

Wadjemup Bidi, Rottnest Island

The Wadjemup Bidi is a 45km network of trails, broken into five sections, that provides access to Rottnest's beautiful natural features and cultural history and helps to control and manage visitor impact in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Wadjemup is the Noongar name for Rottnest Island while Bidi is the Aboriginal Noongar word for track, or path. Professor Len Collard, from Moodjar Consultancy and Professor of Indigenous Studies at the University of Western Australia in consultation with the Rottnest Island Authority (RIA) and the Whadjuk Working Party, developed concepts and renamed the five sections of the Wadjemup Bidi using Noongar Aboriginal language.

Signage in the Thomson Bay Settlement Mall promoting the Wadjemup Bidi features an interchangeable panel that depicts which one of the Aboriginal Noongar six seasons you are currently in and the best section of the Wadjemup Bidi to experience during that season. The cutout artwork that features on either side of this sign was designed by Aurora and Cassandra Abraham, two talented Noongar Artists.

The symbol of an osprey – a medium-size raptor, or 'bird of prey', that inhabits most coastal areas and off-shore islands in Australia - is used to depict the trail and is located on all directional markers.

Funded through a \$559,100 partnership between the Rottnest Foundation and BHP, two new sections of the Wadjemup Bidi are now open to the public. The Karlinyah Bidi and the Wardan Nara Bidi.

The Karlinyah Bidi is approximately six kilometres long and leads visitors through the beautiful bays of the northern beaches. The Wardan Nara Bidi winds over 10 kilometres and allows visitors to explore the beauty of the Salmon Bay coastline before guiding them inland to the WWII guns and tunnels. It then takes in the Wadjemup Lighthouse before ending at the world class surf break at Strickland Bay.

The project has resulted in greatly improved access to popular bays and vantage points, making these areas safer for everyone to enjoy. In addition, there are new facilities to enhance the visitor experience and an appreciation of Aboriginal heritage by way of storytelling audio boxes and interpretive artwork.

Noongar artist Peter Farmer was commissioned to create the Mamong Djoortorts (Whale Tracks) sculpture located along the Wardan Nara Bidi and his Aunty Kerry-Ann Winmar tells the story of the Mamong Djoortorts that is heard through an audio sign at the site. Barry McGuire, a Traditional Owner, relays the dreamtime story of the 'Two Brothers' that is heard through an audio sign at Ricey Beach, located along the Karlinyah Bidi.

A short surfing documentary has also been produced that can be accessed by QR Code at the famous surfing location Strickland Bay, along the Wardan Nara Bidi. It includes interviews with well-known WA surfers and commentators, interweaving iconic footage and images of surfing from the 1950's to the current day.



The Ngank Wen Bidi is the last section of the Wadjemup Bidi remaining to be constructed. The northern part of this section will be partly funded by the Rottnest Foundation, utilising a grant from the Commonwealth Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure Program, which is managed by Tourism WA.

The Wadjemup Bidi is a conservation initiative that helps to direct and formalise access through path realignment, construction of beach access structures, rehabilitation, signage and education.

The Rottnest Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation that works to 'Conserve the essence of Rottnest' by encouraging community involvement and raising funds to protect and enhance the Island's unique environmental, cultural and heritage assets.

For more information on the Rottnest Foundation visit www.rottnestfoundation.org.au

Contributed by the Rottnest Foundation Inc.



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Photos: (page 18) Interpretive Sign along the Warden Bidi and (page 19) New Beach Access - Little Armstrong Bay ©Don Palmer, Courtesy of the Rottnest Foundation.

