South Australian
HERITAGE COUNCIL

BETTER HERITAGE INFORMATION
SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE

Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks

Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks SHP 17062, c.1999.

Source: DEW Files

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ENTRY IN THE REGISTER

Description or notes with respect to a place entered in the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with either the *South Australian Heritage Act 1978* or the *Heritage Places Act 1993.*

The South Australian Heritage Council may correct errors or inaccuracies in the entry in the Register in accordance with s21 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993.*

NAME: Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks **PLACE NO.:** 17062

ADDRESS: Gawler Ranges People's Country
Nonning Road, Nonning SA 5717

CL 6312/903, F 260955 Q 13

Outside of Hundreds

CONFIRMED IN THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE REGISTER:

5 July 2000

DESIGNATED AS A PLACE OF GEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

16 March 2000

S16 CRITERIA SATISFIED UNDER *HERTIAGE PLACES ACT 1993*

(c) it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history

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COMMENTARY ON THE LISTING

Additional information provided as a part of the content of the South Australian Heritage Register in accordance with s14(6) of the *Heritage Places Act* 1993 'hold information in association with the Register'.

KNOWN AS: Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks [Designated as a place of geological significance]

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks yields excellent opportunities for the study of weathering and the formation of unusual structures on volcanics in the Gawler Ranges. Comprised of rhyolite and a part of a group of geological formations called the Peter Pan Supersuite, Caralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks have been gradually exposed through subsurface and differential weathering. Differential weathering has resulted in flared slopes creating uniquely shaped exposures including conical residuals. Once exposed, other forms of erosion such as pans and grooves have also developed. The weathered outcrops of the Peter Pan Suite are a reference for comparison with other granite structures on the Eyre Peninsula that collectively enable an understanding of weathering processes. Future research may provide insight into the formation of the rhyolite landforms and volcanic events that shaped the South Australian landscape.

STATEMENT OF DESIGNATION

Designated Place of Geological Significance

Unusual structures associated with Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks illustrate processes of erosion over millions of years. The odd shapes of the rhyolite rocks differ from many granites in the Eyre Peninsula and provide unique insight into erosional processes affecting the landscape and differentially affecting the protruding rhyolite. Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks offers research opportunities to enable erosion processes of volcanic rocks and ancient volcanic events in South Australia to be better understood.

Elements of Significance:

Elements of heritage significance include:

- Rhyolite landforms, including but not limited to flat exposures, conical residuals, pits and pans.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include:

- Human-made objects, trails and roads, vegetation, fencing and signage.

CRITERIA (under section 16 of the Heritage Places Act 1993)

***(c) it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history* (Proposed)**

The unusually widely spaced joints in rhyolite at Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks and subsurface weathering has produced a unique and striking series of landforms. Less susceptible to weathering and erosion than the surrounding rocks, Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks are of great geomorphological and research interest. The rhyolite of the Peter Pan Supersuite, a large group of geological formations, provides excellent evidence regarding the effects of weathering and erosion on granite. When comparing the weathering of these rocks to other exposures, such as the Hiltaba Granites of Pildappa Rock, Mt Wudinna and other granite structures in the Eyre Peninsula, detailed information on the differentiated weathering of the volcanics can be determined.

The origin of rhyolites in South Australia is not well understood, neither is the intrusion of the rock into the surrounding plains. Investigation of these structures as well as granites of the Eyre Peninsula may contribute to further understanding of volcanic events in South Australia.

