

# Palya!

**STRONG PEOPLE HEALTHY COUNTRY and WATER**

*Anangu Kunpu, Ngura Kunpu munu Kapi*

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Government of South Australia  
Department for Environment  
and Water

**LANDSCAPE**  
**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**  
ALINYTJARA WILURARA



It's been an amazing time for me since W Board in October and the board has grown from strength to strength. The team kick some hard and a field of setbacks... in one way or another

Having said that, I have made the very difficult decision to accept a role in Queensland. The role will extend my ability to support the work I am passionate about but perhaps more importantly allow me to see my children and grandchildren on a regular basis.

They are however an incredibly resilient bunch and I'm confident the important work they do to support the health of

I'm also very grateful to the many people I've met from across the AW region who have shared their knowledge and extended their friendship to me over the past 14 months. What I learned has both reinforced and expanded my understanding, not only of the challenges faced by Aboriginal people, but also of their deep commitment to culture and unrivalled ability to care for their Country.

As General Manager I leave behind a great team and many happy memories and wish them, the board and their partners and many stakeholders all the best for the future.

There are many irons in the fire and I know that together you will forge a strong, healthier future for the Country and people of the remarkable Alinytjara Wilurara region.

Palya!

O'Leary

Damian Miley  
General Manager  
Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board

## INVITATION



The Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board invite you to visit our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and our website to learn more.  
[landscape.sa.gov.au/aw/home](http://landscape.sa.gov.au/aw/home)



**As AW is always keen to do better so...**



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If you have any suggestions or would like to contribute to this publication please email us at: [aw.landscapeboard@sa.gov.au](mailto:aw.landscapeboard@sa.gov.au)



## Where we are and what we do

The region spans over a quarter of a million square kilometres, and has a population of approximately 3000 people, many of whom identify with the Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, Ngaanyatjarra, Kokatha, Mirning or Wirangu peoples.

As the only all-Aboriginal board in Australia responsible for managing a Natural Resource Management region, the AW Landscape Board's aim is the protection of the land for the mutual benefit of the country and its people.





APY Lands' Land Management searching for waru (even in their tea break)

## 02 AW Board on the run



Board visits the Far West coastal region of AW

## 04 Adaptive management



WA Conference presents future opportunities

## 05 Oak Valley Rangers' camel survey

Finding new ways to manage camel impacts



## 06 Friends of the Great Victoria Desert



FoGVD's annual flora surveys provide valuable insights

## 07 AW Board's 2021- 26 Landscape Plan

AW Landscape Board's 5-year plan based on Community plans



## 08 Ferals, flowers and fowls



Working with the Far West Coast Rangers

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Building a Buffel grass eradication strategy

## 12 Another day in the office...



AW trainee becomes vital team member with a bright future

## 13 AMYAC supports new Plan

Development of a Healthy Country Plan given the nod



## 14 New funding for pest control

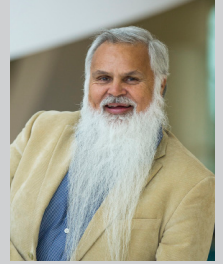
Pest management key to healthy Country in APY Lands

## 15 Quick Snips

## 16 AW's hellos and goodbyes

## From the Chair

Welcome to the 2021 Summer edition of Palya.



As Australia places a tentative foot forward into the new year hoping that the worst of COVID is behind us, we must remain vigilant in our efforts to protect Aboriginal people living in remote communities across the AW region.

The board has worked closely over the past few months with communities and partners, including Nature Foundation SA, the APY Lands, Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation, and Yalata and Maralinga Tjarutja Communities to develop or revisit formal agreements that give clarity and commitment to our work together.

Understanding the aims and aspirations of the people who live in our region's communities is fundamental to the success of our operations.

On behalf of the AW Landscape Board I would like to sincerely thank our departing General Manager Damian Miley for his outstanding leadership and commitment to ensuring the team and the board operated at the highest standard. We wish him well in all his future endeavours.

I would also like to congratulate board members Mick Haynes (as an AW board representative) on becoming Deputy Chair of the 10 Desert Project Steering Committee and Julie O'Toole on her appointment as Chair of the Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park Co-management Board. Debbie Hansen and Mick have also recently been invited to become directors with the Indigenous Desert Alliance.

Our board has many plans for 2022, some building on previous projects and some resulting from new, recently acquired funding. Through consultation with, and guidance from the region's Traditional Owners our aim remains to deliver long lasting, high-impact projects through strong partnerships.

