

# PEMBERTON BUSHWALKS

*forests at your feet*

## A FOREST FOCUS

The karri forest in Western Australia's cool, well watered South West is one of the nation's most impressive forests. Here, between Manjimup and Walpole, the towering, pale skinned karri and the gnarled marri trees reach to the sky. Against the emerald green backdrop of the forest understorey, cool rivers flow between the giant trees while on the coast, forest streams give way to wide river mouths and windswept heathlands.

In spring, between September and November, the forest is colourful. This is when the wildflowers awaken from their winter sleep and peep over the blanket of creepers, vines and mosses covering the forest floor. Thirsty rivers, replenished by winter rains, chase the spray as waterfalls tumble merrily over the rocks. Nights are cool so warm clothes and wet weather gear is recommended.

Summer, from December to February, is warm and relatively dry. When sunny days and balmy nights entice you outdoors, please be careful with fires.

Pemberton, here in the heart of karri country, is an ideal base from which to explore the forest. There are dozens of secluded picnic and camping spots nearby. The Warren River, its tributaries and several other free-flowing streams offer some of the best trout fishing in the State.

For a feast of karri scenery, visit the Warren, Beedelup, and Gloucester National Parks and Big Brook Forest. On the coast, D'Entrecasteaux National Park covers 118000 hectares of sweeping beaches, wild coastal wetlands, rugged cliffs and dunes. It also offers beach fishing, but access is easier if you have a four-wheel-drive vehicle.

## THE KARRI EXPERIENCE

The living forest dominates life in and around Pemberton. Timber and farming have always been the towns major industries but equally important now is tourism. Both the timber and tourism industries rely on the karri forest which, apart from its biological diversity, produces strong and versatile timber and is popular for recreation.

About half the karri forest in this region is managed for multiple use, which means it provides timber, protects water catchments, provides scenic landscapes and recreation areas, and conserves flora and fauna. The other half is primarily used for conservation and recreation.

Karri grows mainly on red earth solid (karri loams) on lower slopes with more than 1100mm of rainfall. At its best, karri grows in pure stands although it often grows alongside marri and jarrah. Most karri trees grow within 40km of the sea and many fine stands grow to the water's edge on inlets permanently open to the ocean.

The karri oak with its needle-like leaves and corky bark is common in the dense forest understorey, its shrub companions are the waterbush and tree hovea, with its pea-shaped purple flowers. To find out how waterbush got its name, shake it after rain. Near water, the Warren River cedar appears.

Karri trees can live for 400 years but reach their full height in less than a century, and their maximum girth in about 200 years. Like other Western Australian plant species, they have adapted to fire and drought. In fact, karri regenerates after wildfires.

When a wildfire burns through a patch of forest, it does three things:

- it creates a gap in the canopy by burning down some old trees and allowing sunlight to reach the forest floor;
- it clears the ground of plant growth, leaving behind a fertile layer of fine ash;
- and finally, the heat dries out the trees' seed capsules, which later open and scatter their seed on to the fertile bed below.

After the first winter rains following a bushfire, a healthy crop of tiny karri seedlings appear – and then the struggle for survival begins. As young karri grow toward the sun, in fierce competition with their siblings, the weaker saplings die from lack of moisture and light. This process continues for about 200 years or more until, eventually, each tree has clearly staked out its own territory in the sky. Foresters use this principle to manage or thin regenerated forest.

#### **KARRI FUN FACTS**

**Although a karri tree may produce some flowers every year, it takes four years for the flower buds to develop into mature gumnuts ready to drop seed. There is a heavy blossom cycle once every 4-7 years. The purple-crowned lorikeet plays an important role in pollinating the karri flowers. It has a tongue designed to collect the protein-rich pollen grains.**

### **GLOUCESTER TREE TRAILS**

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Three trails leave directly from the Gloucester Tree site, and a fourth, the Cascades Walk, starts nearby. There is a trail head display describing the walks

on site and the three trails that leave from the Gloucester Tree are clearly marked.

### **The Dukes Walk (400m – easy)**

Follow the blue markers and catch your fires close-up glimpse of the karri forest from this short loop trail. Only 3 km from Pemberton, this trail starts from the famous Gloucester Tree. As you stroll along the track, pause to gaze up at the tall trees competing for space in the sky. You can see that a forest is just like any other natural community – only the strong survive.

Below them, the thick understorey is a mass of plant life. Look closely to see the vines and creepers scrambling up the trunks of smaller trees, the vivid mosses and fungi clinging to fallen logs and the bark dangling like tattered clothing on the trees. In spring, the wildflowers raise their colourful heads as the butterflies come to life. Take your time – enjoy your first taste of the forest. It's sure to whet your appetite for more bushwalking.

