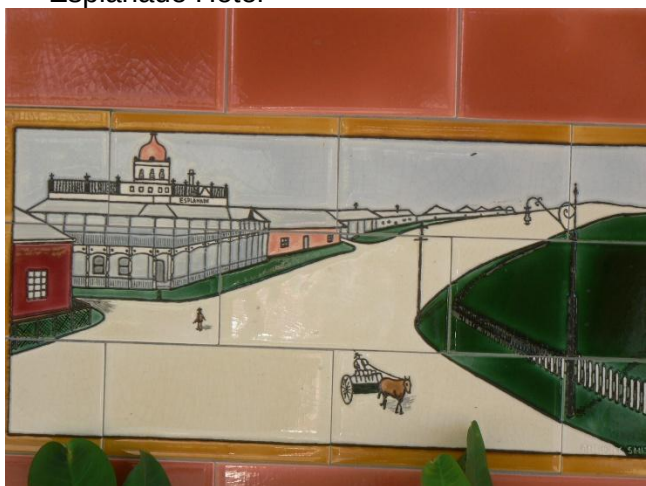


WESTERN AUSTRALIA – April to June 2011

Introduction: This Western Australian road trip followed 3 days exploring Fremantle while based in the historic -----



----- Esplanade Hotel-----



----- on the Fremantle waterfront.



We then headed off on a 58 day road trip throughout Western Australia as documented and illustrated below.

Day 1 – Thursday 14 April: First thing in the morning we collected a campervan from the KEA depot and after shopping for supplies and dropping our travel suitcases back to Kea headed south along the coast to Mandurah and the Top Tourist Holiday Park for our first night on the road.

Day 2 – Friday 15 April: As my Canon camera on-off switch failed yesterday and the local Fremantle Camera House advised that we would need to go to Perth to check if it could be repaired, we purchased a new Lumix FH 25 camera for Lexie at the Mandurah Camera House so we could use that for the rest of the trip and sort out the Canon when we returned to Auckland. Sales person Glenda put the camera on charge while we spent time around the shops. Then it was out to the Creery Wetland to try out our new camera with -----



----- shots of its ponds and saltmarsh boardwalk -----



----- then out through the bush walk trail to a bird-hide.

Back in camp that evening we checked the photos out and were very satisfied with our new purchase.

Day 3 –Saturday 16 April: As we left camp 9.30am we stopped off to view the -----



----- Venetian Canals development where apartments were being advertised for sale at \$795,000 (equal to \$1.113 million AUD or \$1.36 million NZ dollars today).

South of Mandurah we took Lakeside Road through St John Road to visit the Lake Clifton Thrombolites and -----



----- took the boardwalk out to the -----



----- the viewing jetty. These thrombolites are "living rocks" (microbialites) where microorganisms draw calcium carbonate from the lime rich lake water to create rocklike formations with a "clotted" texture. They grow around 1mm/year and differ from stromatolites which have a layered internal structure. The Clifton Lake has the largest "lake-bound" thrombolite reef in the Southern Hemisphere.

Moving on to Bunbury we drove up to the Marist Hill Tower -----



----- with its widespread views over the foreshore suburbs -----



----- and across the inland estuary to a huge bush fire

At the southern edge of the estuary was ----



-----Mangrove Cove with its wetland and -----



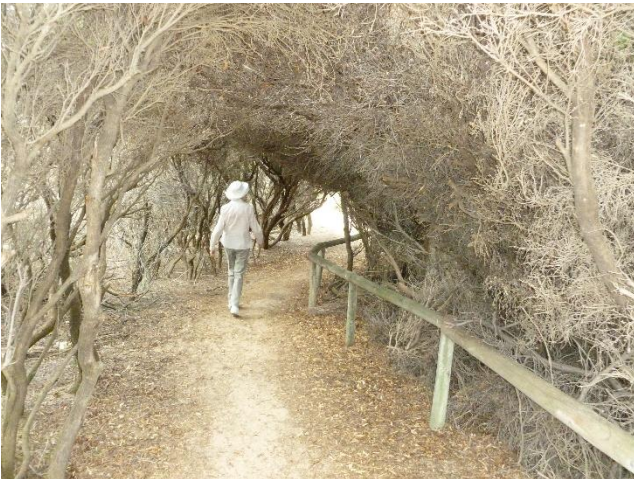
----- mangrove walkways and viewing platforms.

We headed for Margaret River on the south coast via -----



----- Tuart Forest Drive, stopping for a cuppa with a foreshore view of the Busselton Jetty which at over 1.8km is the longest timber piled jetty in the Southern Hemisphere.

Day 4 – Sunday 17 April: During the morning at Margaret River we took the coastal walkway -----



----- out to the Huzzas Cliff Memorial where on 27 September 1996 a huge 200 ton section of the cliff collapsed without warning on a school group of children and parents who were watching a surfing competition. Five adults and four children lost their lives in the tragedy.

Continuing on along the Cape to Cape Walkway -----



----- (125 km from Cape Naturaliste to Cape Leeuwin) -----



----- we were treated to great coastline views across thick coastal vegetation. Then it was back to town for a walk around Margaret River to end our day of sight-seeing.

Day 5 – Monday 18 April: We headed out to Knotting Hill Winery -----





----- and enjoyed excellent Sauvignon Semillon with our vineyard platter lunch.

The Fonti Cheese Factory at Margaret River -----



----- allowed us to stock up following a tasting.

Then after refuelling we journeyed east to Pemberton. While checking in at the Caravan Park around 6pm the camp owner, who was looking into a car outside the office, called in to the receptionist who was checking in 3 Chinese girls to a cabin "there are 5 people with this car – two of them are hidden down in the back seat".

Day 6 – Tuesday 19 April: Pemberton had a forest railway -----



-----where we saw the morning tram run crossing the main road as we headed east through -----



----- karri forest to Northcliffe, a very neat and tidy township -----



----- with its Museum showing pioneer life. In addition to the outdoor artwork everywhere the Windmill Gallery adjacent to (and operated by) -----



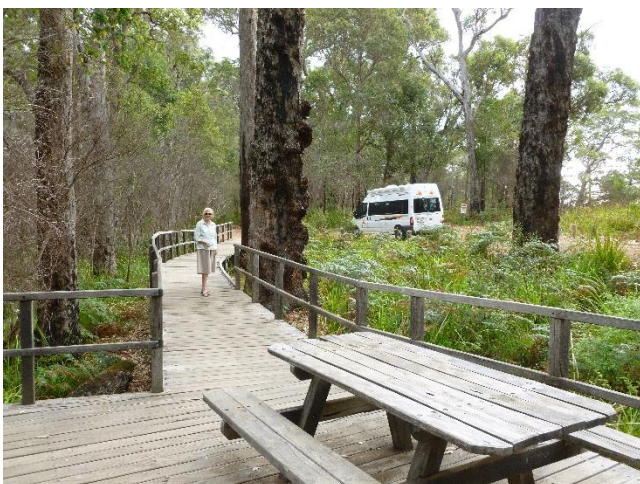
----- the motel had loads of Fairy Wren material on display, and we were told there are some 17 types of this colourful bird (one of our favourites).

We gave a miss to the Forest Sculpture Trail (\$8.00 per person) instead taking our walk for the day ----



----- along the free forest trail.

From Northcliffe we cut across country east to Highway 1 and then south to Walpole, stopping at the hilltop rest area -----



----- to take the boardwalk to the John Rate Lookout with its view down to Nornalup Inlet where Walpole is located.

Before tea we took a walk to the -----

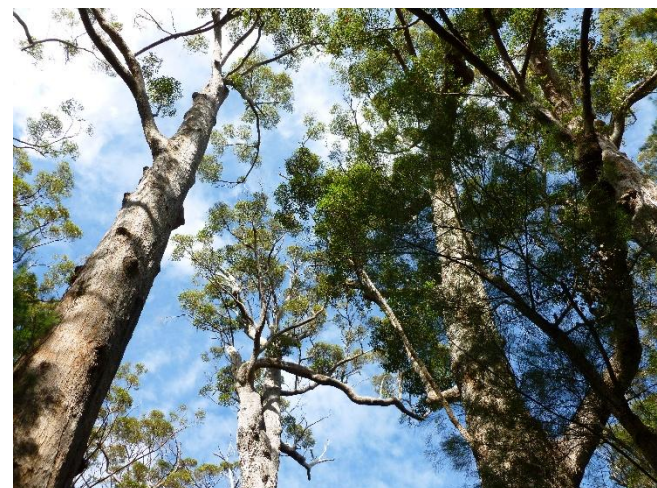
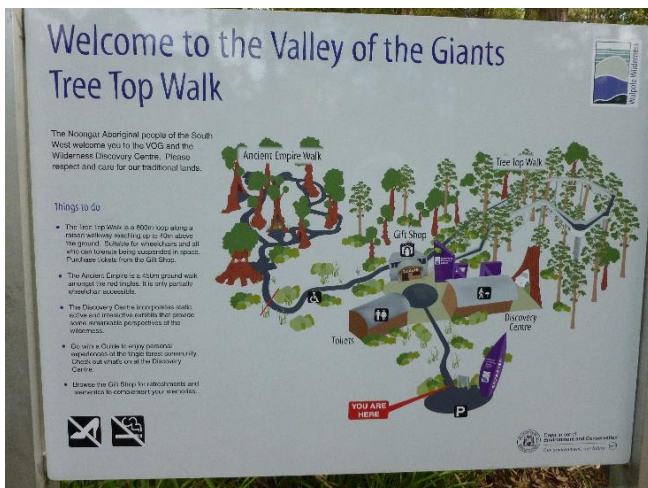


---- foreshore Bibbulmun Trail -----



----- spotting these pelicans at the water's edge, and later these kangaroos feeding nonchalantly in a front garden.

