

Peter Wood inside the entrance to Golgotha Cave, Margaret River.



MARGARET RIVER ALL SET!

– Kent Henderson

The 18th Australasian Conference on Cave and Karst Management, to be held at Margaret River, Western Australia (3–9 May 2009) is all but upon us! Everything is organized, everything is set. It will be wonderful! Bookings have already been substantial, and we expect a number of attendees from overseas. It is **NOT** too late to register – but be quick..!

Naturally, during my visit I did a bit of ‘cave stuff’... On the day I arrived I meet with the Conference Organising Committee, which was in the home stretch with arrangements.



Anne Wood with Simon Taylor at Ngilgi Cave.

I spent two weeks at Margaret River in January (ostensibly on business), staying at the home of our Conference Convenor, Anne Wood and her husband Peter – of which I was most grateful.



A purpose-built abseiling site at Margaret River

During my stay, Anne and I visited Ngilgi Cave at Yallingup, and had a chat to its manager, Simon Taylor, who is looking to welcoming ACKMA to his patch. Likewise, we had a meeting at CaveWorks with Jayme Hatcher (Attractions Manager) and her father, Lindsay Hatcher (Environmental Manager), and all is looking fine there.

Interpretation Panels at Calgardup Cave.



Towards the end of my sojourn, I went of a caving trip to Golgotha Cave with Peter Wood. It is a former show cave, with several management issues, and it will be amongst a number of sites that will be visited during the Conference. Likewise, we visited the entrances of several other sites.

I understand approvals and funding are now largely in place for the makeover of Jewel Cave at Augusta. The changes will not be in place till at least later this year, so obviously attendees will be there 'too soon' when we visit the cave during the Conference.



The entrance to CaveWorks.

The plans, which have been a number of years in gestation, I understand include moving the current car park east, placing a new Visitor's Centre on the site of the old car park, re-vamping the cave entrance, and completely re-lighting the cave.



Inside the Ngilgi Cave Interpretation Centre.

An abseiling group at Margaret River.



I am told that a lighting company from Perth has been slated to do re-lighting – Lindsay Hatcher advised me that this company lit the *Stonehenge* ancient monument in England. Obviously underground lighting is rather specialized, but one assumes they will do a good job. Coincidentally, during my stay, the following brief article appeared in the *Augusta-Margaret River Times* (16/1/09):

'Non building' in AMRTA win

Architect Chris Willcox described the design chosen by the AMRTA for the Jewel Cave re-development project as a 'non-building'.

'It's really was designed to be anti-architecture: not to deter from the site. I didn't think putting a piece of architecture there would be appropriate,' the tender-winning architect told the Times.

The design shows a building partially submerged underground, with a native rooftop garden.

'It's nice to be given the opportunity to do something I was passionate about. It's a different approach. Rather than a building it's a non-building.'

Estimated to cost \$3.1 million, the building was also praised by the Tourism Association for its eco-sensitive design principles. Willcox and Associates beat off a number of big-name firms to secure the tender, David Willcox told the Times.

Well, at \$3.1 million, it will have to good! ...although the statement that the 'building being partially submerged underground' might be a worry...? The current car park, if that it where the new Visitor Centre is to be located, is directly over the top of the main chamber of Jewel Cave, with not too much limestone between its ceiling and the surface... However, all the factors involved in engineering in karst have no doubt been taken into account, one assumes. An article on the Development from AMRTA is elsewhere in this Journal.

So, see **YOU** at the Conference! As most (at least some...?) members may have noted, the Registration Form was inserted in the last two editions of this Journal. It is also on the ACKMA Web Site.