### **Karri Views: (800m – easy)**

This path leads you to the edge of the valley. It offers views across the bubbling Eastbrook below. It offers views across the Gloucester National Park. Here, the undergrowth forms an emerald-green backdrop for the stately karri trees, making this a good photographic point. The hillside is vibrant with colour in spring. To complete this short but scenic loop walk, follow the green markers back to the base of the Gloucester Tree.

### **EYE IN THE SKY**

**For the first fifty years of forestry in Western Australia, an early warning system for bush fires depended on a network of lookout towers. These towers were built about 40 km apart on prominent hills in the forest, and were staffed continuously in summer. But the karri forest posed a special problem. With few peaks, and giant trees towering 70-80m about the ground, the task of building a tower to overlook the forest was formidable. Then, in 1937, young forester Don Stewart (who later became Conservator of Forests) suggested using the trees themselves as lookout towers. The first tower was built on a large marri tree at Alco near Nannup. Eventually 13 towers – some of them built on trees – watched over the karri forest. Today, only the Gloucester, the Diamond and the new Dave Evans Bicentennial tree towers remain. The modern 'towerman' is a pilot flying high overhead, watching for smoke and reporting details of any forest fires. However, key towers are still used throughout the summer, or when spotter aircraft break down, or weather conditions make flying impossible.**

### **Nyungar Walk (1.5km – easy)**

A spare hour is all you will need to explore this loop trail, which combines the best of on-foot forest discoveries with a drive through scenic karri forest. From

the trail ahead on Eastbrook Scenic Drive, head across the brook and then up the valley, gradually climbing the hillside to get a birds-eye view of the creek. In spring, sniff the heady perfume of fragrant wildflowers and listen to the birds chattering overhead.

The trail links up with the earthworks of an old logging railway before again crossing the creek and leading you back to Eastbrook Drive. Turn tight, and follow the gravel road back to your car. Take care – this is a one-way drive.

### **Wauguls Walk (6km – easy)**

Rather than crossing Eastbrook and returning to the carpark on the Nyungar Walk, continue along the old railway. You are now following Waugul's Walk. The Waugul is an Aboriginal mythical serpent which formed the rivers – even, perhaps, the Eastbrook stream bed back in the Dreaming.

Follow the bubbling brook through tall karri forest and, for those with the right kind of imagination, watch for the Waugul. You can arrange to be met at the picnic area, making this a 3km stroll, or you can return to the carpark by turning right onto the road and walking the 3km along the old railway earthworks. Take care as this is a one-way scenic drive.

### **Train Tracks**

**Many forest roads and walk trails were originally railways or tramways built by hard physical labour. The marks of mattocks and shovels can sometimes still be seen, and the sweat and toil of the workers imagined. The narrow winding corridors help you explore the once-harvested forests which have since regrown. Waugul's Walk and Eastbrook Scenic Drive are two such corridors.**

### **Gloucester Route (10km – medium)**

Follow the black markers for a rich karri experience, and step out along this trail which starts from the Gloucester Tree picnic site. Although quite steep and difficult in sections, the trail is very rewarding. It loops through the towering karri forest – both young and old – in the Gloucester National Park, then leads you over hills, down gullies and across hidden creeks and waterfalls with moss-covered logs as foot bridges.

Plan for a half day adventure and pack lunch, a flask of water and a raincoat. There is a café at the Lavender and Berry Farm at about the half way point. Why not stop for a cuppa.

### **The struggle for survival**

**Parts of the forest were logged and regenerated in the early 1940s. You can spot these areas where smaller, vigorous, closely spaced karri trees grow among the larger forest veterans.**

**Karri is a very competitive tree and it is a case of survival of the fittest from the time the seeds germinate. For example, in an area the size of a football oval, 125000 karri seeds can germinate. Twenty years later, only about 1000 of these have survived and, after 400 years, only 20 mature trees may remain. The struggle for water, sunlight, growing space and food from the soil is intense.**

## TOWN WALKS

### **Pemberton Forest Park Walks**

The Pemberton Forest Park Walks are a component of the Karri Forest Discovery Centre, which is situated in the Karri Visitors Centre and managed by the Pemberton Visitors Centre Inc. The Pemberton Forest Park is a magnificent small reserve of mature karri forest which forms a striking backdrop to the town of Pemberton. The park is managed on behalf of the community by the Pemberton Visitors Centre Inc. There is a trail head display outside the Pemberton Visitors Centre which describes five walks. Each walk is clearly marked by its own trail marker, which means you should never get lost.

The walk from town to the Gloucester Tree also begins at the Visitors Centre and is marked by a distinctive trail marker.

The following three walks begin from the Pemberton Swimming Pool. Parts of each of these walks combine or overlap.

### **Hatchery Trail (2km return – moderate)**

This walk leaves from the far side of the Pemberton Pool and follows close to the stream that feeds the Swimming Pool, before passing close to several huge karri trees and arriving finally at the trout hatchery.

