

# Strong People, Strong Country

Co-managing parks in South Australia



**National  
Parks**  
South  
Australia





# Contents

<b>A journey of...Listening</b> . . . . .	<b>2</b>
Traditional belonging . . . . .	3
Protecting nature . . . . .	3
<b>A journey of...Understanding</b> . . . . .	<b>4</b>
What is 'co-management'? . . . . .	5
Working together. . . . .	5
<b>A journey of...Respect</b> . . . . .	<b>6</b>
Legal framework . . . . .	7
Achievements . . . . .	8
<b>Our stories: Co-management in South Australia</b> . . . . .	<b>10</b>
Arabana Parks Advisory Committee . . . . .	12
Gawler Ranges National Park Advisory Committee . . . . .	14
Ikara–Flinders Ranges National Park Co-management Board . . . . .	16
Kan̄ku–Breakaways Conservation Park Co-management Board . . . . .	18
Lake Gairdner National Park Co-management Board . . . . .	20
Mamungari Conservation Park Co-management Board . . . . .	22
Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park Co-management Board . . . . .	24
Nullarbor Parks Advisory Committee . . . . .	26
Vulkathunha–Gammon Ranges National Park Co-management Board . . . . .	28
Witjira National Park Co-management Board . . . . .	30
Yandruwandha Yawarrawarrka Parks Advisory Committee . . . . .	32
Yumberra Conservation Park Co-management Board . . . . .	34
<b>Acknowledgements</b> . . . . .	<b>36</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> . . . . .	<b>36</b>



A journey of...

# listening

*“ We meet around the table with different stories and histories; co-management helps us develop shared contemporary visions for the future of the country. ”*

Matt Ward, DEW Regional Manager, Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara

## Traditional belonging

***“By reconnecting people to their land in a way that benefits them, culture becomes strong again”***

Leonard Miller Snr, Yumbarra

Aboriginal Australians have an intrinsic connection to their ancestral lands; while each community is distinct, they share a common fundamental belief that their health and wellbeing cannot be separated from the health and wellbeing of their ‘ancestral estate’ (Moorcroft 2007).

Today, many communities struggle to maintain or rebuild this connection: Co-management is about connection to country; it’s about recognition:

*“We are scientists. We have a relationship to country and we’ve looked after land in the driest country in the world... It’s good to get that recognition...”*

*The spirit energy of Aboriginal people is vital to country: the country cries for the people. We need more of our people on country; working for country”* (Aaron Stuart, Arabana).

Elders traditionally carry the knowledge of how to use and treat the land including looking after creation sites and other special areas. Many communities suffer from the passing of ‘cultural knowledge keepers’:

*“We’re working through the Co-management Board to get it right... We are the Elders now... we have to step up and look after it”* (Maureen Williams, Kanku–Breakaways).

Many communities have embraced co-management as the first step:

*“Reconciliation involves justice, recognition and healing. It’s about helping all Australians move forward with a better understanding of the past and how the past affects the lives of Indigenous people today”* (Reconciliation Australia).

## Protecting nature

***“Co-management is a new way of working together; a new way to care for our parks”***

John Schutz, Director of National Parks and Wildlife

South Australia’s protected area system, which safeguards areas of conservation and biodiversity significance, includes over 340 reserves that together cover more than 21 million hectares, or 21% of the State.

Much of this reserve system is in arid, remote areas of South Australia that are logistically difficult to manage. The relatively undeveloped nature of these areas means they have retained both conservation and cultural values: in South Australia, as in many parts of arid Australia, there is a strong correlation between lands of high conservation value and Aboriginal importance.

Essentially, a system of representative protected areas must embrace cooperation with Aboriginal people as both land holders and keepers of a rich reserve of local land management expertise.

