

## JEWEL CAVE DAZZLES AGAIN

Corey Gale \*



Following an extensive redevelopment the stunning Jewel Cave, near Augusta in Western Australia, was officially re-opened on Wednesday 9th February, 2011, by the Honourable Brendon Grylls, Minister for Regional Development.

Over 170 people gathered for the grand opening of the Jewel Cave Preservation Centre, which is equipped with new interpretation panels, retail stands and full cafe facilities. The uniquely designed building has been crafted to incorporate the natural environment and overlooks lush forest, whilst offering a comfortable and engaging visitor experience.

Guests were invited to tour Jewel Cave and experience for themselves the dazzling beauty of its ancient adornments. As Western Australia's largest show cave, Jewel Cave is home to a stunning array of stalactites, straws and flow stones which entice visitors into this magical subterranean treasure trove.

The rejuvenation of Jewel Cave is a major step forward for the Augusta Margaret River Tourism Association (AMRTA) who have been developing the project for over eight years. The AMRTA worked with Willcox Architects on the project in order to develop an ecologically sensitive building which best complements the natural integrity and beauty of the site.

Chair of the AMRTA Board, Rachel House, acknowledged the input that different organisations had in the project. The \$3.1 million project has received funding from a variety of sources including Lotterywest, Royalties for Regions, TQUAL, South West Development Commission, RIFP and Envirofund.

Ms House commented that, "A great many people have dedicated a lot of time and hard work bringing this vision to life and to see it culminate in such a fantastic facility is testament to their determination."

Minister Grylls, who oversees the Royalties for Regions program, officially welcomed guests to the occasion and was delighted to experience the results of the funding for himself, "As well as the direct environmental benefits to the cave, the redevelopment creates a first rate experience for visitors," he said.

The project, which saw the cave close for four months during late 2010, included the removal of 50 year old infrastructure from the site to enable natural filtration of water and the protection of threatened ecological communities that live within the cave. Along with a new tunnel entrance, car parking and walkways have been constructed to tie into the Preservation Centre design. Revegetation of the site is about to commence after the driest summer on record in the south west of Australia. For more information about the limestone caves in the Margaret River region and information about visiting go to

[www.margaretriver.com](http://www.margaretriver.com).

\* Acting Attractions Manager, AMRTA



L-R. Tony Tapper, Lloyd Robinson, Ron Spackman, Lex Bastion. The first Jewel Cave explorers – with Ron standing in for his father Cliff Spackman.



New access way connecting the new visitor center to the cave.



Anne Wood and Robyn MacBeath

## Coming Events

2011: June 20-25	International Karstological School, Slovenia
2011: July 16-24	Asia-Pacific Geoparks Network Symposium, Vietnam
2011: July 20-27	INQUA Quaternary Sciences Congress, Bern, Switzerland
2011: August 15-18	Central American Congress of Karst and Speleology, Guatemala
2011: September 13-16	Parks Forum "Re-Discover Parks Conference," Perth, Western Australia
2011: Sept 23-25	Middle East Speleology Symposium, Lebanon
2011: Oct 25-26, Nov. 25-26	Centre for Gippsland Studies. Churchill, Victoria (Workshop and Conference)
2011: Oct 30-Nov 1	Global Geotourism Conference, Oman
<b>. . . and Looking Ahead:</b>	
2012: May	<b>ACKMA Annual General Meeting, Wee Jasper, NSW</b>
2012: Aug 5-10	International Geological Congress, Brisbane
2012: Sept 6-15	World Conservation Conference. Jeju Island, South Korea
2013: May	<b>ACKMA 20<sup>th</sup> Conference, Waitomo Caves, NZ</b>
2013: 21-28 July	International Congress of Speleology, Brno, Czech Republic