### **Trevor's Trail (2.4km – moderate)**

This walk starts on the far side of the pool at a huge old karri stump. This was once a 300-400 year old tree that hung threateningly over the swimming pool and had become a danger to swimmers.

To remove the tree required exceptional felling skills and considerable courage. Trevor Cederman felled the tree so as to miss the pool and avoid considerable damage. Tragically, Trevor was killed by a falling tree while working in the bush in 1995. This trail is dedicated to him. A plaque on site tells you more about Trevor and the felling of this tree.

Follow the markers alongside the pool and uphill toward the top end of the forest park. The ground below drops away and you can peer into the karri treetops. From here, you may be able to see pardalotes going about their daily business.

Fifty years ago, much of this hillside was cleared and grassed, to become part of Pemberton's original golf course. Today, a new forest has reclaimed the greens and fairways. Soon you will reach the hatchery and can follow the Hatchery Trail back to the pool.

### **Karri Heights (2.4km – moderate)**

Follow Trevor's Trail to the top of the hill, then veer off along the boundary of Forest Park. Here, you have giant karri trees on one side, and a farmer's paddock on the other side. Here, there are some fine views, and between June and August the fungi is in full bloom. See how many types you can spot along the way. Karri Heights will also bring you to the trout hatchery from where you follow the Hatchery Trail back to the pool.

The next two walks are also in the Pemberton Forest Park. Look for the start of these trails at the bottom of Pump Hill, opposite the start of Rainbow Trail.

### **Whistler Walk (2km – moderate)**

From Pump Hill Road follow the markers up the hill through thick karri forest. Head downhill toward Lefroy Brook, AND STOP AT THE BIRDHIDE. Here you will find information about the birds of the karri forest. Sit for a while and enjoy the splendid views of Pemberton.

### **Lefroy Trail (2.1km – moderate)**

This trail starts from the same point as Whistler Walk, but veers downhill towards Lefroy Brook. After a steep climb, you will come to the birdhide mentioned above. From here, continue to follow the boundary of the Forest Park back to Pump Hill Road.

### **Gloucester Tree Walk (3km – moderate)**

This walk takes you from Pemberton town site to the Gloucester Tree of visa versa. If you are setting out from town, start from the trail head outside the Visitors Centre and follow the signs through town. Soon you will reach the forest. You will be walking through karri and marri forest. Take your time and don't be surprised if you startle a kangaroo grazing near the track, especially early in the morning or late in the afternoon. By taking this walk you can avoid following roads all the way to the Gloucester Tree. Walking in the forest sure beats competing with cars and breathing exhaust.

If you are starting from the Gloucester Tree and heading for town, look for the walkers' information then follow the well marked trail back.

### **Pardalotes on Patrol**

**Two types of birds you are likely to see and hear in this karri forest are the spotted and striated pardalote. Both live high up in the karri crowns where they spend most of their time busily – and noisily – searching every leaf**

**and twig for food. They prey on lerps, cicadas, spiders, weevils, caterpillars, native bees and other small forest creatures. Delicious!**

**There are fewer insects in winter, so the birds flock in groups of 10-20, patrolling the treetops, in an effort to flush them out. Some flocks of striated pardalotes migrate inland, using the eucalypt lined rivers as corridors for safe travel. However, these faithful birds return every year with the same partner to the same nest. The spotted birds nest in hollows while the striated species prefers a nest hole in an earthen bank.**

### **Gloucester Tree to Cascades Walk (12km return – moderate)**

Fill your water flask, don a hat or raincoat (depending on the season) and set off on a half day adventure along this trail, which starts at the Gloucester Tree. You start on the 10km Gloucester Route, but when you reach the bitumen road, turn right, cross over the twin bridges, and then right again, following the trail markers back into the forest. From there, you will follow the gurgling Eastbrook, through the valley. Listen for the stirrings of many different creatures. For them, the winding brook is a liquid lifeline.

Continue through the forest, following the old railway earthworks. This, too, was once a lifeline. Heavy logs were hauled from the forest along the railway to the Pemberton mill. Listen carefully, and watch out for the tourist trams which use this line. Now, the tell tale scar of the track and the timber harvest on adjacent hillsides, is gradually fading as the forest continues its silent regrowth. Timber remains a major industry for Pemberton, as you will see when you look across the town with its weatherboard houses and prominent mill. Equally important now, is tourism. Both rely on the same commodity – towering karri forest, now and in the future. Both can continue to exist together, as they do today. Continue to follow the trail markers until you reach the Cascades. Take care! Listen and look out for log trucks when crossing roads.