Parry Agius  
Presiding Member  
Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board



New weather stations in the region provide vital information to remote Communities

# Board on the run...



The Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board took a different tack to their usual Board meeting venues in September 2021 holding an on-Country trip followed by a meeting in Ceduna on the Far West Coast of South Australia.

Board members represent many communities spread over a quarter of a million square kilometres of sparsely populated arid lands. Two days spent together travelling along AW's coastal strip provided members with the opportunity to build relationships and develop understanding of each other's Country through informal discussion.

AW's General Manager, Operations Manager, Project Officer, Data and Information Management Coordinator, Communications Coordinator and

L-R Adam Wood, Angela Whiting, Olly Lipcer, Damian Miley, Peter Miller, Parry Agius, Julie O'Toole, Helen Donald, Sally Scales and Debbie Hansen

Board Executive Officer, supported the Board members Parry Agius (Chair), Peter Miller, Debbie Hansen, Julie O'Toole and Sally Scales during their visit to Yalata Community and the Head of Bight.

With the weather becoming increasingly windy, the barbecue lunch planned to be held on the Nullarbor cliffs was reconsidered and instead set up to share with community inside the Yalata Community workshop. AW's General Manager Damian Miley and board Chair Parry Agius took the opportunity to talk with the Chair of the Yalata Council Dwayne Edwards and the Community's CEO David White who showed them some of the projects being undertaken within the Community.

The group of women from Yalata gathered out of the wind at the local school to talk with the Board members. Back left to right: Rita Bryant, Adrienne Peters, Irene Peters, Theresa Peters, Jocelyn Queama, Julie O'Toole, Margaret May, Debbie Hansen, Sally Scales (standing). Front: Joy West, Janet May and Dora Queama



## The "look" of the day - stylish windswept hairdos from the Head of Bight



Operations Manager, Ollanta Lipcer



AW Landscape Board Chair, Parry Agius



Board member Debbie Hansen

An impromptu meeting with the women from Yalata also provided an opportunity, gladly taken by the female board members and staff, to hear their views on how we can work together.

Next stop was the Head of Bight. Unfortunately it was too late in the season to see the Southern Right Whales that spend several months



in and around the waters below the viewing platform during their breeding season. None-the-less the day was made memorable by the incredible wind with gusts of up to 120 km an hour.

The following day the board members and staff travelled to Googs Lake (in Yumbarra Conservation Park). They were joined by National Parks' Mark Anderson, National Parks Ranger Tamahina (Tammy) Cox, AW's Ecologist Brett Backhouse and AW's Ceduna-based Project Officer Alex Fraser. Ex-board member Mima Smart and Yalata Community member Sharon Bryant also joined the expedition. Unfortunately the Chair of the Yumbarra Co-management Board Wanda Miller was unable to make the trip on the day as planned.

The group stopped at the impressive new information bay erected at the entrance road to Googs Lake. Tammy, explained how and why it was created at the instigation of the Yumbarra Co-management Board. The ironwork design of the sign reflects the cultural importance of the land and, as it was only recently erected will later provide information about the various species that live in the area. Travelling over the heavily



Above: Tea break along Googs track (L-R) Damian Miley, Mark Anderson, Peter Miller, Adam Wood, Alex Fraser and Brett Backhouse

corrugated road the group stopped briefly to see the "money tree" at the Googs memorial.

After stopping for a "cuppa" along the way, AW's Data and Information Management Coordinator Adam Wood provided maps showing track rationalisation work undertaken in the area. Through the combined efforts of AW staff, West Mallee Protection group and local volunteers some years earlier vegetation regeneration was now clearly evident.

Below: Board member Peter Miller took time out to reflect and enjoy being back on Country

After a busy few days on-country the Board members third day back inside a "not so windy" meeting room in Ceduna was for more formal board business.

Key discussion topics included the Board's Succession Plan, the AW Prospectus and COVID vaccination protocols in Aboriginal Communities.

At the December board meeting in Adelaide it was clear that the many topics informally discussed during the on-country trip supported greater collaboration in decision making.



Top left: Mima and Sharon replace fallen coins from the money tree; travellers put them there for whomever may need it  
Left: Adam Wood points out where track rationalisation had been undertaken in the Googs Lake area

## AW presents at the 2021 National Malleefowl and WA Threatened Species Forum

# Adaptive Management in the Great Victoria Desert

Alinytjara Wilurara's Ecologist Brett Backhouse attended the 2021 National Malleefowl and WA Threatened Species Conference in September where he presented on the work undertaken in the AW region to ecologists and environmentalists from around the country.

