that aims to keep you up to date with what's what, who's who and helpful how to's in interpretive planning, production development and training.

This issue is full of articles submitted by contributors from all over Western Australia. We love being able to provide a platform that can showcase the amazing work being undertaken by our colleagues who share our passion for interpretation in all its forms. The main focus of this issue is community education, community involvement and guiding programs.

Our regular "Let Me Introduce" article features a Regional PVS Leader who's found his 'sense of place'. Pop on over to page 6 to find out who it is.

We would like to thank all our contributors for taking the time to share what is happening in and around their Region and District.

Unit News:

Last issue we announced that both Gwen and Alena were expecting new additions to their families towards the end of October, in fact they both had the same due date. Now in some sort of spooky coincidence while neither of them actually got to their due date, both ended up giving birth to daughters on the same day.

With Gwen and Alena away on parental leave, we welcome Arlene Moncrieff who will be working on interpretation projects for Contos (LNNP) and James Pemberton who will be working with the graphic team.

We hope you enjoy this edition and we welcome and encourage your feedback. Remember to keep your camera in hand and your writing hats on, so we can look forward to another bumper issue in 2014.

Cheers,

The Interpretation Team

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Please pass this newsletter on to your Ranger staff for reference.

Missed an issue?

Old issues of 'Interpretation matters' are available on the Interpretation Unit [website](#).

Cover page photo:

Broke Inlet,
Photo ©Tim Foley

Your mission should you choose to accept it ... getting a community involved

by Susan Pedersen

An exciting project is underway on Dirk Hartog Island National Park. The ecological restoration project is removing feral cats and goats then returning a number of small native mammal species to the island.

The success of this project relies on support from the local community and visitors to the island for quarantine measures so a community engagement strategy is being implemented.

As part of this we developed a display and children's activity and invited the community to an informal event at the office where they could meet the people involved in the project. About 130 people came, nearly half of them children – a great turnout for a town of about 600.

The children's activity was about the project - removing feral cats and goats and bringing a number of small native mammals back to the island.

Children were given a Pawsport with instructions and pages for each animal to be returned to the island. First the children had to find the cats and goats. This got harder when most had been found, just like in real life.

In return for each feral animal they found, the children selected an animal to return to Dirk Hartog Island. They then stamped the pages in their Pawsports for each type of animal before putting the animals on the island.

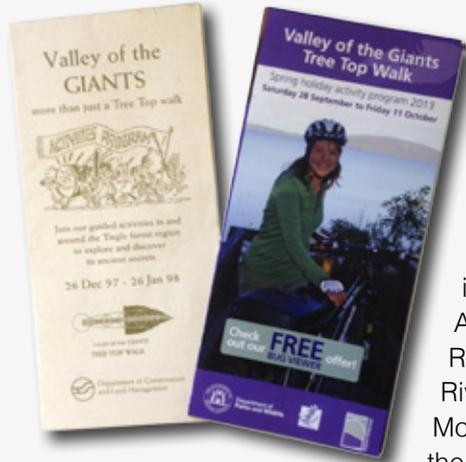
Many animals were returned to Dirk Hartog Island and we hope this is a reflection of what will happen in the future.



Photos: (top left to bottom) : Grab your Pawsport; Finding the ferals; Stamping the Pawsport pages (above) : Returning native animals to Dirk Hartog

Seventeen years and still going strong Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk holiday program

by Kym Phillips



In January 2014 the Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk will be hosting its seventeenth consecutive summer holiday activity program. The Tree Top Walk opened to the public in 1996 and it wasn't long before an activities program started in the summer of 1998.

The first program encouraged visitors to recreate in the pristine, yet wild, national parks of the area. Activities such as canoeing on the tranquil Walpole River, a meandering boat ride on the Denmark River and trekking with knowledgeable guides to Mount Pingerup were included. For many years the programs were organised by casual Activities

Coordinators and it wasn't until 2009 that a dedicated Visitor Interpretation Officer was appointed.

Over time there have been an ever increasing number of Tree Top Walk visitors who are taking part in the activities program. In 2013 more than 1500 people took part in program activities. Activities have gradually evolved to target a greater diversity of people and are now clearly structured with strong educational messages.

