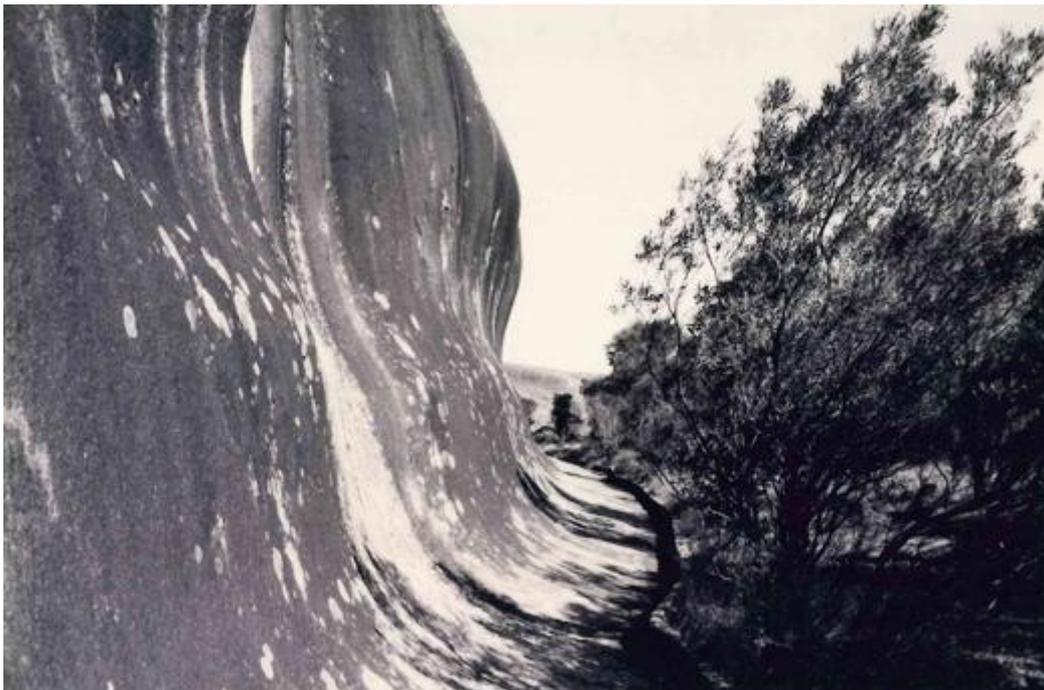


**BETTER HERITAGE INFORMATION  
SUMMARY OF STATE HERITAGE PLACE**

**Pildappa Rock**



**Pildappa Rock SHP 17058, 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*.

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**NAME:** Pildappa Rock

**PLACE NO.:** 17058

**ADDRESS:** Barngarla Country

792 Pildappa Road, Minnipa SA 5654

CR 5755/14 H600100 S8

Hundred of Pildappa

### CONFIRMED IN THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE REGISTER:

16 March 2000

### DESIGNATED AS A PLACE OF GEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

11 November 1999

### S16 CRITERIA SATISFIED UNDER HERITAGE 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'.**

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**KNOWN AS:** Pildappa Rock [Designated as a place of geological significance]

### STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Pildappa Rock is an excellent example of an inselberg located in the northern Eyre Peninsula and demonstrates well-developed erosional features on a granite outcrop. These features include wave-like walling that developed over millions of years of erosion and water-filled pits called gnamma. Pildappa Rock demonstrates distinct erosional processes that have the potential to contribute to an understanding of the formation and development of granite outcrops within South Australia.

### STATEMENT OF DESIGNATION

#### Designated Place of Geological Significance

Pildappa Rock is one of the best-known granite outcrops in South Australia. It demonstrates numerous examples of distinctive erosional features on the granite surface, contrasting greatly to the highly eroded surrounding plains. The most notable features are the wave-like sides and water-filled pits known as gnamma on the raised surface of the rock. Both features demonstrate unusual erosional processes that have moulded and shaped Pildappa Rock over millions of years and can provide detailed insight into similar structures within the State.