Hosted by WA's Northern Agricultural Catchments Council NRM team, guests from all over Australia gathered to share and learn from each other about the important work being done to help protect and grow populations of threatened species.

With COVID impacting on the number able to attend in person the conference was well equipped to include numerous participants online.

Around 100 conservation professionals, hobbyists, students and scientists attended the conference held at the new Batavia

Coast Conference Centre in the Gerald Apartment Hotel.

During the week, presenters spoke about projects trailed, challenges, and solutions in their respective regions which provided a space for collaboration and sharing of ideas.

Open discussions on current projects, data findings, challenges and progress to date centred around development of national, state, and regional threatened species strategies.

### Capturing audience attention

Following the Threatened Species Commissioner's speech, Brett spoke briefly about the Alinytjara Wilurara (AW) region to give context to his presentation.

He then spoke about the importance of working in partnership with the Maralinga Tjarutja and Far West Coast Rangers (who were unable to attend the conference) in the planning and implementation of the National

Malleefowl Experiment. He described AW's work with various threatened species including waru in the APY Lands and sandhill dunnarts in the southern AW region before focussing on malleefowl.

Brett showed examples of unusual nest building behaviours including one constructed across Googs Track (with traffic significantly reduced as a result of COVID); and another nest constructed on the edge of a railway track that incorporated various foraged man-made materials.

He also described AW's use of LiDAR (laser imaging, detection, and ranging) equipment to locate Malleefowl mounds (nests). Given the vastness of the region it provides the means to locate mounds even through foliage which would be difficult to see through using a drone.

Discussion on AW's adaptive management approach prompted considerable discussion. This included cat and fox management and the use



Above: Malleefowl expert Joe Benshemesh working with Ranger Philip Watson from Oak Valley

Left: A well constructed active malleefowl nest found in Yellabinna Conservations park



Camels browsing impacts on threatened plant species

of Felixers, the significant impact of Buffel grass and the monitoring and management of camel browsing on sandalwood and quandong trees.

"With many threatened species issues common to both SA and WA I can clearly see the potential benefits in working in closer collaboration with our friends from across the border. Conferences like this provide unique opportunities to network and drive national best practise approaches" said Brett.

Brett was also on a panel that discussed working in partnership with communities on threatened species projects.

This project was supported by NACC NRM, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

AW's Ecologist Brett Backhouse presenting at the National Malleefowl and WA Threatened Species Forum



# Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Plan

## ... a clear path to healthy Country and people



**In September 2021, AW Landscape Board announced the release of the Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Plan 2021-26. The plan was developed to closely align with the key priorities and land management objectives stated in the Healthy Country Plans developed by communities across the region.**

This plan builds on the Alinytjara Wilurara Regional NRM Plan 2011 – AW's foundational ten-year regional plan created through extensive consultation with the region's Traditional Owners and regional ecologists across all stages of its development.

Over the past ten years, AW has supported the region's landholders and communities to develop their Healthy Country Plans and/or \*Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) land management plans. The targets identified in these plans have been aligned with AW's Landscape Plan using the Healthy Country Planning (HCP) approach.

HCP is an adaption of the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation first developed in Australia with Aboriginal people and increasingly being used by Indigenous communities worldwide.

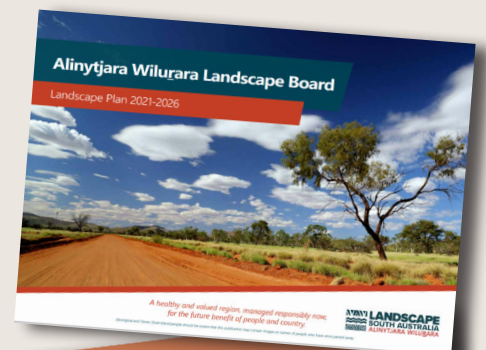
Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation, is a methodology utilised by local governments and NGOs around the world to collaboratively and systematically conserve the environment and allow for adaptive management.

This plan encourages multiple sources and partnerships to invest and engage in caring for country activities that support knowledge sharing and capacity building for Aboriginal communities across the region.

"Our (SA Government's) historic Landscape SA reform is putting communities back at the heart of natural resources management and these Landscape Plans are a key part of this," said Minister for Environment and Water David Speirs.

Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Plan 2021-26 is available on the Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board's website: [www.landscape.sa.gov.au/aw](http://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/aw)

\*An Indigenous Protected Area is an area of Indigenous-owned land or sea where Traditional Owners have entered into an agreement with the Australian Government to promote biodiversity and cultural resource conservation.