Frankland district staff work harmoniously, creating rich and diverse experiences for program participants. Many staff including rangers, nature conservation employees, fire officers and conservation employees share their knowledge and skills to assist with the development and delivery of activities. Along with Department of Parks and Wildlife operated activities, local organisations and businesses are offered the opportunity to include activities in the program and many activities are collaborative. This has allowed the community to develop a sense of ownership for the Tree Top Walk as a local tourism icon.

The next program will be held from the 27th of December through to the 18th of January. The Tree Top Walk will be open until 9pm on Fridays throughout the summer program for anyone who would like to see the Tree Top Walk from a different perspective. For more information contact the Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk Ph: 9840 8263 Email: ttw@dpaw.wa.gov.au



Kym is the Frankland's District Interpretation Officer and works Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Kym can be contacted on 9840 0453.

Tree Top Walk Guide Wins Gold

Helen Nash of Denmark and long serving Tree Top Walk Guide is the proud owner of the coveted FACET Golden Guide Award (2011). The award aims to acknowledge individual excellence in tour guiding and raise the profile of the profession.

Tree Top Walk Manager Julie Ross said that Helen had received due recognition for the amazing role she plays at the Tree Top Walk.

"Having worked as a visitor services assistant at the Tree Top Walk for more than sixteen years, Helen continues to be at the leading edge of guiding providing all visitors with a heightened experience of the tingle forest," Julie said. "She runs daily guided tours through the Ancient Empire, delivers tours to coach and school groups and continues to develop fun-based activities for children during the school holidays."

"I was thrilled to accept the award, not only for myself, but for all the other guides at the Tree Top Walk who also do a fantastic job creating lasting impressions of the natural environment," Helen said. "Raising the profile of the important role of the guiding profession was an added benefit in winning the award and I was proud to win the Golden Guide Award for the Tree Top Walk, the Department of Parks and Wildlife and the region."



Helen Nash, FACET Golden Guide

Helen works as a visitor services assistant at the Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk on a permanent part-time basis. She has been working in this capacity for sixteen years. She is recognized by her peers as a leader in the field of tour guiding and as a result she was nominated by her fellow guides for the prestigious FACET Golden Guide award.

As well as running daily guided tours through the Ancient Empire, she also delivers tours to coach and school groups and guides a range of activities during the school holiday periods. Her guiding experiences are not confined to the Tree Top Walk; she leads popular education programs such as "Kids on the Beach" during the summer and has visited the local primary school in a voluntary capacity.

Helen has a natural affinity with the environment in which she works and enjoys bringing the tingle forest to life for visitors. She is innovative and uses numerous techniques to engage her groups. She finds storytelling an important part of her delivery and believes that it is the stories that really connect people to their surroundings.

She conveys her knowledge of the natural environment and local culture in an easy to understand, friendly and approachable manner. As a testament to her skills, Helen provides all visitors with a lasting and memorable experience of their visit to the Tree Top Walk and the region.

Prior to her working at the Tree Top Walk, Helen was a primary teacher for 22 years, gaining her 'Master of Arts in Teaching - Primary Education' while living in America. At Teaching College in the UK she studied biology and has incorporated a love of the subject into her teaching programs and guided activities. In recent years, Helen attained a Certificate III in Tour Guiding at Albany TAFE.

Helen acts as a mentor for new guides, instilling confidence by sharing the skills and knowledge that she has developed over the years.



Let me introduce (in his own words) ...

Tim Foley,
Regional PVS Leader, Warren Region

There is no end to the stories that could be told about the forests of the lower south west of WA. We often take for granted the knowledge that we hold about a place and the plants and animals, people and events that have and continue to shape the locality. A phrase that I have always liked that is often now used to describe this uniqueness is "Sense of Place". For me, interpretation is about uncovering this sense of place and sharing it with visitors and locals alike.

I have been living and working in the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) Warren Region for over 25 years. This region encompasses the towns of Manjimup, Pemberton, Northcliffe, Walpole and Denmark as well as the smaller communities of Quinninup, Windy Harbour and Peaceful Bay. In my time living in this neck of the woods, I have come to love and call his place home.

In my job as the regional leader for Parks and Visitor Services, I have been able to explore much of the area and gain an appreciation of its dominant characteristics and its subtleties. These characteristics are not just visual but aural, tactile and olfactory. The stimulation of all the senses is

often the case when experiencing the natural environment and it is in this heightened sensory state that some of my most evocative memories are formed.