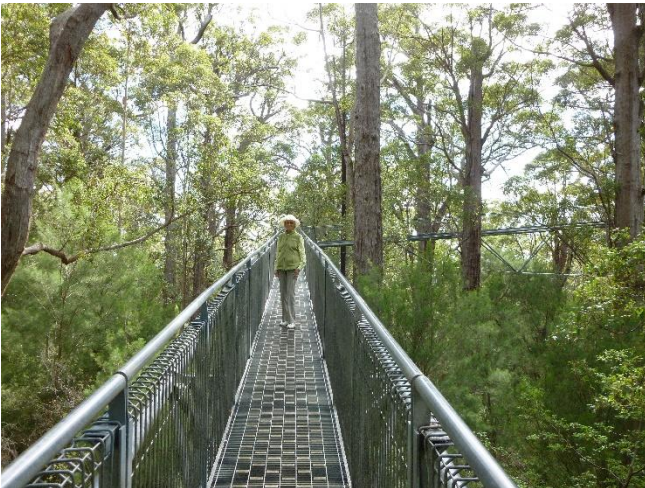
Day 7 – Wednesday 20 April: Continuing east from Walpole towards Demark we visited the Nornalup National Park and -----





----- the Valley of the Giants and took the Ancient Empire Walk amongst the red tingle trees, a giant eucalyptus species endemic to southwestern Western Australia, known for its enormous size, buttressed base, and ecological significance. On the left is the Grandmother Tree and on the right we are standing at the foot of the Bat Tree.

The Tree Top Walk -----



----- threaded its way amongst the tingle forest canopy -----



----- and high above the forest floor.



The Visitor Centre had excellent displays of forest plants and life forms.

East from the Valley of the Giants we turned south to William Bay to visit Elephant Rocks. The tide was in as we got our first view -----



---- of the Bay, with thunderous surf rolling in towards -----



----- Elephant Rocks, requiring us to tread carefully as waves swept into the spaces around the formations and stopping us from accessing Elephant Cove for the best ground level views.

It was then on to Denmark and Site 52 at the Rivermouth Caravan Park.

Day 8 – Thursday 21 April: Today was a rest day -----

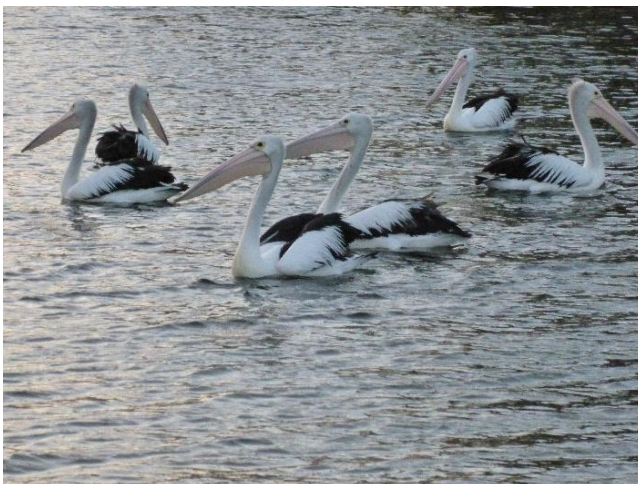


----- with a potentially hazardous riverside bushwalk into town for lunch -----



----- followed by a lazy time reading and relaxing in camp.

Day 9 – Good Friday 22 April: For our morning walk we drove down Ocean Beach Road -----



----- passing pelicans on the river before reaching the pontoon bridge -----



----- where a guy on a bicycle offered to take our photo before we arrived at Wilson Inlet.



This locality had plenty of birdlife including Pied Shags and Great Blue Heron

Lunch at The Lakehouse Winery and Restaurant in the hills north-west of Denmark was special -----



----- with its lake-side and forest setting -----



----- and great wine and food. We did not drink all that Semillon Sauvignon Blanc for lunch – the waitress said we can take the bottle with us.

It was a long drive in the afternoon as we headed north through Mount Barker to Stirling Range National Park where the camping area was chock full of Easter holiday makers.



Continuing north toward Borden we passed the Stirling Range Lily Dutch Windmill, a 16th Century five story fully functioning brick replica. The estate also provides self-contained accommodation.

However, we needed to find a camping ground as we headed west through Gnowangerup into the sunset, and after 276km for the day eventually found Broomehill Caravan Park -----



----- where we were the only overnight campers.

Day 10 – Saturday 23 April: After exploring Broomehill, a wheat and gold mining area, we headed north through Katanning with its wheat fields and sheep grazing on stubble in harvested areas. The wool industry was celebrated at Wagin ----



----- with its Big Merino nearby at the showgrounds where we camped overnight.

Day 11 – Easter Sunday 11 April: Wagin annually hosts Woolorama (the largest Agricultural Show in WA outside the metropolitan areas) in the first weekend of March.



We spotted these quirky tin sculptures near the Showgrounds.

There were two watering holes in Wagin, the historic “The Old Wagon Well” of 1886 -----



----- being for passing drovers and townsfolk, the modern second one being for Woolorama patrons.

Travelling east from Wagin though huge dust storms -----



----- affecting the road and grazing sheep -----



-----we reached Dumbleyung with its classic Aussie Tavern and loo, -----



----- and where on 31 December 1964 Donald Campbell broke the world water speed record in his boat Bluebird travelling at 444.66 km/hr over Lake Dumbleyung.

Continuing east through the dusty stubble -----



----- of harvested wheat country we passed through Dudinin -----



----- to reach Kulin where heavy rain had partly flooded the main street.

We took the Tin Horse Highway -----



-----some 15 km east of town to view the several dozen roadside sculptures.

The tin horse sculptures along the road were created by the local community to publicise the annual Kulin Bush Races. With new tin horses added each year there are some 70 sculptures as of 2026. A selection of those for which we took photos are shown below.





From Kulin we travelled north to Kondinin for an overnight stay at the local caravan park, and watched the movie “Gallipoli” on our TV while we had our evening meal.

Day 12 – ANZAC Day, Monday 25 April: A Remembrance Service was concluding as ----



----- we headed for the Kondinin Bush Walk where we had a constant battle with the flies.



The long straight road heading west to Corrigin continued on to meet the No.2 Rabbit Proof Fence constructed 1904 to 1905. Three fence lines were constructed in stages to stretch from near Esperance on the south coast north some 2,023 miles to Port Hedland in order to protect the western part of the State from an invasion of rabbits from the east. This photo is at the location of a Yard Trap where rabbits which had strayed through to the western side of the fence and trying to return east were funnelled into the yard from where fence riders could dispose of them

Day 13 – Tuesday 26 April: We discovered in Quairading where we overnighted that the whole WA State was on holiday until Wednesday due to combining both the Easter and ANZAC holiday periods, so there were no shops open, the only supplies being at the BP service station (which had run out of milk).



We were in the heart of wheat country here with harvested grain being stored in huge sheds (as at The Grain Pool above) instead of the silos we had seen in South Australia and NSW on previous trips.

Heading east on Bruce Rock Road we crossed through Pink Lake which changes colour when evaporation drops the lake level and -----



----- salt accumulates on vegetation in the lake as well as along the foreshore. There was no pink today.

Further east we turned off the main road for a side visit to Kokerbin Rock -----



----- a granite rock formation and the third largest monolith in Australia -----



----- where we parked up for a 1 hour walk and climb.



There were great views from the summit and a -----

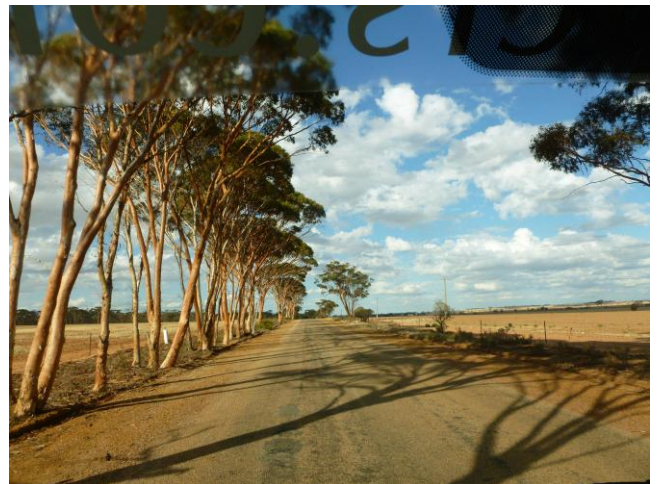


----- section of the walking track passed the “devil’s marbles”.

Before we reached the township of Bruce Rock we passed through Shackleton -----



----- where it's still operating bank (Fridays 3 to 4.30pm) originated as a branch of the Bank of NSW from the 1930s before being taken over by BankWest in 1997.



Our day finished with a long straight run to Merredin where the only food available on this last day of the holiday was from Subway, our first and only and never repeated experience of this takeaway chain.

Day14 – Wednesday 27 April: Our morning walk was to the Railway Dam which involved a rock wall being built around the granite Merredin Peak to collect rainfall runoff from a 40 hectare area and divert it to a 25 million litre water storage dam originally used for railway engine supply. It was designed by Engineer C. Y. O'Connor who designed and constructed the Goldfields Pipeline Perth to Kalgoorlie.



The Merredin Peak and rock wall captures rainfall runoff -----



----- with an outlet channel -----



----- leading to the storage dam.

Back in town the whole place was buzzing after the extended holiday weekend, and we were able to stock up at the IGA grocery store before heading 4km west to the No. 4 pump station on O'Connor's Goldfields Pipeline. This steam powered pumping system was constructed in 1902 and was replaced in the 1950's by an electric powered pump station which was itself upgraded to a separate new station in 2001.