### **KARRI FUN FACTS**

**Karri is one of the largest living things on our planet. One tree can weigh more than 200 tonnes, grow to 90 metres tall, use 170 litres of water per day, produce one kilogram of honey in a good season, take nine people holding hands to span its girth – and do it all in 400 years!**

## **OUT OF TOWN WALKS**

### **Big Brook Dam (3.5km – easy)**

Get into nature by driving north-west from the trout hatchery along the scenic Rainbow Trail to Big Brook Dam. Alternatively follow Golf Links, Mullineux and Range Roads for a more direct route to the dam. The dam, built in 1986 to supplement water supplies to the town and trout hatchery, is an excellent spot for swimming, fishing, canoeing or sailboarding.



A walk trail loops around the dam, passing through the Big Brook forest. The forest, now 60 years old, provides pure water, animal homes, timber and an inspiring backdrop for visitors – just as the old forest once did. Young karri trees grow vigorously, greedily absorbing carbon from the atmosphere, to convert into cellulose and wood fibre. By acting collectively as a carbon sink, they can help slow the projected greenhouse effect. As you walk along the trail through regrowth forest, keep an eye out for waterfowl on the dam, and many other forest birds, if you can't see them chances are you will hear them in the treetops. Try to identify the Warren River cedar trees, before crossing Big Brook on a log bridge. Keep following the trail, which circles back along the other side of the dam to your starting point. Stop at the birdhides, fishing platforms and other shelters along the way, where you will find information about the karri forest environment. This walk is sealed all the way, and is suitable for disabled use. It is also ideal for prams and cycles.

### **Big Brook Arboretum (1.2km – easy)**

On the Rainbow Trail, about 10kms from town, is an arboretum, or botanical tree garden. Many different species of trees – some from Australia and some, like the American redwood, from overseas – were planted here by foresters in 1929 to study their growth in the Pemberton area. Later, eucalypts from the eastern States were planted.

The test achieved mixed results. While most of the European pines and the giant redwoods disliked the climate here, some of the eucalypts grew well. For instance, foresters found that yellow stringybark, which produces an exceptionally durable timber, grew as fast as karri for the first 40 years on its life.

Recognising the different tree species as you weave your way through the plantation is an interesting challenge. You will stroll through a grove of sequoias, (American redwoods), past spotted gums from New South Wales, and through natural karri forest, as you circle back to the picnic site. Then, you might be ready for a refreshing swim in the nearby Big Brook Dam or wish to continue your drive along the Rainbow Trail.

### **KARRI FUN FACTS**

**The botanical name for karri is *Eucalyptus diversicolor*. *Eucalyptus* is a Latin word meaning 'well covered', referring to the flower bud. *Diversicolor* refers to the leaf having light and dark green sides. Karri is an Aboriginal name for the tree.**

### **Founders Forest (400m and 1km – both easy) (Formerly 100 year Forest)**

Head east from Pemberton on the Vasse Highway, then follow the signs north to this forest picnic area, now more than a century old. As you drive and walk



through this new forest of towering karri trees, try to imagine it as a wheatfield. That's what it was in the 1860s before nature took charge and after the farm was abandoned.

Two loop trails – the 400m Wheatfield Walk and 1km Hilltop Loop – lead you from the picnic area through this regenerated forest. In places, thick undergrowth forms a natural corridor, while overhead, the sun battles to peep through the karri crowns. Look closely at old tree stumps beside the track; often they will be smothered by delicate moss or vivid fungi. Pause, too, to listen to the birds and the wind in the trees. They seem to be whispering tales of a pioneer's past plans for a farm – a dream that was lost, but nevertheless brought promise of a future for the forest.

#### **LEFROY'S DREAM**

**Mr De Courcey Lefroy, a member of one of Western Australia's pioneering families, once had a dream he would clear the karri forest and transform the land into a wheat farm. In the mid-1860s, on the site where Founders Forest now stands, he did just that. He also built a house nearby and a small flour mill, powered by a water wheel, down beside the brook that now bears his name. But Lefroy's crops failed and in the early 1870s he abandoned the farm and left the district.**

**In 1875, fire swept through the area. Soon after, the karri forest seeded and the following winter, a new crop of karri seedlings sprouted. In 1916, the new trees became the first karri forest to be protected by Western Australia's Forests Department. Today, it is managed by the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) as a demonstration forest.**

## **DAVE EVANS BICENTENNIAL TREE WALKS**

Three walks start from a trailhead near the picnic shelter at Bicentennial Tree. All three pass through old growth karri forest. Experience the huge old trees and abundance of birdlife, particularly purple-crowned lorikeets when the karri is in flower.

### **Lorikeet Stroll (200m – easy)**

This short walk gives you a taste of walking in the karri forest. Keep your eyes and ears open for purple-crowned lorikeets darting around in the karri tree tops.