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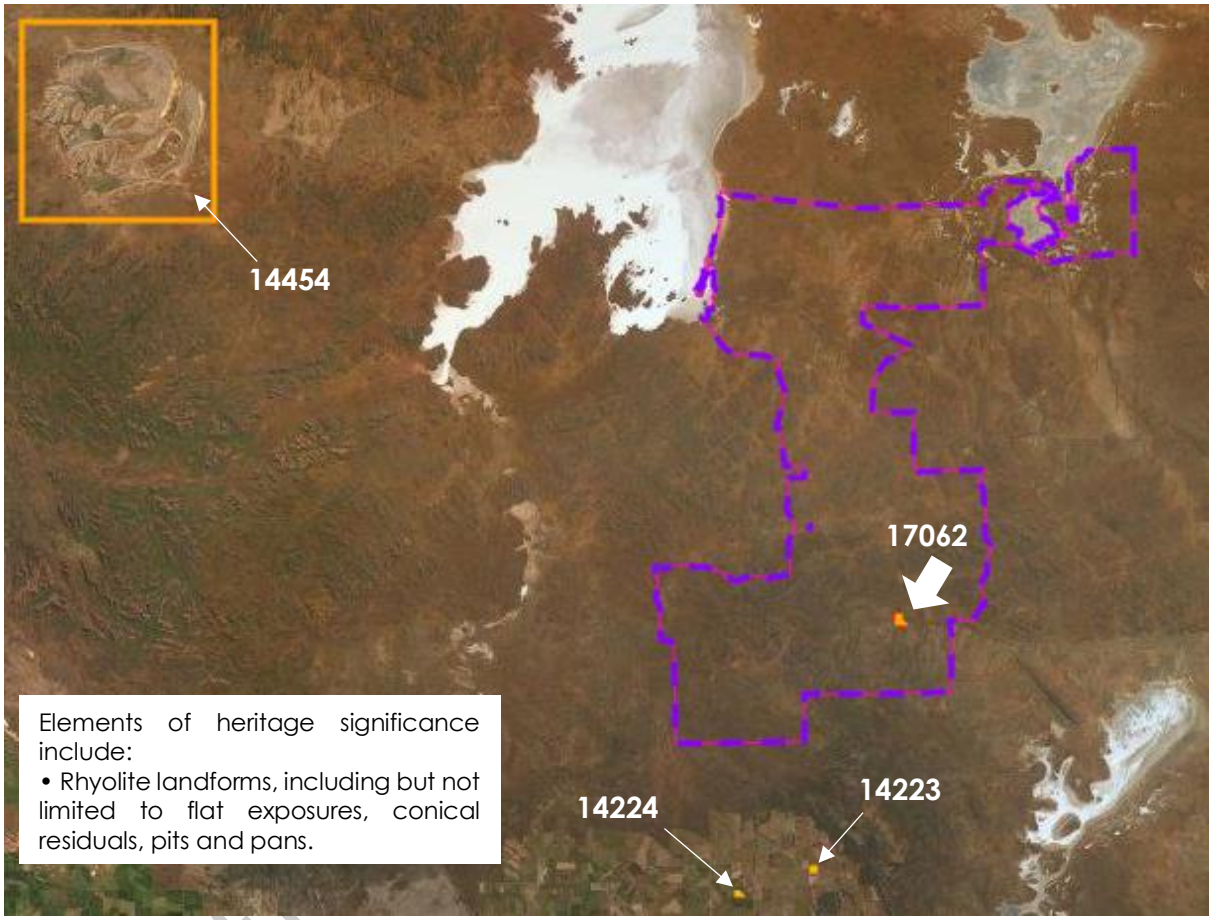
SITE PLAN

Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks **PLACE NO.: 17062**

Nonning Road, Nonning SA



Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks, Nonning Road, Nonning SA 5717,
CL 6312/903, F 260955 Q 13 Outside of Hundreds

N ↑

LEGEND

Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)

Outline of Elements of Significance for State Heritage Place

Existing State Heritage Place(s) (Lake Acraman Impact Structure SHP 14454, Stables, Shed & Yards SHP 14223 and Cunyarie Rocks (Emu Rocks) Water Supply Structure SHP 14224.)

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SITE PLAN - DETAIL

Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks **PLACE NO.: 17062**

Nonning Road, Nonning SA

Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks, Nonning Road, Nonning SA 5717,
CL 6312/903, F 260955 Q 13 Outside of Hundreds

N ↑

LEGEND

Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)

Outline of Elements of Significance for State Heritage Place*

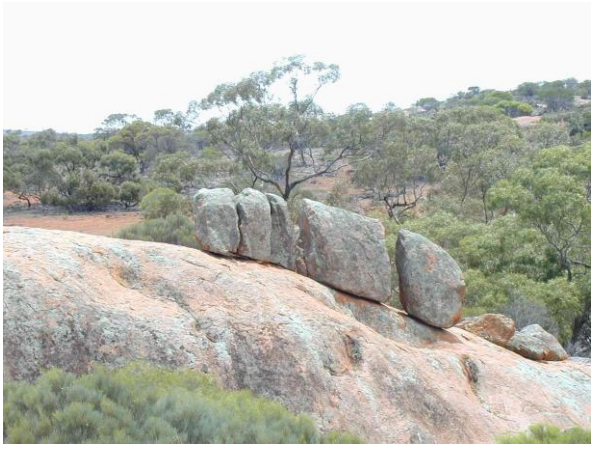
Outline of Existing State Heritage Place

*Red outline is indicative of elements of significance, noting imperfect alignment of aerial imagery with parcel cadastre.

Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks are an isolated group of rhyolite rocks that are part of the Peter Pan Supersuite, a group of magmatic and largely granite-based rocks. The outcrops were likely shallowly intrusive[1] volcanic porphyritic rhyolites, which formed part of a great outflow of acid lavas[2] during the Kimban Orogeny approximately ~1750-1700 Ma. Rhyolites differ from granites as it displays finer crystals.[3] Outcrops of Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks within the State Heritage Place have developed into unusual shapes, such as boulders, conical structures and platforms[4] because of weathering and erosion on joints within the rock.[5] As such, it is believed that Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks display 'every stage' in the erosion of the volcanic blocks.

The outcrops are present in two major groups split by a dirt track running through the centre of the State Heritage Place and show a variety of minor landform elements that are common among other granite structures in the Eyre Peninsula such as flared slopes, pans and pits and examples of rillen which are erosional gutters typically formed along joint structures.

Some of the flared slopes display a weathering profile at the base that contributed to a wave-like shape of some of the rocks. Weathering at Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks has been extreme resulting in some cases in the formation of conical columns. Additional pans and pits can be found in the upper surface of the granites[6] and some armchair-like pits that have formed asymmetrically.



Pit and boulder/block with eroded joints from Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks, c.1999.
Source: DEW Files

Elements of Significance:

Elements of heritage significance include:

- Rhyolite landforms, including but not limited to flat exposures, conical residuals, pits and pans.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include:

- Human-made objects, trails and roads, vegetation, fencing and signage.

HISTORY OF THE PLACE

Geological History

The Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks are formed from granites of the Peter Pan Supersuite during the Paleoproterozoic Era. When originally listed, the age of Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks was hypothesised as being ~1500 Ma (Million years ago). With continued research, the rocks, recognised as a part of the Peter Pan Supersuite, a grouping of several geological formations, were identified at the site and are currently believed to be from around 1750-1700 Ma. The Peter Pan Supersuite contains magmatic rocks that intruded into the surrounding landscape during the Kimban Orogeny, a large-scale mountain building event that occurred between 1730 and 1690 Ma.[7]

The Peter Pan Supersuite is intruded by the Gawler Range Volcanics which is one of the largest areas of rhyolite known in the world. The Gawler Range Volcanics is in turn intruded by the Hiltaba Suite granites that many of the granite outcrops in the Eyre Peninsula are composed of. The Gawler Range Volcanics and Hiltaba Suite are comagmatic, meaning that it likely derived from the same magmatic source.[8]

The rock from which the outcrops are formed is particularly widely jointed. This makes the rock more resistant to weathering than the surrounding plains. Evidence at the site demonstrates that the current surface of the surrounding rock has likely lowered by around 2 metres due to erosion, allowing for the Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks to become exposed.[9] This enabled the newly exposed Peter Pan Supersuite to erode into the unique formations of the rocks that are seen today.

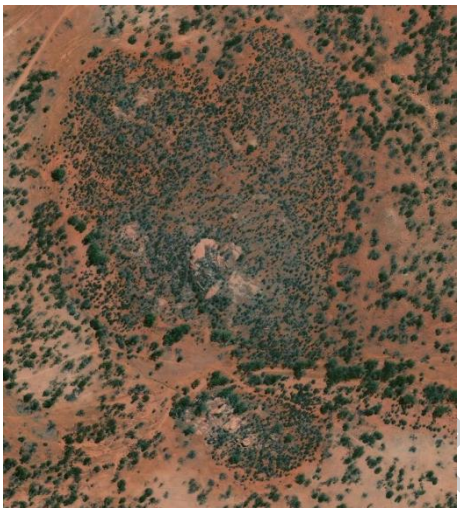
For example, distinctive conical structures formed. The crested tops of these cones weathered minimally, while the remaining rock underneath the surface eroded to a much higher degree closer to the surface, and, caused the odd conical form, some of which are 2 metres tall,[10] to eventually become exposed.[11] Further exposure of these slopes by the removal of the overlying soil indicates significant erosion and alteration of the surrounding landscape with comparatively little effect on the structures of Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks.[12]

In the Gawler Ranges, rhyolites do not often develop flared slopes with only a few sites displaying such erosion including Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks, Mt Sturt and Mt Copper. The slopes displayed at Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks are believed to be the most spectacular examples of flared slopes on the Gawler Range Volcanics.[13] Another rhyolitic structure comparable to Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks is the 'Organ Pipes'. While the Organ Pipes are also impressive rhyolite structures, it demonstrates different results of erosion processes to those at Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks, lacking flared slopes the Organ Pipe formed in vertical columns similar to the pipes of an organ, from which its name is derived.