#### Elements of Significance:

Elements of heritage significance include:

- Pildappa Rock surface and immediate surrounds,
- Gnamma, pits and natural drains associated with erosion and water at the place
- Boulders originating from Pildappa Rock, including those with tafoni

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***

Like many of the granite outcrops on northwest Eyre Peninsula, Pildappa Rock displays both major and minor features which provide evidence of the origin of inselbergs and their subsequent development and the effects of weathering on granite surfaces, in particular the evolution and development of gnammas. This evidence can also provide information regarding the chronology of the development of the surrounding landscape in general.

(Criteria statement considered by the State Heritage Authority at provisional entry in the South Australian Heritage Register on 11 November 1999, however at that time this information did not form a part of the Entry in the Register. The Assessment Report considered as a part of the Agenda Item at the time of listing does not form a part of the Content of the Register.)

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

Pildappa Rock is an excellent example of an inselberg in South Australia and displays a detailed geological record of the effects of millions of years of erosion on granite outcrops. While there are several inselbergs scattered throughout the Gawler Ranges, including heritage listed inselbergs like Yarwondutta Rock and Quarry (SHP 17059), Ucontitchie Hill (SHP 17061) and Mt Wudinna and Environs (SHP 17060) among others, Pildappa Rock is recognised as a particularly well-developed and well-preserved example in the northern Eyre Peninsula.

Distinctive erosional structures present at the place include flared slopes, gnamma, tafoni and rillen, with its gnammas and flared slopes being particularly well-developed. As such, Pildappa Rock has the potential to yield important information about the origins and development of granite outcrops throughout South Australia.