## Much Valued Friends

### Friends of the Great Victoria Desert

The Friends of the Great Victoria Desert (FoGVD) team very much enjoyed meeting with the people of Oak Valley Community and further building their relationship as part of their 2021 annual vegetation survey.

The “Friends” have been making field trips to the Maralinga Tjarutja Lands since 1994. In 2007, they started recording desert vegetation at photopoints previously established by the Biological Survey of South Australia.

Four specific transects were designated and photopoints established within them to allow FoGVD observers to visit and record photopoint data every four years. These areas include:

- Googs Track
- Emu – Tallaringa
- Cook - Oak Valley (Maralinga)
- Voakes Hill – Serpentine Lakes

More locations were added over the years. They now monitor 196 photopoints. By 2021, the Friends had added 1412 photos to the 126 previously taken in these areas by the Biological Survey of SA.

In August 2021 the Friends drove from Ceduna to Oak Valley where they met with the Oak Valley Rangers and talked about working together in the future.

“Ensuring that all our work is planned with and approved by the Traditional Owners of the area (the Maralinga Tjarutja people) is a high priority. The opportunity to build relationships with the local community at Oak Valley was definitely one of the highlights of our trip. We want to thank Sam and Shane Doudle (OV Ranger Coordinators), and Jeremy LeBois, the Chair of the Maralinga Tjarutja Trust. We are especially grateful to the Oak Valley Rangers for their support” said Trip Leader Peter Facey.

“Three days into the trip Sam drove 52 kms to our camp to lend us a satellite phone which allowed us to keep in contact as Oak Valley had been closed during a COVID scare at Ceduna and Nundroo – where we had refuelled. While this was done primarily to safeguard the Oak Valley Community, we were none-the-less impressed with

Above: FoGVD met with the Oak Valley Rangers at the local art gallery

this effort to help us” said Peter.

On this trip, Peter, Ian Jackson and Peter Wilson carried out the surface photography of existing vegetation sites while Phil Prust, and Brian and Gill McKay used a drone to photograph selected vegetation sites. Bill Dowling “floated” between the two groups giving support as needed.

Of the 77 vegetation sites scheduled to be visited the group were only able to photograph 68. Three sites on the NE road from Irish Well and three on the Dey Dey Road north of Oak Valley are no longer able to be reached as the road is almost totally overgrown.

They also weren’t able to reach three sites south of Immarna siding, east of Ooldea as the railways now prohibit use of their maintenance roads.

The FoGVD’s drone team covered 37 sites. Of those not photographed some

Photopoint in Mamungari Conservation Park showing changes in vegetation over 10 years





Above: The team mapped and recorded the photopoint sites noting the effects of fire, regrowth, species loss and climate impacts

were protected sites which henceforth are off limits with others not recorded due to wind conditions and time constraints.

Some of the observations included:

- South of Oak Valley, during the five years from 2011 to 2016, most of the grass had disappeared and the mulga trees were sparser but by 2021 the grass appeared to be returning following rain earlier in the year.
- In Mamungari Conservation Park dramatic changes in the ground cover were recorded (left) from 2011 to 2016. The little grey shrub (*Ptilotus obovatus*) growing amongst the grasses in 2011 had disappeared by 2016, and not re-appeared by 2021.
- In 2016, the Voakes Hill Corner photopoint showed grey and dying spinifex. Five years later it had been replaced by other grasses with evidence that fire had killed off the Spinifex.
- Photopoints near Mamungari Conservation Park in 2014 and 2016 clearly showed a fire had temporarily wiped out the Spinifex and was replaced by tufty grasses. By 2021 the Spinifex appeared to be re-emerging.

The Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board are proud to support the important work undertaken by the FoGVD with funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program (NLP2).

The full set of photopoint images is available to researchers.

Email: [secretary@fgvd.org.au](mailto:secretary@fgvd.org.au)

## Oak Valley Rangers Monitoring camel browse impacts



**In early October 2021, Oak Valley Rangers travelled to the southern Maralinga Tjarutja Lands to observe and record the extent of damage caused by camels on local vegetation.**

Oak Valley Rangers: Lance Ingomar, Glenda Hansen, Phillip Watson, Cindy Watson, Ethan Ingomar, Madeline, Clemesha and Samuel were joined by ecologist Phil Landless.

After preparing the vehicles, survey and communications equipment and camping gear they drove three hours south of the Community to set up and begin work.

