

Pilbara Technical Tour

10-18 May 2008 • Perth, Western Australia



Minerals, Management and Magic

Join us for a once-in-a-lifetime experience

on a special post-conference technical tour to the extraordinary Pilbara Region of Western Australia. You will spend over a week in the real Australian Outback, visit world class mining and gas processing operations, experience eco-tourism at its best in the beautiful Karijini gorges, see ancient aboriginal rock art and learn about indigenous culture. Numbers strictly limited!

The IAIA08 Steering Committee has engaged professional tour operators Global Gypsies Pty Ltd to host a major post-conference technical tour to experience first hand the mining, environmental management and magic of the Pilbara Region. (Global Gypsies: <http://www.globalgypsies.com.au>)

The Pilbara region of Western Australia is a remote and rugged landscape. It contains some of the oldest rocks on the planet (over 3 billion years old) and has some of the world's largest iron ore deposits. Economic growth in China has seen rapid expansion in mining, petroleum and other related industrial projects in the last few years. This has created challenges for the co-existence of development with the unique biodiversity and landscapes of the region and traditional Aboriginal cultural heritage in the area. For information on the Pilbara, see <http://travellaustralia.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=282654>.

In Karijini National Park, deep gorges with spectacular rock formations have eroded over millions of years. On the Burrup Peninsula, recently nominated as a World Heritage Site, the world's largest outdoor art gallery comprising thousands of Aboriginal etchings in the natural rock exists alongside industrial projects arising from offshore oil and gas development. Further south, the amazing corals, fish, sharks and pristine waters of Ningaloo Reef can be accessed directly from the beach.

Although mining has been the economic mainstay of the Pilbara region for several decades, much of the region is undeveloped. To explore the region, it is necessary to cover large distances by road and to camp out under the stars. This is actually the best way to experience Australia's outback. Not surprisingly then, eco-tourism is rapidly emerging as a growth industry in the region.



This technical tour will take you to places that few visitors to Australia experience. You will visit world class mining and gas processing operations, experience eco-tourism at its best in the beautiful Karijini gorges, see ancient Aboriginal rock art and much much more.

The great distances (both sealed and unsealed roads) will be covered in a coach with a professional tour guide as well as local EIA experts. In-depth information on impact assessment issues including the environmental, social and economic challenges faced in the Pilbara region will be provided throughout the tour including extracts from recent state-of-the-art impact assessments.



Itinerary

Saturday, 10 May

Depart Perth 9.00am. Drive across the northern wheat belt of Western Australia learning about the effects of dryland salinity and climate change on agriculture and enter the Murchison Region. Camp overnight on the 152,000 acre Wogarno sheep station at the shearer's compound adjoining the homestead. (Distance traveled - 540 km) Wogarno Station: <http://www.wogarno.com.au/about.html>.



Sunday, 11 May

Drive across the Murchison learning about mining and grazing land uses in the region. You will be awed by the sheer scale of the landscape. Camp in the caravan park of the mining town of Newman. (Distance traveled - 640 km)



Monday, 12 May

Detailed tour of the Mt Whaleback iron ore mine operation just outside Newman with a senior environmental manager. Drive to Karijini National Park and set up camp at the Karijini Eco Retreat. (Distance traveled - 210 km) Iron ore mining (BHP Billiton): http://ironore.bhpbilliton.com/our_operations/mines.asp.

Tuesday, 13 May

Guided walking tour of spectacular water-carved gorges in Karijini National Park learning about the geology, biodiversity and indigenous heritage of the area. Camp at the Karijini Eco Retreat. Enjoy sunset drinks followed by dinner at the restaurant at the Retreat (cost not included) and star-gazing with your tour guide at the spectacularly bright Milky Way. Karijini National Park: http://www.naturebase.net/component/option.com_hotproperty/task/view/id,47/Itemid,755.