The original Merredin steam powered pump station and a section of the 566km long Goldfields Pipeline supplying water to the Eastern Goldfields from 1903, specifically Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie.

From Merredin we headed west on the Great Eastern Highway 94 to then divert south west to York, east of Perth. We were still in wheat country with both -----



----- shed storage and tower silo storage units holding harvested grain.

We stopped in at the Tammin Hydrology Model housed -----



----- in the Tammin Amphitheatre building and featuring a working model depicting a typical wheat belt landscape showing how farming land is being lost to salinity, and showing some solutions. If effective salinity control solutions are not implemented some \$400 million annual losses are predicted.

We reached historic York around 4pm and after checking the availability of good TV reception (to watch the Royal Wedding on Friday) -----



----- booked in for 3 nights at Mt Bakewell Caravan Park 4km north of town. York is the oldest inland town in WA 61 km east of Perth, and gateway to the wheat belt. The town hall was built in 1911.

Day 15 – Thursday 28 April: Today was a housekeeping and rest day with one walk, this to -----



----- the nearby racecourse which was moderately busy.

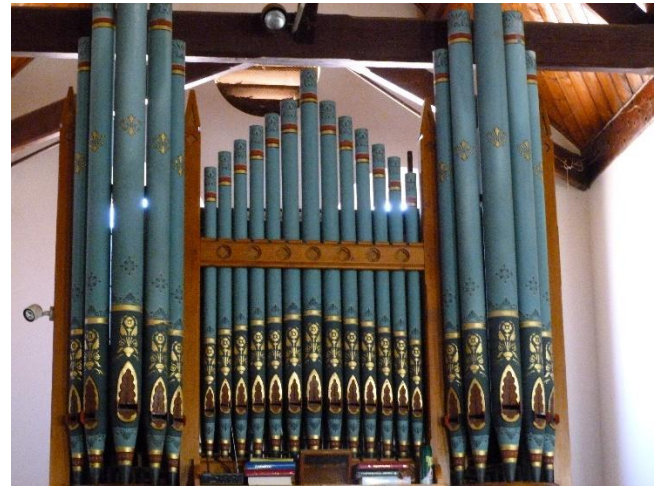
Day 26 – Friday 29 April: Explored York by foot today, -----



----- checking out quirky locations -----



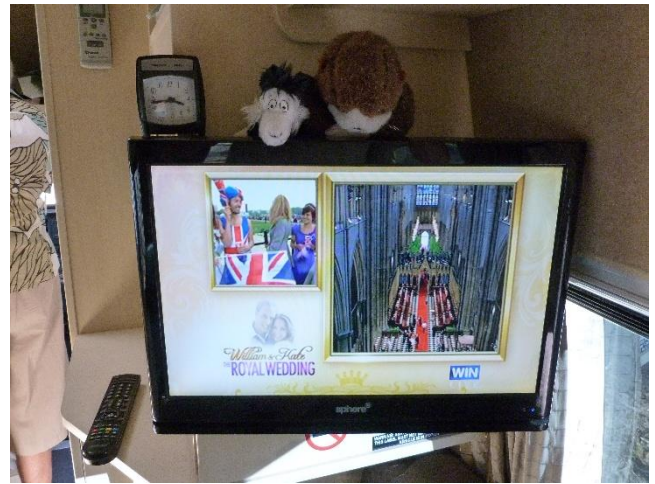
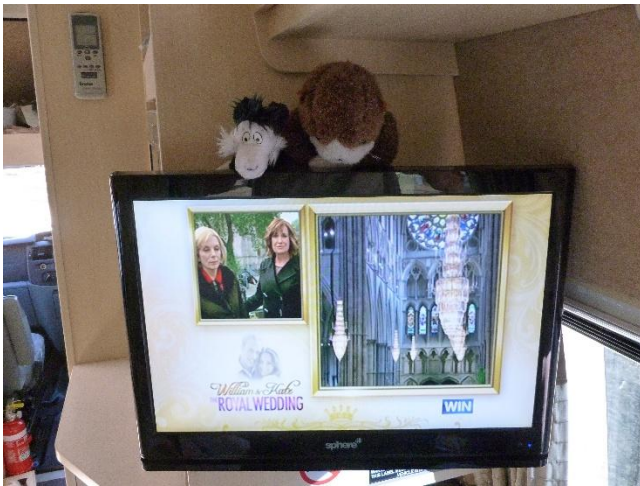
----- and walking to the 1858 Holy Trinity Church with its really neat stained glass windows -----



----- and magnificent pipe organ.



After lunch at the Settlers Courtyard Restaurant we headed back to camp and set up the TV -----

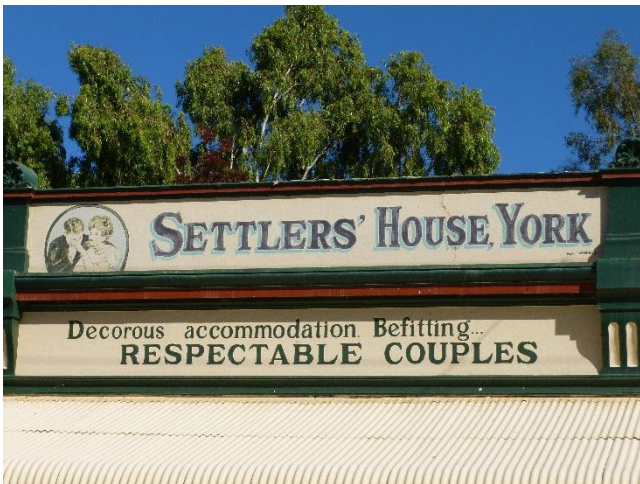


-----for the Royal Wedding of Prince William to Kate Middleton, 3.30 to 9.30pm.

We took some 50 plus photos of the event from the TV screen, with samples shown below.



Day 17 – Saturday 30 April: Explored more of Main Street -----



----- noting the Settler's House emphasis on "respectable" clientele, -----



----- and then headed north to Northam on the Great Eastern Highway where we took a late morning walk over the White Swan Swing Bridge on the River Avon, but it was this Great Egret that captured our attention rather than the few swans around.

Continuing north on Highway 115 into more wheat country we stopped off to view the Dolly Parton Grain Silos at Goomalling, -----



----- each of these having a capacity of 10,000 tonne.

Like many of the country towns we passed through -----



----- Goomalling had a range of rural life sculptures on outdoor display.



It was late afternoon as we tracked through dead flat country to Dalwallinu where the columns in the Discovery Centre represent -----



----- salmon gum trees (*Eucalyptus salmonophloia*) being one of the “signature” species in the Wheatbelt around Dalwallinu (the indoor photo from the Centre website).

Day 18 – Sunday 1 May: Travelling on north of Dalwallinu we soon left wheat country for scrublands, and were now on the major route (Great Northern Highway 95) heading 370km to Mt Magnet (the longest surviving gold mining settlement in WA) -----



----- with its open-air cinema and mining heritage, and where we saw our first -----



----- 55m long ore carrying road train.

Day 19 – Monday 2 May: Continuing on to the mining town of Newman the road was very busy with huge 3 trailer road trains as well as transporters carrying mining equipment.



It required a long straight stretch of road to pass a 55m long fuel road train before we caught up with this transporter carrying a disassembled mining dump truck on the road through the township of Cue.

Cue is an historic gold mining township (2016 census population 178) with some great heritage buildings -----



----- including the old Post Office and the Masonic Lodge, this latter being considered the largest corrugated iron building in the Southern Hemisphere.



After many km from Cue we were able to bypass the dump truck transporter as it pulled off-road into a rest area while we continued on to Meekatharra. Our roadside scenery was brightened -----



----- with roadside flowers and interesting mailboxes such as this one at the access road entrance to Munarra Homestead.

We overnighted at Kumarina Roadhouse after a 447km drive from Mt Magnet

Day 20 – Tuesday 3 May: We only had 170km to go to Newman and -----



----- called in at Capricorn Roadhouse just south of Newman to find it a very busy transport hub with some 6 ore carrying 4 trailer road trains refuelling.

Newman is the location of the largest single-pit open-cut iron ore mine in the world. The deposit was discovered in 1957 when prospectors Stan and Ella Hilditch climbed the hill now known as Mt Whaleback looking for manganese only to find a massive deposit of iron ore beneath their feet.



The entrance to Newman has a sculptural welcome and -----



----- a well-used old mining dump truck on display.

Day 21 – Wednesday 4 May: We overnighted at the Calgan's Rest Caravan Park, being checked in by a lady from Whangarei who came to Newman from Westport Mines some years back. Lexie had a blood pressure check at the Newman Hospital Doctors surgery and was prescribed medication to control her high reading. We headed off early afternoon for Port Hedland with rain all the way, oncoming road trains creating huge spray off the wet road. After 460km we reached the Big 4 Tourist Park at Cooke Point on a day when wet conditions and lack of subjects prevented the taking of any photos.

Day 22 – Thursday 5 May: We visited a local pharmacy for a blood pressure update for Lexie and found the pharmacist to be a lady from Te Awamutu. Having left the inland Highway 95 (among the remotest sealed roads anywhere in the world) we were now on the Great Northern Highway 1 heading east from Port Hedland.



We passed through “hummocky” country to reach -----



----- the Pardoo Roadhouse for food supplies -----



----- before continuing on to camp overnight at Sandfire near 80 Mile Beach.

Day 23 – Friday 6 May: There were a selection of animals and birds roaming the Sandfire Roadhouse site -----



----- including this camel (our photo) and a white peacock (website photo).

Today we travelled 350km to Broome, turning off left from Highway1 -----



----- to refuel at Roebuck Plains Roadhouse and take Broome Road west 36km to Cable Beach Caravan Park for a five night stay. It was a short walk to the beach where we had great sunsets each evening.

