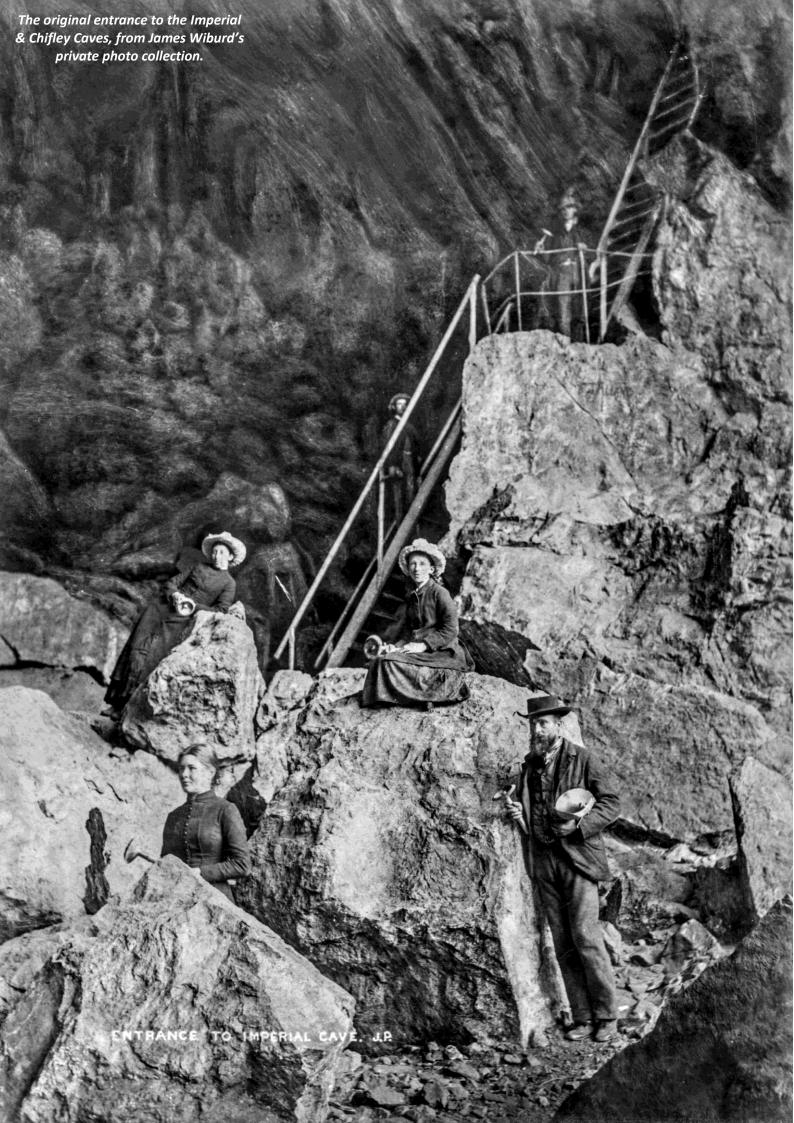
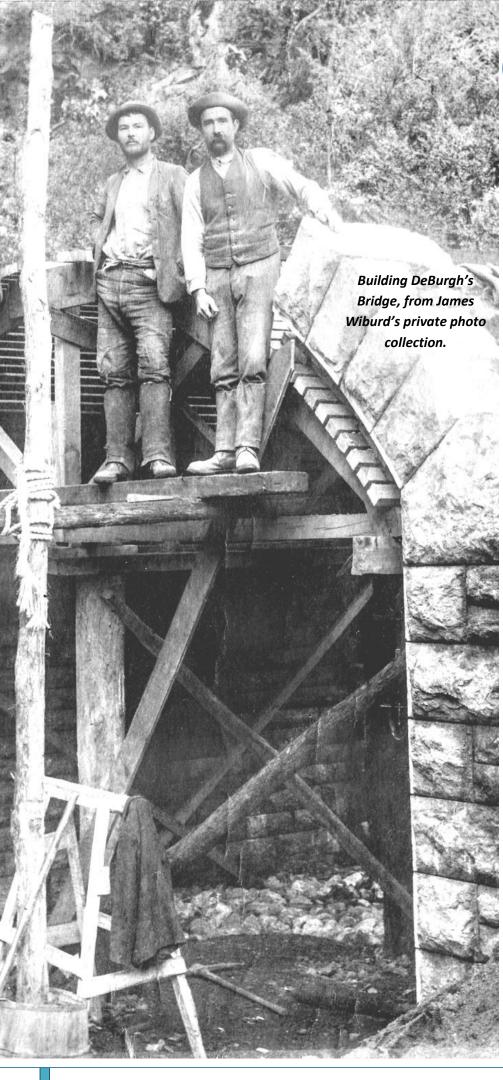




1300 76 33 11 www.jenolancaves.org.au





Contact

Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust 4655 Jenolan Caves Road, Jenolan Caves NSW 2790

Administration Office

Ph: 1300 76 3311 Fax: 02 6359 3092 Hours: 9am to 5pm

Cave Operations

Ph: 1300 76 3311 Fax: 02 6359 3307

Hours: 8.30am to 5.30pm

Technical Services

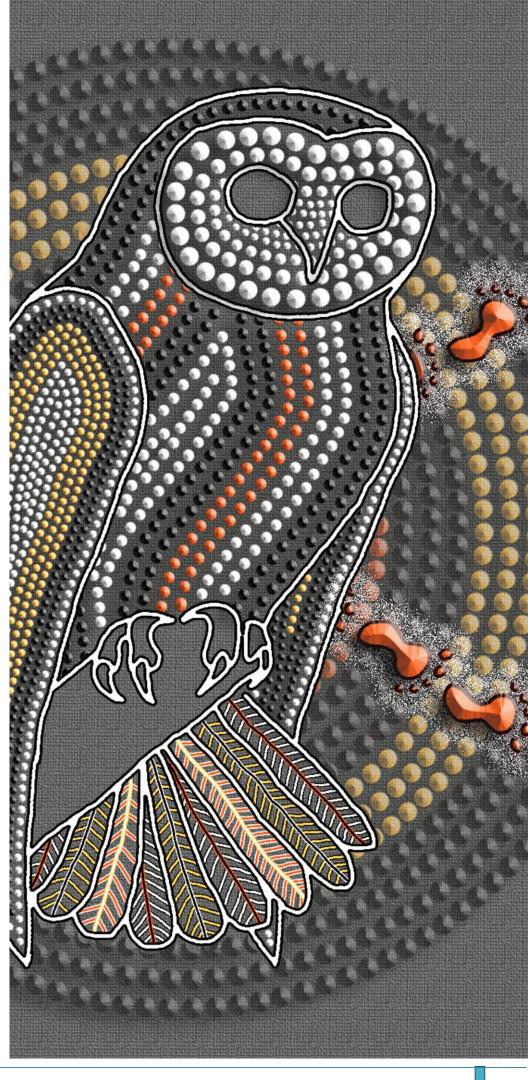
Ph: 1300 76 3311 Fax: 02 6359 330

Jenolan Caves House

Ph: 1300 76 3311 Fax: 02 6359 3227

> The cover photo was taken by Cave Guide, Scott Lewry, at The Shrine, in the Ribbon Cave.

Jenolan Caves
Reserve Trust
acknowledges the
traditional
custodians of the
land at Jenolan, the
Gundungurra and
Wiradjuri peoples,
and pays respect to
all elders, both past
and present.



Painted by Gundungurra artist, Tom Brown.

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Our Role

Role

The Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust is a body corporate established under the provisions of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 and is responsible for the care, control and management of the Visitor Use and Services Zone (VUSZ) within the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve. The Trust is responsible to the Minister for the Environment.

