

The 'Breaking Ground' Party...



BREAKING GROUND – THE JEWEL CAVE PRESERVATION & REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

– Jayme Hatcher



The Augusta Margaret River Tourism Association's (AMRTA) innovative vision to upgrade one of the region's most iconic tourism attractions became a reality on Tuesday 18 August when it broke ground on the Jewel Cave Preservation and Redevelopment Project.

After almost fifteen years in the planning, the project is finally a reality after it was given the go ahead following the successful completion of a heritage survey in conjunction with local aboriginal families.

The first stage of the project involves establishing a new car park off the cave which includes recovery and storage of the top soil for the revegetation of the old car park. This process will

ensure that the site is revegetated with plant species endemic to the Jewel Cave precinct. Seeds have already been collected and are currently being propagated at a local nursery for planting. This is well under way with the new car park site cleared, the soil stockpiled and the new car park being laid today as I write (6 October)! It is a very exciting time for staff, visitors and the local community as Western Australia's largest show cave gets its much needed facelift.

The final working drawings are being completed with the eco-sensitive building going out to invited tender late October, with building works commencing December 2009. It is anticipated that the redevelopment will take approximately twelve months to complete. The Project looks at developing an eco-sensitive building and infrastructure which will complement the natural environment, upgrading fifty year old wiring and lighting, creating an interpretive centre and cafe to increase education and visitor amenities and the re-vegetation of the existing site to help recharge the water table and preserve the threatened ecological communities whilst maintaining the sites integrity. The design includes environmentally sustainable features such as passive solar design, natural ventilation, solar water heating, insulation, water efficiency and storage, minimal artificial light and waste management systems.

The AMRTA has currently received over \$1.2 million in grant funds for the Project and will be proposing to inject over \$1.6 million of its own funds to complete the project. Thank you to our grant sponsors Australian Government Grant (Regional Infrastructure Funding Program), Lotterywest, Royalties for Regions, Southwest Development Commission and Envirofund.