Monitoring the impact of camel browse in this area is a long-term study with five sites visited annually to observe changes over time at the same locations.

Details such as the tree's height, width, damage (branches broken etc) and general condition were recorded using Fulcrum.

Fulcrum is a data collection platform that Oak Valley have customised to use for field data collection on iPhone, iPad and/or Android devices.

The rangers observed and recorded details of vegetation in each transect but found little evidence of recent camel browsing in most of them. This may be attributed to the successful and closely managed cull undertaken

earlier in the year. The rangers also actively seek other ways to stop camels from destroying important plants on their Country

The *Wayanu* (Quandong) Protection Experiment involves trying different ways to scare camels away from some already targeted important trees. When the most effective method becomes apparent the rangers will use it to protect the important Wayanu trees so they can stay healthy.

The Oak Valley Ranger team have already taken, and continues to take great steps forward in caring for their Country. Visit the Oak Valley Ranger's Facebook page to find out more: [www.facebook.com/ovrangers/](https://www.facebook.com/ovrangers/)

Rangers Leon Brown and Sylvia Boogar trialling the use of CDs dangling in the trees to scare camels away



# Ferals, flowers and fowls

## All in a day's work



Although actual sightings of small feral animals are rare in the vast AW region, collecting data about their presence, movements, habits and populations is made possible through the deployment of in-situ, on-country technical equipment.

The data recorded in designated remote locations provides important insight for the AW Operations' team to effectively plan and manage feral animal projects.

In mid November 2021 AW's Ecologist Brett Backhouse and Project Officers Alex Fraser and Paul Gregory travelled with Far West Coast Ranger Isac Willis to Immarna (over 1200 km from Adelaide) to retrieve equipment that had been recording feral animals and other species in the area for many months.

It was the first time the team had been able to access these sites since early November 2020 after the Australian

Rail Track Corporation introduced new safety procedures that caused delays in checking the equipment on-Country.

The team's work for the week focused on surveying for any new Buffel grass infestations, locating Felixers at Immarna, checking the status of the Ooldea Guinea flower plots and recording observations of the multiple malleefowl mounds as part of the Australian Government's National Landcare Project.

The Immarna Felixers were all located. This was the longest that any have gone unchecked by quite a number of months, so the team were keen to find out how well they had operated.

Of the four, two were still active, taking photos and capturing data that can be used as baseline for the site. Of the other two, one was hibernating and had been since about June, the other had a camera fault, which occurred in March. Unfortunately for the team, the

Felixer with the faulty camera was the one that required an 800m walk over the red sand dunes — not exactly the highlight of the trip.

The one that was hibernating was also collected so it could be checked over and repaired before being redeployed.

The remaining two were baited and will be checked again early in 2022.

Interestingly of the 27 'target' photos recorded since last November, all were foxes. Only one cat was recorded (non-targeted). There were also a few dingoes. Felixers do not 'target' dingoes, they help keep feral animals in check.

On inspecting the Guinea flower plots it appeared that the plants had reduced in numbers slightly from 2019 potentially as a result of die back from the dry summer of 2020.

On checking the malleefowl mounds the team found that the mound at Immarna and the one between Immarna and Barton were active. They visited nine known mounds at the Mungala site. Two were clearly active, one a massive flat pancake-looking mound, and the other a very large heaped-up dome. One was difficult to classify as it had diggings and malleefowl tracks on it but with some signs of predation. A few large fragments of egg shell were located just outside the mound but whether it was a fertile egg or not could not be determined.

With day one of their retrieval efforts being hot and humid, then rain setting in from midday the following day until their return the day after, the team put in a stoic effort to achieve their goals.

Well done team and thanks to Olly (Operations Manager Ollanta Lipcer) for managing to get the team certified in rail corridor safety in time for the trip.

Below: Images recorded by the Felixer identifies the feral animal and the location

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Photo



Above: Stopping to change the tyre pressure after driving on muddy roads



Active malleefowl mound recorded at Mungala site



# Warru: Repopulating the north-west APY Lands

In November 2021 fourteen warru (black-flanked rock wallabies) were trans-located to boost numbers and breeding capacity of the declining western population near Kalka in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands.

Increasing the population of this once critically endangered species has been the focus of over a decade of recovery work.

The removal of 14 warru for translocation to the western APY Lands will have little long-term impact on the swelling populations inside the APY Lands' pintji (fenced enclosure) and around the New Well site.