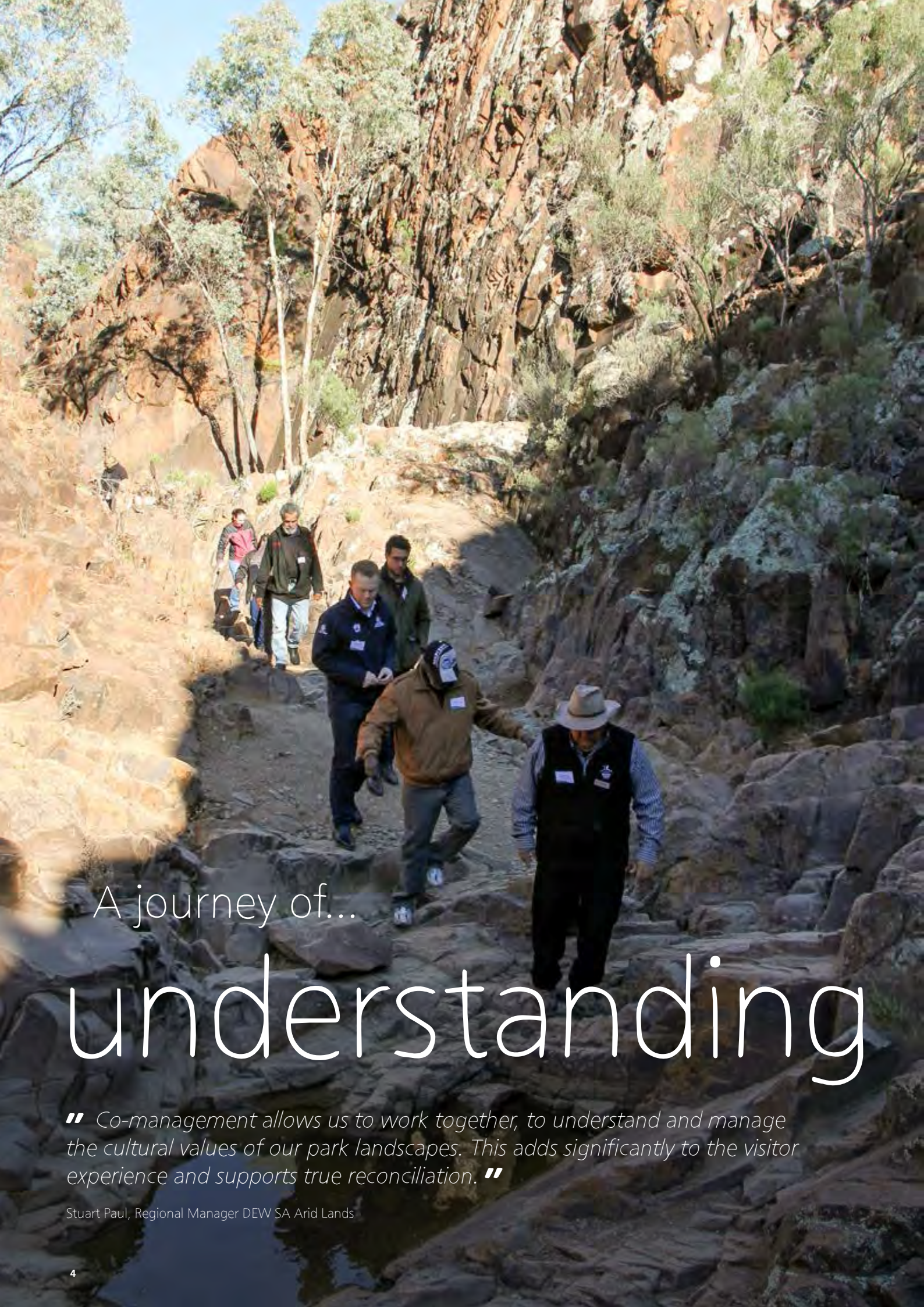
Co-management agreements are integral to South Australia’s system of representative protected areas: *“Co-management is essential to the way we manage our parks... Where we are today wouldn’t have been imagined 10 years ago,”* (Jason Irving, Department for Environment and Water.)

Areas of high Indigenous importance often encompass entire biogeographical regions, highlighting their conservation and resource management significance in creating and managing a truly representative reserve system.

*“Indigenous people have legitimate interests in protected area management and biodiversity conservation and also have much to offer the broader community in the understanding of the Australian landscape and environment”* (Gilligan 2006).

***“ We are custodians of the oldest country in the world ”***

Marilyn Ah Chee, Witjira



A journey of...

# understanding

*“ Co-management allows us to work together, to understand and manage the cultural values of our park landscapes. This adds significantly to the visitor experience and supports true reconciliation. ”*

Stuart Paul, Regional Manager DEW SA Arid Lands

## What is 'co-management'?

### *"Connecting Aboriginal people back to their country"*

John Schutz, Director of National Parks and Wildlife,  
Department for Environment and Water

Co-management in South Australia is about bringing together traditional Aboriginal beliefs and contemporary Western perspectives on the importance of looking after land.

The concept recognises that Aboriginal and conservation challenges and initiatives cannot be addressed in isolation: that healthy country and healthy communities go hand-in-hand (Gilligan 2006).

It is about taking care of both the cultural and natural values of land, providing Aboriginal groups that have retained a strong land connection with a framework to manage their land for healthy biodiversity and community outcomes.

By recognising Aboriginal rights and credibility, co-management agreements also educate the broader community and instill pride amongst communities: they give real meaning to reconciliation.

Co-management is a new way, *"a genuine partnership and process of engagement"* (Jason Irving, Manager, Protected Areas, Department for Environment and Water). It is a meaningful way for communities to direct their efforts and reinforce a sense of worth and social cohesion. This has far reaching community benefits, particularly for younger members including increased employment, school engagement, and more functional families and community structures.

More specifically, co-management in South Australia:

- acknowledges the rights and capacity of Aboriginal communities to manage cultural and natural values on traditional lands
- educates the wider community about 'healthy country' and brings them along on a journey of mutual respect and understanding
- enables Aboriginal people to live on country
- allows Aboriginal communities to look after and use sacred places in accordance with their traditional culture and values
- builds land management expertise and employment opportunities, especially amongst younger members.

## Working together

### *"We want to share knowledge and teach people"*

Ivy Campbell, Ngaut Ngaut

By combining customary and contemporary knowledge, co-management agreements can offer real gains in managing conservation areas of South Australia and bring about profound economic and social improvements for Aboriginal communities.

While all co-management agreements are individual and reflect specific natural and cultural concerns of the land and community, they also encompass four fundamental principles:

- continued cultural, spiritual and traditional use of the park by the relevant Aboriginal group
- continued enjoyment of the park by members of the public
- preservation and protection of Aboriginal sites, features, objects and structures of spiritual or cultural significance within the park
- protection for the natural resources, wildlife, vegetation and other environmental features of the park.

In practical terms, this means local community members are involved in on-ground, day-to-day land management activities including:

- preserving and managing native wildlife
- controlling feral animals and weeds
- conserving culturally significant sites and places
- visitor interpretation and cultural education
- fire management.

Combining Western and Aboriginal knowledge provides the best of both... offering something that is new and different yet embedded in tradition and supported by a wealth of scientific and cultural understanding.

*"Indigenous knowledge and Western science are respected and integrated, and cultural, social and economic aspirations are incorporated with conservation outcomes"*  
(Moorcroft 2007).

Left image: Left to right; Michael Anderson, Keith Peters, Matthew Johnson, Ben Daly, Leonard Millar, Chevahn Hoad at Sacred Canyon, Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park.

*“ Open your eyes  
and ears...listen and  
learn from us ”*



A journey of...