The first whiff of the distinctive smell of Brown Boronia (*Boronia megastigma*) in the early spring as it wafts through the damp forest, or the autumn light that falls in the late afternoon on the pillar like trunks of Karri trees, enhanced at times by a shower of rain, that saturates the eye with glistening colour, are just two of many sensory experiences that are transient but deeply comforting. So at the risk of sounding like a total aesthetic junkie, it's these sorts of moments that inspire me to stay in this place.

The interpretation of this regional landscape is an interest of mine. I have had the good fortune to work with other committed people within the agency and external to it, to bring together interpretative products for various parks and facilities over the years. Two people that come to mind who have shared this journey are Jacki Baxter and Bron Anderson. Both bring their particular flair to the production of interpretive installations in the region.

While I do not consider myself a brilliant photographer, I admit that I do enjoy trying to capture some of the visual feasts that meet the eyes in this part of the world. I do have the privilege to be in some out of the way places or maybe at a fire or in an area with abundant wildflowers and I can't help but take a few snaps as you never know when they might come in handy and as they say, a picture can paint a thousand words and that is a bonus when you have a limit on the number of words that can be used on a panel. Anyway happy interpreting.

All photos : ©Tim Foley



West Kimberley School Holiday Program

... bigger and better - through sharing the passion

by Sara McAllister and Bonnie Tregenza

The Department's West Kimberley school holidays program is moving from strength to strength, demonstrating what can be achieved with a collaborative approach to community education.

Currently in its sixth year of operation, 2013 saw the DPaW interpretation team and rangers working closely with a multitude of organisations including: education officers from Department of Fisheries, Native Title Holders and joint management partners Nyamba Buru Yawuru, local volunteers from the Keep Broome Clean Team, a migratory shorebird scientist from the Global Flyaway Network, a local whale watch tour provider and the NAIDOC committee.

Bolstered by two new interpretation officers, Sara McAllister (Marine Parks) and Bonnie Tregenza (Yawuru Joint Management), the program is experiencing a renewed lease of life. It's been given a new theme 'Kimberley Coast + Culture' to encapsulate the current direction of conservation management within WA, with key messages that recognise traditional custodian partnerships and the recent expansion of marine protected areas in the Kimberley.

Recent changes to the program such as catering to all ages and expanding our sites to include the newly designated Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park, have allowed us to reach a wider audience. Venues within this program are diverse and provide participants with experiences to cater for all comfort zones from on-country remote experiences to the hustle and bustle of the local shopping centre. Some of our more popular activities for 2013 included: turtle monitoring, fishing in Yawuru Country, the inaugural sandcastle competition, spear making, bird watching and a giant community art canvas.

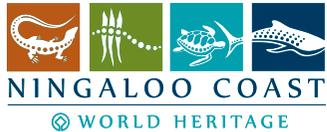


Sara is West Kimberley District's Interpretation Officer and Bonnie is the Yawuru Community Communication Officer, both based at Broome. Sara and Bonnie can be contacted on 9195 5500.



Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area : School holiday activities

By Cheslea Godson



DPaW puts on fun and interesting activities during the school holidays in Exmouth and Coral Bay for the local community and visitors. These free

activities aim to help participants experience and learn more about the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage area, its amazing flora and fauna, and how the area is studied and managed.

More than 300 people of all ages took part in the July holiday program. Activities included a sand creature competition at Bundegi in conjunction with the Shire of Exmouth which had a great Exmouth local turnout, a marine ranger talk at Turquoise Bay, a wildlife tracking and camera traps walk, and a rock wallaby ramble at Pilgonnaman Gorge. There was also face painting and story time with Ningalulu the whale shark mascot, a marine movie night in Coral Bay, a turtle talk at Jurabi Turtle Centre, humpback whale and whale shark talks, and the water sprayground fun day. The human-eating octopus sand creature (see photo right) was a highlight!



Bazza's Fish Tales

By Claudia Simpson

The Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park is an amazing place, the pristine water, the flora and fauna, and the stunning natural beauty have inspired an innovative way to educate and stimulate locals and visitors to protect and care for the park.

