

Kanku–Breakaways Conservation Park

Management Plan 2017

Kanku–Breakaways Conservation Park is the traditional land of the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara people and is an important part of the Coober Pedy district. The Kanku has always protected us, the land, food, plants and animals. We will work together to keep it strong so that the Kanku can welcome people and provide a vibrant Coober Pedy community.



Minister's foreword



The Kaṅku-Breakaways Conservation Park is a unique and beautiful landscape of profound cultural significance to the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunyjtjara people. It is a special place for the local community and makes an important contribution to Coober Pedy's vibrant tourism industry.

This plan sets out strategies for the park's ongoing conservation. It focuses on protecting culturally significant features, helping to maintain the connections of the traditional owners to their Country, welcoming visitors and supporting the aspirations of the Coober Pedy community.

The adoption of this plan and the establishment of the new name for the park - Kaṅku-Breakaways Conservation Park - recognise and respect the ongoing custodial role of the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunyjtjara people over their Country.

The finalisation of this plan is testament to the leadership of the Kaṅku-Breakaways Conservation Park Co-management Board – a partnership between the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunyjtjara people, the South Australian Government, and the District Council of Coober Pedy. I acknowledge the efforts of others who have contributed to the development of this plan and those that continue to assist in the conservation of this important park.

It is with much pleasure that I now formally adopt the Kaṅku-Breakaways Conservation Park Management Plan under section 38 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Hunter'.

The Hon Ian Hunter MLC

Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation

Cultural Sensitivity Warning

Aboriginal people are advised that this plan may contain culturally sensitive material.





Developing this plan

The Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara people are the traditional owners of the Kaṅku–Breakaways Conservation Park. The traditional owners, the District Council of Coober Pedy and the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation have committed to working cooperatively towards the ongoing protection of the Kaṅku by establishing the Kaṅku–Breakaways Conservation Park Co-management Board.

The traditional owners know this area as the Kaṅku. The word ‘Kaṅku’ means shelter, and has been selected to illustrate the importance of this place to the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara people. ‘Kaṅku’ is pronounced ‘kah-ngoo’ (‘oo’ as in ‘look’). The park was re-named Kaṅku–Breakaways in late 2015.

This management plan has been developed by the Kaṅku–Breakaways Conservation Park Co-management Board with assistance from the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources. Members of the Board wish to thank those who provided comment on the draft plan.

Ian Crombie

Chair Kaṅku–Breakaways Conservation Park Co-management Board



**Government
of South Australia**

Department of Environment,
Water and Natural Resources



District Council of Coober Pedy



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Directions for management

Kan̄ku–Breakaways Conservation Park has always been a place of profound spiritual significance to the traditional owners, the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara people, and is much loved by the Coober Pedy community. The Kan̄ku has always provided protection for the traditional owners and in return it will always be protected.

The Kan̄ku is owned by the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara people and was constituted as a conservation park under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* in 2013 after two decades of care by the District Council of Coober Pedy. The Kan̄ku will be managed to achieve the aspirations of the traditional owners, to conserve the cultural and natural landscape and to involve people in its care and protection.

As a Conservation Park, it is provided with a high level of legal protection and is managed primarily for conservation. It was proclaimed under section 43 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* so that no new mining entitlements may be granted and so that the mining and petroleum exploration interests that existed prior to proclamation are preserved.

This is the first plan for the Kan̄ku–Breakaways Conservation Park. It meets the requirement for the completion of a park management plan specified under section 38 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*, and is adopted subject to the native title rights and interest that continue to exist in relation to the land.

The Board will work with stakeholders and the community to implement the plan. This will be done in a way that is consistent with the wishes of the traditional owners, the Coober Pedy community, and the laws that apply over this land including the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988* and the *Native Title Act 1993*.

The traditional owners will be consulted on key park issues including the development of any new infrastructure such as vehicular and walking tracks, car parks and any earthworks; and will be informed about park progress and management through regular reports.







Park significance and purpose

The long-term protection and enhancement of the Kaṅku begins by understanding its significance.

The Kaṅku is an area of 14,300 hectares that is located approximately 25 kilometres north of Coober Pedy in the far north of South Australia (Figure 1).

The Stuart Highway runs parallel with the western boundary of the Kaṅku and Kempe Road passes through its south-eastern portion. It is important in itself and as part of a statewide system of protected areas that play a critical role in conserving South Australia's culture, natural formations, ecosystems, habitats, plants and animals.

The Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara people have a deep spiritual connection to this land. Their connection to their Country is embedded in the Kaṅku's spectacular landscape and scenery. The

Papa kutjara

The image above is of a site called two dogs, or papa. Papa is also known locally as 'salt and pepper' or 'the castle'. To the traditional owners this site is known as the two dogs sitting down – a yellow one and a white one. To the far right of papa is the peaked hill. This is the watti (man) who owns the two dogs. Moving to the left of the two dogs is the kalaya (emu). Father emu is looking after all of his little chicks.

entire park is a registered Aboriginal Site under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*. Many sites within the Kaṅku are a part of dreaming stories. Aboriginal culture does not allow for all details of the Kaṅku's story to be told.

Lying within ancient sedimentary basins, the geology and eroding platforms visible today formed from rocks deposited about 115 million years ago. Originally dark grey mudstone, uplift of the basin and withdrawal of the sea exposed the rocks to 60 million years of weathering and erosion, causing bleaching and iron-staining which has given these rocks their spectacularly varied colours. Alternating wet and dry climatic conditions during this period allowed silica to accumulate in the soil profile, eventually cementing the near-surface as hard silcrete.

Resistant to erosion, those areas capped by silcrete remain, creating striking flat-topped mesas as erosion has carved steep-sloped escarpments (breakaways) and discarded the silcrete debris into gibber-covered footslopes and floodplains. The precious opal at Coober Pedy is thought to be a product of the weathering. Natural weathering and erosion is still happening today in a continuing evolution of the landscape.

The dramatic geomorphology of the landscape is a drawcard for visitors, particularly as the sun rises and sets over the Kaṅku. Commercial tour operators, who bring visitors to the Kaṅku, make a positive contribution to the region's economy, as do commercial photographers and film-makers who wish to capture the land's natural beauty.

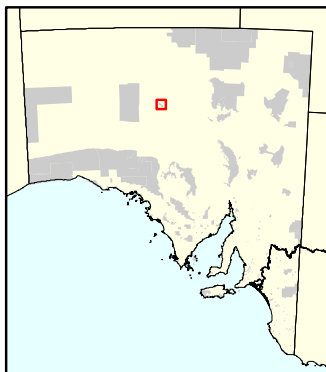
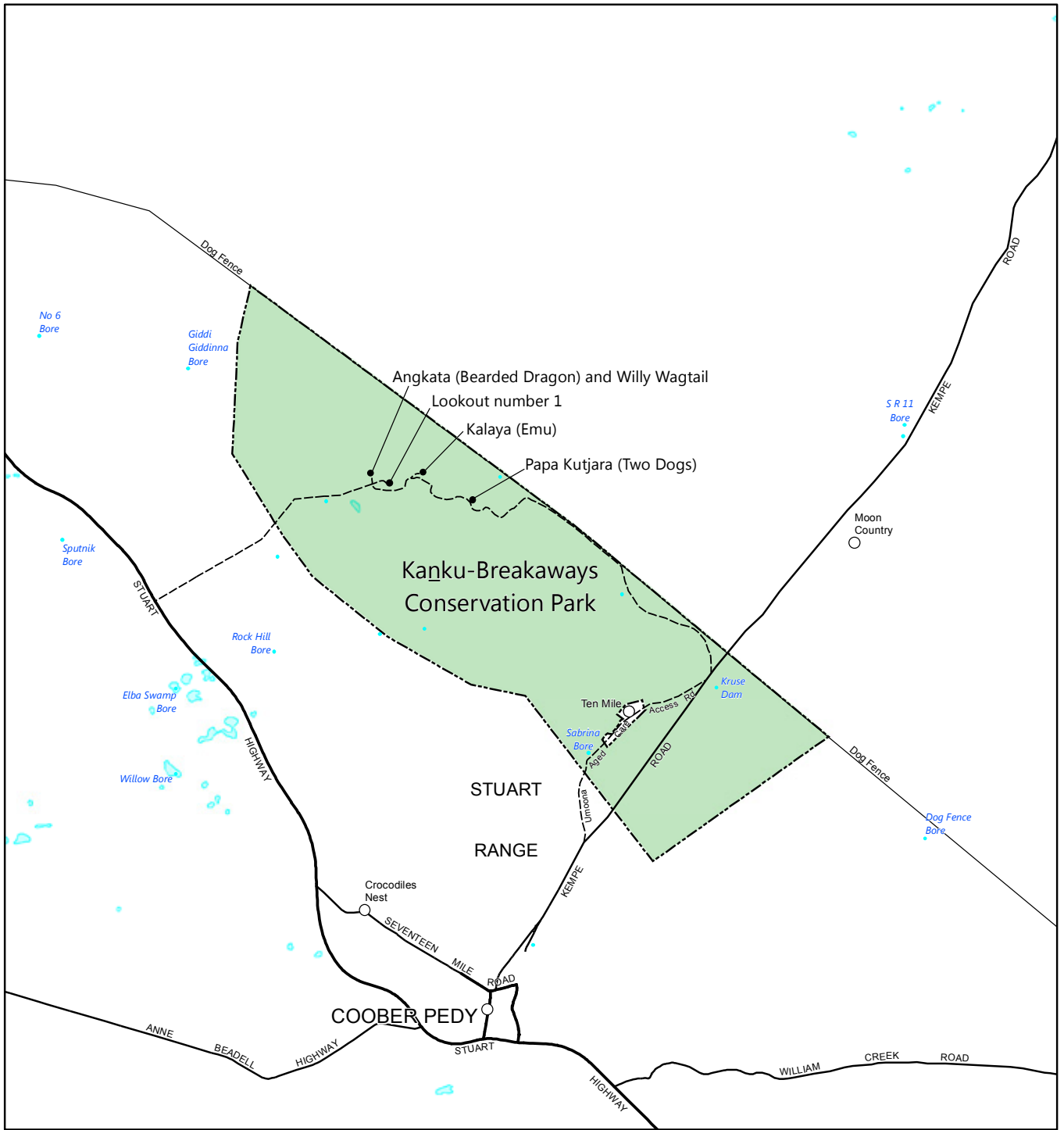
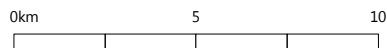