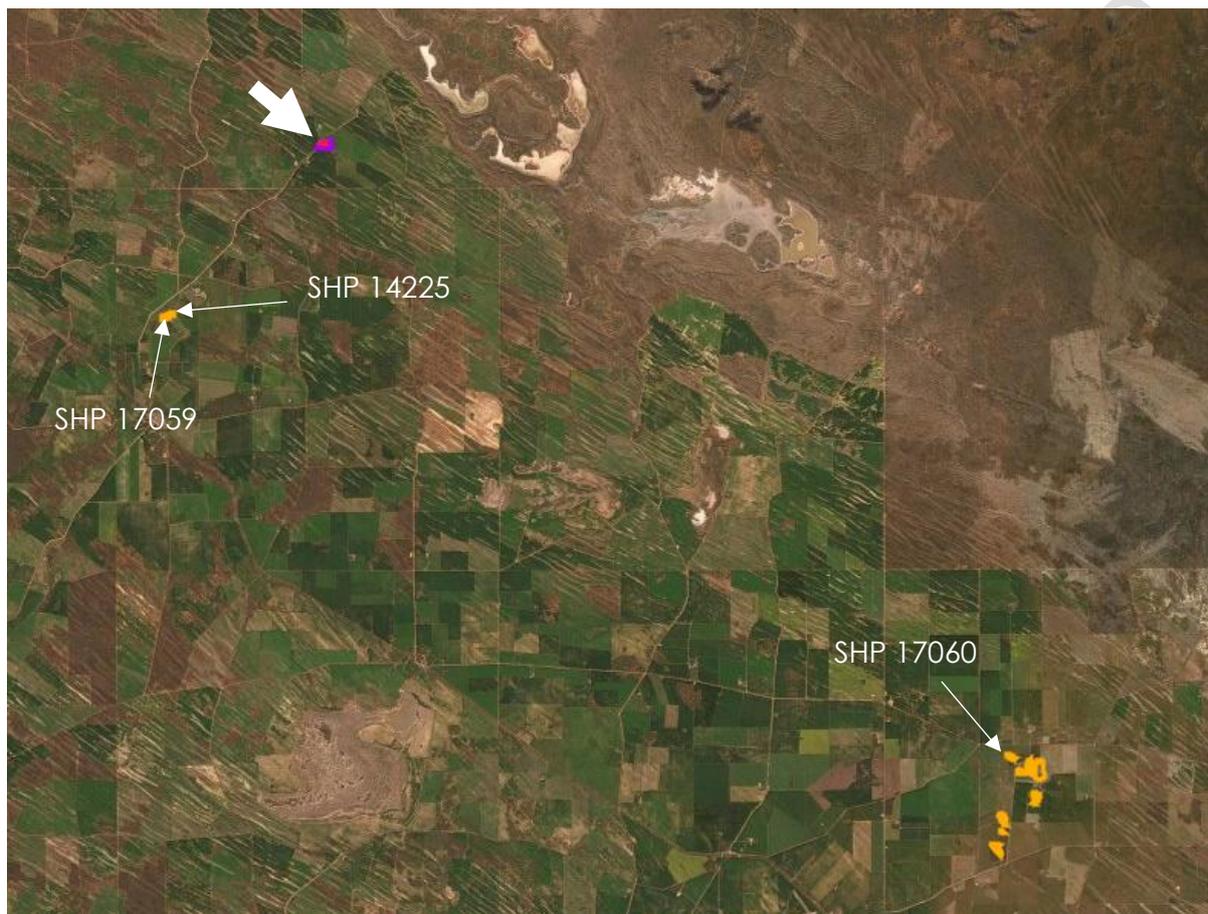
## SITE PLAN

Pildappa Rock

PLACE NO.: 17058

792 Pildappa Road, Minnipa SA 5654

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Pildappa Rock, 792 Pildappa Road, Minnipa SA 5654  
(CR 5755/14 H600100 S8, Hundred of Pildappa)

N ↑

### LEGEND

-  Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)
-  Existing State Heritage Place(s) Yarwondutta Rock and Quarry (SHP 17059), Yarwondutta Rock Tank (SHP 14225) and Mount Wudinna & Environs (SHP 17060).

## SITE PLAN - DETAIL

Pildappa Rock

PLACE NO.: 17058

792 Pildappa Road, Minnipa SA 5654



Pildappa Rock, 792 Pildappa Road, Minnipa SA 5654  
(CR 5755/14 H600100 S8, Hundred of Pildappa)

N ↑

### LEGEND

-  Parcel boundaries (Indicates extent of Listing)
-  Outline of Elements of Significance for State Heritage Place\*

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

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Pildappa Rock, sometimes called Pildappa Hill, Peldubba or Peeldubba, or Gemini Rocks, is a large protruding rock structure found south of Gawler Ranges National Park.<sup>1</sup> Composed of coarse-grained granite, known as Hiltaba Granite, the rock has a striking red-pink appearance.<sup>2</sup>

It is an 'isolated granite dome' that can be referred to as a 'whaleback' or a 'ruware'. A whaleback refers to a rock knob generally associated with glacial events,<sup>3</sup> while a ruware refers to a domed rock generally outcropping in a tropical area.<sup>4</sup> Both of these were broadly used to describe similar outcrops that had heights between ~7.6 and 19 metres above the surrounding plain, though Pildappa Rock reaches up to 22 metres high.<sup>5</sup> Most commonly it is known as an 'inselberg' which is defined as an isolated hill that stands above the surrounding plains, similar to Uluru.

The rock has multiple flared slopes including those that are concave and rival similar structures such as Wave Rock in Western Australia. Additional channels and erosional gutters (rillen) have also been formed and eroded by waterflow some of which flow down the sloping sides of the rock.<sup>6</sup> The surface of the dome is dotted by similar erosional structures such as gnamma (water-filled pans, armchair hollows or rock holes among others) and drains. One of the gnamma on Pildappa Rock measures 2.7x2.3 metres and has a depth of 70 centimetres.<sup>7</sup> A single drain, trending north south, runs across the entire outcrop and is believed to be caused by the preferential erosion of an aplite (igneous) dyke that runs along the outcrop.<sup>8</sup> Remnant boulders, some most notably on the southern side of Pildappa Rock, have small cavities (tafoni) developed on their underside from weathering and are found on the outer margin of the inselberg.<sup>9</sup>

There are also remains of water collecting infrastructure. A small wall around the outcrop allows runoff to flow into a now disused water storage tank. While remnants of two walls constructed on top of the rock to channel water into a small dam<sup>10</sup> also remain.<sup>11</sup>

### Elements of Significance:

Elements of heritage significance include:

- Pildappa Rock surface and immediate surrounds,
- Gnamma, pits and natural drains associated with erosion and water at the place,
- Boulders originating from Pildappa Rock, including those with tafone.