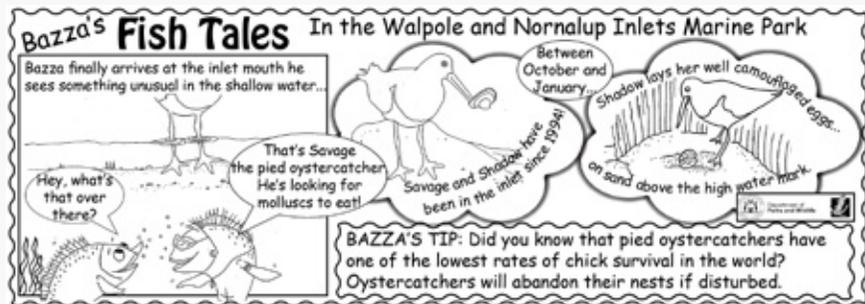
Bazza's Fish Tales is a weekly comic production that is published in the local newspaper. The comic follows the travels of 'Bazza' the bream as he explores the inlet system, along the way he encounters local issues and interesting characters which provide an opportunity to educate the readers. The comic is planned to follow the seasons and every week it deals with the current events happening in the ever changing inlet system.

The comic production team is made up of Marine Park Coordinator Shaun Ossinger, Marine Park Ranger Justin Ettridge and Interpretation Officer Claudia Simpson. The team is passionate and devoted to conservation and education. The concepts are put together as a team and all the drawings and compilation are done in house at the Frankland District DPaW office in Walpole, resulting in a quality interpretative tool that at a local level is educational for kids and adults alike.

Bazza has been gracing the pages of the local Walpole Weekly for 12 weeks and in this time the comic has collected community support from local personalities and other government departments.

Local environmental tour operator and story teller Gary Muir said *'Education is the most effective tool to communicate the value of our environment for the future, and DPaW's comic is providing it in a fun and innovative way'*.

While Tahryn Thompson, Marine Education Officer with the Department of Fisheries had the following comment when asked about Bazza's Fish Tales *'I think that Bazza's Fish Tales is an excellent tool to communicate important messages to our local community about the unique ecosystem that exists within the Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park. They are fun and light-hearted to draw peoples interest, but contain factual information about such things as fish biology, water quality, marine debris, eutrophication and other environmental issues that affect marine life within the system'*.



The team behind Bazza's Fish Tales, Shaun Ossinger (above left) Claudia Simpson (above right) and Justin Ettridge (below left) with Gary Muir.



News Flash : Bazza's Fish Tales has now been picked up by the Albany Weekender, Denmark Bulletin, Pemberton Community News and the Hopetoun Community Spirit newspapers. Increased readership now tops 40,000!!

Claudia has enjoyed being given the opportunity to work on the comic as part of her job as the District's interpretation officer and hopes that some of her hard work may spark an interest to create the environmentalists and marine park protectors of the future.

The team hopes to collate all the stories and produce a kid's activity booklet in the future.



Go with a guide ... a quick chat with Ginger

Hi Ginger, I see you were manning the Interpretation Unit 'Pop-Up' desk at the PVS Conference in October. Can you please share with the readers of Interpretation Matters more about the 'Go with a guide' e-Learning opportunity?

Of course, I'm happy to share with everyone interested in guiding. The Interpretation Unit have always had guiding as a passion of theirs. Way back in the day when there was more opportunity to get out into the Regions and Districts, the Unit ran the Designing Guided Experiences Workshop, a 4-5 day workshop that focussed on guiding and the skills you need to do the job well.

With everyone having less and less time to attend a week-long workshop, Gil Field and the Interpretation team worked with DPaW's Organisational Learning and Development Unit to package all the essential need-to-knows into an e-Learning opportunity.

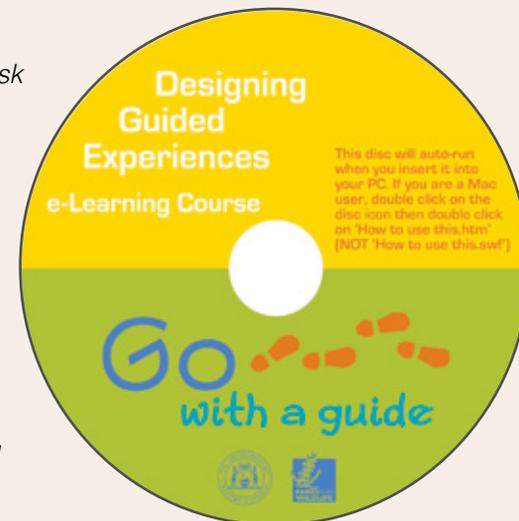
The DVD stands alone in teaching you the principles of interpretive communication, along with the planning and design techniques for developing and presenting guided experiences and guide programs.

