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GEOPARKS WA REPORT

22nd Octcober, 2025

1. **Attendance at the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network Conference – Kutralkura UNESCO GLOBAL Geopark, Chile**

The conference was held in Temucu, Chile, an hour's flight south of Santiago and was held at the main conference venue, Campus San Juan Pablo II University, 15 minutes south of the town. The university closed for the duration of the conference and students volunteered to support the conference. They did a magnificent job.
Registrations were available in the Town Hall supported by the local government and there was a display within the town square of local artistry including geofoods, handicraft and cultural events.
The host UNESCO Global geopark was the Kutralkura Geopark (which means stone of fire in the Mapudungun language) which covers an area of 12,000 square kilometers in seven communities of La Araucania and extends mostly across the Andes mountain range.
700 geopark experts from 50 countries attended presenting around 400 papers and participating in 9 thematic workshops. It was a fabulous family atmosphere.
Two very large marquies were set up to house displays of geofoods, artisans handicrafts and more. The second marquie showcase the global geoparks from other countries as well as Kultalkura.
The Governor and Temucu Mayor opened the conference at an ice beaker within the World Heritage Area Railway Museum which featured steam locomotives and a turntable. The event was well attended and catered for.
I presented on the Genestream project but managed to include references to what is happening in Australia and particularly in Western Australia, also mentioning the Australian Geoparks Network and Geoparks WA. I also attended the Indigenous Workshop and as impressed with a local Indigenous lady who spoke about her concern in relation to maintaining cultural displays at the expense of developing her constituents.
I also spoke with several of our International Advisers about having more input from them. They collectively were open to more engagement and offered to resolve/advise on any issues we, AGN, were experiencing.
And, I spoke with Nick Zouros about how we should progress our geoparks. Keep on doing what we are doing, he wants a UNESCO Global Geopark in Australia.

2. **Geoparks WA (GWA)**

- The above outlines my attendance at the UNESCO conference. I also visited several geoparks in Germany and Italy. We are on the right track.
- GWA will be outlining our Local Geopark accreditation process in November 2025.
- The Genestreaming project with Lotteries and MRD funding is almost complete. Final editing for the documentary is nearing completion. The aim is to have this Deep Time study launched by the Governor in due course. The draft documentary loks amazing. Two versions are being prepared, 55

and 95 minutes with an aim to have them aired on SBS, ABC and into Local Government libraries and schools across Western Australia.

- Murchison Georegion and Aspiring Geopark – See Karen's notes.
- Sunset Coast Local Geopark – Three LGAs are working together to establish a metropolitan geopark in Perth's northern western suburbs. Wanneroo, Joondalup and Stirling LGA cites have formed a working group to develop the local geopark. Walking trails in the Wanneroo-Yanchep area are being established with educative panels. A draft geotrail has been prepared for Stirling City's Star Swamp park.
- Bindjareb Peel Local Geopark – is progressing steadily with a drive trail established and soon to be launched APP and Geopark brochure. Work is taking place in partnership with GSA WA with Waroona Shire to interpret a new walking trail from the town. The Incorporated board is expanding with a Youth Ambassador appointed and soon, an Aboriginal appointee. Consideration is being given to extending the area of the geopark.
- Nannup WA Local geopark – See Wendy Duncan's notes. GWA has added Nannup website to the AGN website.
- Geoparks Australia/AGN website is being maintained by Marnie Bennett (PDC) and is looking good. I will arrange for the website to be transferred back to Perth Web Hosting so all our URLs are at the same location.
- Geoparks WA will be launching a new round of contacts with State and federal government and political organisations in the new year.

Dr Alan Briggs
President – Geoparks WA
Deputy Chair – Australian Geoparks Network

Vice President's Report for the period 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

During the 12 month period 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025 Geoparks WA moved forward on a number of fronts and held many meetings with the four geopark projects to progress their establishment in the State. Together with Dr Alan Briggs and / or Wendy Dowling AM I undertook a large number of advocacy meetings with politicians as well as government departments. In addition I was one of a number of Geoparks WA Members who connected the organisation with the Australian Geoparks Network and other allied organisations throughout the year.