Elements not considered to contribute to significance of place include:

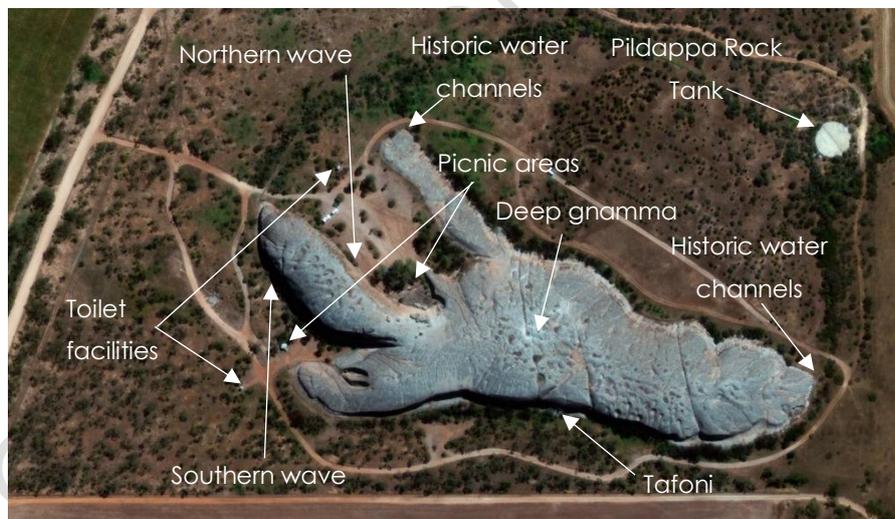
- Human-made objects, trails and roads, vegetation, fencing and signage.

## HISTORY OF THE PLACE

### Geological History

The Pildappa Rock is a Mesoproterozoic rock structure from approximately 1600-1575 million years ago (Ma) and is a part of the Hiltaba Suite. The Hiltaba Suite granites often have a red or pink colour from abundant iron oxide inclusions and are commonly quarried commercially. Areas of this formation can be found throughout the west and central sections of South Australia. The Hiltaba Suite was formed in the last volcanic event to have affected the Eyre Peninsula.

Once emplaced, the Hiltaba Suite was then covered by sediment. However, as early as 30 million years ago, erosion and uplifting gradually began to reveal Pildappa Rock.<sup>12</sup> The granites demonstrate very few joints (breaks or fractures in the rock), which is believed to have contributed to the preservation of the homogenous and somewhat monolithic rock formation.<sup>13</sup> The rock, with its limited joints, appears to have eroded much slower than the surrounding, closely jointed granite plain. As a result, the surrounding landscape slowly revealed the Pildappa Rock and allowed it to stand starkly in the landscape.<sup>14</sup> The subsurface, comprised of wet and eroding rock in contact with granite, contributed to creating the 'wave rock' shape we see today on many of Pildappa Rock's walls.



**A map of Pildappa Rock noting important landmarks. 2025.**

Source: Google, 2025.

Today, Pildappa Rock is surrounded by Pleistocene (2.58 Ma - 11.7 ka (thousand years ago)) and Holocene (11.7 ka - present) sediments with two other smaller outcrops of the Hiltaba Suite within 1.5km. Yarwondutta Rock, a similar granite outcrop, Mount Wudinna and Ucontitchie Hill are also nearby. The Central Eyre Peninsula is often referred to as Granite Country due to the abundance of such outcrops.<sup>15</sup> Pildappa

Rock is believed to be one of the most spectacular and interesting outcrops of this particular granite in the northern Eyre Peninsula.<sup>16</sup>

Narrow depressions in the boundary between weathered and unweathered rock, known as the weathering front, indicate that minor forms in the granite such as rillen may have been weathered from beneath the soil.<sup>17</sup> The weathering front for Pildappa Rock can best be seen in its flared and concave slopes. The major outlines of the outcrop itself are the result of 'fracture control'.<sup>18</sup> Where fractures in the rock determine areas of erosion.