# respect

*“ Reconciliation is about unity and respect... it is about respect for Aboriginal... heritage and valuing justice and equity for all Australians. ”*

Reconciliation Australia (2015)



# Legal framework

Provision for co-management structures has been created through amendments to the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* in 2004 and the *Wilderness Protection Act 1992* in 2013.

The Acts provide for co-management of national parks, conservation parks and wilderness areas in South Australia through co-management agreements between the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation and the relevant Aboriginal group. As well as providing the opportunity for co-management of existing parks, the amendments allow for new, co-managed parks to be created on Aboriginal-owned land at the request of the traditional owners, with great potential to enhance nature conservation and nature-based tourism.

**“ Co-management is here; it is part of law. It is your chance to tell your story.**

**What is your story? ”**

Parry Agius, Presiding Member Alinytjara Wilurara NRM Board

Therefore, in accordance with the legislation, two types of land can be co-managed:

- **Crown land** – that is, land owned by the State Government as part of the reserve system such as Lake Gairdner National Park and Yumberra Conservation Park
- **Aboriginal land** – that is, land owned by traditional owners such as Mamungari Conservation Park and Kan̄ku–Breakaways Conservation Park.

The legislation provides for three different types of co-management framework (see ‘How it works’) that can be tailored to individual circumstances and may evolve over time as capacity builds and cooperative relationships develop, as long as the legislative requirements are met. This includes developing and implementing a park management plan.

Co-management arrangements are generally reviewed every five years and enable everyone to take stock of the partnership and further strengthen the arrangement.

## How it works

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* and the *Wilderness Protection Act 1992* provide for a flexible co-management framework:

- **Aboriginal-owned park managed by a Co-management Board**  
(e.g. *Mamungari Conservation Park*)

These parks are under control of, and managed by, Co-management Boards with a majority of members from the relevant Aboriginal community and are chaired by a person nominated by the Aboriginal owners.

- **Crown-owned park managed by a Co-management Board**  
(e.g. *Vulkathunha–Gammon Ranges National Park*)

Co-management Boards may be established for a Crown-owned park, giving the Board management control of the park. Membership is determined by agreement between the Minister and the relevant Aboriginal group.

- **Crown-owned park with a Co-management Advisory Committee**  
(e.g. *Nullarbor Wilderness Protection Area*)

A statutory Advisory Committee may be established for a Crown-owned park to provide management advice, but it does not have management control. The functions and membership are determined by agreement between the Minister and the relevant Aboriginal group.

# Achievements

Numerous Aboriginal-conservation partnerships have been successfully negotiated over the past decade. These provide a cooperative system for managing protected areas and their biodiversity in association with Aboriginal communities and landholders.

There are now 12 co-management agreements in place over 35 of South Australia's parks and reserves, covering 13.5 million hectares or 64% of the State's reserve system. There are also commitments to establish co-management arrangements in Narungga and Kurna Country in 2018 and 2019.

Each co-management agreement represents willingness by both parties – Aboriginal communities and the Government – to work together for mutually beneficial outcomes, specifically contemporary environmental, cultural, social and land management issues.

*“ Co-management is reconnecting people to their land. Culture becomes strong again... ”*

Trevor Scott, Nullarbor

Aboriginal communities that have signed such agreements have taken on responsibility for managing the land in accordance with legislative requirements, while the Government is agreeing to support this function, recognising that this partnership is in the best interests of the State's conservation and tourism objectives.

This system has many advantages that bridge challenges facing conservation and Aboriginal communities in South Australia. It is helping provide on-ground land management and traditional knowledge in areas of high conservation value while also addressing what are often seen as intractable social issues facing many Aboriginal communities.

*“ We've come a long way; we've still got a long way to go. I'm glad I'm on this journey ”*

Glenise Coulthard, Flinders Ranges

## Key features of South Australia's co-management approach:

- **Innovative** – both Aboriginal land and parks can become co-managed parks, providing a novel solution to both Aboriginal and conservation issues
- **Flexible** – the three models of co-management enable a choice of best fit
- **Certain** – legislative amendments secure the responsibilities and expectations of all parties
- **Adaptive** – the relative balance of responsibilities can evolve over time.

Co-management also gives Aboriginal people a voice; a framework to contribute to a range of State priorities, such as nature-based tourism activities, regional employment initiatives and promoting community health and wellbeing.





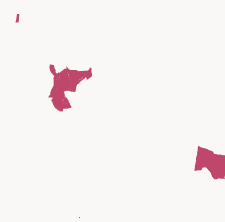
# Our stories: Co-management in South Australia



**Arabana Parks  
Advisory Committee**



**Gawler Ranges  
National Park  
Advisory Committee**



**Ikara-Flinders Ranges  
National Park  
Co-management Board**



**Kanku-Breakaways  
Conservation Park  
Co-management Board**



**Lake Gairdner  
National Park  
Co-management Board**



**Mamungari  
Conservation Park  
Co-management Board**



**Ngaut Ngaut  
Conservation Park  
Co-management Board**



**Nullarbor Parks  
Advisory Committee**



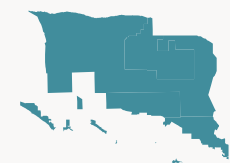
**Vulkathunha-Gammon  
Ranges National Park  
Co-management Board**