The role of the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust is to protect, conserve and present the natural and cultural heritage of the VUSZin an environmentally, socially and financially responsible and sustainable manner.

The VUSZ is an area of about 50 hectares within the larger Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve. The VUSZ contains most of the show and adventure caves, all visitor accommodation and facilities and associated utilities and services.

The Trust collaborates closely with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Committee and with Aboriginal communities on joint park management activities across the Reserve and across the wider Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Vision

Our vision is to ensure that the Jenolan VUSZ is highly valued, conserved and enjoyed by present and future generations while making a significant contribution to regional prosperity.

Core values

We uphold the NSW public sector core values of service, integrity, trust and accountability.

Aims and Objectives

The Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust Strategic Plan 2015–18 was adopted in September 2015 and it commits the Trust to four primary goals underpinned by our role and vision.

Goal 1: Provide quality visitor facilities, services and infrastructure by developing and maintaining ecologically sustainable, culturally appropriate, safe and enjoyable visitor facilities, services and experiences.

Goal 2: Conserve natural and cultural heritage values by protecting, conserving and presenting the natural and cultural heritage values of the Jenolan Caves reserve and prioritising activities that recognise the Karst Conservation Reserve status of the area, its world heritage, state and national heritage values and the significant catchment and Aboriginal cultural heritage values in the Reserve;

Goal 3: Strengthen partnerships by developing operational and research partnerships to enhance the Trust's commercial viability and by implementing sound environmental research and support programs across the reserve that assist in the protection, conservation and presentation of reserve values; and

Goal 4: Improve organisational effectiveness and sustainability by becoming a more effective, innovative, sustainable and customer-focused organisation and by providing a safe and rewarding work environment for our employees.

These goals and values remain highly relevant to the Trust's operation.



Administrator's Report

The Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust is a relatively small and financially self-reliant agency which is part of the Office of Environment Heritage (OEH). The Administrator represents the Trust and is appointed by the Minister for the Environment. The Administrator is accountable to the Chief Executive and Trust staff (c.74 FTE) are seconded from OEH.

In September 2015, the Trust developed a strategic business plan to identify its goals and key strategies for the next 3-5 years. Work is now well under way on implementing this plan with achievements and good progress being made already during 2016-17. These are summarised in the overview below.

Goal 1: Provide quality visitor facilities, services and infrastructure

- Achieving a 3.0% increase in annual cave visits over the previous 5-year average with the highest ever monthly visitation since 2011 being recorded in April 2017 (29,152);
- Implementation of on-line booking for cave tours through the new Booking Boss system from February 2017. Visitor experience within the precinct including parking, has improved and customer response has been excellent.
- Increasing room occupancy rates by 2.5% over the previous 5-year average, with a 4.6% increase in Caves House occupancy rates being recorded in 2016-17;
- Hosting 51 recreational caving and cave diving activities by groups such as the Sydney University and Metropolitan

- Speleologist Societies and the NSW Cave Rescue Squad;
- Installation of Wi-Fi access points throughout the Grand Arch precinct to enable free public access to the internet and very fast download of the Jenolan Caves App in late August;
- Completion of a sediment report for proposed works in Blue Lake and Surveyors Creek;
- Completion of a soft wash of all buildings in Grand Arch Precinct;
- Hosting the last leg and award ceremony of the biggest ever Six Foot Track
 Marathon Event in March 2017, attracting almost 900 runners and 2,500 spectators to the Reserve;
- Upgrading of Gatehouse fire alarm systems;
- Refurbishment of the Binda Cabins;
- Refurbishment of Binoomea Lodge which is now back online for guest use;
- Development and implementation of a Property Improvement Plan for the refurbishment of Caves House and which included the engagement of an interior designers, architects and heritage advisers;
- Completing stakeholder consultation for the preparation of a Reserve Master Plan and signage replacement program;
- Completion of major repairs to the Jenolan Schoolhouse;
- Hosting special events such as concerts, Yulefest and additional school holiday activities at the Caves.

Goal 2: Conserve natural and cultural heritage values

- Revision of the draft plan of management for the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve and the Conservation Management Plan.
- Updating the Trust's Movable Heritage Strategy to better conserve and present historic items in Caves House and elsewhere.
- Updating the Caves House Conservation Management Plan;
- Purchase of historic photographs reflecting the history of the Jenolan reserve;
- Completion of important conservation and building maintenance works to staff cottages including to heritage significant buildings including the Electricians Workshop (Old Diesel Shed) and the Schoolhouse;
- Ongoing recording of wildlife observations particularly of rare or threatened species; and
- Continuing with innovative environmental initiatives within the caves such as the replacement of galvanised steel handrails and stairs with stainless steel, installation of LED lighting and cave cleaning activities.

Goal 3: Strengthen partnerships

The Trust continued to develop strong partnerships and collaborations with:

- Office of Environment and Heritage including the NPWS Blue Mountains Branch; Asset Utilisation Branch and the Landform Rehabilitation Team based at Bathurst;
- Kanangra Boyd to Wyangala Link Partnership Group, part of the Great Eastern Ranges initiative;
- Oberon Council, Mayfield Gardens and the Blue Mountains Attractions Group on joint regional tourism initiatives including referrals through bluemtns.com.au;
- Oberon Correctional Facility for maintenance works in the Reserve;
- Oberon High School for hospitality training within Caves House;
- The Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) Committee and the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Advisory and Management Committees;
- The Australian Museum in offering 'Science in the Caves' to secondary school students and the Museum's Science Festival;
- Australian Caves and Karst Association and the Australian Tourism Export Council;
- The Jenolan Caves Heritage and Protection Society;
- Volunteer bush regenerators, the Jenolan Rural Fire Brigade, university research teams and volunteer speleologists who continue to be supported in various ways by the Trust;
- At the end of June 2017, the Trust had 46,162 Facebook fans, 3,283 Instagram followers and 215 LinkedIn followers; as well more than 3,000 subscribers to the Trust e-newsletter.

Goal 4: Improve organisational effectiveness and sustainability

There has been continued improvement in applying contemporary public sector and business management practices at Jenolan including:

- Ongoing support was provided for the Trust WHS Committee which has assisted with the identification and implementation of critical Trust initiatives including the completion of a Confined Space Audit and Management Plan; a Hazardous Materials Audit, Management Plan and registers; and a revised Snow Policy;
- Recreational policies and consents were developed including the Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (Drones) at Jenolan Caves Policy and Fact Sheet and the Standard Event Agreement for the proposed Rhythm Hunters Concert;
- Installing a new internal phone system together with new computer hardware and software upgrades including server and server software replacements and the installation of new hospitality management systems enabling more costeffective integration with our ACCPAC accounting and office software;
- Purchase of a forklift for better management of manual handling risks;
- Upgrade of closed circuit television monitors;
- In terms of the Trust business performance as reflected in our KPI's in 2016-17:
 - Strong financial performance across all accommodation was achieved in 2016-17. Revenue per available room (all rooms) showed a 9.5% increase, while average room rate (all rooms) showed an increase of 2.4%. The best

- performer relative to previous years was The Gatehouse with revenue per available room up 12%, room rate up 5% and occupancy rate up 1.6%;
- Performance of Caves House Hotel was also notable with only a very slight increase in average room rate (0.6%), but good performance in terms of RevPAR (10.5% increase) and occupancy rate (4.6% increase);
- Revenue per FTE was up 6.8% while expenditure per FTE was down 2.8% with no significant decline being reported in visitor and guest service; and
- Gross trading profit at the end of June was \$1,006,461; Net Profit \$451,427; \$373K ahead of consolidated budget and one of the best profit results ever achieved by the Trust, enabling future reinvestment of funds into much needed areas.

