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## Geoparks WA Reflections – May 2023

Well, it is getting colder and that means it is great to get outside and into WA's beautiful Autumn sunny days.

Congratulations to the 18 New UNESCO Global Geoparks announced on Thursday. This takes the number of global geoparks to 195 across 48 countries. Something must be working. Check them out ([here](#)). In Australia, 20 years after Geoparks were initiated, we are still working on wording!

The Waitaki Whitestone UNESCO Global Geopark, one of the 18 announced, has been well supported by Professor Ross Dowling AO (our Vice President) and he is on their Board of Directors.

I am just back from Europe where I visited Germany, Portugal, and Italy ... not boasting, just saying. While I enjoyed the travel experiences (and the food and wine), it is great to be back.

I did manage a visit to the German Bergstabe-Odenwalk UNESCO Global Geopark. What an amazing geopark. There were visitors everywhere. They have excellent trails and signposting, particularly where I visited, the "Felsenmeer", a valley of rocks in which the Romans carved granite columns from massive boulders that had been eroded to the valley surface. The management team produce annual brochures, bulletins, and maps for the geopark and of course I had to bring some home. I met the information centre manager who was very knowledgeable about the geosite and geopark.





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Even walking trails within the broader geopark provided information about the area of the geopark and were QR coded for additional information. This trail was near an observatory and the signs were Astro-themed. Brilliant.



Then in Italy, I was pleasantly surprised when the guide explained the geology on which the vines were growing ... including seashells she had gathered in the vineyard at 400m above sealine.





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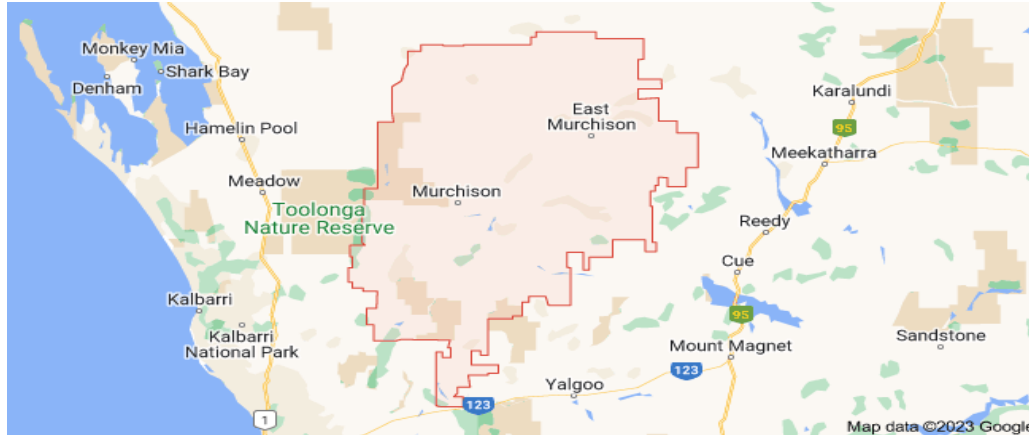
**Locally**, back home in Western Australia we still have lots of action happening with 4 active communities working on establishing local geoparks:

**Binjareb-Peel geopark** has continued working on the drive geotrail with planning underway for a logo, signs, and information for the geosites, liaising with stakeholder groups. The Peel Development Commission grant has provided this great opportunity to work towards establishing the geopark.

**Nannup Geopark**, under the excellent leadership of Mark and his experienced committee/board, have incorporated the management body, have designed an excellent interpretation facility, presented to the Nannup Shire, and gained their support AND access to land for the interpretation facility, are working towards a significant grant and are actively promoting the Nannup geopark.

**Joondalup/Wanneroo geopark** working group is comprised of LGA officers who have developed planning strategy for 2023. Having identified a range of geosites and other sites of geo-interest, they are progressing along the geopark pathway.

**Murchison Georegion and aspiring geopark** have resolved to establish an incorporated body to manage the Georegion and geopark. The team have made fabulous progress with a publication of the 21 geosites, developed an App and recently employed staff to assist with the marketing and planning processes. It was great that the Georegion featured in the Austrade Thrive 2030 publication ([here](#)).



**The Swan River to Murchison River geodrive trail** – working with Mid West Development Commission, the Feasibility Study on the geodrive potential has been drafted. Over 43 geosites were assessed with 18 being nominated for final selection. The aim of the geodrive trail is to provide information on the geology expressed along the coastal drive via panels and QR codes and encourage drivers to take a break from driving (think safety). The geotrail will also feature local businesses and encourage drivers to stop for a bite to eat and drink, maybe stayover for a night and refuel, so increased spending occurs.





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**Trails Forum** - On Friday (26<sup>th</sup> May) I attended the forum provided by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and Trails WA held in Bindoon. It was amazing to participate with such an energetic group of trail blazers. Dwellingup has established itself as a Trail Hub and Kelvin Barr (Trails Officer – Shire of Murray) gave a great presentation about the trails and the development experience. The new suspended bridge near Bayden Powell Water Spout ([here](#)) is amazing and will link trails to car parking which has been much needed. The outcome from the forum (my learning) is that we don't have to create a whole new series of trails, just work with current trail managers to include information about the geology on which they are laid. The John Forrest geotrail which has been finalised by the Geological Survey WA and has an excellent published booklet has been listed on the Trails WA ([here](#)).

**Railway Reserve Heritage Geotrail, John Forrest NP**

Bush Walk (+2) in Perth & Surrounds

Half day 7.6 km Bush Walk Grade 2 Mountain Bike Easiest

Welcome to the glorious Perth Hills!

The Railway Reserve Heritage Geotrail in John Forrest National Park is a 30 minute drive from Perth City.

The section of trail from Swan View to National Park Headquarters is about 4 km one way and provides an easy-to-access glimpse into the geology of the Perth Hills.

Map About Need to know Photos Reviews (3)

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So, still lots happening in WA.

Dr Alan Briggs  
President – Geoparks WA