APY Land Management were supported by members of the Warru Recovery Team, including AW Ecologist Brett Backhouse, ZoosSA Heidi Baker and Ecological Horizons Dr John Read.

The group ascended the pintji hill at around 6:30 am, to check traps along three separate lines.

With such a large team, the traps were quickly cleared and the animals processed efficiently. The 14 animals suitable for translocation were then placed into pet packs and into the waiting Toyotas ready to be driven 300 km to the far west APY Lands.

The drive usually takes about 4 hours however due to heavy rain, large puddles and some flowing creeks made travel more difficult along much of the road and it ended up taking over 6 hours to arrive.

The animals however were comfortable inside the convoy of Toyotas that went directly to the release sites to minimise the impacts on the warru of being confined.

Once at their release site, all the animals were left in their capture bags with the drawstrings untied. The bags were placed in a cool dark caves that had been pre-selected by the Warru Rangers.

This allowed the warru to slowly emerge from the bag during the night reducing stress and encouraging them to stay in the area most suitable for them.

Despite weather factors slowing the initial process, translocation of the warru to the Tomkinson and Hinkely Rangers was a great success. Four were released within the Hinkelys, and ten in either Maku Valley, or Muttata Scree.

These supplementary warru will integrate into the current western population providing new genetics and increasing the number of breeding animals in the area.

The AW Landscape Board supports this work with funds from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

APY Land Management supported by Warru Recovery Team members prepare pet packs for transport



APY Land Management: thumbs up for warru!

APY Lands' Land Management searching for warru (in their tea break?)



# New weather stations

Adam Wood

## provide critical information for remote communities

**The installation of new weather stations across the AW region will provide vital information for local communities and important information for the ongoing recognition and management of climate change.**

The new weather stations installed across the Maralinga Tjarutja Lands and APY Lands fill in what were significant gaps in weather information in the AW Landscape region.

These complement existing stations at Pukatja (APY), Nullarbor Roadhouse, Tarcoola and ARTC stations along the railway corridor at Cook and Barton.

In joint partnership with APY Land Management, a total of five new stations have been rolled out across APY. The site deployments were completed by APY Land Management and Rangers in remote locations at Watarru, Kalka, Murputja, Sandy Bore and the Warru Pintji.

Two more were installed in Maralinga Tjarutja with Oak Valley Rangers setting one up next to the Oak Valley school and another at Rodinia Airfield near Mamungari Conservation Park. There are plans to install two more near the Anne Beadell Highway in the future.

Access to the up-to-date local weather information recorded by each weather station is readily available on-line

This allows rangers to most effectively and safely plan and undertake operational work such as threatened species (fauna and flora) monitoring, Buffel grass (and other weeds) control and fire management. For example, delaying trips if high rainfall is pending, checking for Buffel grass germination

when rain has fallen or if the local community is about to be affected by any extreme weather events.

The information parameters include air temperature, wind direction, wind speed, daily rainfall, relative humidity, fire danger index and delta T (evaporation rate). The frequent hourly updates on the website could also provide assistance to emergency bush fire responses.

Below: Warru Rangers Keith Turner-Hill, Sherada Stanley and Ronnie Wells at the APY Lands' Pintji

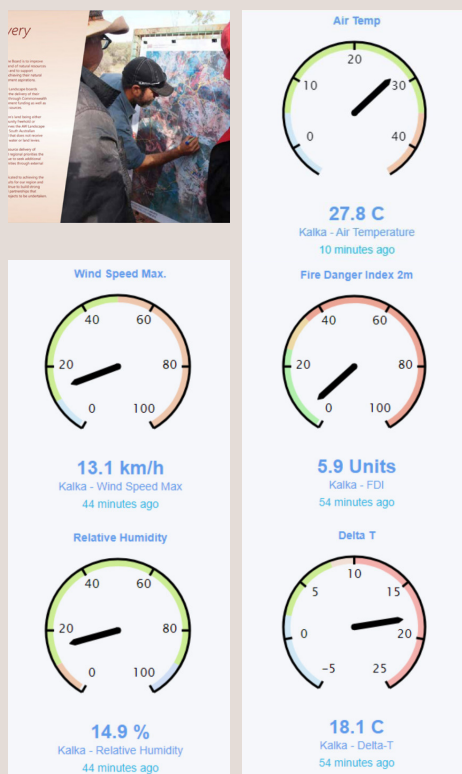
Top Right: Shane Doudle (left) with Lance Ingomar Cindy Watson, Parka Hogan and other Oak Valley Rangers setting up at Rodinia Airfield



Below: Bronson Bennett, Colius Young and Matthew Miller setting up at Watarru (photo by Lisa Phillips)



## Dashboard information for Kalka



Above: Example of the easily accessible information recorded through the weather stations: Kalka

Special thanks to Leighton Wilksch from Agbyte for supplying and delivering the units to Umuwa and Ceduna respectively and for providing clear instructions on how to set it up.