### **Karri Ridge (1km – mostly easy)**

Follow the markers up to the ridge, and take the time to appreciate the immense size of the mature karri. Although only a 1km walk there are some steep sections, so be prepared.

### **Warren Lookout (2.4km return – moderate)**

To take in the best of the karri forest and the Warren River Valley, follow the trail to the spectacular Warren Lookout, a great photo vantage point. The view from the lookout to the Warren River is superb, and well worth the walk. At the lookout, you will find out information about the river.

#### Find Out More About The Karri Forest At The Karri Forest Discovery Centre

The Karri Forest Discovery Centre is the place to visit if you want to find out more about the karri forest ecosystem. You will find the Discovery Centre in the Karri Visitors Centre, along with the Pemberton Visitor Centre and the Pemberton Pioneer Museum, situated in Brockman Street in the heart of Pemberton. Interactive displays and a short film, *The Secret World*, will help you learn more about the pale-skinned giants of the southern forest. Have a chat with Penny the Possum or Coco the Frog and discover where and how they live there.

While you are there you can also pick up a Karri Forest Field Guide, which will help you identify some of the more common plants and animals that live in the karri forest.

The Karri Visitors Centre can also help you with information about things to do and see, and the best places in the forest to explore.

Drop into the above centres while you are in Pemberton for all your visitor needs.

#### **Beedelup Falls (300m – moderate)**

Pack your bird field guide and head for these falls in Beedelup National Park. To get there, drive 17km west of Pemberton along the Vasse Highway, then follow the signs. When you arrive at the picnic site, where the walk loop starts, listen for the birds and the muted roar of the falls. Then, as you descend the steps through a corridor of trees and creepers, pause to listen to the forest, and look out over Waterfall Dam, the huge lake into which the falls empty.

You can see a great view of the falls from a 25m suspension bridge that spans the Beedelup brook, or from timber boardwalks and platforms. In winter when the falls are thundering you may be able to feel the spray. As you walk upstream to another bridge, look for the masses of maidenhair fern and mosses which creep at the base of the trees. On a fine day, catch the sun filtering through the karri tree tops or hear the frogs calling from their hidden homes.

#### **What's in a Name?**

Beedelup is an Aboriginal Term said to mean 'a place of water'. But be prepared the falls can be reduced to a trickle, feeding a network of shallow pools in a dry summer. The main focus of the trail in this season is the noisy birds that use the brook as a corridor leading to water - the liquid of life.

### **Dunes Walk (3km return – moderate)**

Combine a scenic drive with some on-foot exploring by heading south to this walk which takes you into D'Entrecasteaux National Park. To get there drive south along Ritter Road to the picnic site near Yeagarup Lake. The trail takes you through Banksia woodlands and overlooks the lakes and surrounding swamps. These freshwater areas are perched on top of sand. Organic matter, such as leaves and bark and dead plants, have formed a waterproof layer on the bottom of the lake or swamp, catching and holding only water that falls or drains into them. This is an area of continuous change. Here, coastal winds whip the white sands into mobile dunes, which are constantly on the move. They march relentlessly forward like a silent army reclaiming the lakes and forests. The face of the dune is well over 40 meters high, and the sight of it overtaking the forest is quite spectacular. The walk follows a sandy, four-wheel-drive track to the base of the sandhills. You return by the same track, but be prepared to step aside; vehicles use this road regularly for access to the coast.

### **The Cascades (1.2km – easy)**

Set amid the karri forest about 8km south of Pemberton off the Northcliffe Road, these rocky rapids and surrounds provide a place for an outdoor lunch, a leisurely afternoon stroll, or a few peaceful hours of fly fishing. As you wander down to the picnic site from the parking area, listen to the voices of the birds as they chatter in the trees. Water is always a focus for forest life. From there, it's just a few steps to the lookout, or you can get a closer view of the Cascades by stepping down to a boardwalk that crosses a tributary of Lefroy Brook. Beware of the slippery rocks and stay well back from the water's edge.

The loop trail, which starts from the picnic area and crosses the Northcliffe tramway, takes you through different types of forest and you will see some lush fern and reed growth near the water. The trail passes through the peppermints and sheoaks. So try to identify the trees or catch a glimpse of a trout or marron in the brook.

### **It's a Trout's Life!**

Western Australia has two species of trout - brown and rainbow - which have been introduced into freshwater rivers and dams throughout the South West. Most winters, however, do not provide the appropriate breeding environment for these introduced fish, so they seldom reproduce in the wild. Instead, they are raised in hatcheries where eggs are fertilized and allowed to hatch. The tiny babies are known as "fry" until they grow several centimeters. They then become fingerlings, which are used to restock local waters.