The rhyolite within the State Heritage Place is particularly noteworthy for it's age, origin and composition when compared with other similar places. For example, the Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks outdate the granites of many other intruding inselbergs in the State. The Peter Pan SuperSuite is estimated to be between 1730 and 1690 Ma while structures of the Hiltaba Suite such as Pildappa Rock (SHP 17058), Yarwondutta Rock (SHP14225) and Mount Wudinna (SHP 17060) are approximately 1600-1575 million years old. Additionally, the rhyolite present also contains a larger amount of quartz phenocrysts (Quartz crystals) than is usually found in porphyritic rhyolite of the Gawler Ranges.[14] As such, it is also thought, along with the Mt Sturt volcanics, to have a shallower volcanic origin than most other volcanics.[15]

Additionally, the odd shapes of the Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks contrast with the predominantly flat inselbergs of Hiltaba Granite[16] and with other granite outcrops of the Eyre Peninsula. The Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks yields opportunities for research including correlating the landforms produced by weathering from specific rock types and comparison with other granite landforms on the Eyre Peninsula.[17]

The granite at Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks demonstrates very few joints (breaks or fractures in the rock). The lack of joints and weathering over millions of years contributes to the odd shapes of the rock formation.[18]



Aerial view of Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks. c.2025

Source: NatureMaps

Today, Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks are surrounded by Pleistocene (2.58 Ma - 11.7 ka (thousand years ago)) gravels and clays and Holocene (11.7 ka - present) alluvial sediments.[19]

Human History

Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks are on the land of the Gawler Ranges People, comprising the Kokatha, Barngarla and Wirangu People.

The Kokatha People traditionally are from lands north of Port Augusta from Lake Torrens to the Gawler Ranges.[20] However, they would occasionally visit the coastal Eyre Peninsula for rations, in times of drought, or ceremonies. After years of contact with the Kokatha People, the Koonibba Lutheran Mission was established. In 1898 it provided rations to First Nations People in the area. In 1913, First Nations families in the area near the mission requested the construction of the Koonibba Children's Home so that their children would not be removed. However, children at the home were not allowed to speak their own language.[21] Between the 1930s and 1947, many Kokatha People also moved to camps surrounding the Cresco Fertilizer Works at Port Lincoln where there were employment opportunities. Conditions in these camps were well-beyond capacity with reports of up to fifteen people sharing shacks with no sanitary facilities available. Others found work at Iron Knob, [22] on pastoral stations[23] or on the construction of the Todd River pipeline network.[24] During the 1950s[25] and 1960s[26], British nuclear weapons testing was undertaken at Emu Field[27]and Maralinga.[28] First Nations

People were not sufficiently warned of the dangers of the testing and suffered from radiation poisoning and blindness[29] with high rates of cancer affecting the wider community.[30]

While the Wirangu People's country is primarily coastal they also have connection to the Gawler Ranges. The Wirangu People experienced a significant reduction in population as a result of frontier violence, disease and poor living conditions caused by colonisation. In 1849, up to 200 Wirangu People were driven off of the cliffs and killed[31] in the Waterloo Bay Massacre at Elliston. This had a long lasting impact on the Wirangu, Kokatha, Nauo and Barngarla People.[32] The Koonibba Mission provided some refuge for the Wirangu People in the 1890s. Linguist Paul Monaghan notes that the Wirangu linguistic identity has been revitalised in the past 20 years as a result of opportunities that have emerged due to native title processes.[33]

The Barngarla People lived on the eastern side of the Eyre Peninsula prior to colonisation. Extending over a distance of 1100km or more, the Barngarla Nation is believed to be the largest in South Australia.[34] The Barngarla People had and continue to have a strong connection to the land. The Barngarla People strongly resisted colonisation, though their numbers were greatly reduced due to introduced disease, deaths during acts of resistance by Barngarla People and retribution by colonisers, and loss of access to traditional foods.[35]