I would like to especially thank the very dedicated and committed Trust staff and our hardworking management team for continuing to show dedication to the mission, aims and objectives of the Trust. I want to particularly thank and acknowledge the great contribution made by our acting General Manager David Bragg and our new Cave Operations Manager Geoff Melbourne for an exceptional year which produced some excellent visitor service, financial and operational results. A special thanks is also extended to the Chief Executive OEH and those many staff members of OEH who have provided specialist and professional advice to the Trust over the past 12 months. The Trust has also been very fortunate to have strong and ongoing support from the Minister for the Environment and her office, which is also very gratefully acknowledged.

Bob Conroy Administrator Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust

Robert Conroy is Administrator of the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust, and is appointed in accordance with Section 58 (Z) of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974.



Overview

During the last 12 months the Trust has been fully self-funded, producing a profit of \$1,006,000 before depreciation, from its trading activities. This profit is more than double anything previously achieved.

This profit has allowed the Trust to reinvest funds back into the Visitor Use and Services Zone. This includes projects such as Refurbish Binda Cabins (\$47K), Upgrade Fire safety in Gatehouse (\$146k), Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade (\$36k) and Rock-fall Protection works (\$48k), just to name a few, for a total of \$430,000 for the year.

Staff Cottages which were refurbished last financial year, have been made available for rental through a local real estate agent.

The Conservation Management Plan and the Master Plan are near completion and will be available for public viewing early in the new Financial Year.

The Trust Work Health & Safety Committee has been active in monitoring Staff and Visitor Safety throughout the year.

The Trust has been improving its AMS (Asset Management System) system over the past 12 months including the use of a drone to enhance the accuracy of the work performed. This has assisted both the Masterplan and CMP process and is also of assistance currently as we apply for grants for various projects.

The old School House which is one of the major heritage listed buildings on site and is daily used by the Guide staff as Plughole Adventure Tour starting point. The refurbishment also included the rendering and painting of the toilet block adjacent to the School House.

Planning is well under way for the Elevator Refurbishment and the Café Refurbishment, both due to commence early in the new Financial Year.

David Bragg
Acting General Manager
Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust
October 2017





Marketing

The Trust marketing area has continued to focus on building both hospitality and caves business.

This was achieved by detailed planning, with some broad marketing strategies, and strategies that targeted specific demographic and geographic markets, moving away from traditional to online marketing, and measuring the results. Online surveys, Google Analytics, and online booking software enabled marketing decisions to be made, based on first hand findings.

Approximately 500 visitors completed Jenolan's online survey, adding to a growing database, which provides invaluable information about how visitors research holiday destinations and also about their expectations and perceptions of Jenolan.

Selection of Research Findings

Past survey recipients have confirmed the trend that women make up to 80% of travel and holiday decisions. However, in 2016-17, a growing number of men indicated that they made the decision to visit Jenolan. This shows the potential of marketing to men, especially in the lead up to holidays.

Jenolan's online booking reports show that when individual customers book online, they spend significantly more per session than when they book in person or on the phone. Online purchasers tend to choose the more expensive tours and the tours that are placed near the top of the list of choices.

The survey shows a slight increase in families seeking value for money. After the Home Page, the prices page is the most viewed page on the Jenolan website. So, although 55% of visitors say their main focus was to discover new and fascinating things, Google Analytics indicates that price was the more likely concern.

74% of Jenolan's visitors are age 40 or older.

Jenolan's customers consider themselves active but not seeking extreme adventure. This is borne out by the fact that our show cave tours are still our most popular product, even though our Adventure Caving is extremely popular.

Most Jenolan survey respondents expect to find an experience of unspoiled nature, that is 'magical', unique and relaxing, suggesting that Jenolan should market its unique aspects only. Adventure, romance, fun for kids, and learning are experiences that can be found in many other holiday destinations.

Very few survey respondents make spur-ofthe-moment decisions to visit Jenolan. 89% planned their visit before they left home, highlighting the need to promote to potential visitors online, in their planning stage, and before they even start planning.

12.7% of survey respondents came to Jenolan mainly for the overnight stay, rather than the cave tour. This represents a slight increase from last year and suggests that Caves House may be increasing in popularity.



One third of survey participants were first time visitors. But the rest were repeat visitors, with 21% saying they have visited 4 or more times previously. 25% said that good memories of their last visit made them want to visit again. This reinforces the importance of good customer service and delivering a great overall experience.

Internet information influenced 22% of survey respondents to visit Jenolan, and 14% were influenced by a special offer.

Survey respondents claim they are rarely influenced by traditional promotions such as posters, magazines, newspapers and TV advertising. They claim to be more influenced by the Internet, friends and social media, perceived as more authentic and trustworthy. Travellers still regard brochures, guidebooks, travel magazines as somewhat relevant, while Facebook ads are not even perceived as ads.

A decreasing number of Jenolan's guests are leaving reviews on Tripadvisor. More are leaving reviews on Booking.com, where they can rate hotels on a number of points, resulting in a fairer review. This trend is extremely noticeable and if it continues, is good news for the hotel industry.

From our web statistics we can see that electronic tablet use has dropped by 8%. Apple devices were used by 66% of viewers and are by far the most popular. Apple device usage has increased by 15% from last year. 22% of viewers used a Samsung device. Samsung devices have increased also, but by only 10%. This information is relevant to future app requirements.

Most Internet users view Jenolan's website by mobile phone, but session duration on mobile phone is less than half the duration of a desktop session. This means that mobile websites must be much clearer and easier to navigate, so that users can find what they need in a very short time.

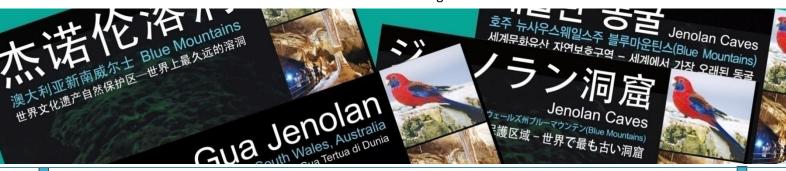
In 2016-17, people in 192 countries looked at Jenolancaves.org.au. Most viewers were in Australia, but over 17,000 were in the US. Significant numbers of viewers were in the UK, Russia, Singapore, NZ, Canada, India, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan.

Sessions in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Argentina and Mexico increased drastically, due to paid Facebook ads, targeting hot climate countries. Sessions in Russia and Mongolia increased drastically also, in response to paid Facebook ads targeting cold climate countries. Although Jenolan does not receive many actual visitors from these countries, it clearly demonstrates how effective Facebook is for sending potential visitors to our website.

Jenolan ranks well on search engines, thanks to ongoing optimization measures. Also, 911 other websites contained links to the Jenolan website. Website referral traffic increased by 52% over the year. Referral traffic from social media increased by 29%. The main websites that sent traffic to us were Facebook and Bluemts.com. This indicates that it is not necessary for our website to be at the top of search engine results, as long as it has links on other high profile websites.

Broad Strategies

AdLoyalty.com.au, a Canowindra based creative agency, was commissioned to produce a set of short marketing videos. The videos focus on romance, adventure, fun, learning, conservation and uniqueness of Jenolan. They promote Jenolan's full product range for social media and website.



Jenolan maintains membership of a range of tourism organizations, including the Blue Mountains Attractions Group, the Blue Mountains Accommodation and Tourist Attractions Group, and Oberon Business & Tourism Association. This provided shared marketing opportunities, the chance to gain insight from other businesses and to provide assistance to smaller ones.