The DVD can also be completed as a prerequisite to attending a shorter two-day course where you present (in part) a guided experience you have prepared and have it assessed by your peers and the course leader.

I can highly recommend the DVD, which is available free of charge from the Interpretation Unit.

Thanks Ginger, it's been great to talk to you today, and a free DVD that will help staff deliver best-practice, well that has to be a bonus.

Disclaimer : no mannequins were hurt during the photo shoot or interview!!



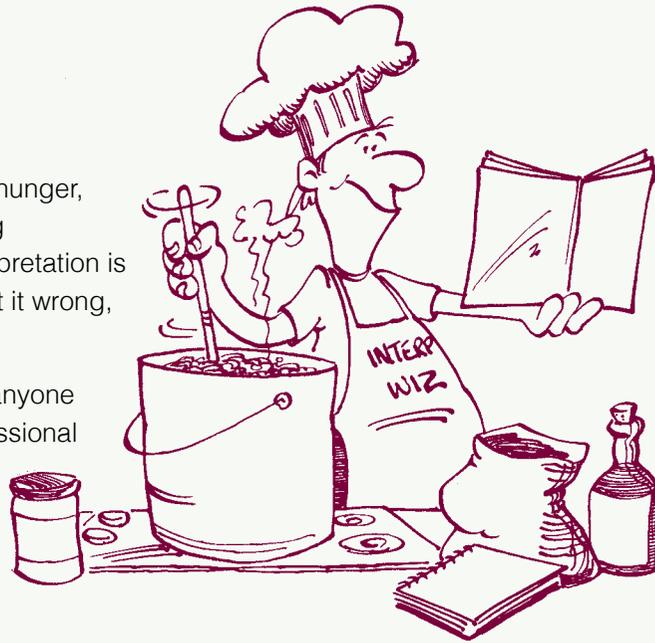
Go with a guide

It's all about the sauce!

by Judymae Napier

As any good cook would know, a meal can satisfy hunger, but with the right sauce, it can become an amazing experience. What you might not realise is that interpretation is much the same, it's all about the 'source'. If you get it wrong, you can be left with egg on your face.

You may think this is a trap for young players, but anyone can get caught. In the interests of safety and professional integrity it is important that you dig deep when researching content for your next interpretation project. Don't rely on one source alone, even if it has been provided by an 'expert'.



Compare it with what you know and if you don't know, find someone else who does. Check it against reliable text you've read, or other information you have seen or heard. Discuss it with staff and specialists both inside and outside the department. Once you are all happy with the content, only then should you commit to print.

Bon appetite

Footnote: on a recent job Judymae had been provided with 'expert' advice on geology. This advice proved to be slightly inaccurate when it was run past another geologist for confirmation. A timely reminder for all of us.

Interpretation Unit's Online Resources

**Clicking on the red text will take you to the page.*

With the change from the old *CALM Web* intranet site to the *Source* we have lost the capability to load up the hundreds of pdfs that were previously available to you. We are looking at ways to make these available, but in the meantime, Gwen has compiled a number of category based sign examples and these are loaded on our intranet.

- Risk sign examples - check our [Risk Signs page](#)*
- Dieback sign examples - check out [Dieback Sign layouts](#)*
- Management sign examples - check out [Management Signs](#)*
- Don't forget to regularly check out [our intranet site](#)* for all our latest information.

We can also do a manual search for you if none of the examples cover what you are looking for.

Also available are the approved Sign Prescriptions, Frame Drawings, old versions of the Interpretation Matters newsletter and much more.

Don't forget to let us know if you have any issues with these pages so that they can be fixed.

Seriously Dude!

by Karen Shaddock

I've realised I have too many Seriously Dude moments in my life, I think I need to chill. So rather than write a Seriously Dude 'tongue-in-cheek' rant, this time I thought I would write something that might help avoid some in the future.