Figure 1
Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park



LEGEND

- Bore, Spring, or Water Tank
- █ Lake
- Sealed Road
- Vehicular Track
- Dog Fence
- Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park



What are we looking after?

Kan̄ku–Breakaways Conservation Park protects:

- Cultural sites and a landscape of profound significance for Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara people.
- A spectacular landscape.
- Acacia-lined watercourse habitat that supports the nationally threatened Bronzeback Legless Lizard (*Ophidiocephalus taeniatus*).
- Vegetation formations including: arid and semi-arid Acacia low open woodlands and shrublands with chenopods; Eucalyptus woodlands with shrubby understoreys; Acacia tall open shrublands; chenopod shrublands; mixed chenopod and samphire shrublands, and forblands.
- Over 60 native plant species including Black's Bindyi (*Sclerolaena blackiana*), *Goodenia chambersii* and Gypsum Groundsel (*Senecio gypsicola*) which are listed as rare under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*.

- Approximately 60 native animal species including the Slender-billed Thornbill (*Acanthiza iredalei*) which is listed as rare under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*.

Kan̄ku–Breakaways Conservation Park provides opportunities for:

- Traditional owners to exercise their traditional rights, continue their culture and maintain their long term connection to Country.
- Community based events, tourism, photography and filming.
- Visitors to experience and learn about the park's dramatic landscape and rich cultural heritage.



Celebration of the hand back of Breakaways Conservation Park to the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal Corporation - Breakaways Conservation Park 2013

What are the challenges?

Key challenges in the protection and management of the Kan̄ku are:

- Protecting the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara cultural sites from erosion, human interference, inappropriate management activities and pest species.
- Providing opportunities for more visitors to experience the Kan̄ku and learn about its cultural significance without risking further damage to sensitive Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and features.
- Realising the opportunity that the Kan̄ku offers for community events and tourism.
- Enabling the traditional owners to continue their connection to Country in accordance with traditional law and custom, in a manner consistent with the relevant objectives for management set out in the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*.
- Improving the resilience of ecological communities, native plants and animals to the temperature increases and changes to rainfall patterns that are expected as a result of climate change.





Management themes and priorities

This section of the management plan addresses the most important management issues for the park focusing on two key themes.

Theme 1: Welcoming people and supporting the Coober Pedy community

The Breakaways are visible from the Kempe Road on the way to and from Coober Pedy. The natural beauty of the park is a drawcard for locals and tourists. The Kaṅku offers a quintessential outback experience encompassing a striking landscape and a rich cultural heritage. The Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara people welcome visitors to their Country. They want visitors to remain safe while also respecting their land, culture and protocols.

Commercial tour operators offer tours of the Kaṅku. The brilliant colours and dramatic landscapes of the Kaṅku also attract professional photographers and film-makers. The Kaṅku has featured in a number of television documentaries, and movies including *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* and *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*. These activities bring significant economic benefits to Coober Pedy and have helped to promote the region internationally.