Jenolan takes opportunity to help promote other attractions and tour operators in the Blue Mountains and Central West, through free links on the Jenolan website and through social media sharing.

Jenolan also offers familiarization tours, dinners and overnight stays for journalists, film crews, tour operators, travel agents and other people who work in the tourism industry, such as staff from Visitor Information Centres, Destination NSW and Tourism Australia.

Most traditional strategies have been gradually replaced by online tools, such as regular updates to jenolancaves.org.au, a presence on high profile 3rd party websites, search engine optimization, e-news to a database of more than 5,000, and a very strong reliance on social media, especially Facebook.

Targeted Strategies

Apart from broad strategies, Jenolan targets geographic and demographic markets. The 2 most important target markets are Australian retirees and international travellers, who can come to Jenolan mid-week and in off-peak times.

During the year, a range of strategies were used to attract the international market. At the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE), Jenolan met with 21 international journalists

and 90 international travel agents and tour operators. Trade discounts and information in Mandarin, Japanese, Korean and Indonesian are also incentives. Film crews from Japan and Malaysia, plus journalists from Israel, the US, the UK and Japan visited Jenolan. Several major inbound tour operators and travel agents from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Sweden, France, China, Canada, Japan, Malaysia and the UK were invited to Jenolan.

An independent sales representative was employed, to increase business from Tour Operators in 2017-2018.

Next to the International market, retirees are Jenolan's most important target market. Retirees enjoy the historic ambiance of Caves House. Senior Facebook followers display the strongest engagement with Jenolan's Facebook posts. Jenolan's Facebook page has 45,000 followers, mostly female.

Discounted rates for interstate tour operators are used to attract the interstate market. Several snowfalls in August brought unexpected and invaluable free publicity, especially in Queensland.

People who live within a 3 hour drive of Jenolan are another important market. Groupon, The Entertainment Book and website blogs highlighting news and history are all aimed at attracting this 'local' market. Jenolan also continues to enjoy a presence on regional radio.

Once people move beyond the planning stage, and have actually started their travels, they can be reached by more traditional means.

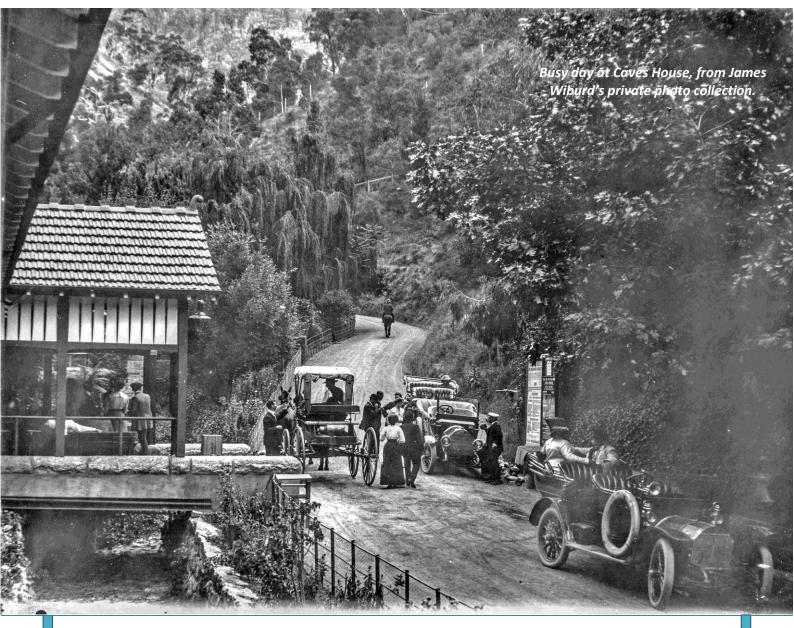
Often out of phone and Internet range, they still may be influenced by brochures, visitor information centres, and tourist publications.

To market to schools, 2 short videos were produced, featuring Jenolan's educational program and conservation measures.

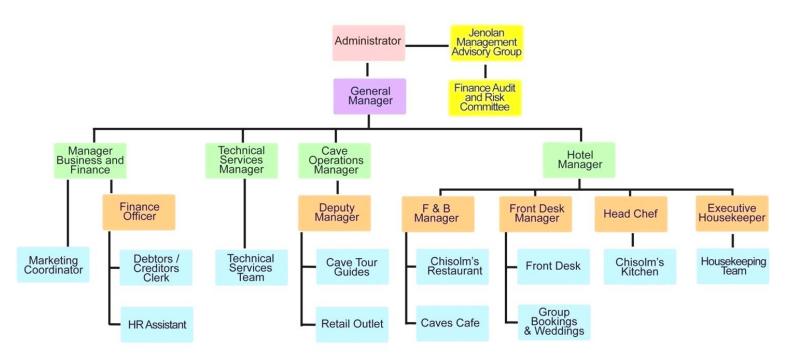
The adventure market is vital for Jenolan, with the Blue Mountains a major destination for adventurer seekers. Although Facebook promotions had an excellent reach, the most successful boost for Adventure Caving came through online cave tour bookings. Complimentary Adventure Caving photos generated excellent word-of-mouth publicity, as people share them on social media.

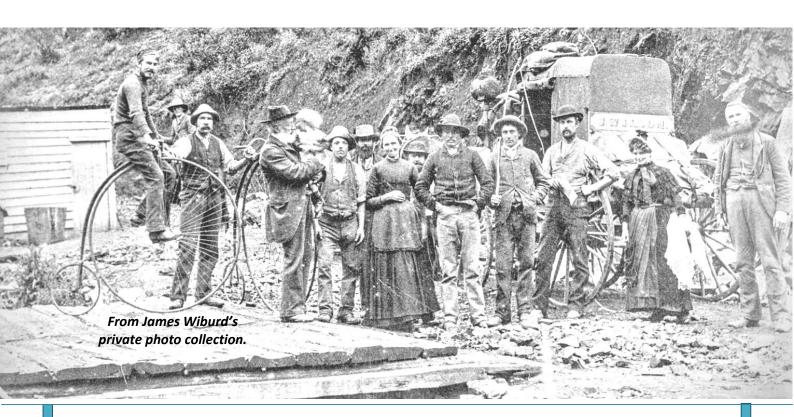
Jenolan's ongoing support for community fundraising is currently the main method of marketing to families. This year, Jenolan supported 226 organisations, mainly schools. In turn, many of these organisations promoted Jenolan on their websites, on Facebook and on event collateral.

Carolyn Melbourne
Marketing Coordinator
Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust
October 2017



Organisational Chart







Cave Operations

Visitation

2014/15 - 230261

2015/16 - 233739

2016/17 - 231849

Despite several major natural incidents which had some impact on visitor experience, positive results were achieved.

Compared to 2015/16

Visitation	231,849 (-0.8%)
Revenue	+4.9%
Expenditure	+5.3%
Number of Cave Tours9423	3 (-410 or -4.17%)
Revenue per FTE	+8.4%
Total Expense per Visitor	\$11.92 (-2.3%)
Total Revenue per Visitor	\$26.55 (+13.2%)

2016/2017 Financial Year:

Total FTE	27
Number of Tours per FTE	349
Salaries & Wages as % of total expenses.	86%

FTE=Full time equivalent staff

Online Tour Bookings

Online tour booking, via *Booking Boss*, was launched in February, for both online and in office over the counter sales. The positive impact on sales income has been substantial. There have been great benefits for staff also, as a result of reduced queues in ticket office and fewer phone bookings.

