

A U S T R A L I A ' S W E S T

R I C H A R D W O L D E N D O R P

 FREMANTLE PRESS



AUTHOR'S NOTE

Western Australia is the largest state in Australia; in fact it encompasses one-third of the whole country. It is also the most sparsely populated of all the states.

One cannot help but be impressed, not only by the vastness of the state, but also by the natural landscapes that make it such a unique and fascinating area. There are few places left, particularly in the Western world, where one can so easily leave behind cities, freeways and the man-made environment.

When travelling by motor car through the state, the visitor may be excused for finding the outback monotonous or repetitive. Yet this ‘sameness’ is its strength. Millions of years of evolution have gone into the creation of forms of existence that have successfully adapted to extremely harsh conditions. This environment with its enormous spaces is unique in our present-day, overpopulated world.

Through these pictures I hope to give an impression of the variety of this landscape and its seasonal changes, as well as to show something of man’s encroachments upon it. We should tread lightly in this fragile environment, wonder at its strength and beauty, be inspired by it and develop our own environments in harmony with it. Sadly, this has not always been the case.

All the photographs in this book are ‘as found’, not manipulated by computer or any other means. For me, to do otherwise would be to insult the natural beauty of the Western Australian landscape which truly needs no such enhancement.

Richard Woldendorp



Rottnest Island, some twenty kilometres west of Fremantle, was named by the Dutch explorer, Vlamingh, who mistook for rats the small native marsupials (now known as quokkas) that he found there. ‘Rats Nest’ or Rottnest, as it became, saw some dark days as an Aboriginal penal colony but is now a favoured holiday playground.





Turquoise seas and dazzling white sands make up a string of fine beaches that fringe the coast from Mandurah in the south to Yanchep in the north.

Cottesloe Beach, with its grassy terraces and shady Norfolk Island pines, is a favourite with locals and visitors alike.

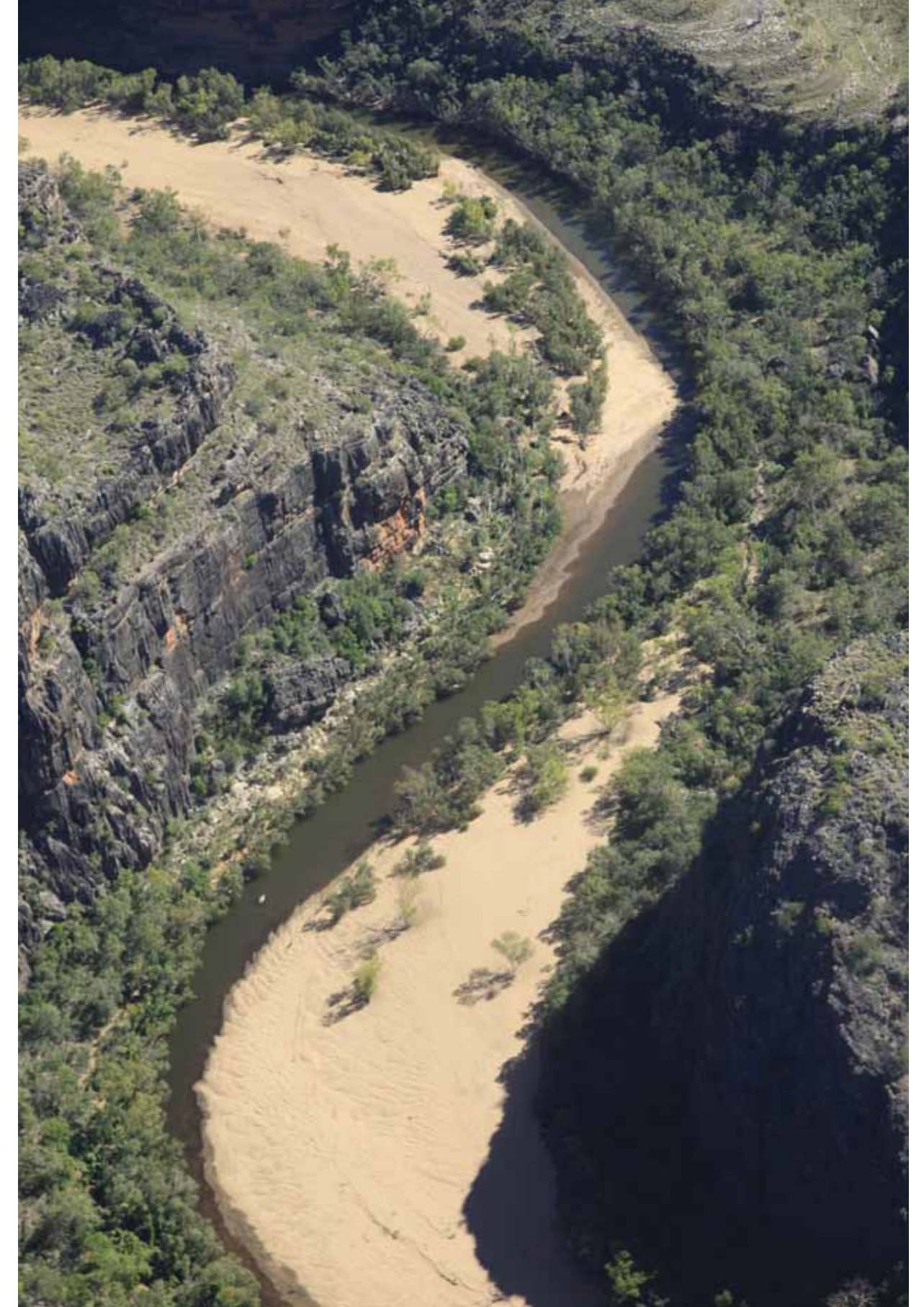
Overleaf and pages 18–19: The urban scene from Perth (the capital of Western Australia) to Fremantle is dominated by the broad stretches of the Swan River.





The rugged and remote coastline around Nullaki Peninsula bears the brunt of the Southern Ocean's winds and waves.

The Lennard River carves the dramatic Windjana Gorge through the ancient reef of the Napier Range in the Kimberley.





An old shearing shed is a relic of the pioneer past, when wool growing was a major industry in the Pilbara.



Now it is cattle which dominate the scene on the stations of the north.



A theatrical event — the opening of the ‘wet’ season in Western Australia’s north.

After the monsoonal downpour, the red-coloured pindan earth streaks across the paler sands of Cable Beach, Broome.





Pindan landscape north of Broome.



Aerial view of saltbush country near Lake Lefroy, south of Kalgoorlie.