Additionally, *Lepilaena australis*, an aquatic plant, has been recorded in two of the gnammas at Pildappa Rock.<sup>19</sup> The water holes may also house many endemic insects and crustaceans, though such a survey has not been conducted at Pildappa Rock.<sup>20</sup>

Several interesting structures associated with Pildappa Rock include:<sup>21</sup>

- Extensive examples of well-developed gnammas on the summit of the rock (Weathered pits of water such as asymmetrical armchair hollows, flat-bottomed pans),<sup>22</sup>
- Interconnecting gutters (rillen) along joint structures,
- Pits, often hemispherical, elliptical or circular shape and form in homogenous, rock that erodes at a similar rate both vertically and laterally,<sup>23</sup>
- Boulders with tafoni (cavities developed in the underside of rocks),<sup>24</sup>
- Flared, steep and often concave or convex slopes of Pildappa Rock.<sup>25</sup>

### Human History

Pildappa Rock is a part of Barngarla Country and gnammas were common sources of water for First Nations People in South Australia. The word 'gnamma' itself is of First Nations origin, from the Nyunga language in the Western Desert and refers specifically to a rock hole with water.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the name 'Pildappa' itself, previously also referred to as Peldubba or Peeldubba,<sup>27</sup> comes from the Barngarla language (birldaba) with 'birlda' meaning 'possum'.<sup>28</sup> The term from which the now anglicised 'Pildappa' originated from was also said to mean 'rock water', alluding to its use as a water source.<sup>29</sup> It has also been referred to as 'Gemini Rocks',<sup>30</sup> however, the origin of this name is currently unknown.

In 1857, Stephen Hack and his brother John looked to explore Australia's northwest and in June, he visited Pildappa Rock with a 'native guide'.<sup>31</sup>

During the early twentieth century, Pildappa Rock was used as a water source for European explorers. A Department of Mines report from 1912 recognised Pildappa Rock's potential as a water collection point,<sup>32</sup> though there is evidence to suggest that water collection from runoff of the rock may have started as early as 1905 with

construction of a dam. However, this is based only on photographic evidence speculated to have been taken at Pildappa Rock.<sup>33</sup>



**'Man overlooking a dam holding water runoff from granite rise. This feature with concrete gutter to direct flow into the dam may be Pildappa Rock, 15 Km north-east of Minnipa.'**  
c.1905

Source: State Library of South Australia

The Pildappa Rock tank, a separate tank to the speculated 1905 dam, is a concrete, underground container with a galvanised roof that collects water channelled off Pildappa Rock. The date of construction is not known,<sup>34</sup> however, in 1927, the *Port Lincoln Times* reported on the intention to search for water around Pildappa and Buckleboo,<sup>35</sup> and in 1928, a water catchment system was completed at Pildappa Rock by the South Australian Government<sup>36</sup> suggesting a potential construction date for the Pildappa Rock tank. In 1953, the rock provided water to two nearby towns, Pildappa and Chulpudie.<sup>37</sup>

Pildappa Rock has also long been a place for tourism. For example, picnic grounds were present in the area prior to October 1929.<sup>38</sup> Visiting and walking on Pildappa Rock has been encouraged with recent plans demonstrating an 'easy' trail for scaling the geological feature.<sup>39</sup> The area surrounding Pildappa Rock became the 'Pildappa Rock Recreation Reserve' and has been jointly managed by the Wudinna District Council and the Minnipa Progress Association since 2009.<sup>40</sup>