In the first 20 years of colonisation at least a dozen European settlers and an unrecorded number of First Nations People were killed.[36] Many were dispossessed from Country and would not return until many years later. By the 1930s, it was estimated that very few Barngarla or Nauo People lived in the southern Eyre Peninsula instead being found at Franklin Harbour, Streaky Bay, Gawler Ranges and Iron Knob, Whyalla, Port Augusta or Port Pearce.[37]

Very little human history is recorded in relation to the Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks and little research has been conducted on the structures' origins. However, the rocks are known to have been described as 'Hoolderoo Rocks' as early as 1894, when the structures were compared to Chambers Pillar, a 50-metre-tall sandstone pillar, in the Northern Territory.[38] The origin of the name of Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks is, however, currently unknown. People once believed that Yellow-Footed Rock Wallabies frequented Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks, but this was later determined to be incorrect.[39] The Place is also frequently visited by tourists, but it has for the most part been unaffected by such visitation.

Despite there being little research published about the rocks, geologists believe it is highly significant for studying how weathering affects igneous rocks such as rhyolites, particularly when compared with other granites of the Gawler Ranges.[40]

Aboriginal Cultural Considerations

The *Heritage Places Act 1993* makes provision for the identification, recording and conservation of places and objects of non-Aboriginal heritage significance. The protection and preservation of Aboriginal heritage is provided for under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*. Contact the Aboriginal Heritage Unit for listings.

CHRONOLOGY

Year	Event
2500-1600 Ma	Palaeoproterozoic Era
~2500 - 538.8 Ma	Proterozoic Eon. 1750-1700 Ma – Age of the Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks. 1730-1690 Ma - Kimban Orogeny. Includes the **Mesoproterozoic Era (~1600 – 1000 Ma).** **Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks is buried by jointed granites and sediment that are more easily eroded.** **Over millions of years of weathering the surrounding rock eroded, exposing Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks to the surface again.**
2.58 Ma - present	**Surrounding Pleistocene sediment deposited.**
1894	Referred to as 'Hoolderoo Rocks' in newspaper article.
1980	Added to the Register of the National Estate.
1985	Recognised as a Geological Monument by the SA Division of the Geological Society of Australia in 'Geological Monuments in South Australia'. Recommended as a Local Heritage Place in the Eyre Peninsula Heritage Survey - Unincorporated.[41]
1998	1 December – Nomination received.
2000	16 March – Provisionally entered in the South Australian Heritage Register and designated as a place of geological significance. 5 July – Confirmed in the South Australian Heritage Register.

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South Australian HERITAGE COUNCIL

SITE DETAILS

Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks **PLACE NO.: 17062**

Nonning Road, Nonning SA

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Granite exposures	
HISTORIC THEME/S	Theme 1 Natural Environment 1.1 Tracing climatic and topological change	
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:	1750-1700 Ma	
REGISTER STATUS:	Nomination received: 1 December 1998 Provisionally Entered:16 March 2000 Confirmed: 5 July 2000 Designated: 16 March 2000	
CURRENT USE:	Pastoral lease	
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	Pastoral Unincorporated Area	
LOCATION:	**Street No.:**	NA
	Street Name:	Nonning Road
	Town/Suburb:	Nonning
	Post Code:	5717
LAND DESCRIPTION:	**Title Reference:**	CL 6312/903, F 260955 Q 13
	Hundred:	Outside of Hundreds

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PHOTOS

Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks **PLACE NO.: 17062**

Nonning Road, Nonning SA

The exposures at Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks, including the conical residual. c.1999
Source: DEW Files

South Australian
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PHOTOS

Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks **PLACE NO.: 17062**

Nonning Road, Nonning SA

The exposures at Coralbignie (Houlderoo) Rocks. c.1999

Source: DEW Files

REVISIONS

Date	Changes
13 February 2026	SAHC modified template to include an image at the beginning of the document.

[1] Campbell, EM (1990), 'Structure and Surface in the Gawler Ranges', *PhD Thesis*. University of Adelaide, South Australia.
[2] McBriar EM (1986), 'Geological Monuments in South Australia Part 6', On behalf of the *Geological Monuments Subcommittee of the SA Division of the Geological Society of Australia Incorporated*, pp.24-25.
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[14] DEW Files
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