

Australian Geoparks Network Newsletter No. 1 2024



News about Geoparks, Geotourism, Geotrails and Geoheritage

195	48	60	1
UNESCO Global Geoparks	Nations	Million Visitors / Year	Network

This is our first newsletter for 2024 and, as always, a lot is happening in the world of geoparks, geotourism, geotrails and geoheritage. While our Chair Professor Ross Dowling take a well-earned break, I am providing an abridged newsletter to report on and keep geopark and geoheritage events happening.

UNESCO Global geoparks

UNESCO Global Geoparks are geoparks certified by the UNESCO Global Geoparks Council as meeting all the requirements for belonging to the Global Geoparks Network. The GGN is both a network of geoparks and the agency of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. that administers the network. Approvals for Global geoparks requires, in Australia's case, State government endorsement is required before the National government will provide its support and application to UNESCO via the UNESCO representative agency in Australia. Geoparks are community driven, not-for-profit organisations. It is likely, in Australia, geoparks will adopt local government boundaries as these boundaries are relatively stable determinations.

AUSTRALIAN GEOPARKS NETWORK

The Australian Geoparks Network held its first board meeting for 2024 February 20th with representation from the Australian Capital Territory, South Australia, and Western Australia. Later infeed was received from the Northern Territory and additional information for South Australia. There continues to be excellent progress towards having geoparks adopted in Australia. There remains some trepidation by some in Australia about the naming process however there appears to be an increasing acceptance of the term "geopark" in the community, at least in Western Australia (see below). The minutes of this meeting will be posted online after verification.

GEPARKS WA

Geoparks WA held its board meeting following the Australian Geoparks Network. Wanneroo/Joondalup continue to work towards an urban geopark, located to the north of Perth City and will include Yanchep National Park within its boundary. Nannup WA Geopark Incorporated has received a significant grant to continue its work on a website, App and in planning for the public interpretation centre. Murchison Georegion and Geopark is working towards incorporation with the seven local government authorities. They have established interpretation centres at each of the LGA's tourism information outlets.

Asia Pacific Geoparks Network

In our region, the, we look forward to the APGN symposium to be held September 10-15 this year in Nom Nuoc Bang UNESCO Global Geopark, Vietnam. Also, this year is the joint conference between Indonesia and Australia organized by Dr Young Ng. For details see <https://geofest.com.au/>

European Geoparks Network

EGN Conference is set for Reykjanes UNESCO Global Geopark, Iceland October 2-5, 2024. Watch for further news given the volcanic eruptions happening at the current time.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

In Western Australia, Geoparks WA is supported by regional development government agencies across the State, as well as Local Government Authorities (LGAs), and provides guiding support to emerging geoparks.

Grants have been received for a long-distance geo-drive trail from Perth, north to Kalbarri. Nannup WA Geopark has received a significant grant to develop its website, an App and for planning its interpretation facility. Binjareb-Peel geopark has received a grant to establish a 1-day geo-drive trail around the Peel-Harvey Estuary. Murchison Georegion and Geopark have been well supported by the Mid West Development Commission and its seven LGAs and previously the Wheatbelt Development Commission provided funding for a PhD research project about establishing geoparks in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia. And two LGAs (Wanneroo and Joondalup) continue to develop steps towards establishing a geopark over their combined boundaries.

AGN and Geoparks WA

As a team we continue to support the Australian Geoscience Council through its Working Groups towards completing and implementing its National Geotourism Strategy.

Dr Alan Briggs

Deputy Chair – Australian Geoparks Network