You can fish for trout from September 1 till April 30, although the season is open all year in the main streams of the Murray, Blackwood, Donnelly and Warren Rivers. A licence is needed and can be purchased at the Pemberton Visitor Centre. Use rods only (no nets or spears, please) and throw back any fish that are less than 30cm long. There is a bag limit of 10 trout per person per day but

take only what you need. If you're down Warren River way, you may be lucky enough to capture a record-sized trout. The biggest rainbow trout caught in Western Australia was 3.42kg while the biggest brown was 4.13kg – and both were hooked in the Warren. Good Luck!

### **Brockman Sawpit (800m – easy)**

You will drive back in time as you head 16km south along the Pemberton – Northcliffe Road, then turn left into Rowes Road to get to this historic site. The sawpit was used to provide timber for the Brockman Homestead, 5km north-west of the pit, on the banks of the Warren River. Pemberton pioneer Edward Brockman settled here in the early 1860's. He built a house with mud bricks and pitsawn timber, cut by convict labour. As you cross the Warren Bridge, you can see the original homestead nestled by the river. The convicts, and the 'ticket of leave' tradesmen who followed them, were the forerunners of the timber industry that has been the backbone of Pemberton since early this century. As you stroll the 500 metres to the original sawpit, imagine the convicts – sweating and covered in a fine net of sawdust – heaving a log saw up and down to cut the timber. Take the time to read the information on site: it will give you a valuable insight into what life was like in days gone by. Scattered around the forest are the stumps of the original jarrah trees, felled by the convicts to provide the logs for pit sawyers. Young, vigorous jarrah have regrown in the gaps that were left after prime trees were cut. These trees are the forests new growing stock.

## **WALKS IN AND AROUND NORTHCLIFFE**

### **Northcliffe Forest Park Walks**

Several trails twist through the Northcliffe Forest Park, linking up, then disappearing again into the forest. To get there by car, follow the signs from the townsite or walk from opposite the town shops.

The park was developed by the Northcliffe community, which wanted to share this special forest with you. Pack a picnic lunch or something to barbecue and make the most of the facilities that have been provided in this natural setting. (This park is managed by the Northcliffe Visitor Centre on behalf of the community).

### **Twin Karri (500 metres – easy)**

This short walk loop starts at the hollow but Karri and leads you through thick karri forest. There is much to see here; look up at the towering trees soaring into

the sky. Look down to see the delicate wild flowers peeping up from the forest floor in spring. And look around at the thick understorey which provides hidden homes for many forest animals. Walk in the opposite direction from the start point and you can walk through 1.4km of forest, to link up with the Town Dam Walk Trail. Stop at the Halfway Hut to catch your breath or just enjoy the forest peace.

### **Town Dam (500 metres – easy)**

Make your way to the tranquil picnic spot at the town dam, by following the road past Hollow Butt Karri, and then along the Gardener River. Ducks are often seen swimming on the dam, which was built as a town water supply but never used, due to poor water quality,

From here the walk loop leads you through mixed jarrah, marri and karri forest. Watch for banksias and sheoak trees as well as old logs, felled in the group settlement days. Rather than return to the dam, continue along the main track to the Bardi Creek Trail or the Riverway Adventure Trail.

### **Bardi Creek (800m – easy to moderate)**

Through the coastal swamp vegetation, this trail will take you back to town. In winter, take care as you use the stepping stones to cross Bardi Creek, and in summer watch for flashes of colour from the bright red bottlebrush.

### **Riverway Adventure Trail (600m – challenging)**

Branching off the main track, this trail – as the name suggests – is more challenging. You can set out from either the Acacia or Casuarina picnic areas on Acacia Road and scramble down steep slopes into the Gardner River valley. After crossing the fallen logs and log bridges, the trail leads you away from the river back to Acacia Road. In spring, colourful wildflowers carpet the forest floor. Look for a huge karri tree which has a lightning–burn scar down its trunk.

### **Boorara Tree, Lane Poole Falls (5km – easy)**

Venture into wild forest on this trail, about 18km south-east of Northcliffe. Follow the signs off Boorara Road to the tree, which, until 1977, was a fire lookout tower. The tree, which has had its cabin removed, is surrounded by a shady picnic area. This marks the start of the track to the misty veil of Lane Poole Falls on the Canterbury River. The trail was once a firebreak, designed to bring a raging wildfire to a sudden halt. These days all it will stop is you as you pause to admire the tall karri trees keeping quiet sentinel over the creepers, vines, and mosses, scrambling across the dense forest floor. In spring, the awakening wild flowers peep over the blanket of undergrowth. As you near the falls, the track descends steeply, before you emerge to see the fast flowing water tumbling over a granite wall to a pool, 12 metres below. In summer the flow may be reduced to a trickle but you can still soak up the unspoilt atmosphere of this hidden valley with its towering river banksias.