Commercial tourism, photography and filming requires a permit which is issued by the Board. A commercial photography and film production protocol has been developed to encourage sustainable filming and photography in the park. This protocol is regularly reviewed.

Most people visit the Kaṅku briefly to see the changing colours of the landscape during sunrise or sunset. The access track through the Kaṅku has a series of road-side lookouts and car parks (Figure 1). Most people keep to the primary access road. However a myriad of additional, unnecessary tracks have developed over time. These tracks have compromised some of the Kaṅku's cultural features and have potential to cause further damage. The primary access road is available for horse riding, horse carriages, and leading a horse.

Several tracks also provide access to areas that are not culturally appropriate for public access. There is currently a lack of clear signage or barriers to ensure that traffic stays on the primary access road. To ensure that people do not impact on the Kaṅku, public access will be confined to a Public Access Zone. The Public Access Zone includes a 30 metre corridor along the primary access road, car parks and lookouts (Figure 1). This zone aims to provide opportunities for visitors to drive on the primary access road and walk throughout the zone. Access must continue to be provided through the Kaṅku to a small parcel of Crown land that is dedicated to the care, control and management of the Umoona Aged Care Aboriginal Corporation Incorporated (Figure 1).

The remainder of the Kaṅku is designated as a Cultural Conservation Zone to protect sensitive cultural features from interference or inadvertent damage. Traditional owners may access and exercise their traditional rights within this zone. As a way of facilitating appropriate access, the Board may grant permits for activities including management, commercial photography, film making and commercial tourism. An approved representative of the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara community may be required to supervise these activities. There are restricted areas within the Cultural Conservation Zone where permits may not be approved.

While the Kaṅku already provides a wonderful experience, it has considerable potential to enable a greater range of culturally appropriate experiences. This will be achieved by engaging with the community to identify their needs and aspirations. Improvements could include improved visitor facilities and information that tells the story of the traditional owners and their culture. There are also opportunities for the traditional owners to provide unique cultural experiences. These initiatives will lead to a greater appreciation and respect for the Kaṅku, appropriate visitor interaction with the land, and broader social and economic benefits for Coober Pedy.



Objective and strategies

Provide opportunities for people to access and learn about the Kaṅku and Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara culture, and the Coober Pedy community, in a sustainable and culturally appropriate way.

- Establish prominent park entry signage that welcomes visitors to Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara land and encourages them to help protect the Kaṅku.
- Develop a visitor experience strategy to guide the establishment of signs, interpretation, visitor facilities including toilets and any tourism activities such as walking trails to ensure they are undertaken in a way that is achievable, culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable.
- Develop an interpretive driving tour that enables visitors to learn about the Kaṅku through short stops at key viewing areas and points of interest throughout the park.
- Communicate key aspects of Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara culture and appropriate visitor behaviour to people through participation in cultural activities, a park brochure, on-site information, improved fee collection process, and improved definition of access tracks, car parks and lookouts.
- Ensure that Aboriginal groups with an interest in the Kaṅku are consulted in the development of interpretive materials.
- Establish a major focal point for the communication of the Kaṅku and Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara culture, commencing with the development of a concept plan for the refurbishment of Lookout number 1 (Figure 1).
- Assess, and as appropriate, issue permits for access to the Cultural Conservation Zone in accordance with the recommendations of the Aboriginal heritage survey report and the Park's Commercial Photography and Film Production Protocol. Support the presence of an Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara representative to supervise activities in the Cultural Conservation Zone as appropriate.
- Continue to provide access through the Kaṅku to Ten Mile Creek and establish formal access arrangements if required.



Theme 2: Keeping the Kaṅku strong

Managing the Kaṅku and undertaking traditional practices on Country are vital to maintain the strong connection to Country of the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara people. The spiritual significance of the Kaṅku to the traditional owners is interwoven with its natural formations, plants and animals. Many features form part of stories that weave their way across the landscape, extending for thousands of kilometres and across state borders. Access to, and knowledge of, many features in the Kaṅku is gender restricted or limited to certain members of the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara community.

There is also much evidence of past Aboriginal occupation in the Kaṅku, in the form of stone artefacts and quarry sites. Many artefact scatters are closely linked with ritual and ceremonial sites. Other archaeological sites, such as quarrying and tool-making sites, represent the practical activities that occurred in the Kaṅku by the ancestors of today's traditional owners. To protect these sites and features, the Kaṅku is a registered Aboriginal Site under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*. This Act respects the confidentiality of traditional knowledge associated with these sites and features. The Act protects all of the cultural and archaeological values of the Kaṅku from damage, disturbance or interference, and respects the confidentiality of traditional knowledge associated with these sites and features.