Day 24 – Saturday 7 May: Today was a housekeeping and maintenance day, but we took time out-----



----- for lunch at Zanders beachfront restaurant.

Day 25 – Sunday 8 May: First visit for the day was the -----



----- historic Courthouse and adjacent Sunday market -----



----- with its stalls sheltered by a great variety of trees (such as this Boab) -----



----- and the park lined with a variety of palm trees in full fruit.

We then drove to the western foreshore and port area -----



----- where out to sea (to the left of Lexie's hat) there was a pearl lugger cruise under way.

We also had a look around -----



----- Broome Port with a walk out onto the shorter of its two shipping jetties, and then -----



----- back in town walked out on the historic Streeters Jetty which was used from 1897 to serve pearl luggers and merchants.

We spent the rest of the day at Cable Beach Reserve and late afternoon watched the -----



----- camel caravans -----



----- and another great sunset before -----



----- picking up a take-away meal from Zanders.

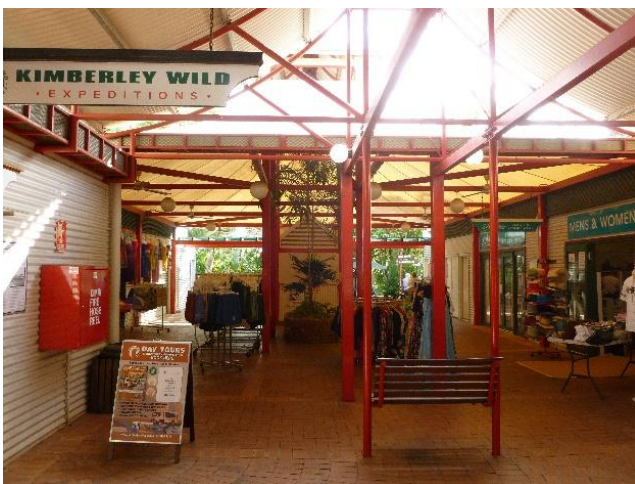


Our final event for the day was the movie "Water for Elephants" at -----



----- Sun Pictures, claimed to be "The World's Oldest Operating Picture Gardens"

Day 26 – Monday 9 May: After some local shopping -----



----- around Johnny Chi Lane off Dampier Street we spent the rest of the day at Cable Bay Reserve again.

Day 27 – Tuesday 10 May: This was a maintenance day, Lexie to a hairdresser, and me to Novus Glass repair shop to have windscreen damage repaired, arrangements having been made for this on Monday via Kia Campers.

In the early evening out at Cable Bay beach -----



----- a wedding party were having their photos taken -----



----- in the light of the setting sun.

Day 28 – Wednesday 11 May: Our farewell day for Broome, with a morning exploring town and visiting Bedford Memorial Park with its statuary of -----



----- the Women in Pearling Monument, and the bronze bust of French explorer Captain Nicholas Baudin.

The 3m tall monument depicts an Aboriginal woman emerging from the water holding a pearl shell and was erected as a tribute to those women who were exploited as divers during the 'black birding' phase of the pearling industry in Broome. The Bedford Park location is where pearling luggers were laid-up after voyages and divers families would wait for the pearling crews to return.

The bust commemorates the voyages and exploration work of Captain Nicholas Baudin 1800 to 1804 in the ships 'Geographe' and 'Naturaliste' accompanied by 23 scientists covering areas in astronomy, botany, zoology, minerology, horticulture and geography. After sailing from Le Harve, Normandy, on 19 October 1800 they arrived in what is now Geographe Bay south of Perth on 31 May 1801. Thus began several years of charting some 2/3 of the Australian coastline (including south eastern coast of Tasmania – Van Diemens Land on earlier Dutch charts), covering in detail the whole of Western Australia. The scientists collected some 200,000 specimens of flora and fauna which was the most valuable natural history collection of its time, and included 2,542 new to science.

By chance Baudin came across and met with Matthew Flinders in South Australia on 8 April 1802 at a location Flinders subsequently named 'Encounter Bay' (south-east of present day Melbourne). Baudin gave French names to 100's of places in Australia, 240 of which are still in use in Western Australia. Unfortunately he did not make it home, dying of tuberculosis on 16 September 1803 at Mauritius during the return voyage.

So late afternoon we headed out the 36km back to the junction with Great Northern Highway 1 at the Roebuck Plains Roadhouse to camp overnight in preparation for our return journey west and south to Perth.

Day 29 – Thursday 12 May: Woke 6am to -----



----- an interesting sunrise, and finding we were almost alone overnight in the camping area at the roadhouse. Heading west we stopped off at Sandfire Roadhouse for lunch ----



----with the peacocks and ----



----- dozens of galah on the ground and in the trees..

There was a large three trailer liquefied natural gas road train parked up as we arrived.



It was a very impressive set of wheels.



It was familiar country as we passed hillocks we had photographed from the other direction as we headed up the coast. So it was in to Pardoo Roadhouse to stop overnight after a 420km day on the road.

Day 30 – Friday 13 May: About 20km out from Port Hedland -----



----- we came across a series of roadside termite mounds with hardhats!!!

After refuelling at the BP Great Northern Highway before reaching the turnoff to Port Hedland we stopped at the “Welcome Rest Area” across from the northern end of the airport runway to view “Transformation”, a 2009 sculpture funded by Billiton Iron Ore.



The concrete represents the red earth and iron ore of the Pilbara and the steel element the ongoing refining of technology and materials and humanity's striving for achievement. The inscription states that "the two forms are linked and intertwine in what is a continuously revolving wheel, from earth to processed material and back again".

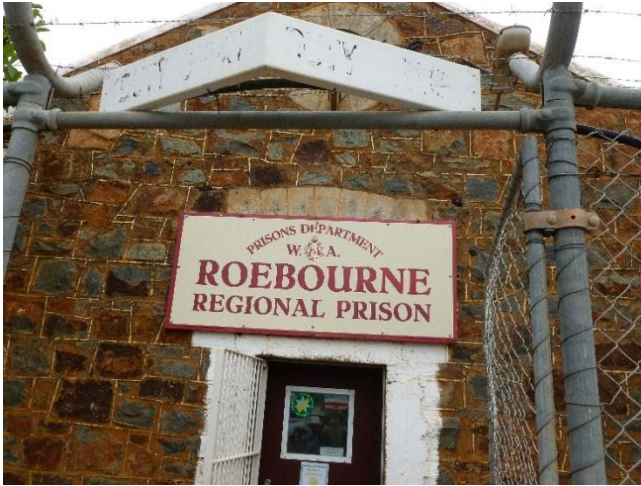


Bypassing Port Hedland we passed a large load which had been halted by police to let following traffic through. Around 45 minutes later we reached the entrance to Whim Creek, a notable landmark midway between Port Hedland and Karratha with -----



----- the roadside entrance sign a model of its famous hotel. The original hotel built in the 1860s was a traveller's rest stop and was blown down via cyclone winds on 3 occasions. It was the hub of a mining village after copper was discovered nearby in 1872 and gold in 1887. It became renowned for its alcoholic camel which drank patron's beers, eventually being relocated when found to be suffering from cirrhosis of the liver.

At Roebourne we called in at -----



-----the historic goal, now well fenced off to prevent people getting in. We then turned off Highway 1 north to the historic ghost town of Cossak with its superbly restored buildings including -----



----- the Courthouse, ----- Galbraith's store (the first building to be constructed of basalt after an 1898 cyclone destroyed all the wooden buildings in town) -----



----- and the Customs House and Bond Store.

Cossak was the birthplace of Western Australia's pearling industry, and subsequently became the first port in the North West and critical to development of the pastoral industry in the region. It was then off to Point Samson where we hunkered down from strong winds at the Samson Beach Caravan Park.

Day 31 – Saturday 14 May: Given the forecast for continuing winds with rain we booked in for another two nights as -----



----- our camping spot was very sheltered, and there were plenty of local walks of interest, including the historic jetty which replaced the Cossack wharf in 1902.

From the partially ruined jetty we could look across the bay to -----



----- the iron ore loading dock at Cape Lambert with one of the longest, highest and deepest wharves in Australia.



The dock is operated by Rio Tinto Iron Ore and handles up to 80 million tonnes of ore annually.

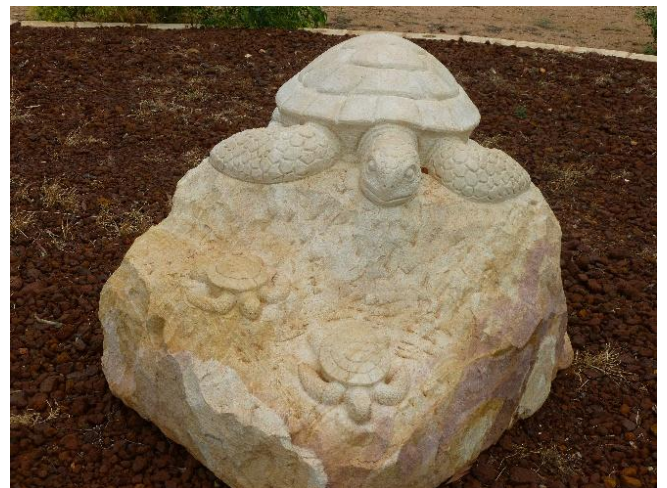
We then took the Johns Creek walk to -----



----- the industrial area where local school children had decorated one of the containers. Then back to camp via the Community Park which had lots of art works -----



----- including murals and -----



----- sculptures and -----



----- a supporters walkway illustrated which school kids' tiles.

Day 32 – Sunday 15 May: Foreshore walks today included -----



----- Honeymoon Cove and -----



----- the hill from where we could overlook the local harbour and workshop areas.

Day 33 – Monday 16 May: After a huge storm overnight the day cleared as we left camp, taking a last look around the village -----



---- including this seagull bench seat at the park, and the storm shutters on this holiday home.