## Karri Fun Facts

Karri leaves are shed and replaced each year, and karri bark is shed every year in late summer or autumn. For each hectare of karri forest, seven tones of leaf and bark litter fall to the forest floor every year. If an area was left unburned for 50 years, the litter layer on the forest floor could be several metres thick and weigh as much as 50 tonnes per hectare.

### **Mount Chudalup (1km – moderate to steep)**

Situated 1.5km south of Northcliffe just off the Windy Harbour Road. Mount Chudalup towers over the surrounding karri forest. The climb to the top of this 185 meter granite dome is steep in places but worth the effort. Follow the mossy path as it weaves a track to the top. In spring, watch for orchids and other wildflowers that peep out from the weathering rocks.

From the top, you can enjoy sweeping views of the coast and surrounds, including the Meerup and Doggerup Dunes, the Southern Ocean, D'Entrecasteaux National Park and the Shannon Forest. In winter, listen for the surf and feel the salty blast of the great Southern Ocean winds.

*Features: Views, karri, flowers and animals of granite outcrops*

**▲ The peak of Mount Chudalup has dangerous sheer faces. Exercise caution at all times – especially in windy weather.**

## Park Patterns

From the top of Mount Chudalup you can see the patterns of the land that give D'Entrecasteaux National Park its unique character. It is a transition between the coastal belt and the tall forests. Continuous lashing by the Southern Ocean winds has created an extensive sand dune system. These coastal dunes have blocked the flow of streams and creeks trying to empty into the ocean. Over time this has created a chain of lakes and wetlands extending from the Broke Inlet in the south to Lake Jasper (the largest freshwater lake in the south-west) north-west of Mount Chudalup.

### **WINDY HARBOUR - D'ENTRECASTREAU NATIONAL PARK**

After seeing the wild southern coast from the top of Mount Chudalup, take the time to drive another 11 km south to Windy Harbour. There are many beaches to stroll along and some rugged coastal cliffs to see. A protected swimming area is

suitable for children, so pack your bathers, fishing rod, snorkeling gear and a picnic lunch and make a day of it.

## SHANNON WALKS

### **Shannon Dam** (3.5km – easy)

Get away for a day at Shannon – the one time timber town, now a popular tourist destination deep in the heart of the Shannon National Park. To get there, head north-east of Pemberton to the South-West Highway and turn right, or drive south to Northcliffe then head east. After a peaceful picnic or barbecue lunch, take a step back in time. As you wander along the river to the dam, you walk through history; through forests that were the life-blood of the mill town. These have re-grown and again provide pure, natural enjoyment for today's generations. Disabled people, too, can capture the spirit of a bygone era. The first 600 metres of the trail are sealed and suitable for wheelchairs and prams.

As you walk, try to spot remnants of the railway line, built almost entirely by hard, physical labour, and which transported the huge logs. Now, this line is being quietly invaded and reclaimed by the surrounding forest, and will disappear – to be remembered only, perhaps, by the ghosts of this once flourishing timber town.

The Shannon Dam, set against a backdrop of tall karri forest, was a vital water supply for the townspeople and the mill. It was also a favorite picnic place, and families today still find it an ideal spot for fishing, canoeing, swimming, marroning, or simply watching reflections of the towering trees, and the woodswallows gliding and dipping to drink from the dam.

### **The Rocks Walk Trail** (5.5km – moderate but steep in places)

Detour left across the river from the Shannon Dam trail and climb alongside the karri crowns. As you walk, try to identify the different tree species before pausing to catch your breath at Smeather's Rock. From here, high above the ground among the leafy karri crowns, you can get a bird's eye view of the forest and back across the river to the old Shannon townsite.

The chattering birds urge you to continue your climb. As you go higher, the trees thin out and the drought tolerant jarrah tree becomes more prevalent as the ground becomes rocky. Turn a corner in the trail and there is Mokare's Rock, complete with a colourful carpet of flowers, mosses and lichens, from a boardwalk, you can get a close look at the delicate foliage without damaging it. Pause for a moment to enjoy the view across the Shannon River Basin, before slowly winding your way down through shady glens of karri oaks and across trickling creeks to the Shannon Dam. Time for a swim?. You can arrange to be met here, or you can link up with the Shannon Dam trail to wander back along the river to the recreation site.

### **Great Forest Trees Walk** (4km one way, 8km return – moderate)



This walk connects the arms of the northern loop of the Great Forest Trees Drive. The walk follows old forestry tracks and is steep in places, particularly where the trail crosses the Shannon river. Pure stands of karri forest line the walk at this point. In winter, the Shannon may burst its banks and sometimes cut the track. If you are not feeling up to tackling the 8km, you can get someone to meet you at the other end of the trail where it meets Curtin Road.