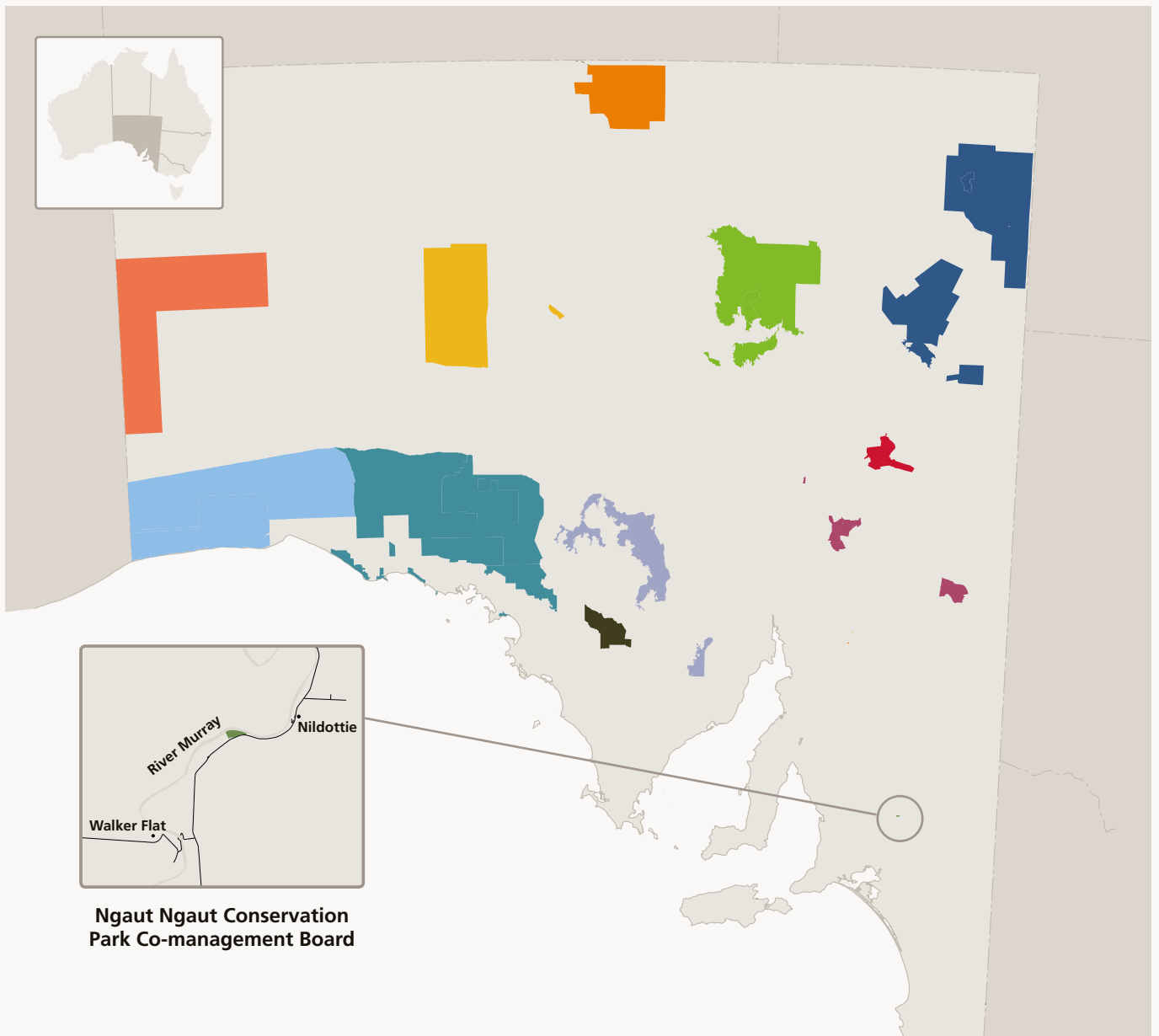
**Witjira National Park  
Co-management Board**



**Yandruwandha  
Yawarrawarrka Parks  
Advisory Committee**



**Yumbarra Conservation  
Park Co-management  
Board**



Our story

# Arabana Parks Advisory Committee



***“ Management is about care. ‘Co’ is about togetherness. Join us from the millennia that has been to the millennia that is to come. ”***

Aaron Stuart, Advisory Committee former Co-chairperson

We are proud to be part of managing this special and remote area of central northern South Australia, a large mass of country with a complex story around it. Co-management recognises our connection to this country and that our input on how this land is managed is important.

The Arabana Parks Advisory Committee manage Kati Thanda–Lake Eyre National Park and Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park. Kati Thanda is an icon of outback Australia, a spectacular and inspirational landscape and a core element of the massive Lake Eyre Basin ecosystem, the largest internal drainage system in the world. The mound springs are ancient environments where water has been discharging for hundreds of thousands of years. Their unique geology and structure provides shelter for a range of species found nowhere else in the world including two species that are only found within Wabma Kadarbu itself.

## ***Co-management recognises our connection to this country***

We welcome visitors to our traditional lands and encourage them to learn about our stories and culture. In this area, visitor numbers vary greatly from about 5,000 in a dry year and soar to around 25,000 in a flood event year. We seek to establish culturally appropriate ways for people to experience the parks, in particular the waters and lake bed of Kati Thanda and the mound springs of the area, which have high conservation and cultural values, and are sensitive to visitor impacts.

**Parks co-managed:** Elliot Price Conservation Park; Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park and the lake portion of Kati Thanda–Lake Eyre National Park.

**Area:** 1.43 million hectares (total)

**Land systems:** Contains mound springs and Australia’s largest salt lake – Kati Thanda (Lake Eyre), an icon of outback Australia with stark, inspirational landscapes; horizons of salt transform into a seemingly endless inland sea when floodwaters arrive

**Traditional owners:** Arabana and Dieri people

## **Co-management agreement since 2013**

For the future, we are working on two new park management plans – one for Kati Thanda–Lake Eyre National Park/Elliot Price Conservation Park; and the other for Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park. We are also working to improve interpretive signs and visitor facilities, and increase opportunities for Arabana people to be on country, involved in day-to-day management of the parks.

Ultimately, we would like to progress from an Advisory Committee to a Co-management Board.