According to the SA Division of the Geological Society of Australia Incorporated, there is a small, abandoned quarry on the northeast corner of the base of the rock, however, such a quarry is not recorded on the South Australian Resources Information Gateway (SARIG) which records historical mines.<sup>41</sup>

In January 2024, the walking trails and tracks, as well as other infrastructure and facilities, at the Recreation Reserve were renewed by the Wudinna District Council.<sup>42</sup> As part of the project, the campground was relocated to a nearby property.<sup>43</sup>

### 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 - 538.8 Ma	Proterozoic Eon. Includes the Mesoproterozoic Era (~1600–1000 Ma). <b>Pildappa Rock Formed (~ 1600-1575 Ma).</b> <b>Pildappa Rock is buried by the surrounding jointed granites</b>
~30 Ma	Rock begins exposure through uplift and erosion.
<b>2.58 Ma - present</b>	<b>Surrounding sediment deposited.</b> <b>Pildappa Rock used as a water source by First Nations People.</b>
<b>1905</b>	A dam is constructed at Pildappa Rock. <sup>44</sup>
<b>1912</b>	Pildappa Rock is noted as a suitable place to collect water. It is suggested that masonry tanks are constructed at the site.
<b>1912 - 1928</b>	Underground tank constructed nearby to collect runoff water. A quarry is also opened.
<b>1928</b>	Water catchment system completed at Pildappa Rock by the South Australian Government.
<b>1980</b>	Recognised as a Geological Monument by the SA Division of the Geological Society of Australia in 'Geological Monuments in South Australia'.
<b>1987</b>	The water tank at Pildappa Rock is recommended as a Local Heritage Place in the <i>Heritage Survey of the Eyre Peninsula and West Coast</i> .
<b>1999</b>	11 November: Pildappa Rock is provisionally entered in the South Australian Heritage Register and designated as a place of geological significance.
<b>2000</b>	16 March: Pildappa Rock confirmed as a State Heritage Place in the South Australian Heritage Register. A \$11,000 grant is provided to enhance the Pildappa Rock Trail. <sup>45</sup>

- 2009** Pildappa Rock Recreation Reserve becomes jointly managed by the Wudinna District Council and the Minnipa Progress Association.
- 2022** \$15,000 grant awarded to the Wudinna District Council to preserve the site,<sup>46</sup> predominantly focusing on revegetation.<sup>47</sup>
- 2024** The trail and amenities are updated at the Pildappa Rock Recreation Reserve.

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## SITE DETAILS

Pildappa Rock

PLACE NO.: 17058

792 Pildappa Road, Minnipa SA 5654

<b>DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:</b>	Granite inselberg
<b>HISTORIC THEME/S</b>	Theme 1 Natural Environment 1.1 Tracing climatic and topological change
<b>DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:</b>	1600Ma
<b>REGISTER STATUS:</b>	Nomination: 1 December 1998 Provisional Entry: 11 November 1999 Confirmation: 16 March 2000 Designation (Geological): 11 November 1999
<b>CURRENT USE:</b>	Recreation Reserve
<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:</b>	Wudinna District Council
<b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>Street No.:</b> 792 <b>Street Name:</b> Pildappa Road <b>Town/Suburb:</b> Minnipa <b>Post Code:</b> 5654
<b>LAND DESCRIPTION:</b>	<b>Title</b> CR 5755/14 H600100 S8 <b>Reference:</b> <b>Hundred:</b> Hundred of Pildappa