Thank you to the APY and Oak Valley Rangers for setting the stations up on the various sites.

To check out up-to-date weather in the region go to:  
[http://toip-server.net.au:8080/custdata/agbyte/apy-aw/agb\\_index.html](http://toip-server.net.au:8080/custdata/agbyte/apy-aw/agb_index.html)

Below: Young Oak Valley Ranger helps with setting up at Rodinia Airfield



# Experience directs planning

## Building a Buffel grass eradication strategy

A full-day workshop held in Streaky Bay in mid-November 2021 saw significant progress made on the development of a three-year, action-focused project plan designed to contain and manage Buffel grass. The aim of the plan is eradication of this highly invasive species from the central and eastern Great Victoria Desert by 2025.

Facilitated by AW staff and attended in person and via video conference by partners, Community Rangers groups from APY Lands, Oak Valley and Tjutjutjara, PIRSA, and the Buffel Grass Taskforce, the group established realistic objectives and parameters along with the methodologies and resources required to achieve them.

Buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) is a transformer weed of the Australian Rangelands. It has the potential to dominate the ground layer of vegetation, and burn hotter and more quickly than the native grasses it replaces. It presents a significant threat to arid ecosystem and damaging to important cultural sites.

Under the Landscape South Australia Act 2019, Buffel grass is recognised as a declared weed.

This project is planned to be delivered through access to the AW Landscape Board's retained earnings funds.

It was decided that a working group (based on workshop attendees) will be established to monitor the project bi-annually. The Project Manager will also provide findings to the SA Buffel Grass Taskforce.

The project will be designed and delivered in partnership with rangers and land holding authorities and is aligned with the goals stated in the Healthy Country Plans of Spinifex/Pilki, Maralinga Tjarutja, Far West Coast, Southern APY and Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara Lands.

Further updates will be made available on the AW Landscape Board's website.

The workshop was attended by:

Mark Anderson (Buffel Grass Taskforce, NP&WS), Sam Doudle and Shane Doudle (Oak Valley Ranger Coordinators), Damian Miley (GM Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board), Adam Wood (AWLB), Ollanta Lipcer (AWLB), Robbie Sleep (NP&WS) David Cooke (PIRSA & Buffel Grass Taskforce), Greg Patrick (SA Arid Lands Landscape Board), Tatia Currie (AWLB), Will Powrie (Spinifex Ranger Coordinator) Ethan Hansen, Scott Baird, Ainsley Mungee, Mr Brooks (Spinifex Rangers), Charlie Lange (APY Land Management Ranger Coordinator) and Neil Collins (APY Land Management), supported by AW's Sue Agars and Helen Donald.

L-R: **No time for lunch!** Shane Doudle, Sue Agars, Mark Anderson, Sam Doudle (seated) Helen Donald and Damian Miley crack on through to get the job done! (photo by Adam Wood)





# Just another day in the Office...

leading to a bright future for Amanda



**The Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board is much impressed by Project Officer Amanda Bowne. Over the past 30 months she progressed through her 12 month Aboriginal Business Administration (ABA) Traineeship and is now an indispensable member of the AW team.**

Amanda won an ABA Traineeship role and joined the Alinytjara Wilurara team in July 2019. She excelled over the period of her traineeship and in November 2020 was offered an on-going position with AW as a Project Officer.

During this time Amanda made several trips on Country with AW's Operations team gaining skills and experience in field work, survey techniques and working with Aboriginal rangers.

After joining AW's Shorebirds survey team along Yalata IPA, then participating in the warru pintji trapping survey in the APY Lands, she was skilled up and ready to support the Googs Track sandhill dunnart survey team and later a Grevillea survey at Mt Finke.

"I really enjoyed getting out on Country and learnt a lot doing field work. I feel immensely privileged to have had the opportunity to work with Aboriginal rangers from across the region. I also gained insight into the planning stage of surveys while helping the Operations Manager to review previous work undertaken around the southern AW region, particularly AW's work along the Yalata coastline" said Amanda.

Under the guidance of AW's Business Manager, Business Services Coordinator and Communications Coordinator, Amanda gained many valuable skills as part of her traineeship.

