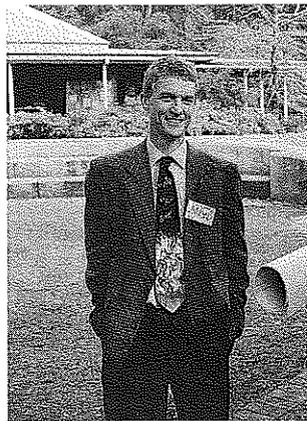


Gil Field is CALM's Senior Interpretation Officer. He has had extensive involvement with the development and advancement of interpretation with respect to facility design and professional training.



Angus Morrison-Saunders is the Coordinator of the Environmental Studies and Tourism programs at the University of Notre Dame Australia. He has a particular interest in environmental education and training.

Working with the education industry

The Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), Western Australia is in partnership with the University of Notre Dame Australia to deliver some of the units within their Environmental Studies and Tourism programs. CALM involvement with the university started in 1994 with the provision of occasional guest lecturers and involvement in field excursions over a range of units. More recently, however, CALM has taken the responsibility for presenting two units in their entirety: Ecotourism and Heritage Management, and Recreation Planning and Management. In addition to the partnership between these two institutions, the two units directly involve local government and the community.

The Ecotourism and Heritage Management unit focuses on interpretation techniques in natural and cultural heritage area management and the business of cultural management and ecotourism. Subjects include interpretive planning, project design and evaluation as well as the planning, design and presentation of ecotours and other guided interpretive activities. A one-week intensive workshop occurs within the unit for university students and also doubles as a professional development short course attended by outsiders to the university (eg CALM staff, local government recreation officers, private ecotour guides etc).

This unit established the annual 'Footloose in Freo' activities program as an outcome of the intensive training workshop in which student guides lead their own interpretive activities for the general public. This program of guided activities is based in and around the local Fremantle environment which offers a

wide range of cultural and natural settings. Footloose in Freo is timed to coincide with school and university holidays and is promoted to Fremantle and Perth residents and visitors.

CALM is the major provider of settings for outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities in Western Australia. The Recreation Planning and Management unit explores the theory and principles of recreation planning and management using local examples and practices to demonstrate appropriate techniques. Students learn the essential principles and procedures used in planning and management of natural environments for public recreation and tourism including the design, construction and maintenance of recreation areas and facilities; and the latest standards, techniques, products and materials applicable to recreation and tourism planning and management.

Both units are based directly on professional training courses conducted internally for CALM staff. Integrating the courses within the university system and also making them available to interested community members on a professional development basis guarantees regular offerings to a variety of participants and revenue to CALM.

Offering the courses and workshops as professional development opportunities without further obligation to a university program presents an open learning environment. The university is extending environmental education opportunities into the broader community.

The combination of university students (typically, young school leavers) with practising professionals (typically older),

creates a dynamic learning environment. Professional participants to date have included local government staff (eg environment and recreation officers), other government agencies, private businesses such as ecotour operators and other interested individuals. The students have plenty of energy and youthful enthusiasm which seem to inspire the older participants, who in turn enjoy sharing their practical wisdom and experiences with the students. The students get an appreciation of what life is like as an environmentalist in the 'real world' and make useful contacts for future study and work opportunities.

The location of the Notre Dame campus in the heart of the city of Fremantle permits tremendous interaction with the local community and its many cultural and environmental attractions. The campus is not one precinct, as with most other universities, but is spread across numerous historic buildings in a number of streets of the west end of Fremantle. The students are part of the town's character and the university, part of its profile. They are part of the vibrant culture of Fremantle. CALM has located two offices on the Notre Dame campus (Marine Conservation Branch and Aboriginal Tourism, Education and Training Unit) as well as CALM's 'WA Naturally' shop. The shop is an ideal starting point for the annual Footloose in Freo program of guided activities. The students' commitment to

educating the participants about the rich environment of Fremantle can be gleaned from the Footloose in Freo brochure used in 1998 to promote their presentation:

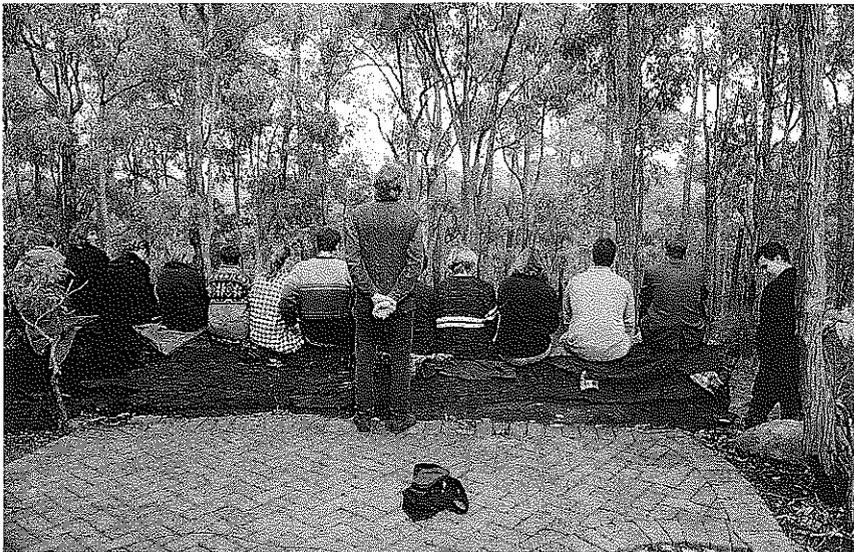
- Art Attack – trek around Fremantle, learning about the architectural changes of the historical buildings which are now housing art studios and galleries.
- Freo's Bit 'O Bush – immerse your senses in the wonders of the natural bush, from nature's symphony, to becoming closely acquainted with the natural environment through special activities.
- Tales of a Town – hear the stories, scandals, sagas and myths that will challenge your perception of Fremantle as a jolly seaside town. Take a gentle stroll back in time and enjoy Freo's folklore.
- Cray Culture – do you like fishing? boats? quirky Freo history? Then join us on a walk around the Fishing Board Harbour, looking behind the scenes at boats and discussing the marine environment, fishing and Freo.

The university is an established member of the Fremantle community, so why should CALM locate offices and a shop on campus and become involved in community education programs in areas other than those managed by CALM? CALM considers community relations to be critical to the longevity of government corporations



striving to provide community services while promoting community values.

Environmental education and heritage interpretation are key strategies for protecting heritage by enriching community appreciation, understanding and support. Maximising the experience and building the relationship should generate care and involvement that ensures minimum impact. CALM has taken its community relations role onto the campus to work with future decision-makers, and onto the street to interface with our constituents.



Tuning in to the bush – part of learning about ecotourism, recreation planning and heritage management

The two units, in particular the Recreation Planning and Management unit, also establish a partnership with local government. This is an extension beyond community education into cooperative community management. For example, during the 1998 Recreation Planning and Management unit a partnership was forged with the city of Melville which was in the process of planning the Piney Lakes Reserve, with a visitor centre, car parks, walking trails and other recreational facilities. The major task for participants in the unit was to prepare designs for recreation facilities within the reserve. At the end of the unit these were presented to the city of Melville in a formal showcase of the students' work.

The partnership of CALM, the University of Notre Dame Australia, local government and the community is an innovative way in which conservation agencies can fulfil their education and awareness-raising responsibilities with the wider community. It is a synergistic partnership with benefits for everyone, as well as the local environment.

Gil Field
Senior Interpretation Officer
WA CALM

Angus Morrison-Saunders
Environmental Studies and Tourism
Notre dame University