Our story

# Gawler Ranges National Park Advisory Committee





***“ Gawler Ranges People ask you to respect this ancient landscape. Everything you see is important to us. ”***

Elliott McNamara, Chairperson Gawler Ranges Aboriginal Corporation

The Gawler Ranges National Park is fundamental to the Aboriginal law, culture and beliefs of the Gawler Ranges people. We have over 30,000 years of strong and ongoing connection to the country.

The park is a cultural landscape, with sites, objects and stories that have been passed down through generations.

Traditional ceremonies and practices are carried out in the park to this day.

Co-management of the park provides the opportunity for Indigenous aspirations and conservation priorities to come together; working cooperatively to maintain strong relationships, healthy country and to connect people to an ancient landscape.

## ***The park is a cultural landscape***

The Committee brings together three Aboriginal groups in partnership with government, all the people bring something to the table. It's about looking after the landscape for the community.

We have worked together to revise the park management plan which has been a great way to work through issues.

Four main themes identified in the plan are:

- Protecting natural values
- Respecting, recognising and protecting the culture of the Gawler Ranges Aboriginal People
- Providing high quality visitor experiences
- Connecting histories.

**Park co-managed:** Gawler Ranges National Park

**Area:** 162,875 hectares

**Land systems:** Spectacular, ancient landscape, remnant of a massive volcanic eruption 1,500 million year ago. Contains cliffs of columnar rhyolite (known as organ pipe formations), rock holes, springs and intermittent waterfalls and is an important biodiversity corridor through the Great Victoria Desert and Nullarbor Plain into Western Australia

**Traditional owners:** The traditional owners of the Gawler Ranges are a distinct group of foundation families made up of some, but not all, of the Barngarla, Kokatha and Wirangu people

## **Co-management agreement since 2011**

For the future, the Committee is focusing on finalising and implementing the management plan, in particular:

- continuing to build relationships between Committee members and other partners including pastoralists, researchers and Department for Environment and Water officers
- facilitating on country planning and initiatives to establish priorities and deliver strategies outlined in the plan including improved interpretive signage and managing visitor impacts.

We are working towards amalgamating co-management of the Gawler Ranges National Park with Lake Gairdner National Park to encourage a more coordinated management approach.

# Ikara–Flinders Ranges National Park Co-management Board





The Idnya (Western Quoll), a totem animal of the Adnyamathanha people, has been reintroduced around Wilpena Pound. Vince Coulthard, then CEO of the Adnyamathanha Traditional Land Association, conducted a blessing ceremony at the first release in April 2014.

***“ Our land cannot survive without its people; and the people cannot survive without the land. Co-management recognises the connection between Aboriginal people and country. ”***

Glenise Coulthard, Board member

The ancient landscape of the Ikara–Flinders Ranges National Park is part of the traditional Yarta (lands) of the Adnyamathanha people. Adnyamathanha culture is a welcoming and sharing one - and this welcoming and sharing culture extends to you.

Following establishment of the Co-management Board in 2011, a new management plan was developed that has a strong Adnyamathanha focus. The draft plan is based on three themes:

- Advancing Adnyamathanha spiritual, cultural and economic relationships with country
- Healing the Ikara–Flinders Ranges National Park
- Sharing the spirit of the Flinders Ranges.

We are now working on developing a new Interpretation Plan that has a strong Adnyamathanha influence and will guide management of key visitor sites across the park.

***Take your time,  
walk in our footprints,  
and share our story***

As the traditional owners of this amazing part of the country, we have a cultural responsibility to ensure your physical and spiritual wellbeing is well-looked-after during your stay. There are many cultural treasures to be found whilst you visit our Yarta. We invite you to learn about our culture and social history; however, we ask that you exercise your role as a respectful and responsible traveller to assist us in protecting them for future generations. Take your time, walk in our footprints, and share our story. Familiarise yourself with the richness of our Yarta and appreciate the wildlife, landscape, cultural richness and more. We will do our best to highlight areas of strong cultural importance and we ask that you treat them with the respect and reverence they deserve.

**Park co-managed:** Ikara–Flinders Ranges National Park

**Area:** 91,200 hectares

**Land systems:** One of Australia’s premier national landscapes – rugged mountain ranges, spectacular gorges, sheltered creeks lined with river red gums and abundant wildlife

**Traditional owners:** Adnyamathanha (‘rock’ or ‘hills’) people

**Co-management agreement  
since 2011**

The co-management agreement requires that preference be given to Adnyamathanha people to work on the park. To date, over half of park employees are Adnyamathanha people and further opportunities are being investigated.

Protection of Aboriginal culture is a high priority of the Board. Adnyamathanha people will be the only applicants considered for all base-grade positions across the park.

For the future, the Board will continue to implement the management plan process to set future directions for the park. Within this framework, the Board aims to:

- Establish a traditional use zone for hunting, ceremonies and other traditional uses to advance Adnyamathanha spiritual and cultural relationships with their country
- Progress long-term strategies that will ensure the protection of Sacred Canyon, a significant engraving and painting site
- Build cooperative partnerships with neighbouring landholders to promote conservation initiatives across park boundaries.

# Kanku–Breakaways Conservation Park Co-management Board





***“ We have respect for each other... Co-management is encouraging a better understanding of our people, our culture, our country. ”***

Maureen Williams, Board member

The Kaṅku–Breakaways hold great cultural and spiritual significance to our people, interwoven with its striking natural formations, plants and animals.

Many features form part of our stories that weave across the landscape, extending thousands of kilometres.

Managing the Kaṅku and undertaking traditional practices on country are vital to maintain our strong connection to country.

Our Co-management Board is a partnership between the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal Corporation, the District Council of Coober Pedy and DEW.

***It is vital to maintain our strong connection to country***

We have consulted on a management plan - *“We’re learning as we go...working together to get it right”* (Chevahn Hoad, Co-management Board Executive Officer).