We headed down to Roebourne and turned west onto the Great Northern Highway and soon -----



----- came across the effects of last night's heavy rain as traffic coming towards us sprayed water all over the van.



We accessed email at the Visitor Centre after turning into Karratha, it requiring 4 staff members to reboot all the internet systems after last night's power outage during the storm.

Then, after the rest of the day in town we headed to the suburb of Rosemary and the Big 4 Holiday Park.

Day 34 – Tuesday 17 May: From Karratha we headed across the causeway -----



----- between evaporation lagoons for the Dampier Salt Works, and turned north to the Burrup Peninsula and Hearson's Cove, stopping to catch some road-side Sturt's desert pea in full bloom.

At Ngajarli (Deep) Gorge we spent an hour viewing and photographing some of the accessible petroglyphs (rock engravings) up the gorge, this being the most prolific Aboriginal rock art site in Australia. There are some 10,000 petroglyphs throughout the peninsula and adjacent islands, estimated to be 47,000 years old.



The access track was pretty rugged (a 700m boardwalk has been installed since 2011), and today visitors keep to the walkway and viewing areas rather than climb onto the rocks.

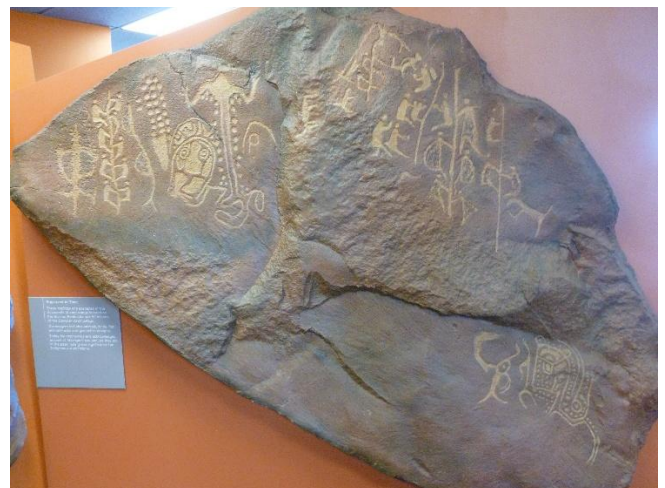
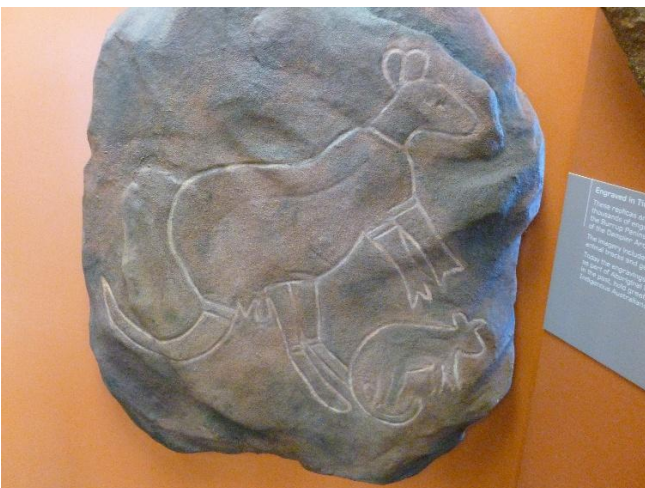


There were loads of animal engravings -----



---- as well as what seemed to be the occasional almost human representation.

The Northwest Shelf Visitor Centre had a couple of replica rock art engravings of typical art work, comprising animals, birds, fish, animal tracks and geometric designs.



On the high ground outside the Visitor Centre was -----



----- this metal sculpture of two workers assisting a companion. It is a memorial to workers who lost their lives during the construction of the Northwest Shelf Gas Project and conveys mateship, courage and compassion.

The Project is the largest oil and gas development in Australia -----



----- encompassing a huge area (as per this website panorama) -----

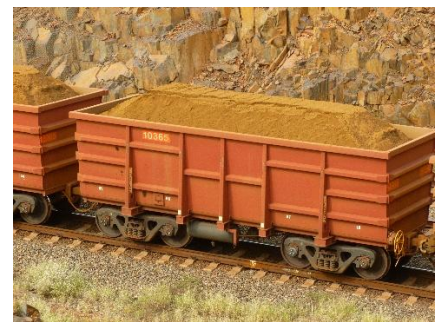


----- with one of the offshore huge drilling platforms visible well out to sea, -----



----- and large gas storage facilities at the left of the complex.

Rio Tinto also operates a major iron ore ship loading facility nearby -----



----- with exceptionally long trains carrying ore towards the loading facilities

We checked in late afternoon at the Dampier Caravan Park, stopping off at the Red Dog memorial at the town welcome sign.



Red Dog (1971 to 21 November 1979) was a kelpie/cattle dog cross who was well known for travelling widely throughout the extensive Pilbara Region. He was initially owned by Colin Cummings of Dampier, then sold to John Stazzonelli who as a truck driver took Red Dog all over Western Australia from Perth to Broome. When Stazzonelli died in 1975 Red was adopted by various folk when returning for periods between his travels. The Bank of NSW gave him a bank account (presumably this paid for veterinary check-ups) and used him as a mascot in its advertising "*If Red banks at the Wales, then you can too*". His name "Red" has been attributed to the red dirt throughout the Pilbara region.

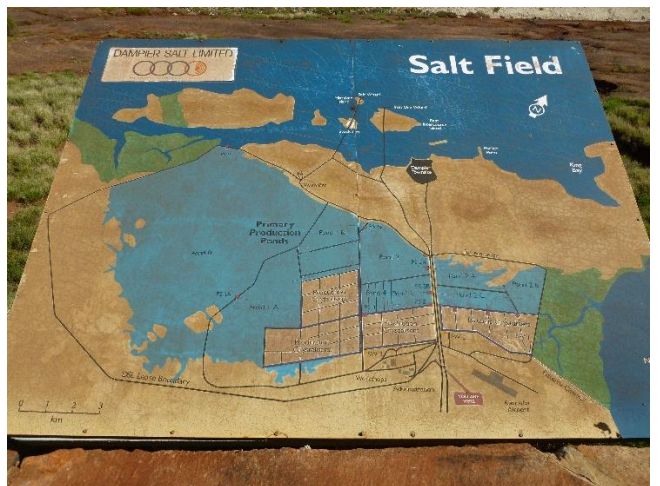


Early evening we headed out to Hearson Cove beach where people were congregating to watch -----



----- the rising moon cast its light across the low tide mud flats as the "Staircase to the Moon".

Day 35 – Wednesday 18 May: A bright sunny morning with ore ships -----



----- loading at the jetty across the bay from camp. We headed out of Dampier back to Karratha and while stopped at the Salt Field Lookout -----



----- watched an incredibly long empty ore train pass by.

We stopped off in Karratha to refuel and found that a rear window on the van had shattered into small pieces, fortunately with all bits still holding together. We found the address of Novus windscreen repairs which turned out to be guy, Nigel Richards, who worked out of his home garage.



Nigel said that a proper repair could only be done in Perth, but he taped up the window and did not charge us anything. The rest of the day involved a 390km drive south west past Nanutarra some 70km to Barradale 24hour rest area at Yannarie River.

Day 36 – Thursday 19 May: There were about 6 campers at Barradale overnight with -----



----- a tent group close by still sleeping as the sun rose and the moon set.

Travelling south we turned northwest at Burkett Road to head cross-country 76km to the Minilya-Exmouth Road. Halfway along Burkett Road we passed the turnoff to Giralia Bay with its sculpture -----

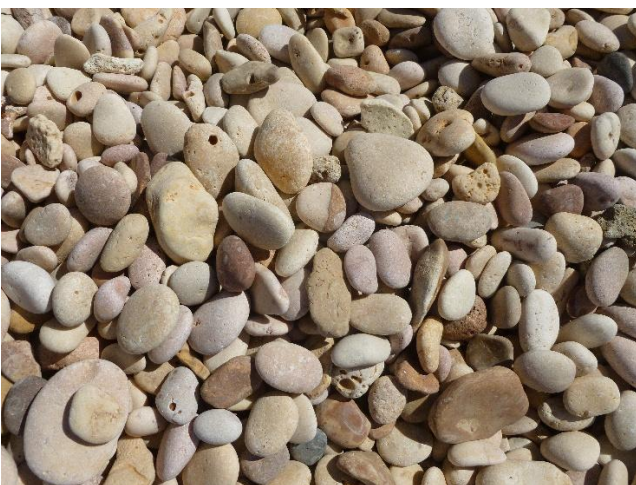


----- of the Tin Man Fishing (web photo), then on the Exmouth Road headed through sheep country.

We passed the Kailis Prawn Fishery entrance -----



----- on our way along the coast to Pebble Beach where -----

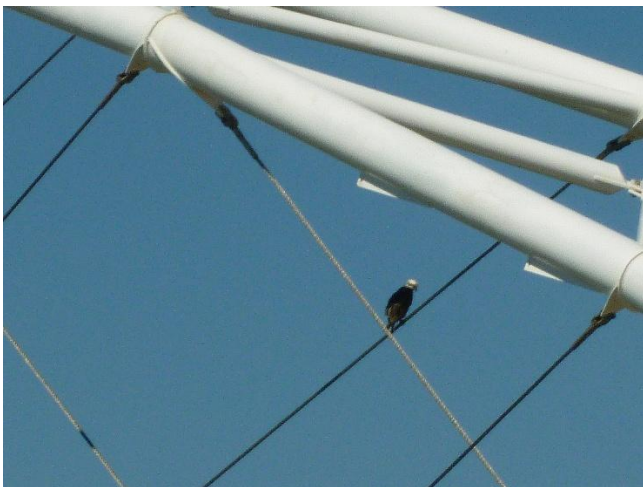


----- we examined some of the great variety of small stones covering several km of beach along the foreshore of Pebble Beach Cove.