Global Geoparks

Globally there are now 229 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 50 countries. There are five Regional Geoparks Networks – European, Asia-Pacific, Latin America & Caribbean, African and North America. Australia sits in the Asia-Pacific Network but we are still the only continent without geoparks. Thus Geoparks WA is working together with the Australian Geoparks Network to re-introduce geoparks into Australia.

In September 2024 the *8th Asia Pacific Geoparks Network Symposium* was held in Cao Bang UNESCO Global Geopark in northern Vietnam. Five members of the Nannup Geopark participated in the Conference and Geoparks WA was represented by Board Member Professor David Newsome.

Last year the Global Geoparks Network celebrated its 20th anniversary and at the *7th Conference of the Latin America and the Caribbean (GeoLAC) Regional Network Conference* held at the Cami his dosCanions do Sul UNESCO Global Geopark in Brazil from 6-9 November 2024, the GGN held a special event to award diplomas of appreciation to individuals who have made significant contributions to the growth of geoparks. I was very humbled to receive a *Certificate of Recognition* for 'significant contributions to the Global Geoparks Network development'.

This year, in September 2025 the *11th International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks* was held at Kütralkura UNESCO Global Geopark in the Araucanía Region, Chile with our Chair participating in the Conference and also delivering a paper. Alan will provide a Report on the Conference. In September 2026 the *9th Asia Pacific Geoparks Network Symposium* will be held in Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark in Malaysia. To register your interest please do this at the website https://apgn2026.lada.gov.my. I am hoping that we will have a strong presence at the Conference from interested geopark people from Western Australia.

Internationally I continue to serve on the Trust Board of the Waitaki Whitestone UNESCO Global Geopark in New Zealand (https://www.whitestonegeopark.nz). Wendy & I will be visiting the geopark in January 2026 and will circulate a report for Geoparks WA on our return.

The Australian Geoparks Network

The Australian Geoparks Network (https://australiangeoparksnetwork.org) undertook a number of activities during the year, the most significant being the co-hosting (with Geoparks WA) of the visit of Helen Jansen, the then Chair of Waitaki Whitestone UNESCO Global Geopark (https://www.whitestonegeopark.nz) to

Western Australia in March. The geopark is the only UNESCO Global Geopark in New Zealand and the only one in Australasia and Oceania. This year I have co-authored two Book Chapters on geotourism together with Emeritus Associate Professor David Newsome, AGN Roving Ambassador at Large, in which we featured Case Studies on the Waitaki Whitestone.

Wendy and I were in Japan in May and we visited two geoparks. Sanriku Geopark on Honshu Island is the largest geopark in Japan (https://visithachinohe.com/en/park/geopark-2).

Toya - Usu UNESCO Global Geopark is on the island of Hokkaido (https://www.toya-usu-geopark.org/english). Mount Usu has erupted four times in the last century and is one of Japan's most active volcanoes. The Visitor Centre is one of the best we have seen.

Geoparks in Western Australia

On 21 August 2024 the *Bindjareb-Peel GeoDrive Trail* was launched by Hon. Don Punch, Minister of Regional Development at The Thrombolites in Lake Clifton, Mandurah. Also in attendance was Hon David Templeman (Member for Mandurah), Lisa Munday (Member for Dawesville) and Robyn Clarke (Member for Murray Wellington). The drive geotrail includes 12 sites through the City of Mandurah, Shire of Waroona and Shire of Murray and is supported by QR codes on signs along the route as well as a brochure. The geotrail was funded through a grant of $26,500 from the Peel Development Commission. The Bindjareb-Peel Geopark is now an Incorporated Society and thus is the second geopark in Western Australia.

As noted above, in March 2025 Geoparks WA and the AGN hosted a visit to Western Australia by Helen Jansen, then Interim Chair, Waitaki Whitestone UNESCO Global Geopark in New Zealand (https://www.whitestonegeopark.nz). This was kindly sponsored by the Peel Development Commission and the South West Development Commission. Helen's ten day trip saw her visit the Nannup WA Geopark (https://nannupwageopark.com), the aspiring Bindjareb – Peel Geopark, as well as the aspiring Sunset Coast Geopark. Helen was also the Keynote Speaker at two Geoparks Events - a wider Forum and a Closed Workshop.