New tours

Development has been underway for two new tours which will be introduced in the new financial year:

- The "Chifley's Secret Chambers" tour is a premium tour, with a strong history focus and directed at mid week visitors.
- Science based cave tour and karst walk for primary schools and high schools, highlighting the scientific investigations that are currently in progress in the Chifley Cave. These school excursion activities are being specifically designed to meet the requirements of the new NSW school curriculum.



Souvenir/Gift Shop

Planning was under way for moving the souvenir/gift shop to the Ticket Office early in the 2017/18 financial year.

Presenting at Shows and Conferences

Four Caves Guides attended the Australian Cave & Karst Management Association's annual general meeting at TeAnau on the South Island of New Zealand in May 2017. At the Annual General Meeting, Acting Deputy Cave Operations Manager, Scott Melton, was re-elected to the committee of ACKMA, where he is part of a project to develop a national cave guide training certificate.

Planning was underway for 2 Jenolan Caves guides to attend *Speleo 2017*, the 17th International Congress of Speleology in Penrith, which took place in July 2017. Cave Guide, Dr Anne Musser prepared and presented a paper on Jenolan's palaeontology. 175 Congress delegates visited Jenolan Caves during the event.

Several Jenolan Staff manned a stall at the *Sydney Science Festival*, hosted by the Australian Museum, in Sydney, to showcase Jenolan's new science based school program. This generated encouraging levels of interest from teachers.

Staff

Interviews were held in late May for new guiding staff, resulting in two new permanent staff.

Rock Stabilisation

Following several rock falls, which caused significant damage to external infrastructure near the Blue Lake, stabilisation work was undertaken by *Pan Civil*, above the Lucas Cave exit, outside of the Devils Coach House Cave, behind the Hill Flats and on the hill, east of Carpark No. 1.

Wiburd Photo Collection

The Trust was extremely fortunate to receive a substantial collection of original photographs and artifacts belonging to James Wiburd. Wiburd was Superintendent of the Caves from 1903 to 1932, and discoverer of several of Jenolan's most famous caves.

The collection features previously unseen pictures of Jenolan from Wiburd's personal collection. This amazing collection was donated to the Trust by Harley and Susan Lane, who also generously gifted a set of 4 wooden panels, beautifully carved by George Wiburd.



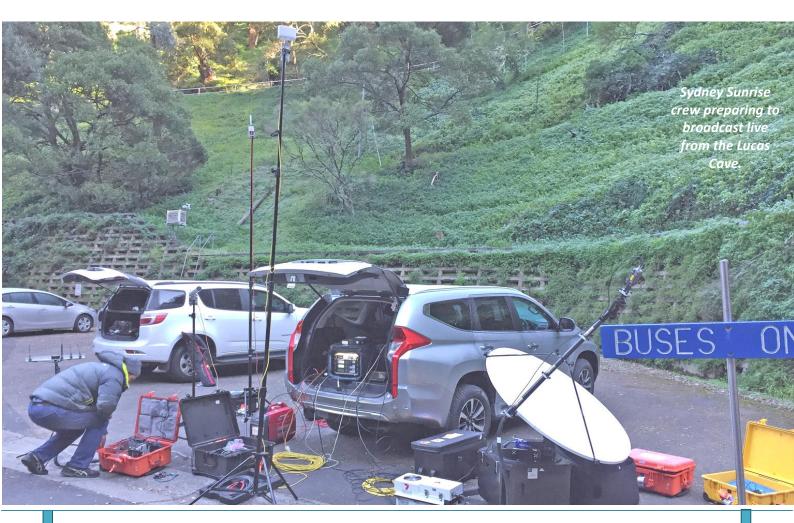
Technology

In May, popular morning news TV show, Sydney Sunrise, achieved a live broadcast and interview from deep underground in the Lucas Cave.

Lighting throughout the cave system has benefitted from the ongoing installation of

LED lighting. Benefits include longevity and reduced power consumption.

Geoff Melbourne
Manager Cave Operations
Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust
October 2017





Jenolan Caves House

Revenue Generated

Visitor accommodation generated revenue of \$1,652,000. The annual rooms sold was 13,506, showing an average occupancy rate of 40%. The annual revenue from rooms sold and accommodation are on par with 2015-2016. The occupancy rate was up slightly from 39.27%. Occupancy rate varied from a low of 29% in February to a high of 55% in July.

The Caves Café generated annual revenue of \$1,249,000, up slightly from the previous year of \$1,193,000.

Chisolms Restaurant generated revenue of \$1,295,000, up slightly from \$1,263,000 on the previous year.

Chisolm's Restaurant continues to provide local artist performances most Saturday nights.

The Gift Shop generated revenue of \$218,000, down from \$309,000 the previous year. In the new Financial Year, the Gift Shop will move to a more visible location within the Ticket Office. We are hoping this move will generate increased revenue in the new year. The Gift Shop sells souvenirs and basic supplies and is open 7 days per week.

Personnel

Staffing continued to be an issue. There was less reliance on travelling staff and greater emphasis was put into retaining and employing local staff.

Contract staff were employed in the first few months of the year for the role of Hotel Manager but in the second half of the year this role contract wages not required. Considerable savings were made in Contract Wages during 2016/17 \$84,000 compared with \$192,000 in 2015/16.

The services of an agency are still being utilized, to supply staff from Japan, predominately for Housekeeping and Kitchen roles. These staff rotate in and out on a six monthly basis.

Greater emphasis has been placed on recruiting staff from local towns. Considerable effort is being focused on reducing staff turnover and increasing skills. In-house training continues to provide better staff and has seen a reduction in guest complaints.

Food and Beverage Facilities

Food & Beverage Operations incorporate Chisolms Grand Dining room, Jeremiah's Bar, Caves Café day visitor facility and Kanangra Boyd Gallery function room, catering for as many as 120 guests.

Following on from last year, being a remote location still presents its challenges in procuring goods and services. A good supplier base has been working with Jenolan, and pricing has been able to be negotiated to suit. Some suppliers have continued to reduce their Cost of Goods, and local suppliers have been sourced for goods and services.

Accommodation

The Accommodation Operation at Jenolan consists of four accommodation units, Caves House (38 rooms), Mountain Lodge (30 Motel Style Studios), Gatehouse Backpacker Lodge (14 rooms) and Jenolan Cottages (8 Cabins).

David Bragg, Acting General Manager
Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust, October 2017



Technical Services

The Jenolan Technical Services Team of 10 expert staff represents a range of trades, including Carpenter, Electrician, Horticulturist, Mechanical Fitters, Tool Maker and Motor Trimmer. Constantly busy behind-the-scenes, the team performs all jobs involving building, mechanical and electrical work, fabrication and welding. They maintain all vehicles, equipment and boilers. They maintain the water supply and the sewage treatment plant. They manage the storm water, car parks and traffic. They assist other Jenolan staff in numerous ways, on a daily basis.

When necessary, the team is supplemented by independent contractors including Oberon Correctional Centre, which helps out with maintaining bushwalks and removing debris.

This year saw changes in key staff, including 3 successive department managers.

Training

This year, staff obtained or updated qualifications in forklift driving and chainsaw operation. Along with all Jenolan staff, Technical Services staff took part in Fire Safety Awareness Training and Fire Warden Training. As most Jenolan staff come into contact with the general public, Technical Services staff also took part in a Managing Aggressive Behaviour course.

At weekly 'Tool box' talks, the team discussed job safety and took the opportunity to share information. For example, a Tool Box talk about testing water samples was a most informative session.