On the outskirts of Exmouth township we called in at the marina -----



----- and walked across the new pedestrian bridge -----



----- where we were lucky enough to see an osprey perching on one of the cables.

We then booked in at the Ningaloo Caravan Park for two nights, and used the on-site Pinocchio Restaurant for an evening meal takeaway pizza.

Day 37 – Friday 20 May: The sunny morning provided a great opportunity to catch up on laundry and housekeeping. After lunch in camp we headed out up the Northwest Cape peninsula to Lighthouse Bay and drove up the hill -----



----- to the Vlamingh Head Lighthouse from where we could look down on a large holiday resort area (now in 2026 closed and fenced off).

A short distance down the coast to the west of the lighthouse was the Jurabi Turtle Centre -----



----- with its wildlife displays and information on turtle breeding and life at sea after hatching. They spend 8 years drifting and feeding on the ocean currents before returning to the local beach to lay eggs.

Then it was back to camp for an evening meal at Pinocchio Restaurant.

Day 38 – Saturday 21 May: Leaving town for a long day on the road south we stopped off at the Marina Harbour -----



----- which was full of both shrimp boats and pleasure craft.

After the "farewell" from town -----



----- we stopped off at the Krait Memorial on the coast near Learmonth Airfield. Operation Potshot (web photo above) relates to a US Navy submarine base which from 1942 was a refuelling depot for US submarines operating in the Pacific. Other Memorial Plaques at this site commemorate the use of the airfield for radar, radio, anti-aircraft guns and fighter planes used to protect the submarines using the base.



Then it was into termite country for some 60 to 70km, finding one roadside mound with personality. Some distance south we diverted west into Coral Bay, a base for -----



----- glass-bottom boat excursions out to the Ningaloo Reef, the white surf on the reef in contrast to the turquoise blue waters in the bay.



Rather than join the campers at Coral Bay we continued south to Carnarvon to check in as the sun set at the Coral Coast Tourist Park after 400km for the day

Day 39 – Sunday 22 May: Our early morning windy walk was from the Carnarvon end of the historic narrow gauge railway and pathway out to Babbage Island and the Mile Long Jetty at the port.



The walkway crossed the rail bridge to the Whitlock Station before continuing several km to the Jetty. The railway was used to transport produce (particularly bananas) and livestock out to the Port from 1900 to 1965. Our day trip was out to the Quobba Blowholes on the coast 75km north of Carnarvon via Blowhole Road. As we approached the foreshore the -----



----- Quobba Lighthouse stood out on the hill above the beach, while at the junction with Beach Road there was a significant cautionary sign regarding the huge swells that dominate this coast.

The blowholes comprise jets of seawater driven by powerful ocean swells -----



which sweep the coast at high tide, washing into sea caves -----



----- and jetting up to 20m through narrow holes in the rocks.

Heading back Carnarvon late afternoon we noted as we approached the suburb of Morgantown and the turnoff to Babbage Island -----



----- how the prevailing winds had affected tree growth along Robinson Street.

At the Babbage Island Terminus for the Mile Long Jetty tramway -----



----- the miniature tourist train was preparing to head up to -----



----- the loading wharf. The Port of Carnarvon was the first in the world to load livestock direct to ships for transport to markets. Sheep were driven along a race that ran beside the rail line.



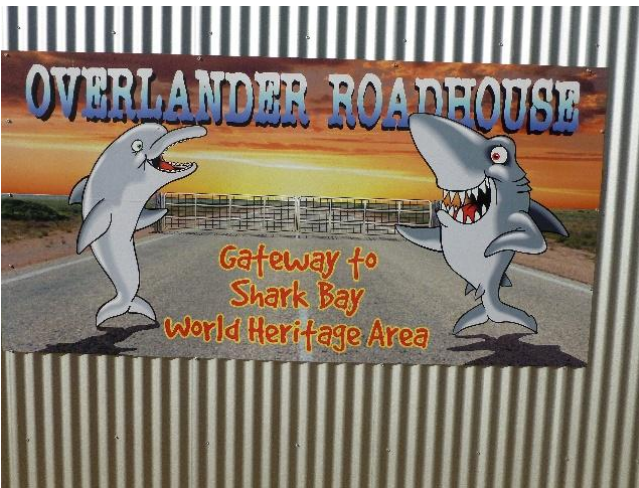
At the Civic Centre two murals celebrated the history of the Port.

Day 40 – Monday 23 May: After shopping and admin in town we headed south on the North West Coastal Highway travelling 64km to the 40 Mile Tank historic site. This was the first of 8 water tanks

constructed in the 1930s from Carnarvon to Geraldton to assist early travellers passing through waterless country. When the Gascoigne River flooded in 1961 the whole of Carnarvon was evacuated here for several days until the flood waters receded.



After lunch at the 40 Mile Tank site (photo from web) we travelled over 40 to 60km dead straight sections of highway to take an ice-cream break at Wooramel Roadhouse. Then it was on past -----



----- the Overlander Roadhouse at Hamlin (where we diverted to Denham on our 2006 trip) to reach the Billabong Roadhouse where we spent the night in their camping area, and ate at the restaurant.



After setting up camp at Billabong and before dinner we took a walk along the dirt road behind camp to view a sprawling network of paddy melon -----



----- while battling the persistent flies. Paddy melons are a bitter potentially toxic weed of South African origin thought to have come into Australia via Afghan camel drivers in the mid-1800s, and are a considerable nuisance in many outback areas.

Day 41 – Tuesday 24 May: After turning off the road south towards Kalbarri and the Kalbarri National Park we reached the entrance to -----



----- the Ross Graham and Hawks Head Lookouts, with Ross Graham also providing a walking trail down to the bank of the Murchison River.



The rocky trail provided extensive views across the gorge, passing through -----



----- great rock piles before reaching the river.



Hawks Head Lookout had a fenced viewing platform on top of the gorge, with an interesting rock formation mid-river

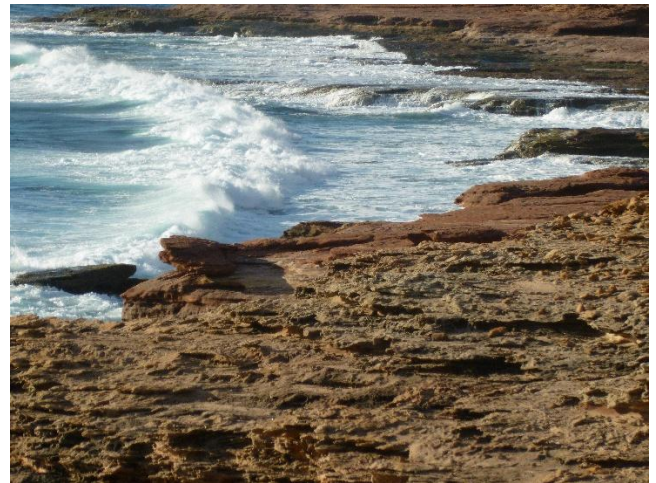


After lunch at Hawks Head we drove to the Kalbarri township on the coast and checked in at the Top Tourist Caravan Park for two nights before heading to the Mushroom Rock Nature Walk.

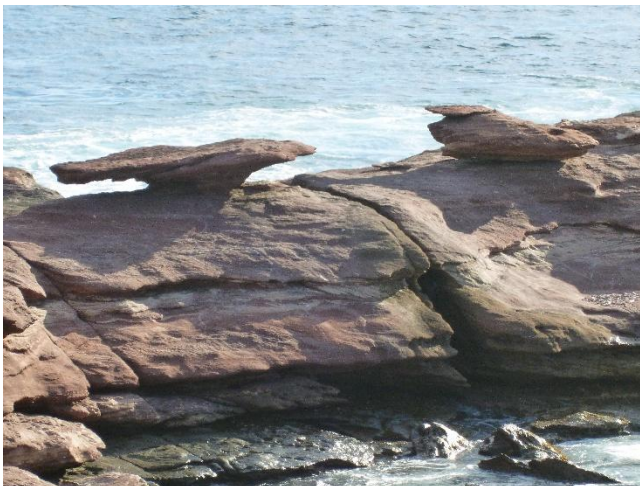
The track down to the beach -----



----- provided our second fairly rugged walk for the day with the information board at the start of the walk warning "expect loose rocks, uneven surfaces and steep sections".



However, the walk was worth it with a great first view from the top of the trail before reaching the foreshore -----



----- with close-up of Mushroom Rock and other cliff-side rock features.



It was then back to camp as the sun set out to sea.

Day 42 – Wednesday 25 May: After a house-keeping morning we walked -----



----- to the river mouth and Chinaman's Beach during the afternoon, and booked in to the Black Rock Café for evening dinner where we had an excellent main course of cashew apricot stuffed chicken, pumpkin mash, salad and balsamic parmesan.

Day 43 – Thursday 26 May: Leaving Kalbarri for the south our first visit was to -----



----- Pot Alley, taking the rugged walking track down the gorge -----



----- past spectacular rock formations to the beach.

