

ITINERARY

The Stars Descend: Gondwana Link Eco-restoration Tag-along Tour, Saturday 25 March 2023

NB: indicative itinerary (subject to weather/gravel roads); final itinerary will be emailed in the week prior to the tour but start and finish times are fixed.

Start	Finish	Mins	Site	Key points	Conservation values and significance
7.45	8.30	45	Handasyde's Strawberries Café 382 Chester Pass Rd, Walmsley (Albany)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Dieback hygiene check · Welcome & overview · Travel plans · 1st stop Wellstead 	N/A
8.30	9.35	65	Travel South Coast Highway to Wellstead	Significance of Hassell National Park	Along the South Coast Highway, just before the Cheyne Beach turn-off, you will be travelling through Hassell National Park – surely the skinniest national park in Australia! This 1264 ha area straddles the highway for about 43 km. Although only 550 m at its widest point, it has extraordinary plant diversity amongst the vegetation associations of low woodland, scattered mallee and mixed heath (kwongkan). It was established in a (half-hearted) response to environmental concerns when this area was opened up for farming in the 1960s. A huge shame that only this skinny strip was protected from clearing.
9:35	9:50	15	Wellstead truck and caravan bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Toilet stop · Convoy protocols · Intro to Wellstead & the Pallinup Valley · The Pallinup Valley provides vital habitat connection from the Fitz-Stirling area to the coast 	<p>Wellstead, named after very early settlers, is a small town that was established when the sandplains were cleared for farming in the 1960s. Surrounding the town site is a dense mix of kwongkan (heathland) vegetation, with a wide range of banksias and other key species. This stop is just before we enter the main Fitz-Stirling area.</p> <p>From there we drive a short distance and cross the Pallinup River valley - a major landscape feature containing the critical vegetation link from the core Fitz-Stirling area to the large belt of vegetation along the coast. The Pallinup is an ancient inland river that re-cut its valley to the coast through the marine sediments that underly the Wellstead and Fitz-Stirling areas. As you go down the valley you are on the original granites, which support plants like York gum that are typical of the inland wheatbelt. Marra Bridge crosses the Pallinup at an important place for Noongar people. As we turn left (north-west) at Boxwood Hill, you can start to see the significant amount of habitat left in the Fitz-Stirling area. Together with the habitat left along the Pallinup Valley, this has made Gondwana Link's ecological reconnection effort here viable. We can do it!</p>
9:50	10:25	35	Cross the Pallinup River & drive to Chingarrup Sanctuary	Changes in the landscape: soils, natural drainage & native vegetation	At Albany we started the drive in mainly jarrah-marri forest, then from near the turn to Cheynes Beach we entered an incredibly rich kwongkan (heathland) area, growing mainly on the light sands of an area that is internally drained, with many wetlands. Once we cross the Pallinup River we are mainly in harder soils and mallee vegetation, with some areas of single stemmed moort and mallet eucalypts. The country is incised with small creeks that flow into the Pallinup River.
10:25	11:55	90	Chingarrup Sanctuary: Eddy & Donna Wajon. 572 ha conservation-covenanted property with bush & eco-restoration plantings.	First Fitz-Stirling property in Gondwana Link; early restoration plantings; public engagement & citizen science; biodiversity richness; malleefowl mound; dieback free.	<p>You have now entered an area known locally as 'Death Valley' where many early farmers failed after the land was alienated for agriculture in 1967. On Chingarrup, much had been cleared for farming but then allowed to regrow as funds ran out. The 72 hectares of cleared land left in 2002, when the property was purchased by Eddy & Donna, is now largely restored as habitat. For over 20 years, the Wajons and their many friends and supporters have made an incredible effort to identify and manage the many values of this very diverse property. Their efforts have identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 7 native vegetation associations: dryandra thicket, granite heath, laterite/gravel heath, mallee heath, proteaceous heath, sheoak woodland, yate woodland with a total of 598 native flora species · 813 native fauna species, including: echidna, honey possum, western pygmy possum, ash-grey mouse, Gould's wattled bat + another 10 mammal species; southern emu-wren & western whipbird + 121 bird species;