**Park co-managed:** Kaṅku–Breakaways Conservation Park

**Area:** 15,000 hectares

**Land systems:** Striking landscapes close to the Stuart Ranges in the State’s harsh arid north. Dramatic flat-topped hills are remnants of an ancient time when this land was covered by a vast inland sea more than 70,000 years ago

**Traditional owners:** Antakirinja Matuntjara Yankunytjatjara people

**Co-management agreement since 2013**

For the future, we’ll focus on protecting significant areas, upgrading infrastructure and visitor facilities and continuing to build good relations with neighbours and the Coober Pedy community.

We also plan to establish partnerships to support research projects that will enable us to get to know the flora and fauna of the park better.

Our story

# Lake Gairdner National Park Co-management Board





Lake Gairdner National Park Co-management Board and Support Staff. Front row; David Grosse (Executive Officer) Jonathan Clark, Jeanette Pereira-Possamai (Administration Support), Helen (Lyn) Smith, Dawn Taylor. Back row; Peter Copley, Tim Hall (Deputy to Jonathan Clark) Mary-Anne Healy. Board members not pictured; Brandon McNamara and Cheryl Rothwell.

***“ This is our country: we still have our culture, language, traditional laws and intimate knowledge of family kinship and customs. ”***

Elder of the Gawler Ranges People

This country was and continues to be important to the laws, customs and cultural identity of the Gawler Ranges People, recognised as traditional owners and granted native title of this country in 2011.

We see co-management as a new way to work together; a new way to care for country.

We are building relationships amongst our Board members and with wider partners and stakeholders including pastoralists, tourist operators, park visitors, scientists and a range of Commonwealth and state government agencies: partners are the keys to success - we need to listen and learn from each other.

***...a new way to work together; a new way to care for country***

We are connecting with our communities and talking with senior Elders. It is important to find out: What do they want to protect? For the future, our focus is on revising the management plan for the park. We are continuing to undertake on country planning and initiatives that involve getting our people back on country for tasks such as: controlling weeds and feral animals, flora and fauna surveys and mapping cultural heritage sites.

We are working together to improve natural and cultural landscapes for all stakeholders.

**Park co-managed:** Lake Gairdner National Park

**Area:** 550,700 hectares

**Land systems:** Situated north of the Gawler Ranges, the park protects a large saline lake system surrounded by red sand hills. The park includes Australia’s third largest salt lake, Lake Gairdner (plus Lake Everard and Lake Harris), which contains over 200 islands

**Traditional owners:** The traditional owners of the Gawler Ranges are a distinct group of foundation families made up of some, but not all, of the Barngarla, Kokatha and Wirangu people

**Co-management agreement since 2011**

# Mamungari Conservation Park Co-management Board







Board members, with AWNRM Board members and Department for Environment and Water staff, gather for an on country meeting

***“ We are custodians of the oldest country in the world... Government and laws can change, but we, as custodians, have to make sure that it is carried through.”***

Dora Queama, Board member

The Mamungari Co-Management Board is the first Co-management Board in South Australia.

We are made up of people from Maralinga Tjarutja in South Australia and Pila Nguru in Western Australia, as well as representatives of the government. We are proud that Maralinga Tjarutja owns the land. Anangu association with this land stretches back for thousands of generations. Our rights as traditional owners have taken decades to be recognised - co-management is an important part of this recognition and a step towards reconciliation.

***We will ensure our stories continue to be told***

We all work together to look after our land - we have a cultural responsibility to look after visitors to our special country, and need to make sure they respect our sacred sites.

We will continue to look after visitors and the country - keeping weeds, like Buffel Grass, away and looking after our important cultural sites.

**Park co-managed:** Mamungari Conservation Park (once known as the Unnamed Conservation Park)

**Area:** 2,100,000 hectares

**Land systems:** One of the most remote continental conservation areas on the planet, protecting a vast semi-desert dune landscape with stark limestone plains of the Nullarbor Plain, ancient palaeo-channels of the Serpentine Lakes and dune fields across the Great Victoria Desert

**Traditional owners:** Maralinga Tjarutja and Pila Nguru people

**Co-management agreement since 2004**

Also, we will use the park to teach Anangu children how to look after the country and to ensure our connection to this place, our stories, continue to be told into the future.

Our story

# Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park Co-management Board



A MACAI cultural tour sharing the Park's sights and stories with visitors from the Murray Princess paddle steamer.

***“ Ngaut Ngaut is part of my heritage and culture. We have to preserve it for future generations. My life would be empty without my connection to this place. ”***

Isobell Campbell, Board Chair

The Ngaut Ngaut Co-management Board is proud to be able to manage the Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park. The co-management model provides the framework for MACAI (Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Incorporated) and DEW to share responsibility for the park.

Unlike most other co-managed parks in South Australia, co-management of Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park has occurred independently of the native title settlement process. The Nganguraku and Ngaiwang people have an ancient and strong connection and involvement with the land and waters of this area and this continues to this day.

## ***We have been part of this country for eons***

We are actively involved in protecting and managing the natural and cultural values of the park. Experienced guides from the MACAI take tourists and school groups on tours to promote cross-cultural understanding. Visitors learn about Nganguraku and Ngaiwang people and traditions, Dreamings and oral histories, rock art and archaeological excavations, and the park's flora and fauna.

The park protects extensive rock engravings and significant sites that continue to be important to our people today, evidence that Nganguraku and Ngaiwang people have been part of this country for eons.

The Board's vision for the park is to protect environmental and cultural sites and objects of value to Aboriginal people and their culture while playing a role, through tourism and school visits, in raising awareness of Aboriginal culture and heritage and the environment in the wider community.