Caves House

Caves House and all adjacent buildings underwent an external wash, which has brightened them up significantly. As issues were reported, repair and maintenance work was done on taps, water supply, water heaters and issues relating to electricity supply. Normal maintenance issues were performed in the kitchen, for dishwashers, water softeners and sourcing/replacing equipment. In addition to these day to day tasks, the following work was done:

- Painting of 1 office, 2 hallways and 1 Vernon Wing room.
- Revamping of swinging doors hinges for the Library, Ballroom and Restaurant, in keeping with the period ambience.
- Installation of new staircase to the lift room, and full service of the lift.
- Moving of the souvenir shop from Caves House to the Ticket Office.
- Fitting of 2 new stoves and bench tops in Chisolm's kitchen.



Mountain Lodge

Issue arose relating to new phones and phone lines, and an electric air curtain was installed at the main entrances, to deter insects from entering the building.

Caves Cafe

With the much anticipated upgrade/refurbishment of The Caves Café, some of the old tired equipment was replaced and a new chip warmer was sourced. A new mobile fridge/freezer was sourced and purchased, saving substantial hiring fees.

Gate House

Fire protection was upgraded in the Gate House backpacker lodge, including the Tech Services Office. While these areas were being upgraded, all the contents had to be relocated and returned on completion.

Staff Cottages

As staff cottages were rented, reverse cycle air conditioners were installed in Cottages 14B, 15, 20 and 6. The team performed general yard maintenance to all other unoccupied cottages.

Old School House

In Carlotta Carpark, contractors were employed to completely renovate the heritage-listed Old School House, which is used as a preparation area for Adventure Caving. It received a new roof, ceiling, paint, carpets and blinds. The laundry was upgraded. The adjoining toilet block was rendered, painted and upgraded internally.

Jenolan Caves Cottages

All 8 self-contained cottages underwent refurbishment, with new furniture, carpet, linoleum and window treatments. Oberon Correctional Centre revamped all the picnic tables, and general maintenance was performed on the alarm system.

Binoomea Cottage & Bellbird Cottage

Recently used as staff accommodation, these buildings were refreshed with paint, new lights and fire exit signs, to raise them to a standard where they could be available to guests as self-catered accommodation, once again. Binoomea Cottage was completely refurnished and kitchen re-equipped. Track work was done and the yard was cleaned up, to bring Bellbird Cottage back on line.

Noxious Weeds & Dead Animals

Weed spraying was done and dead animals were removed, as necessary. Ongoing pest and termite inspections were done by a contractor.

Precinct & Car Parks

The Technical Services Team coordinated traffic and car parking during special events and some public holidays. Parking bays were remarked in all three car parks. The Information Bay at Hampton was serviced.

The team worked with other Jenolan staff to ensure the success of the *Six Foot Track Marathon*, by purchasing extra portable gas BBQs.

A portable freezer was hired for school holidays, public holidays and special events and the Oberon Correctional Centre maintained walking tracks and the supply of firewood for caves house.

Sewage Treatment Plant

To manage the sewage from approximately 240,000 annual visitors, Jenolan has its own highly effective sewage treatment plant. Extensive work was done at the plant this year, aiming towards full automation. Auto shutdown was installed on the effluent trough motor, which is a backup for the limit switch, and also on the pasveer aerator motors, in the event of effluent trough failure. During the year, a range of contractors were engaged to:

- Locate cement stabilization bags around a partially exposed sewer pipe adjacent to the sewage treatment plant. This was in a very steep section and had to be done with rock climbing gear and by staff who were certified in working at heights.
- Supply and install the Open Channel Flow Meter and Data Logger.
- Supply & install a new gearbox and shaft in the aerator
- Install a rubber membrane to the decanting trough

- Source and supply a new Alum pump from the US
- Supply and install a 50 series multi para controller, digital sensor and immersible probe.
- Reline sewer pipes adjacent to Caves House
- Make CCTV inspection of culverts adjacent to Caves House

Water Supply

Jenolan's water supply is sourced from deep underground in the caves, but stored and treated in large tanks above ground. The water supply system now has an automatic chlorination dosing and turbidity monitor. This equipment has an alarm system with it which reports directly to the Technical Services Manager desktop – all part of stepping into the 21st century. The team also performed boiler blowing and testing and acid treatment of the boilers, new staff were trained in this. Contractors were called in to install a circulating pump in the return line to the Caves Cafe, to re-route water pipe lines under the Grand Arch roadway, to repair a leaking valve on the concrete water tank and too install a direct fill valve on the steel water tank.

Rubbish Removal

A tree was removed from near the Carpenter's Workshop. Two dead trees, considered to be high risk, were removed from the Blue Lake Walk. Bobcat and tipper were used to remove waste from the drying beds at the Sewage Treatment Plant.

Cardboard was separated from general rubbish. A contractor collected and disposed of general rubbish and cardboard daily.

Vehicles, Plant & Equipment

All vehicles have been serviced to meet registration and service book requirements. The Massey Fergusson and a Bobcat were sold. A forklift was sourced and purchased.

on the list. This will involve a committed effort from Tech Services members and patience from all staff and visitors.

The team has continued to provide a

There are exciting times ahead with the

refurbishment of public areas within Jenolan

Caves - the lift and the Caves Café being first

The team has continued to provide a worthwhile service to the Office of Environment & Heritage to help Jenolan Caves continue to be a safe place for all to enjoy.

Don Breedon
Acting Tech Services Manager
Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust
October 2017

Looking Ahead



Research & Development

The Reserve continues to be an important resource for scientific research.

An ongoing research and monitoring program by the *National Parks & Wildlife Service*, for Jenolan's rare Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby colony, has found that the population of this iconic species is slowly increasing. Regular surveys and the establishment of permanent camera monitoring sites by *Saving our Species Blue Mountains Branch* and *National Parks & Wildlife Service Kanangra Area* staff have determined that the population is approximately **100 individuals**. Ongoing fox control has contributed to the success of the program by reducing predator impacts, with 160 permanent bait stations established and maintained.

The Sycamore Maple weed control program continues to significantly reduce the areas of steep terrain around Jenolan that are impacted by this invasive weed. This highly successful program, funded by *Central Tablelands Local Land Services*, combines the skills of specialist bush regeneration contractors, National Parks & Wildlife Service Kanangra Area staff and volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds. Regular volunteer weekends have been well attended.

This year, Dr Chris Waring, from ANSTO, published new research about the links between above and below ground temperature, methanotropic bacteria (bacteria that eat methane) and gases (methane, radon and carbon dioxide) found in the Chifley Cave. The results, derived from several years of research at Jenolan, will change the way speleothem growth rates are measured and will have significant implications for paleo climate research. The paper has also revealed that approximately

88 types of new methanotropic bacteria were discovered inside the Chifley Cave – a truly remarkable finding. Dr Waring has presented his findings to the Jenolan Caves staff.

Rare mineral discoveries by Ross Pogson,
Collection Manager, Geosciences, Australian
Museum Research Institute, have revealed
that Jenolan has been a site of animal activity
for centuries, with surface access for much
longer than previously thought. This new
information is of interest to palaeontologists
and to the wider scientific community.

Ross's Chifley Cave study is part of an overall mineral species survey of Jenolan Caves which began over 25 years ago with Armstrong Osborne and other scientists. He is now continuing work, aimed at identifying rare phosphate minerals in the stratified white clay outcrop in Lower Katies Bower, Chifley Cave. He is identifying the range of mineral species present with X-ray Diffraction, as well as trying to establish if there is any order in the sequence of deposition of the minerals. Recently he has extended the study across the access path to the earth deposit that slopes down to the opposite cave wall. The phosphate minerals he has found there, with the assistance of Cave Guide Dr Anne Musser, are similar to those in the main outcrop, with some additions and subtractions. For example, the mineral Ardealite (calcium sulphate-phosphate), is present in the 'Potatoes' in the Lucas Cave and Grotto Cave (Chifley Cave), but not so far in the main Lower Katies Bower outcrop.