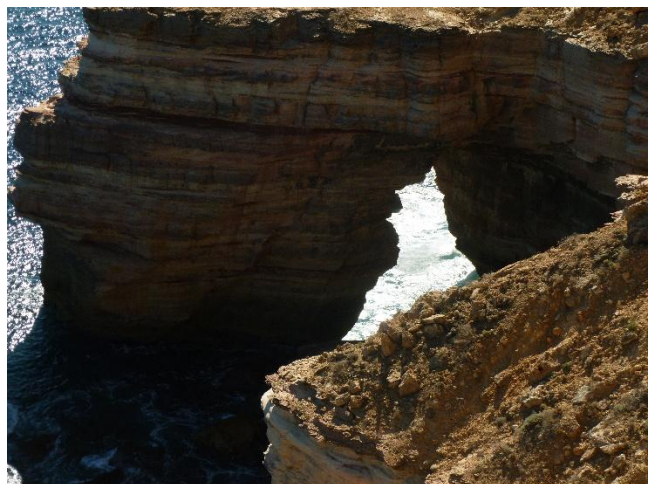


Then it was on to Eagle Gorge (frequented by wedge-tail eagles) and Island Rock, -----



----- where in the carpark we came across a “sister” Kea camper, Registration 357RCL (we are 347RCL).

Just around the corner from Island Rock was the Natural Bridge -----



----- where waves have created a sea-cave which eventually hollows out into an arch, then ultimately when the arch collapses, a “rock island” will be left.

We continued down the coastal road (Hwy 139) with -----



----- banksia lining the roadside in full bloom, eventually leaving scrublands behind us -----



----- and passing through farmland. We popped into Port Gregory to view the Pink Lake (Hutt Lagoon) where our photos turned out dark, hence we submit the web photo above. The lake waters are coloured with a saltwater algae producing beta-carotene, the same pigment that colours carrots. There is a factory at Hutt Lagoon that extracts the beta-carotene for use as a food colouring agent as well for cosmetics and dietary supplements.

Day 44 – Friday 27 May: After a night in Northampton we explored the town on foot -----



----- recognising the Catholic Convent and nearby church from past visits.

Then it was south on Hwy1 to the Elephant Hill Lookout (we really could not make out the “elephant” shape of the hills on the horizon) to turn west a few km to the -----

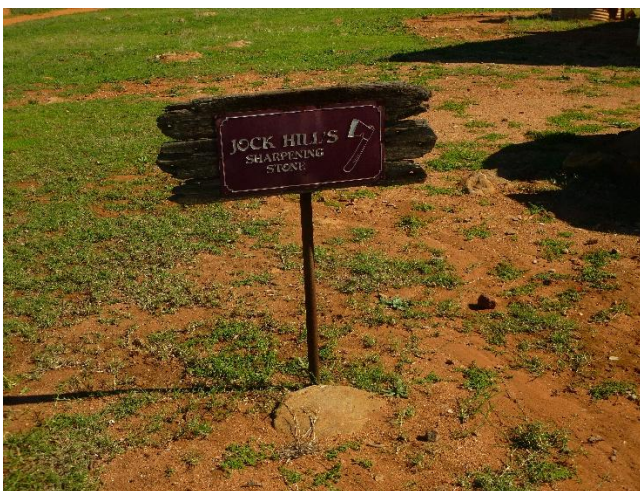


----- Oakabella Historic Homestead, once considered to be the most haunted building in Western Australia. The 1852 homestead complex included several farm buildings -----



----- including this barn with its huge stone buttresses.

After exploring the grounds and the displays chronicling the Homestead's -----



----- fascinating history, we headed for the tearooms -----



----- for some country fare before resuming our travels.

Back at the main highway we took a side road east through the Chapman Valley with its -----



----- notable Catholic and Anglican stone churches, -----



----- then on into wheat country where seasonal work involving two large tractor and cultivator units was well underway.

Next stop was Yuna, a wheat growing storage hub, -----



----- where we noted the importance of irrigation water to sustain farming activity.

Mullewa was the southern terminus of the De Grey stock route, and commemorated this history -----



----- with several rusted steel sculptures. The stock route ran 1,500km from Mullewa up to just east of the De Grey River near Port Hedland. It operated from the 1860s to the 1950s when truck transport took over the route. At its peak some 130,000 sheep took the route annually. Some 55 wells were sunk by the Government from 1895 to provide security of water for travelling stock.

From Mullewa we headed east on Hwy 123 via Pindar -----



----- where we were warned about kiwis and kangaroos and cattle on the road, and met 53m long ore carrying road trains heading west. [In 2026 the "Caution" sign has now replaced the kiwi with an emu!!!]

Late afternoon we reached our destination for the day, the old gold mining town -----



----- of Yalgoo with its welcoming stamper battery, Aboriginal sculptures -----



----- and historic Dominican Chapel of St Hyacinth, all glowing in the setting sun.

Day 45 – Saturday 28 May: Early morning we headed out to the Chapel -----



----- for a closer look. Heritage Council WA records that in 1920 Monsignor John Hawes designed the Chapel for the Irish Dominican Sisters who had come to Yalgoo at his invitation and lived in a timber convent school overlooking the town. It was completed in 1922, and after falling into bad repair when the Sisters left Yalgoo, was restored by the Shire of Yalgoo during the 1980s. Hawes created 15 houses of worship in between Yalgoo and Geraldton which can be visited on a 4 day self-drive tour.

The local school had a host of murals -----



----- around its buildings reflecting Aboriginal art.



Not far from town was -----



----- the historic 100m long Jokers Tunnel -----



----- which we walked through (with care regarding the amount of headroom).



The Yalgoo Jokers gold field was established by a William Nottle in 1894 who collected 3kg of gold from 50kg of rock in his initial find. Some 16 mining lease were granted the following year, most bearing names associated with playing card games, gold mining being seen as a bit of a gamble. Indeed with gold recovery declining to 3kg per 550 tons of rock by 1898 the stamping battery was shifted to another gold field.

On the way back west to Mullewa we were reminded of the remoteness of the area by -----



----- this sign (looking back behind us), and the long straight road ahead.



Once again we had to watch out for road trains which were also heading west.

Back in Mullewa -----



----- more stockman sculptures and Monsignor Hawes churches. At the local caravan park we were the only campers that night.

Day 46 – Sunday 29 May: A bright and sunny morning as we walked the John Hawes Heritage Trail ----



----- with the dog sculpture at the entrance a tribute to Hawes constant canine companion, Dominic.

It was now time to head south, so it was back ----



----- into wheat country again, with evidence of the importance of wheat from the -----



----- long train at the bulk grain loading facility at Mingenew. Mingenew was also a mural town -----



----- reflecting the pastoral history of the area.



From Mingenew we continued south to Three Springs where -----



----- at the Jack Thorpe Gardens we were right alongside their grain storage silos with a nearby large mural on the local talc mining activities as well as grain and wool farming.



The talc mine was established in the 1940s and supplies a substantial portion of its production to the Japanese pulp and paper industry. The talc is very high quality and with the production level at over 240,000 tonnes /year the mine is the second most productive in the world.

We passed the mine area with its huge pile of tailings from the open-cast pit -----



----- as we headed north to Morawa late afternoon.



Day 47 – Monday 30 May: Rest day in camp after heavy rain overnight. The large Freightliner “tractor” truck unit on the site opposite was -----



----- a reminder of home. It is one of Lake King Transport's trucks (hence the “LK” number plate) from way down in the south of Western Australia. After housekeeping tasks we took an afternoon walk around Morawa to the John Hawes church. Opened in 1933 -----



----- it has a tiny Priest's Lodge in the grounds, the smallest Priest's house in the Southern Hemisphere. The Lodge lacks facilities as a permanent residence and is now just a curiosity.

Further on was the local secondary school and nearby -----





----- a range of outdoor art work.

Day 48 – Tuesday 31 May: Travelled cross country to -----



----- Three Springs to join main Hwy 116 south through busy farmland where in the distance a huge flock of white geese was feeding near a small grain silo.

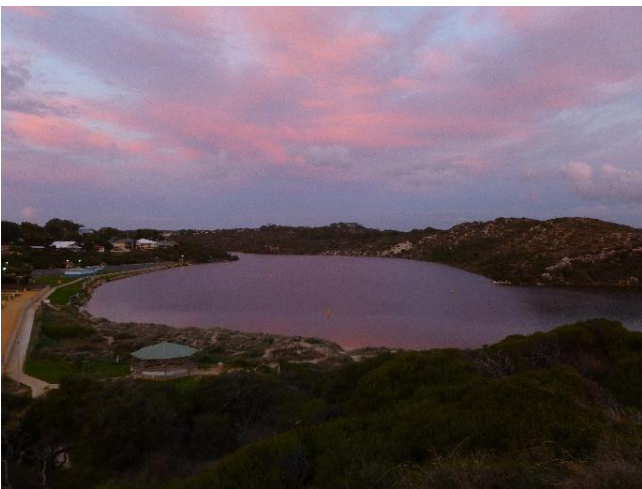
Reaching Moora for lunch we cut west across country to the main Hwy 1 and on to Regans Ford where we turned west around Moore River National Park and on to the coast at Guilderton. The Holiday Park was on the edge of the Moore River estuary, so after checking in we -----



----- climbed the walkway to the Estuary Lookout -----

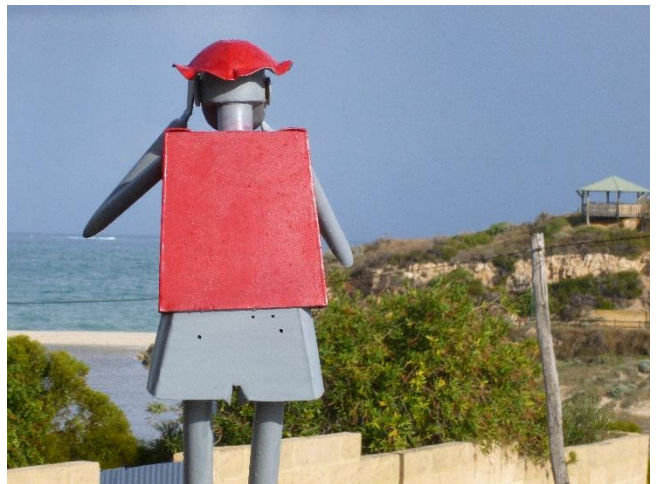


----- from where there were great views of the camping area and the estuary -----



----- as the sun set out to sea.