**Park co-managed:** Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park

**Area:** 49.44 hectares

**Land systems:** steep limestone cliffs and highland plains on the east bank of the River Murray

**Traditional owners:** Nganguraku and Ngaiwang people (members of the Ngarrindjeri), represented by Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Incorporated

## **Co-management agreement since 2005**

As co-managers of Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park, we progressed from an Advisory Committee to become a Co-management Board in 2014, a step towards a shared vision for the land to be handed back to the traditional owners. As co-management partners, we are working on making this happen.

*The Board would like to acknowledge the land on which it meets is the traditional lands for the descendants of the Nganguraku and Ngaiwang (members of the Ngarrindjeri nation) people and that it respects their spiritual relationship with their country. The Board also acknowledges the descendants of the Nganguraku and Ngaiwang people (members of the Ngarrindjeri nation) as the custodians of the Nganguraku region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Nganguraku and Ngaiwang (members of the Ngarrindjeri nation) people today.*

Our story

# Nullarbor Parks Advisory Committee





Participants at the on country planning workshops in mid-August, 2015

*“ We’ve managed to bring the land back from ruin...  
The community is working together to turn things around. ”*

Dorcas Miller, Advisory Committee member

The Nullarbor Parks Advisory Committee is a young committee - we were formed in 2015 and are just getting underway.

We are made up of Mirning people as well as government and community representatives. We look after the Nullarbor and its coastline.

In the first two years, we are developing an important Healthy Country Plan - we will work on a vision of what we see for our country and people in the future. This plan will be important for us to guide how we look after the country into the future and will connect with broader regional plans as well.

## *We look after the Nullarbor and its coastline*

The Nullarbor is a spectacular place, with many important cultural sites such as rock art and painting dating back tens of thousands of years.

Co-management for the Nullarbor was part of a landmark native title decision in 2013 for the Far West Coast people, one of the largest and most complex claims ever in South Australia.

We look forward to building opportunities for Aboriginal people to welcome visitors into the future and to look after country.

**Parks managed:** Nullarbor Wilderness Protection Area and Nullarbor Regional Reserve

**Area:** 900,000 hectares

**Land systems:** Flat, arid, treeless plains dotted with vast underground networks of caves and sinkholes, abutting rugged cliffs of the Great Australian Bight

**Traditional owners:** Mirning People

**Co-management agreement  
since 2013**

# Vulkathunha–Gammon Ranges National Park Co-management Board



***" Our people are happy... it's really good that we can make decisions together. "***

Pauline McKenzie, Board Chairperson

Our country, Adnyamathanha country, is a place of spectacular landscapes and beauty. For us, it has always been our country. We have always lived here.

Our society is complex and mature, with our personal, social and spiritual life integrated with the surrounding environment.

Muda stories and song-lines weave throughout the area and numerous sites of cultural significance are located within the park. Many animals and plants once found in the park (including the Bilby, Rock-wallaby, Stick-nest Rat and Carpet Python), are our Mukunha (a form of totem connected with a piece of land).

## ***We are pleased to have a central role in park management today***

We have always maintained strong links with our country, derived from our Mukunha affiliations, with our Yarta or 'country' and are pleased to have a central role in park management today through co-management.

The management plan includes a cultural use zone at the Plains Block, which allows Adnyamathanha people to hunt and gather using firearms.

We are keen to help others understand and appreciate the natural and cultural values of this land. We've created Uncle Gil's

**Park co-managed:** Vulkathunha–Gammon Ranges National Park

**Area:** 128,228 hectares

**Land systems:** Rugged northern Flinders Ranges with varying terrain of deep gorges, rocky plains, steep mountains and stony riverbeds

**Traditional owners:** Adnyamathanha ('rock' or 'hills') people

**Co-management agreement since 2005**

walk at the Balcanoona Shearers Quarters and held open days at Balcanoona to engage with the Adnyamathanha people and neighbouring landholders.

We are also changing names back to Aboriginal names as they were "...before white explorers named them after themselves" (Arthur Coulthard, Senior Ranger, Adnyamathanha).

For the future, we are focused on creating a cultural walking trail at Weetootla; improving management of campgrounds and day visitor areas; and working with the Bounceback program to control pest species and help bush-tucker species to recover.

Our story

# Witjira National Park Co-management Board





Board members and National Parks staff work together to plan and implement park management activities

***“ There are sometimes differences, but we work through it and work in partnership with National Parks... There’s a trust and respect going on here. ”***

Marilyn Ah Chee, Board Deputy Chair

We have been co-operatively managing Witjira for decades, responsible for jointly managing the park since 1995 and later becoming a Co-management Board in 2007. We have strong links to this land, reflected through Altyerre/Tjukurpa and the many Dreaming stories that weave throughout the park.

One of our biggest achievements is working together. We respect each other’s expertise and strengths, as well as having respect and trust in a working relationship for the benefit of all.

## ***We respect each other’s expertise and strengths***

We developed a new management plan and interpretation plan for the park, with four main themes to guide future management for Witjira:

- *Indigenous people’s aims* – encourage the expression of social, cultural and economic aims by indigenous people
- *Natural systems* – look after the land, water, native plants and animals
- *Important places* – look after sites with cultural, historic, scientific, natural or scenic value
- *Tourism and recreation* – encourage community enjoyment and use.

We work with partners to achieve conservation and cultural objectives including controlling Date Palms that invade wetland habitats, reducing feral animal populations that damage our land (such as camels and donkeys), and improving visitor facilities.