Hunting, camping and the use of firearms is not allowed without the approval of the Board. However the Kaṅku provides opportunities for the traditional owners to exercise their spiritual rights. These rights are extended to the spouses of traditional owners and people who are required to participate in traditional law and customs with traditional owners. The Board may close part or all of the Kaṅku for periods of up to one week for ceremonies or cultural activities.

Management activities for the protection of natural and cultural values may require access to culturally sensitive sites. In these cases specific procedures must be followed to ensure that management activities are conducted in a culturally appropriate way.

Priorities for conservation work such as pest animal management are guided by other relevant plans in the South Australian Arid Lands Region. Introduced plants and animals are not currently a major concern but should be monitored and managed as necessary to prevent their establishment. All management activities are undertaken in a way that is sensitive to the park's cultural sites, landscape features, habitats, plants, and animals.

Fire is not currently a concern; however this may change under climate change and in the presence of weeds such as buffel grass. Fire management will be undertaken as necessary in a way that minimises potential damage to the cultural and natural values of the park.

Gradual erosion over thousands of years has helped to shape the Kaṅku's beautiful scenery. This landscape is particularly susceptible to the additional and rapid loss of vegetation and erosion of soil which can result in the long term degradation of the Kaṅku's special features. Vegetation loss and soil erosion have been accelerated by activities such as illegal off-track driving, unmanaged foot traffic and water run-off from tracks.

Over time, an extensive network of vehicle tracks has developed across the Kaṅku, scarring the particularly susceptible escarpments, footslopes and floodplains. Many of these vehicle tracks are unnecessary but continue to be used (see Theme 1). These activities also affect the Aboriginal cultural values of the Kaṅku. For archaeological sites, the impacts are physical. Scattered artefacts can be crushed by vehicles, washed away by erosion arising from the track network or illegally removed by visitors.

For culturally sensitive sites, the impacts are spiritual, and their significance is affected by the presence of visitors. In 2006, a survey of Aboriginal heritage was undertaken in consultation with the traditional owners. The report that was subsequently prepared, *Aboriginal Heritage Protection Survey: The Breakaways Reserve* (ALRM and AARD 2006), recommends strategies to safeguard sensitive cultural features.



There is an existing mining lease which allows for gravel to be extracted from a pit near Oolgelima Creek. Mining operations associated with the gravel pit are managed through the provisions of the *Mining Act 1971*. Work is progressing to assist the lease holder in relocating the gravel mining operations to a new site outside of the park.

There is also an existing petroleum exploration licence over a portion of the Kaṅku. Petroleum exploration activities are regulated through the provisions of the *Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Act 2000*.

Subject to the *National Parks and Wildlife (Breakaways Conservation Park - Mining Rights) Proclamation 2013*, these existing rights may continue to be exercised under the relevant mining Acts and the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*. The Department of State Development is responsible for regulating activities under these Acts. No new mining rights may be granted within the park.

Objective and strategies

Protect and conserve the Kaṅku's natural values and rich Aboriginal cultural heritage.

- Rehabilitate particular sites of Aboriginal cultural significance in accordance with recommendations in the Aboriginal heritage survey report (ALRM and AARD 2006).
- Identify and implement activities that foster the participation of the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal Corporation in decision making and management, including providing regular reports on the management of the park.
- Work with neighbours to prevent stock from straying into the Kaṅku, and remove any stray stock present in the Kaṅku.
- Monitor the presence of introduced plants and animals, and implement control or eradication programs as required as a part of regionally coordinated programs.
- Monitor and take action to reduce the impact of vehicles, foot traffic and water run-off on soil, erosion and vegetation in the vicinity of the main tracks and visitation areas.
- Improve the scientific and cultural basis for management by integrating scientific and traditional land management concepts, identifying knowledge gaps, conducting research and monitoring the condition of key Kaṅku values.
- Close and rehabilitate inappropriate vehicle tracks, car parks and pull-over areas in line with the recommendations of the Board and the Aboriginal heritage survey report. Monitor the rehabilitation for erosion and success of plant establishment.
- Close and rehabilitate the vehicle track to Angkata (Bearded Dragon) and Willy Wagtail (Figure 1) to protect the culturally sensitive area. Investigate alternative public access arrangements that provide an improved experience including a new car park, a walking trail and interpretation. Monitor the rehabilitation for erosion and success of plant establishment.



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