Day 49 – Wednesday 1 June: On the way out of Guilderton we noted how windy -----



----- the locality must be with this leaning tree. And nearby there were some neat “tin” sculptures, one looking out to sea beyond the Lookout we visited last evening.



Yes, I can see what he is looking at, while down the road this couple were enjoying a dance.

Due east of Guilderton on the way back to the Great Northern Hwy 1 near Gingin we stopped in at the -



----- Gravity Discovery Centre science museum and observatory with its pendulum and leaning towers plus bushwalks and fascinating exhibits (excluding this large Australian Wolf spider stowaway on the inside of the van sliding door).

The 2km bush walk took us past -----



----- a 400 year old "Grass Tree", its black resin surface comprising "yacca" gum which was used by Aboriginal people to bond spear heads to spear shafts. Physicists at the University of Western Australia call it "magic glue" as it has remarkable properties for use in precision experiments.

From the bush walk -----



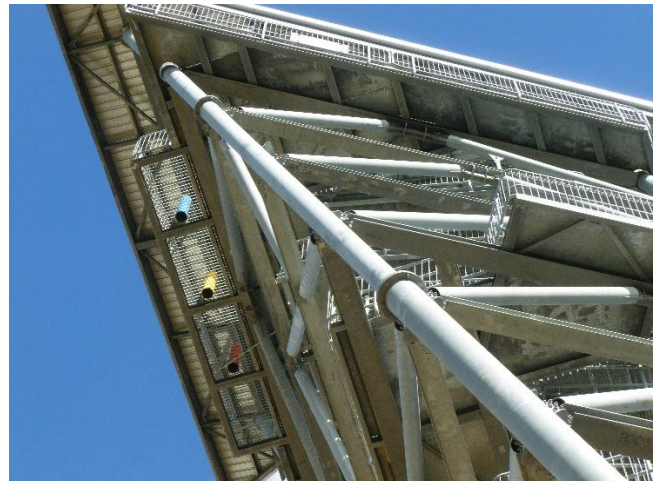
----- it was back to the science exhibits via a pedestrian tunnel -----



----- to listen in on the Giant Aeolian Wind Harp.

The Harp comprises a huge stainless steel tube “sound box” which has thin wires attached to the Pendulum Tower at strategic locations on the outside of the pipe such that as wind conditions change the wires creates resonating sound waves within the tube.

The nearby 45m high Leaning Tower slopes at 15° to the vertical, -----



-----and enables visitors to replicate Galileo's 1590s experiment in which he dropped two balls of different weights and sizes (such as a cannon ball and a bowling ball) from the Leaning Tower of Pisa to show that they would hit the ground together within "two fingers height" of each other. This disproved Aristotle's 350BC theory that heavier things fall faster than light things. Visitors are given two balloons, one smaller than the other, to fill with water and drop together from the top of the tower to show they hit the ground within "two fingers height" of each other. [We did not climb the tower to conduct this test!!]



As we headed away from the Gravity Centre we drove into an intense rainstorm that -----



----- left behind a neat rainbow. It was then on the road south to the Swan Valley wine area and check-in at the Acclaim Swan Valley Tourist Park at West Swan for two nights.

Day 50 – Thursday 2 June: Explored the Swan Valley winery areas today with ----



----- their autumn coloured vines to lunch at -----



----- one of the region's most notable restaurants.



After lunch we parked in Douglas Road just down from the Black Swan and took a walk across the Swan River footbridge at Maali Bridge Park to the Sittella Vineyard where a -----



----- wedding party was assembling. The bridal party arrived by stretch limousine -----



----- to walk to the rotunda where the ceremony took place.

Not far down the valley from Sittella was the Margaret River -----



----- Chocolate Factory with tempting displays of a huge variety a chocolate treats -----



----- as well as an outdoor café spot for refreshments, a fitting place to end our day sight-seeing.

Day 51 – Friday 3 June: Checked in mid-morning for 3 nights at the Big 4 Perth Midland Tourist Park so we could dump waste (the Acclaim holiday park had no dump station). We then headed east on the Great Eastern Highway and turned north on a narrow bumpy sealed road to -----



----- climb up to the John Forrest National Park Lookout with views over Perth City and the northern coastal plains where we did a bush walk of 2½ km before lunch.

For the afternoon we backtracked onto Great Eastern to turn north on Swan View Road up to the entrance to the Swan View Railway Heritage Trail. Here we took a walk to the old tunnel and on to the falls clocking up nearly 5km return.

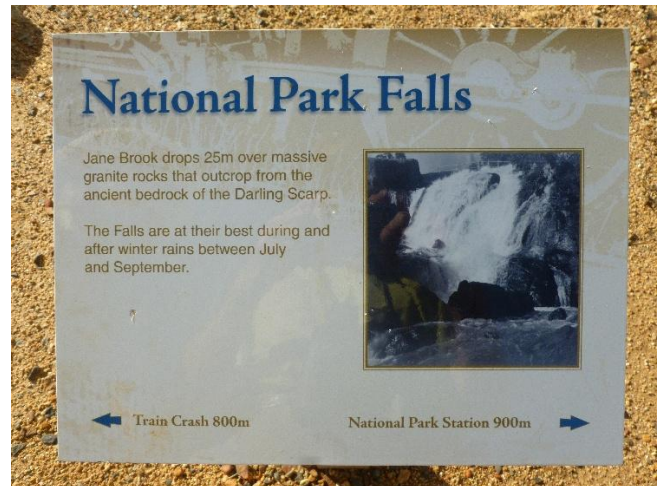


The rail trail was smooth and wide, carving its way through a rocky cutting that replaced the -----

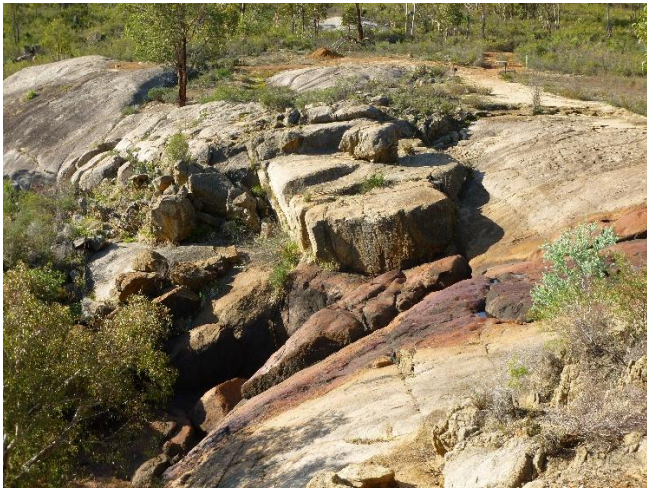


----- original 1896 tunnel in 1945. On the return walk from the falls we took the 350m tunnel, bypassing the cutting. The tunnel became too small for the later railway engines and lack of ventilation shafts caused major problems for crew on the two engines needed to haul wagons up the steep incline through the tunnel.

The falls were dry when we approached (they drop just down from the bridge in the distance) -----



----- with the information board indicating the best time of year to see them was between July and December when the Jane Brook stream was running strong after winter rains.



So our photo shows the brown stained dry bed to compare with the Park's website view of winter flow.

Day 52 – Saturday 4 June: Housekeeping in the morning, and afternoon drove 10km from camp at the Big 4 west to the Galleria Mall.

Day 53 – Sunday 5 June: Spent the day from mid-morning at the Karringup Mall 20km west across town.

Day 54 – Monday 6 June: Relocated today from the Big 4 at Midland to the Central Tourist Park at Ascot. Down the road from Midland we visited -----



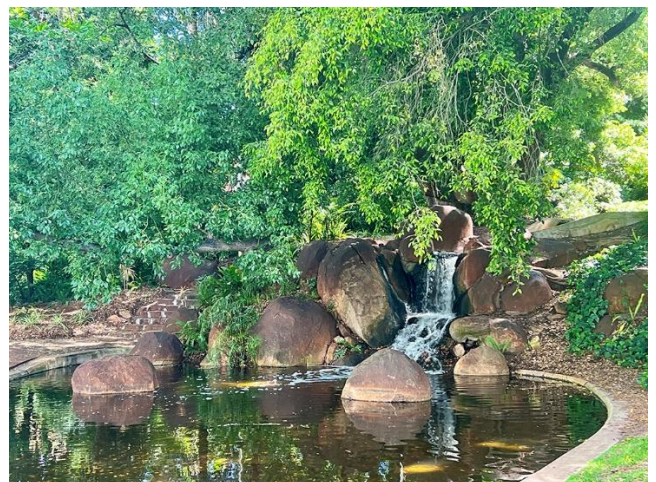
-----Cape Lavender and Mago Coffee -----



----- with their extensive shop displays and café. Then it was a walk around -----



---- the centrally located Harold Boas Gardens before returning to camp (photos from website).



Day 55 – Tuesday 7 June: Relocated in the morning to Discovery Holiday Park at Forrestfield near the airport for three nights before heading to Garden City on Riseley Road way across town for the rest of the day.



Bypassed Bakers Delight (web photo) for David Jones Café at lunchtime, and returned to camp 6pm after leaving the mall at 5.15.

Day 56 – Wednesday 8 June: Collected our suitcases from KEA depot ready to pack for return home to Auckland. Spent rest of the day at Westfield Carousel Carrington.

Day 57 – Thursday 9 June: Packing all day, then to Forrestfield Market Place for evening meal.

Day 58 – Friday 10 June: Completed packing and returned van to KEA 2.45pm. Taxi to airport for overnight flight to Auckland, arriving 5.50am

Thus concluded another really great Australian travel venture.