**Park co-managed:** Witjira National Park

**Area:** 768,853 hectares

**Land systems:** One of the most arid regions in Australia, with extremely low and unpredictable rainfall, it contains desert landscapes and systems including Dalhousie Mound Springs, Simpson Desert sandy plains and dune fields, gibber tablelands and plains, and the Finke River braided channel and floodplains

**Traditional owners:** Lower Southern Arrernte and Wangkangurru people through the Irrwanyere Aboriginal Corporation

## **Co-management agreement since 2007**

For the future, our focus is on increasing ranger presence on the park, offering employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal people on country, finalising the cultural heritage plan to improve site protection; and developing a fire management plan.

*“Witjira is very significant culturally and environmentally. Co-management brings the different knowledge, skills and perspectives of traditional owners and DEW’s representatives to the table so we collaboratively make decisions for the park” (Tony Magor, Board member and SA Arid Lands Region’s Manager Public Lands and Co-management).*

# Yandruwandha Yawarrawarrka Parks Advisory Committee





Members of the Advisory Committee

***“ It’s all about relationships. We can’t do anything positive in co-management without moving along together, hand-in-hand. ”***

Rob Singleton, Advisory Committee Chairperson

For traditional owners, co-management has enabled us to have a say over what is happening on our lands. It is a partnership between the traditional owners and Government that is based on shared knowledge, trust and goodwill.

Our people lived and thrived around Malkumba–Coongie Lakes for many generations before European explorers and pastoralists arrived in the 1800s. Despite loss of country, our culture was not lost; we kept our language and stories, and handed them on.

***...a partnership based on shared knowledge, trust and goodwill***

We are keen to protect the land and share our stories and culture with neighbouring communities and visitors. The Malkumba–Coongie Lakes National Park Management Plan (2014) identifies three zones within the park – Heritage and Conservation Zone; Living and Camping Zone; and Fishing Zone – to allow our community members to carry out traditional activities today. We have also improved interpretative signs and are finalising a cultural heritage plan.

**Park co-managed:** Malkumba–Coongie Lakes National Park, Innamincka Regional Reserve and a portion of Strzelecki Regional Reserve

**Area:** 1.41 million hectares (excluding Strzelecki)

**Land systems:** Extensive arid zone system of wetlands and near permanent freshwater lakes, important refuges for biological diversity particularly migratory birds

**Traditional owners:** Yandruwandha Yawarrawarrka people

**Co-management agreement since 2010**

For the future, our focus is on getting our people back on country. Currently, our members are dispersed all over Australia, making it difficult to get people together. We encourage young people to go out with teams to work on country, learning about their land and heritage. Finding training and employment opportunities for our people, including as rangers and for conservation and management works, will also help.

We are also working to build stronger relationships with the Innamincka township community and neighbouring land owners.

# Yumbarra Conservation Park Co-management Board





Participants at the on country planning workshops in mid-August, 2015

***“ It’s really pleasing that we’ve come this far...  
Do you know how good it feels to get that recognition? ”***

Leonard Miller Snr, Board Deputy Chair

Yumbarra Co-Management Board is proud to be able to manage Yumbarra Conservation Park as well as advise the Minister on many other parks located within our native title area.

After many years discussing our native title claim, co-management is a great way that we can make decisions on how Yumbarra is managed and what the future holds. Co-management is a way to connect people to their land in a way that benefits them...culture becomes strong again.

## ***We want to safely share some of our stories***

Many important cultural sites, plants and animals occur across this Mallee region, spreading from the coast close to Ceduna up to the Yellabinna region.

We welcome visitors to our country and want to safely share some of our stories from the region. We want visitors to be safe and to respect our connection to our country.

For the future, we are working on a Healthy Country Planning process to plan how we manage for our country. Also, we want to work with our partners to manage the region, as well as supporting our families to connect with their country.

*“[This is] The last inland area where I can teach our children – this is our school. The land – houses. Our bush medicine – our pharmacy. Hunting for our meat, gathering our food – our grocery stores – our garden. Our spiritual beliefs are within and throughout the land – this is our church”*  
(Sue Coleman Haseldine).

*“We’ll keep doing what we’ve always done... going out on land, looking after sites, taking young people out on country... so they can look after country, themselves and each other”*  
(Leonard Miller Snr).

**Parks co-managed:** Yumbarra Conservation Park (plus an advisory role over Yellabinna Regional Reserve; Yellabinna Wilderness Protection Area; Boondina, Wittelbee, Wahgunyah, Point Bell, Laura Bay, Fowlers Bay, and Chadinga conservation parks; as well as part of Pureba Conservation Park)

**Area:** 324,352 hectares, plus an advisory role over more than three million hectares

**Land systems:** Vast, largely undisturbed landscapes extending north-west into the Great Victoria Desert, with extensive areas of largely intact mallee woodland comprising seven key habitat types

**Traditional owners:** Kokatha, Mirning, Wirangu, Maralinga Tjarutja, Yalata people and Roberts family, known together as the Far West Coast people

## **Co-management agreement since 2013**



Sue Coleman Haseldine, Kokatha woman and Board member

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- Lake Gairdner National Park Co-management Board (Gawler Ranges Aboriginal Corporation)
- Mamungari Conservation Park Co-management Board (Maralinga Tjarutja and Pila Nguru)
- Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park Co-management Board (Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Incorporated)
- Nullarbor Parks Advisory Committee (Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation)
- Vulkathunha–Gammon Ranges National Park Co-management Board (Adnyamathanha Traditional Lands Association)
- Witjira National Park Co-management Board (Irrwanyere Aboriginal Corporation)
- Yandruwandha Yawarrawarka Parks Advisory Committee (Yandruwandha Yawarrawarka Traditional Land Owners Aboriginal Corporation)
- Yumberra Conservation Park Co-management Board (Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation).

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Many quotes presented in this document are by participants at the inaugural South Australian Co-management Workshop, November 2014, Adelaide.



### **For further information please contact:**

Department for Environment and Water phone information line (08) 8204 1910, or see SA White Pages for your local Department for Environment and Water office.

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