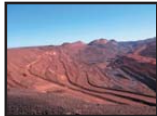
Wednesday, 14 May

Drive to Karratha via lunch stop at Millstream-Chichester National Park - an oasis in a dry land. Management of the hydrogeology is particularly important to balance water supply for regional settlements and maintain this unique freshwater ecosystem. This day will focus on competing land-uses in the Pilbara including rail and road transport infrastructure associated with iron ore mining operations. Bush camp near Karratha. (Distance traveled - 380km) Millstream-Chichester National Park: http://www.australianexplorer.com/millstream_chichester_national_park.htm.



Thursday, 15 May

See the industrial projects (including the recently expanded Woodside Petroleum LNG plant and Dampier solar salt operations) of the Burrup Peninsula along with some amazing Aboriginal art sites. Learn about the challenges of industrial development adjacent to this unique cultural site. Examine first hand land-use developments to expand the town of Karratha in an effort to meet the demand for housing (all available accommodation, including caravan parks, is currently being utilised by mineral/industrial employees and prices have skyrocketed). Bush or station camp near Karratha. Burrup Peninsula: <http://www.burrup.org.au>.



Friday, 16 May

Drive south down the coast to Coral Bay. Wade offshore to snorkel on the magnificent Ningaloo Reef (snorkeling equipment supplied). After dinner, learn about the marine biodiversity, Ningaloo Marine Park and impacts of ever-growing visitor numbers on this fragile ecosystem and landscape. Camp at the Coral Bay caravan park adjoining the beach and the reef. (Distance traveled - 600km) Ningaloo Reef: http://www.discoverwest.com.au/western_australia/ningaloo_reef.html.



Saturday, 17 May

Guided boat cruise to experience Ningaloo Reef from above! Drive along the coast to the seaside town of Kalbarri. On the way, learn about the changing pressures on the coastal environment as traditional grazing activity gives way to industrial and tourism development. Unique outdoor seafood dining experience at Finlays Fish BBQ restaurant (cost not included). If you provide entertainment, you get your meal for free! (Distance traveled - 660km) Kalbarri: <http://www.kalbarri.com/kalbarri/index.html>.



Sunday, 18 May

Return to Perth via lunch stop at the famous Pinnacles Desert. Walk around the thousands of eerie limestone pillars, up to 4m tall that rise from a remarkable moon-scape scenery of yellow quartz sand. Arrive back at your hotel in Perth approximately 7.00pm. (Distance traveled - 570km) Pinnacles Desert: http://www.discoverwest.com.au/western_australia/pinnacles_desert.html.





Important information

The special technical tour will truly be a once in a lifetime experience! Due to the logistics involved, numbers will be strictly limited to a maximum of 40 participants. Places will be allocated to the first 40 people who pay in full. Don't miss out!

Accommodation during the tour will be in two-person tents, sometimes in camping sites and sometimes in the bush where there will be no facilities. Meals will be provided by a professional "camp cook." Tour participants will be expected to participate in setting up and breaking camp as well as meal preparation. Much of the tour will be spent outdoors and sturdy footwear (boots are best), loose-fitting clothing and a hat are essential for the rugged environmental conditions. Please note that space in the bus will be limited and unable to accommodate large suitcases. Please only bring a small, soft bag weighing less than 15kg with you.

To participate in this technical tour, a reasonable level of health and fitness is required.

Prior to participating in this technical tour, you will be required to agree to Global Gypsies Terms and Conditions, which will be sent to paid registrants.



Due to the remoteness of the areas we will visit, Global Gypsies strongly recommends that you take out a comprehensive travel insurance policy including medical evacuation coverage, cancellation and theft of personal property in order for you to be indemnified against any losses for which you would otherwise be liable under this agreement.

Cost: US\$1750 per person, including meals except where indicated.

Registration and payment: www.eecwreservations.com

Queries: Contact Angus Morrison-Saunders (a.morrison-saunders@murdoch.edu.au).