We are coming up to the busiest time of year for the Design Team, the first six months of every calendar year is hectic to say the least. People suddenly realise they have grants and budgets to spend by the 30th June and in a panic throw together some words and pictures and send them in with urgent undertones. Usually some time in March or April!

Our deadline for interpretive projects that need to be completed and paid for this financial year is 10th February 2014. Management and Risk signs can continue to come in right up to around the middle of April, and you can be reasonably confident they will be despatched in time for payment. Any interpretive projects that are logged in after the 10th February, will be actioned as quickly as possible but we won't be able to guarantee delivery and payment by 30th June.

Why so early I hear you ask? Well, the Interpretation Unit works for the whole state, and so far this calendar year the Studio has logged in 385 jobs/projects and still counting. About a third of those are interpretive projects, which can take weeks of preproduction time. Preproduction is the time it takes the designers to work on each project, which includes the time it takes for comments during the draft stage, time for test proofs and adjustments if needed once those proofs are back. While you can make this time a little faster by commenting and returning approvals quickly, it is even more important to ensure you send in the complete job with the order form.

What do I mean by the complete job? Well in short that means the approved text in a word document (approved by any community groups, and/or your District Manager/Regional Manager and PVS Leader), along with all the high resolution photos required, finished maps or good outlines for us to draw mud maps from (and no that is not Google earth photos). Lastly be very clear on what you want and provide us with a good brief.

Why does it take so long for the designer to work on my project? That's a complex question to answer and is slightly different for each and every job, but basically our aim is to provide you and the visitor with the best possible product we can. So sometimes that means two or three mock-ups before you even see a draft. Then there is all the time-consuming background work you never see, things like deep-etching photos. Each deep-etched photo can take an hour or more of a designer's time. Multiply that by two, three or four photos per panel/sign and already we have nearly a day's worth of work for one panel or sign. Then there is the complex layering that happens with backgrounds, text and other graphics. Of course, it is rare that the first draft comes back without comments and changes, hopefully most are minor but there have been times when a total redesign is required. Before you know it around six weeks has past before we can get to proofs.



All things are possible but miracles take a little longer!!

How's this for a request ... can you take the head off this man (*totally different photo not shown here*) and add it onto that photo (*see above*) because the subject is doing something weird with his eyes, turn it slightly, change the shadow on his face so it matches the others already in the photo, add the photo noise/grain and then put his hat back on his head again!!

Katie and Shaun achieved the seemingly impossible request (see photo below).

As a footnote, we really would appreciate not having to do this again though!



Watch out for : *Interpretation splatters*

an ad hoc 'HOT topics' email update.

*A chance for all of us to share any interesting interpretation news or useful online resources. If you find a website you would like to share, take the time to email the URL to **Jacki** and before you know it 'Interpretation splatters' will be hitting selected in-boxes.*

Our Next Issue:

We want *Interpretation matters* to be a point of reference and we need your input to make that happen. Please feel free to provide feedback and to share your stories and projects. We look forward to photos of jobs in-situ, anecdotes from the field ... you get the drift.

Please email these to Karen so she can compile for the next newsletter.

Deadline for article submissions is 28th February 2014.

Who's Who & What we do...

Interpretation is the craft of enriching the visitor experience. It stimulates interest and appreciation for natural and cultural resources and promotes actions that support their conservation and management. Interpretive media may include guided walks, talks, drama, demonstrations, displays, signs, brochures and electronic media.

Our Unit provides advice and consultation on a variety of interpretation services including: Interpretation Planning, Standards Development, Sign and Display Design, Training, Consultancy Projects and Evaluation. To find out more go to our intranet site.

Meet the team

Jacki Baxter - Acting Interpretation Unit Coordinator
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Katie Bryden – Design Studio Officer
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Enquiries:

- Jacki Baxter - Sign Planning, Submitting Interpretation Projects, General Enquiries
- Gil Field - Strategic Planning
- Karen Shaddock - DEC Sign System & Signs (Management, Risk, Directional)
- Lorna Charlton - Communication Planning

The Interpretation Unit works in close conjunction with the Recreation and Landscape Unit whose staff can be contacted for information or advice on hardware for visitor facilities including display shelters.