Start	Finish	Mins	Site	Key points	Conservation values and significance
			Morning tea - catered	More of the Chingarrup story .	barking gecko + 28 reptile species; 9 frog species; 7 butterfly species; 242 moth species; 66 ant species; blue-banded bee + 55 bee species; 17 wasp species; 23 aquatic macroinvertebrate species. Just across the Corackerup Creek from Chingarrup is Bush Heritage's Ediegarrup property . This 1067 ha former farm contains over 300 ha of bush habitat for a range of wildlife, including malleefowl, tammar and black-gloved wallabies, and Carnaby's black cockatoo. Purchased in 2022, Bush Heritage plans to restore cleared paddocks to wildlife habitat through direct seeding, hand planting and other ecological restoration techniques.
11:55	12:35	40	Drive to Nowanup (a longish drive owing to a washed-out creek crossing; if the crossing is repaired, we will save 30 min)	Story of the landscape & farm development	The Borden Bremer Bay Rd runs roughly parallel to the Pallinup River. For the initial section you drive through more of the 'Death Valley' landscape, with rocky and heavy clay country very evident, particularly at the two creek crossings. Then we have a contrast: south of the road is the 'Chillinup' property, which was where European style farming started some 150 years ago on rich young soils formed as the Pallinup River cut through the sediments. To the north is the mallee country 'released' for farming in the 1960s. We turn north up Monjebup Rd, through more mallee and mallet country, to Corackerup Nature Reserve and then Nowanup.
12:35	2:05	90	Nowanup (Eades family; Greening Australia) Toilet stop at the shed & then lunch (catered) at Nowanup Meeting Place	Welcome to Country & smoking ceremony; climb breakaway for an inspiring vista of revegetation and Koi Kyenu-ruff (Stirling Range).	Nowanup was the first property where, in 2006, the collective Gondwana Link effort honoured being on Goreng Noongar country by making the land available to the Noongar community, whose wonderful efforts there have been supported ever since. Goreng Elder Eugene Eades and the Eades family have been at the forefront of this work.— you will meet Eugene at the Nowanup Meeting Place! More of the Nowanup story . Enjoy the new Nowanup website . Once part of a larger sheep farm, this 754 ha property was bought in 2004 as part of the Gondwana Link effort. It is currently owned by Greening Australia but is transitioning to Eades family ownership. 400 ha of the property is bush or regenerating bush featuring mallee shrublands, mallet and moort woodlands and banksia heathlands. Significant populations of the locally endemic eucalypts Corackerup moort and Corackerup mallet are found at Nowanup. Virtually all the cleared land is now under some form of revegetation. The karda (goanna; <i>Varanus rosenbergi</i>), malleefowl, wedge-tailed eagle and owlet-nightjar are some of the more commonly seen wildlife on Nowanup. South of Nowanup is a privately owned block that has also been replanted, initially by Carbon Neutral. It's all part of building the Gondwana Link!
2:05	2:15	10	Drive to Monjebup North	The significance of the Corackerup Nature Reserve.	This drive runs along one side of the Corackerup Nature Reserve, a 3334 ha area initially surveyed up as four farms, but reputedly not alienated as it was even less suitable for farming than surrounding properties like Nowanup. It now forms a very valuable piece of strategic vegetation for restoring ecological connectivity across the whole area. Corackerup Nature Reserve sits astride a 43-million-year-old ocean edge, with a mix of the spongolite rocks deposited under an ancient sea and the much earlier 'country rock' granites and gneisses. It reportedly has one of the highest known concentrations of malleefowls, and a wealth of other species.
2:15	3:40	85	Monjebup North (Bush Heritage Australia)	Showcasing high quality restoration & restoration techniques; proteaceous nodes as	This 1107 ha property has 680 ha of existing habitat and over 400 ha under restoration, making it a key link between Corackerup Nature Reserve and a mix of private conservation properties in the Monjebup catchment, as part of the Gondwana Link. Much of the bushland area had been cleared, but the original bulldozer broke down and the bush is now largely regrown. The cleared land has received a very sophisticated series of restoration

Start	Finish	Mins	Site	Key points	Conservation values and significance
			Cold drink and snack (catered)	food sources for cockatoos & other wildlife; active malleefowl mound; pygmy possum nesting boxes; map revealing the connectivity taking place in Fitz-Stirling.	plantings, which we will examine with Bush Heritage's Alex Hams and restoration ecologist Justin Jonson. The bush is mallet and moort woodland, mallee heath, flat-topped yate, and proteaceous-rich heath. See Bush Heritage's Monjebup story . Detail of the restoration is available in Justin's writings here .
3:40	4:00	20	Drive to Boxwood Hill Roadhouse	View the waterways on your tour map	We head south to Boxwood Hill along Monjebup Rd, crossing some gravel floodways that mark Monjebup Creek, to the Borden Bremer Bay Road. Note the clay-bottomed wetland, fringed with yate woodland, that's at the corner. The Borden Bremer Bay Road crosses both Monjebup (again) and Corackerup Creeks, just before they join up with the Pallinup River, which is south of the road.
4:00			Boxwood Hill Roadhouse Closed on Saturdays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Bus departs for Handasyde's Café (113 km; approx. 1 hr 25 min) · Convoy vehicles head off to their various destinations. 	Keith is available to answer passenger questions all the way back to Handasyde's Cafe!