The Forum, on *Geoparks and Geotourism,* was held on Wednesday 26 March at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)'s Australian Resources Research Centre (ARRC). It was hosted by Geoparks WA together with the AGN and the Forum Advocating Cultural and Eco Tourism [FACET] (www.facet.asn.au). Helen Jansen, Alan Briggs and I made presentations at the Forum on geoparks. The Geoparks Workshop was held the following day, on Thursday 27 March, at the Sebel Mandurah Hotel. It was supported by the Peel Development Commission (https://www.peel.wa.gov.au). The Workshop was open to 20 invited guests who are either directly interested or involved in the establishment of geoparks. Much information was shared at the Workshop.

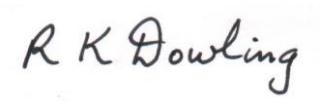
Wendy & I have continued to work hard on briefing our Western Australian politicians on the value of geoparks. On 18 September 2025 we met for a one-on-one meeting with Hon. Stephen Dawson, WA's Minister for Regional Development. We have briefed him many times over the years whilst he has held other portfolios such as Minister of Science in one government and Minister for the Environment in another. He is well across geoparks and he invited us to meet with his Advisor to formulate a policy for geopark

development in WA. Thus less than two weeks ago on 10 October we met with Peter Foster, Principal Policy Advisor to the Minister of Regional Development and Jane Kelsbie, Advisor to the Deputy Premier, to discuss how we can get Geoparks raised as a development item at the forthcoming State Labor Party Conference.

On 8 November 2024 Nannup WA Geopark (https://nannupwageopark.com) was officially launched by Jane Kelsbie MLA, the Member for Warren-Blackwood. The Geopark has moved forward considerably over the past year, largely due to their active Committee under the leadership of Mark White, Nannup's 'Citizen of the Year' for his work on establishing the geopark. On 22 September 2025 Wendy & I attended their 3rd AGM and the launch of the Thylacine Geotrail. With so much happening on the geopark this will be reported on separately by Board Member, Wendy Duncan.

The Murchison GeoRegion (https://murchisongeoregion.com) is navigating through significant changes to land management in the region which, while slowing down progress, is also strengthening the region's geotourism and ultimate pursuit of a UNESCO Global Geopark, through providing new and beneficial opportunities of collaboration. A Review by MGR of Land Tenure of Geosites has been important to identify sites with changed land tenure since MGR formed and those open for public access, where infrastructure and management may be invested and public liability defined. WA Department of Planning Lands and Heritage have been most helpful in this process. Again with so much happening, a separate report will be given on the Murchison by Karen Morrissey OAM, Project Officer, Murchison GeoRegion.

Looking ahead, we will continue to advocate for geoparks to be part and parcel of regional development in Western Australia. Already approximately $1 million of WA Government money has been granted to establishing geopark organisations. On 18 November the *Bindjareb-Peel Geodrive Trail App and Booklet* will be launched by Hon. Jessica Stojkovski, Minister for Peel. Next year I intend to focus my efforts on advancing all four geopark projects in Western Australia with the goal that one of them might eventually become the first UNESCO Global Geopark in Western Australia. We are moving in the right direction with a dedicated and growing bunch of enthusiasts.



Professor Ross Dowling AM
Vice President, Geoparks WA, 22 October 2025

TREASURER'S REPORT

Geoparks WA remains in a healthy position (see attached bank statement overview).

The Operating account has $7,488.27 with expenditures relating to support to Nannup, Workshops and mileage. There were several incorrect entries that were corrected through transfers to other accounts.

The Functions account remains strong with no expenditure recorded.

The LotteryWest account has been accessed to meet associated costs for the grant. MRD funds ($25,000) are now being expended in line with the contract. Geoparks WA will receive up to $5,000 for administration costs.

The Geotrail account was expended however $3,000 was transferred in as the Cultural grant could not be expended due to unavailability of participants. With PDC and board approval the funds are being expended on the production of an A5 publication for the Bindjareb Peel WA Local geopark. Any surplus funds will be used for planned road shows in the geopark.

Can some of the Function funds be used to host a stall in Langkawi conference and for business cards for the executive?



Dr Alan Briggs
President – Geoparks WA