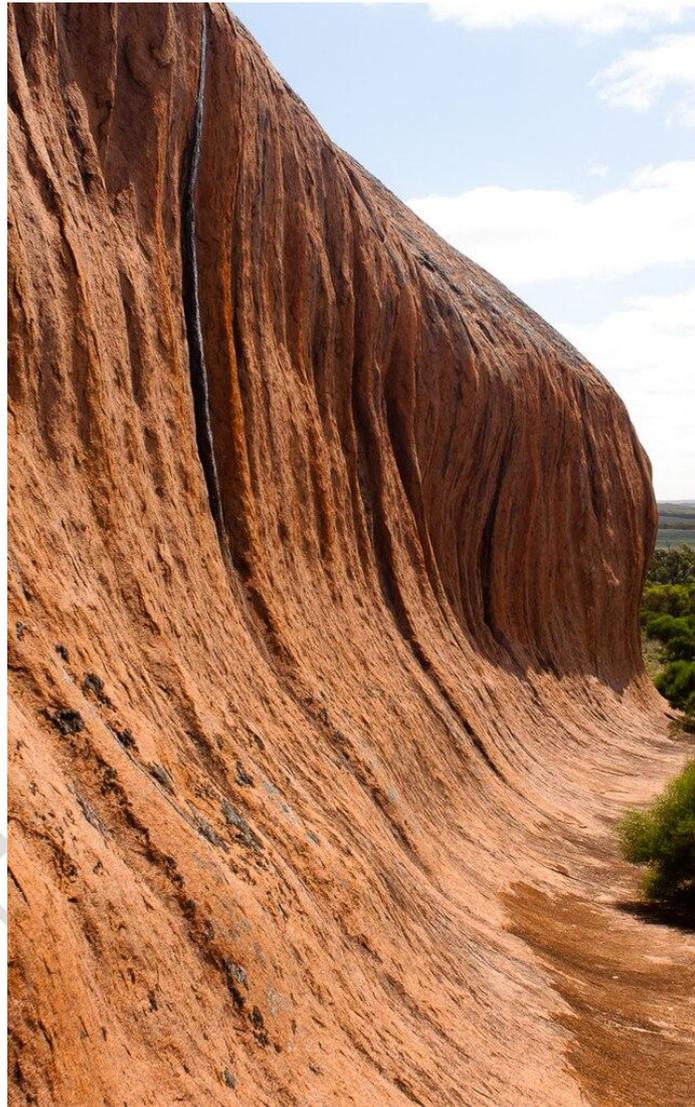
PHOTOS

Pildappa Rock

PLACE NO.: 17058

792 Pildappa Road, Minnipa SA 5654

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**Example of one of the wave rocks. 2011.**

Source: Wikimedia Commons (2011)

## REVISIONS

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

<sup>1</sup> Twidale, CR and Campbell EM (1985), 'History of Exploration and Settlement'. In: *Natural History of Eyre Peninsula*, Eds. Twidale CR, Tyler MJ and Davies M. Royal Society of South Australia. Pg.1-20; and Twidale, CR and Campbell EM (1985), 'The Form of the land surface'. In: *Natural History of Eyre Peninsula*, Eds. Twidale CR, Tyler MJ and Davies M. Royal Society of South Australia. Pg.57-76.

<sup>2</sup> McBriar EM, Giles, CW and Mooney, MD (1980), 'Geological Monuments in South Australia Part 3', On behalf of the *Geological Monuments Subcommittee of the SA Division of the Geological Society of Australia Incorporated*, pp.63-64.

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<sup>5</sup> Bierman, PR and Caffee, M (2002), 'Cosmogenic exposure and erosion history of Australian bedrock landforms', *GSA Bulletin*, Vol. 114, no. 7, pp.787-803.

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<sup>13</sup> DEW Files, McBriar EM, Giles, CW and Mooney, MD (1980), 'Geological Monuments in South Australia Part 3'.

<sup>14</sup> DEW Files.

<sup>15</sup> SA Division of the Geological Society of Australia Incorporated (2016), 'Central Eyre Peninsula; Geological trails'.

<sup>16</sup> DEW Files, McBriar EM, Giles, CW and Mooney, MD (1980), 'Geological Monuments in South Australia Part 3'.

<sup>17</sup> DEW Files; and Twidale, CR and Campbell EM (1985), *Natural History of Eyre Peninsula*, Eds. Twidale CR, Tyler MJ and Davies M. Royal Society of South Australia, Adelaide; and Phillips, JD, Pawlik, Ł and Šamonil, P (2019), 'Weathering fronts', *Earth-Science Reviews*, Vol. 198, 102925.

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