### **Life in Lilliput**

The Islands of rock rising above the forest and shrub land in the south-west of an ancient land, and the residual remnants of eroded plains. These granite outcrops provide variation in the gentle landscape, and many reward a climb with a fine view over the surrounding countryside. They also offer the inquisitive a Lilliputian spectacle of the seasonal cycle of life.

In summer, the outcrops bake, and plants are exposed to searing winds. The rock and soil surface appears dry and lifeless, but don't be deceived; one careless step on the dry and fragile lichen may destroy many years growth. This seemingly sterile surface will spring into life with the first winter rains.

While summer lingers, however, lichens and other plants near the rock surface are brittle, and the bulbs and corms of many perennial lie hidden in the shallow soil. The leaves of the shrubs in the deeper soil aprons appear as muted greys, golds, browns and blues. Animal life, however, is easily seen. The rocks and crevices of the outcrop surface provide shelter for many reptiles that are active only during the warmer months.

As the first winter rainstorms flood the granite, the thin soil becomes waterlogged and the almost bare rock springs to life. Lichens, mosses and algae, clinging to tiny depressions in the rock, suddenly appear alive and vibrant, as a multitude of shapes, colours and textures becomes visible.

### **Pincushions**

Where the soil and natural litter are a few millimeters deep, a moss sward develops. The storage organs of plants hidden in the dry moss of summer respond rapidly to the surge of moisture.

As the lizards of summer disappear, they are replaced by other animals. Tiny, fragile invertebrates appear in the rock pools, and frogs shelter during the day under the rocks near the pools.

Next time you visit a rock outcrop, take a close look at its living features. You might need to get down on your hands and knees to appreciate the detail. Take care not to slip, and also not to break up the delicate swards that take so long to grow and develop. Always remember that you are a giant, privileged to take a peek into Lilliput.

### **Where to go:**

**Mount Chudalup – south of Northcliffe**

**Mokare's Rock – on the Shannon Walk Trail.**

**Any granite outcrop you stumble upon in your travels.**

## **BIBBULMUN TRACK**

The Bibbulmun Track is Western Australia's longest bushwalking track. The first version of the track was laid out early in the 1970s and traversed a 505 km route from Kalamunda to the Boorara Tree, near Northcliffe. In 1998, the track was the subject of a realignment and extension, carried out as part of the Heritage Trails program. The track now extends some 650 km from Kalamunda to Walpole, on the south coast.

In 1993, the Building a Better Bibbulmun Track Project was begun on a major upgrade, realignment and extension of the track. The track now stretches 964 km's from its original northern terminus at Kalamunda, all the way to Albany, the states first settlement.

The track features a host of improvements, all aimed at placing it firmly in the forefront of the world's great long distance trails. Hundreds of kilometers of new, purpose built walk trail, new camp sites featuring unique three-sided sleeping shelters, new guide books and information systems, and access to some of the South West's most spectacular scenery should ensure the track provides a prime walking opportunity for both short and long distance walkers.

In the Pemberton area the new track traverses both the Donnelly and Warren River Valleys, exposing walkers to some of the finest river scenery in the State. In addition, it passes through – or close to – Beedelup National Park, the Pimelea Youth Hostel, Big Brook recreation area and the Gloucester Tree, offering walkers access to many of the prime tourist attractions of the area.

Numerous well marked road crossings provide a wide range of start and finish points, ensuring the track is accessible to a broad range of walkers, from those with just an hour or two to spend to those with big mileage on their minds. Plan a walk of two, twenty or two hundred kilometers – the Bibbulmun Track is here to challenge and delight you.

Current guidebooks, maps and detailed information are available from the nearest Visitor Centre or Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC).

## BUSHWALKERS CODE OF ETHICS

### ***Step out in style***

- Wear sturdy, but comfortable shoes. Joggers are suitable but take care on mossy rocks. Long socks or jeans will give some leg protection.
- Carry a raincoat in winter, and wear layers of clothing that can easily be added to or taken off as you warm up or cool down.
- Pack a small haversack with snacks, picnic lunch, drinks, extra layers of clothes, bush walk guide, *Bush Books* (see page ??) camera, binoculars – but don't overdo it! Travel light.
- Wear a bush hat for protection from the sun or rain.
- **In summer:** carry drinking water for walks that are graded 'medium' and 'long'. Always keep a supply of water in the car.
- **In autumn:** March flies can be a problem. Take repellent or totally cover yourself.

### ***Be careful and considerate***

- Give way to walkers moving uphill.
- Respect the solitude of other walkers by traveling quietly in the forest. This also increases your chance of seeing wildlife. Wear natural-coloured clothing as camouflage.
- In areas without toilets: bury waste 15cm deep and 100 metres from streams.
- Light fires only in barbecues provided, or bring your own portable gas stove.

### ***Walk softly***

- Keep to marked trails and avoid cutting corners or taking shortcuts.
- Please carry out all your rubbish.