

NEW FIRE TOWER — A LONG REACH FROM LEIGHTON BEACH

Fire protection in the Blackwood Valley has been stepped up with the introduction of a new fire lookout tower in the Ellis Creek forest block between Balingup and Nannup.

Originally part of the lighting system for the Leighton Beach marshall yards at Fremantle, the tower is 46 metres high, with a three-metre-square cabin at the top. The structure is embedded in an 80-tonne concrete foundation.

The tower replaces three lookouts in the valley—Carlotta, Milward and Stewart—but extends the overall surveillance area to about 280 000 hectares.

This latest fire detection facility gives fire spotters a clear view across forests, parks, reserves, private

property, community assets such as the Blackwood Valley and Sunlands pine plantations, and into the Scott River area.

It is the third new tower built by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) in the past three years. The lookout network now stretches from Mundaring in the north to Mt Frankland in the south, allowing constant surveillance over three million hectares of the south-west.

CALM operates an integrated fire detection system, with the towers enabling early fire detection by spotters, and aircraft providing the means for spotters to assess the severity of fires and their rate of progress at a closer

range than is possible from a distant tower.

The new tower is named after Gordon Styles, whose career with the Forests Department and CALM spanned 44 years. Mr Styles, now retired, was associated with many aspects of fire management in WA.

These included the development of aerial burning, standard heavy-duty tankers and other fire appliances (some of which are still in use today), fire training programs, and the preparation of comprehensive fire plans.

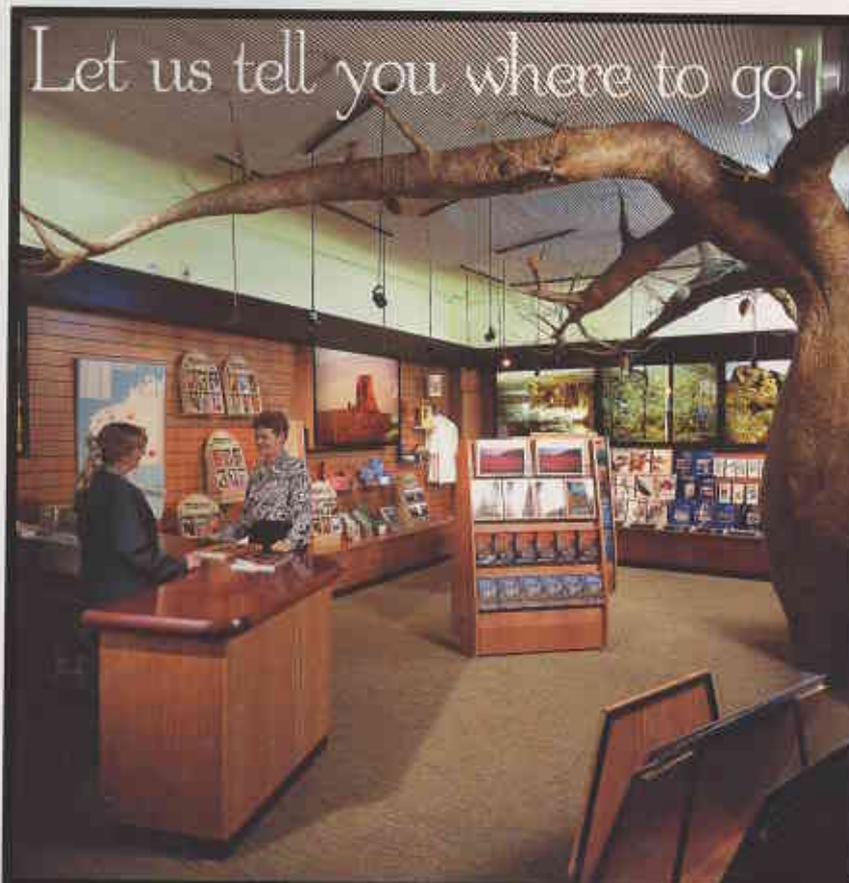
These plans are widely regarded as being a foremost example of integrated long-term fire management in Australia.

Mr Styles was awarded the prestigious Australian Fire Service Medal in 1995.



Above: Gordon Styles, right, inspects 'his' new fire lookout tower with Warren MLA Paul Omodei.

Photo - Paul Webster



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LANDSCOPE

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Discover the fascinating world of 'Starfish, Urchins and their Relatives' on page 10.



'The Art of Interpretation' on page 36 discusses how interpreters use a variety of techniques to enrich our experiences.



What have rabbits done to our land and what have we done about them? Find out in 'Run, Rabbit' on page 49.



Learn about a study of life in the tropical mudflats of Roebuck Bay on page 16.

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