



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Robyn McBeath



Robyn McBeath chats to Dr. Neville Michie
– Conference 2003



Winter is nearly behind us in Western Australia, and in all probability as you are reading this; spring will be in full swing. With the warming days comes a profusion of colour to our bushland, heralding the start to the wildflower season and ensuing busy tourist season.

Despite the general downturn in International travel, visitation to the Margaret River region has been stable over the past 12 months with the Lake, Jewel and Mammoth Caves showing a 4% increase in visitation over this period.

From around the traps in WA, Liam Kinsella is busy restoring the entrance staircase to Ngilgi Cave. The 50-year-old staircase is showing signs of deterioration and is being replaced; fortunately most work has been able to occur out of hours allowing the cave to remain open. Meanwhile, Anne Wood reports CALM has made the position of Caves Manager – Leeuwin Naturaliste National Park a permanent position.

We have seen a number of changes take place at *CaveWorks* over the past couple of months. Visitor Services Officer, Jayme Hatcher has commenced six months maternity leave; Alex Brett, a Senior Guide and resource assistant for the past eight years has moved into the position of Works Officer; and a part time position for a Sales & Promotions Officer has recently been advertised. Needless to say, staff induction and training have kept us busy over recent weeks!

Neville Michie recently visited Margaret River, continuing his work with cave climate and in particular the carbon dioxide within the Jewel Cave. One of Neville's aims during his visit was to develop a model of the Jewel Cave climate to determine the outcome of the "open door" experiment; I look forward to the report on this project.

Stefan Eberhard has just returned from Adelaide where he was working with the Evolutionary Biology Unit of the South Australian Museum using molecular techniques (allozymes and DNA) to investigate groundwater fauna of the Leeuwin Naturaliste Ridge. Stefan is currently writing up his PhD thesis on groundwater ecology in the Leeuwin Naturaliste Ridge and hopes to submit by the end of the year.

From the other side of Australia, Cathie Plowman tells me that planning for the Cave Presenters Workshop (as well as the ACKMA Annual General Meeting weekend following it) is well under way. I encourage cave managers to support their guiding staff in attending what will be a tremendously valuable workshop.



The Augusta Margaret River Tourism Association (Inc). is seeking expressions of interest for the development of Management Plans for the Jewel Cave Precinct, Augusta, Western Australia.

To register your interest contact the AMRTA Caves Manager
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Caves of Augusta Margaret River