In recent years, Dr Anne Musser, Honorary Research Associate with the Australian Museum, and a guide at Jenolan Caves, has recorded numerous animal and bird species in the online Atlas of Living Australia. This year she has continued and also identified 7 bird special for the Atlas, that have not been recorded at Jenolan previously, along with an extensive list of butterfies and spiders.

Dr Musser is also currently excavating a sooty owl pellet deposit in the Nettle Cave. Stage 1 has been completed and surface sediments have been analysed, revealing approximately 2000 bone fragments from 20 small animal species hunted by sooty owls in the past 200 years, telling us much about sooty owls and about small animals that were in the Jenolan area up to 200 years ago. The bones include the extinct White Footed Rabbit Rat. All bones have been cleaned, identified and carefully curated.

At *Speleo 2017* (the 17th International Congress of Speleology), Dr Musser presented to cave scientists from all over the world, about how Australian vertebrates use caves. She also gave a short talk about Jenolan palaeontology, at this event and

earlier in the year, for the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Advisory Committee.

Familiar with the range of scientific work in progress at Jenolan, Dr Musser has incorporated their work and findings into Jenolan's new school excursion program which will launch in 2018.

All this research and activity by external organisations provides a better understanding of the caves and the surrounding environment, and will continue to add to Jenolan's knowledge.

This will translate to changes and improvements to guided tours, and will facilitate new and innovative activities aimed at schools, with science as a focus.

Geoff Melbourne, Manager Cave Operations Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust October 2017



Corporate Resources

Finance and Administration Department

The Finance team is focused on meeting the information needs of both internal and external clients. This involves day to day processing, reporting, advice and project participation.

The Finance team is headed by the Manager Business & Finance, and supported by the Finance Officer, HR Assistant and the Creditors/Debtors Officer.

Information Technology

During 2016/17 the Trust has seen the installation of the new telephone PABX and the installation of WiFi for both guest and Trust use.

Capital Expenditure

Expenditure on Capital works, including planning and equipment totaled \$456,000 and consisted of:

General infrastructure and Environmental

Projects......\$ 261,340

IT Upgrade.....\$54,869

Telephone Upgrade & WiFi......\$139,791

Annual financial Statements

Below is a summary from the Statement of Comprehensive Income for 2015/16, compared with 2016/17.

	2015/16	2016/17
Revenues from continuing operations	\$10,465,107	10,691,775
Total Expenses (Excluding Impairment Expenses)	\$10,419,956	11,239,226
Profit/(Loss) from ordinary activities	\$45,149	(\$547,451)





Statutory Information

Senior Executive Officers

Total no. of senior executive positions: Current year: nil Previous year: nil Number of female senior executive officers: Current year: nil Previous year: nil

Classification of Positions

Listed below is the classification of positions for the last 3 years.

General Manager 1 1 1 Administration Manager 1 1 0 Systems Administrator & Finance Officer 1 Deleted Deleted Manager Information, Communications & Technology 1 Deleted Deleted Manager Business & Finance 1 1 1 Administration Officers Deleted Deleted Deleted Finance Officer 1 1 1 Creditors / Debtors Officer 1 1 1 Marketing Officer 1 1 1 Manager Cave Operations 1 1 1 Guides 1 1 1 1 Guides 1 1 1 1 Wisitor Services Officers Deleted 2 2 2 Team Leader – Plant Electrician 1 1 1 1 Manager Technical Services and Capital Works 1 1 1 Deleted Trades Officer 2 2 2 2		2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
Systems Administrator & Finance Officer Manager Information, Communications & Technology Manager Business & Finance Manager Business & Finance 1 1 1 1 Administration Officers Deleted De	General Manager	1	1	1
Manager Information, Communications & Technology1DeletedDeletedManager Business & Finance111Administration OfficersDeletedDeletedDeletedFinance Officer111Creditors / Debtors Officer111Marketing Officer111Manager Cave Operations111Guides12 2 vacant2222Visitor Services OfficersDeleted22Team Leader – Plant Electrician111Manager Technical Services and Capital Works111Trades Officer (Electrician)11DeletedTrades Officers222Maintenance Officer3.5 1 vacant3.5 1 Vacant3.5Manager Food & Beverage Operations111Manager Rooms Division111	Administration Manager	1	1	0
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Manager Rooms Division 1 1 1	Maintenance Officer			3.5
	Manager Food & Beverage Operations	1	1	1
Manager Hospitality Operations Deleted 1 0	Manager Rooms Division	1	1	1
	Manager Hospitality Operations	Deleted	1	0
Head Chef Caves House 1 1 1	Head Chef Caves House	1	1	1
Customer Services Officer – Hospitality 27 35	Customer Services Officer – Hospitality		27	35

Recruitment Statistics

In all there are 75 permanent positions, covering 4 categories. Permanent staff also engage in job sharing arrangements in the Cave Operations and Technical Services departments. Temporary placements, and a casual workforce of up to 30, supplement the Trust's team of permanent employees.

The Trust's estimated full time equivalent staff number (FTE), as at 30 June 2017, was 77.13.

Training

Total training costs for the year were \$34,595.

Total paid staff hours for external training:

2015/2016 \$0 2014/2015 \$0 2016/2017 \$49,040

Courses undertaken during the year included First Aid Training; OHS induction; 4WD Training; Fire Safety and Fire Warden.

EEO Statistics

Total positions held by males and females are detailed below:

	Males %	Female %
2014/2015	41	59
2015/2016	39	61
2016/2017	43	57

Of the permanent employees, 46% are male and 54% are female. In 2016/2017, the average remuneration for males was \$46,347 and females \$39,222.

Approximately 63% of all staff on the payroll are permanent/temporary, the balance are employed on a casual basis.

Staff relieved in higher positions (minimum 5 days relief) on 8 occasions.

Overseas Visits

There were no official overseas visits undertaken by staff during the 2016/2017 financial year.

Consultants

Throughout 2016-2017, the Trust supplemented internal resources with the following consultancy expertise (costs excluding GST):

Equal to or more than \$30,000

\$121,139
\$125,534
\$34,763
\$276,595
\$119,830

Under \$30,000

Financial Consultancies	\$25,120
TOTAL CONSULTANCIES	.\$748,981

Account Payment Performance

Average value of creditor payments processed per month:

Current (within 30 days)	\$464,492
Less than 30 days overdue	\$24,446
Between 30-60 days overdue	0
Between 60-90 days overdue	0
Over 90 days overdue	0
Percentage of accounts paid on time	95%
Total of accounts paid on time	\$5,573,915
Total of accounts paid	\$5,867,279

Commentary:

- Payment is made on invoice after authorisation within terms through the Accounts Payable module of the Accpac accounting package.
- Credit card use in the Trust has been in accordance with Premiers Memorandum and Treasurer's Direction.

The electronic transfer of funds using the Westpac Corporate Online facility was continued in 2016/2017

Disability Plans

The Trust provides a quality experience for all visitors to the Reserve. Strategies for assisting people with special needs range from the construction of access ramps, to staff members helping visitors adjust to 'closed' cave environments. Other services provided by the Trust include:

- The provision of tailored-tours to cater to the special needs of the elderly and visually impaired.
- The grading of show caves in terms of the number of steps and degree of difficulty.
 Easier access for people with limited mobility. Seven show caves at Jenolan now have 50mm stainless steel handrails installed and steps regraded to make them more standard.
- The continuation of relighting in the show caves, to provide an optimum and even level of step illumination, to assist visitors to negotiate steps in the caves.
- Wheelchair assisted access to part of the self guided tour at Jenolan and two sections of currently guided tours.

Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement

The four principles of cultural diversity enshrined in the NSW Government legislation are reflected in the Trust's Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement.

A key priority for the Trust is raising awareness of the unique natural and cultural resources of the karst conservation reserves within ethnic communities. In this regard, initiatives have included:

- The provision of 'Meet and Greet Programs' to cater for the special needs of visitors;
- Ongoing liaison with inbound tour operators, to ensure that client/customer services are tailored to meet individual needs;
- Ongoing research into the needs of ethnic groups and particular market segments;
 and
- Provision of audio guides and phone app for the self-guided tour at Jenolan, in English, German, Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, Russian, French and Spanish.

Customer Response

A Visitor Monitoring Program (VMP) has continued through 2016/2017 at Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve, to provide feedback on a range of issues. The VMP obtains feedback via the following methods:

Onsite customer feedback surveys

- Targeted surveys, activated when significant issues are identified
- Feedback provided to staff
- Visitors Book comments
- Online Surveys.

The collected data is evaluated and used in the development of management actions.

Government
Information
(Public Access)
Act 2009 Requests

There were no GIPA requests for information relevant to the Trust.

Risk Management

The Trust has in place an Audit and Finance Committee which meets monthly to review and manage risks.

A number of independent audits and assessments were undertaken throughout 2016/2017 financial year, to mitigate risk inclusive of:

- An audit and assessment of Hazardous Materials was completed
- The Hazardous Materials Register was updated with buildings that were not previously surveyed as part of the Parsons Brinckerhoff Audit completed in 2007 and all works completed to date since 2007
- Changes to the Public Health Act 2011 required all Drinking Water Management Plans to meet the NSW Guidelines for Drinking Water Management Systems by September 2014. The JCRT's 2007 Drinking Water Management Plan was reviewed, and a stakeholder lead risk workshop undertaken to develop a Drinking Water Management System to meet requirements of the Public Health Act 2011. An independent contractor was engaged to develop an integrated Drinking & Waste Water Management Plan, including a more consistent and accurate monitoring system. This has resulted in the procurement and installation of an automatic chlorinating system for all drinking water in the VUSZ.
- GN Consulting undertook a Fire Services
 Review in 2007 and returned to site in
 September 2013 to review the updated
 systems, and provide the BCA Essential
 Services Compliance Report (Fire Safety).
- GN Consulting, in conjunction with Wormald, also undertook witness testing and provided the Annual Fire Safety Statements for the commercial operation.

 During April/May Arup Consultants were commissioned to report on current and future Fire Safety requirements, particularly in relation to major works to be commenced in Caves House during the next 12 – 18 months.

Energy Management

The Trust has reviewed and is compliant with its Energy Management Policy. The Trust also continues to install energy efficient bulbs throughout Jenolan Caves House and also upgrades show caves as existing infrastructure fails.

Waste Management

All sewage, septic and garbage waste and refuse is removed from the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve and recycled where possible.

Trimmed and removed trees are mulched and distributed on the Reserve gardens.

Policy and Planning

A draft Conservation Management Plan for the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve is currently being prepared by Urbis Pty Ltd. The Trust has also commenced procurement for the preparation of a masterplan for the VUSZ and a property improvement plan for Caves House in 2016-2017.

Research

Research projects that were completed or are on-going are identified in the Environment Report.

Major Works Completed or Underway

Major works programs completed or underway are listed below.

- Commencement of works to upgrade the elevator in Caves House
- Commencement works to recommission the Hydro Generating Plant
- Refurbishment of the Staff Cottages completed
- Works to provide WiFi to guests and the replacement of the aging PABX system completed
- The Gatehouse backpacker lodge was upgraded for fire safety as per recommendations in the Arup fire safety report.

Hazardous Materials

A hazardous materials Audit has been completed by Hibbs & Co in relation to all hazardous materials that may be on site including asbestos and a full report has been issued to Management on the safety and management of these materials.

Environmental Trust Grant

NSW Environmental Trust Grant funding of \$743,000 was received, for removal of all ferrous materials in the show cave system. Works were initiated in November 2013 and are still to be completed during the next 12 months.

Publications

The Trust publishes a variety of in-house brochures and information sheets on the services and facilities it provides, which are available to the public at various tourist sites around NSW and at Jenolan Caves.

Other

Annual Reports.

Printing Annual Report 2016/2017

Total external cost - Nil.

The Trust's Annual Report is available on the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust website www.jenolancaves.org.au

Melinda Gilmore,
Acting Finance Manager
Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust
October 2017



Internal Audit and Risk Management Attestation Statement for the 2016-2017 Financial Year for the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust

I, Robert Conroy am of the opinion that the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust has internal audit and risk management processes in operation that are, excluding the exceptions or transitional arrangements described below, compliant with the eight (8) core requirements set out in the *Internal Audit and Risk Management Policy for the NSW Public Sector*, specifically:

Core Requirements

Risk	Management Framework	
1.1	The agency head is ultimately responsible and accountable for risk management in the agency	Compliant
1.2	A risk management framework that is appropriate to the agency has been established and maintained and the framework is consistent with AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009	Compliant
Inter	nal Audit Function	
2.1	An internal audit function has been established and maintained	Compliant
2.2	The operation of the internal audit function is consistent with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing	Compliant
2.3	The agency has an Internal Audit Charter that is consistent with the content of the 'model charter'	Compliant
Audi	t and Risk Committee	
3.1	An independent Audit and Risk Committee with appropriate expertise has been established	Non- Compliant
3.2	The Audit and Risk Committee is an advisory committee providing assistance to the agency head on the agency's governance processes, risk management and control frameworks, and its external accountability obligations	Compliant
3.3	The Audit and Risk Committee has a Charter that is consistent with the content of the 'model charter'	Compliant

Membership

The chair and members of the Audit and Risk Committee are:

- Independent Chair, Malcolm Clinch, 1st July 2015, 30th June 2021
- Non-independent Member 1, Stuart Schramm, 1st July 2015, 30th June 2021
- Non-independent Member 2, David Bragg, 1st July 2015, 30th June 2021

Departures from Core Requirements

I, Robert Conroy advise that the internal audit and risk management processes for the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust depart from the following core requirements set out in the *Internal Audit and Risk Management Policy for the NSW Public Sector:*

1. The circumstances giving rise to these departures have been determined by the Portfolio Minister and the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust has implemented the following practicable alternative measures to meet the core requirements:

Departure

Reason for departure and description of practicable alternative measures implemented/being implemented

Non-Compliance

- The agency head must appoint only 'independent members' (including an 'independent chair') to the agency's Audit and Risk Committee from the panel of pre- qualified individuals maintained by the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation (clause 3.1.4).
- Resourcing constraints that will materially impact operating budgets, appropriate shared arrangements for compliance cannot be entered into and current or proposed alternative arrangements will achieve outcomes equivalent to the requirements.
- established to oversight the financial and general administration of Trust matters pending the proposed divestment of visitor services. The JMAG comprises the Administrator, senior representation from the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Trust General Manager and senior management team. An Audit and Risk Sub-Committee of the JMAG has also been established to advise the Administrator. This committee is currently led by a prequalified and independent Chair. The Chair routinely liaises with the Audit Office on behalf of the Trust to provide assurance of the Trust's overall performance and compliance

These processes, including the practicable alternative measures implemented, demonstrate that the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust has established and maintained frameworks, including systems, processes and procedures for appropriately managing audit and risk within the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust.

ROBERT CONROY

Administrator

July 2017

Contact: DAVID BRAGG **Acting General Manager**

02 6359 3918





Independent Auditor's Report