Such skills and knowledge are highly transferable across government and include competent navigation of whole-of-government payment and financial systems, clear understanding of governance and the development and application of policy and procedures. She also expanded her professional verbal and written communication skills – a great asset for any and all future endeavours.

Encouraged by AW's Business Manager, and her direct Supervisor, Business Services Coordinator Dalin Song, Amanda

recently undertook the Aboriginal Frontline Leadership Program run by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment as a next-step for Aboriginal employees in SA Government.

"The Aboriginal Frontline Leadership Program shone a light on ways to become an effective leader, through workshops, online modules and other opportunities to develop leadership skills. Having the opportunity to have in-depth discussions with Aboriginal leaders from across government about the issues and adversity that they are sometimes faced with, and exploring strategies of how to work through them as a leader was invaluable" said Amanda.

Amanda with Far West Coast Rangers and AW Project Officer Alex Fraser for the Mount Finke survey



Being a highly motivated individual Amanda also commenced a Bachelor in Environmental Engineering at Flinders University in 2021.

“Combining science and technology and transforming it into tangible solutions that will protect and improve the quality of our environment is extremely satisfying for me as well as using environmental engineering law and assessing the environmental impact of proposed projects” she said.

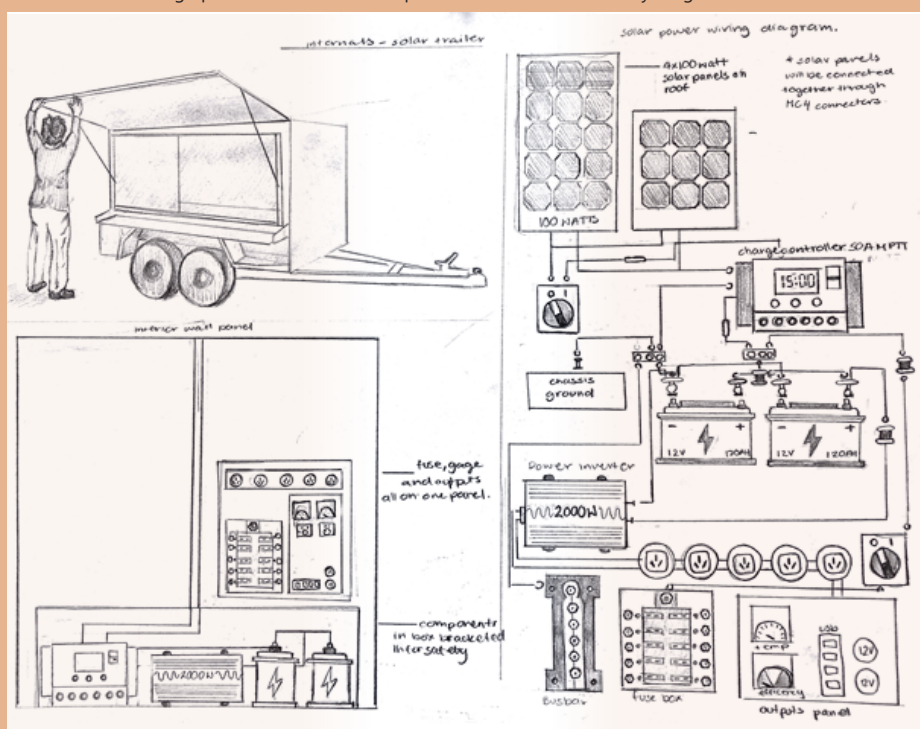
Throughout her first semester the university provided students with an opportunity to work in a group of peers with one of the universities partners, Engineers without Borders Australia (EWB). EWB work with not-for-profit organisations around the world to implement technology that is culturally appropriate, and has direct and indirect sustainable impacts on rural communities. This year EWB partnered with the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CfAT), an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled, not-for-profit that supports regional and remote Australia connecting people and country through technology.

EWB and CfAT created a design brief with Aboriginal and Torres-strait Islander communities in Cape York, in which students pick an issue to focus on and create a solution. Amanda and her team took the challenge of designing a mobile solar power unit for rangers in the area. This project was designed and evaluated over the semester providing students with the opportunity to design a project from start to finish. The final design was a solar-trailer, for rangers to use when working on Country.

More broadly, the needs of the community were considered in every aspect outlined. It replaces currently used diesel generators which are costly and unsustainable. This challenge exposes students to working in a team and following a design brief. At the end of the challenge one project is chosen to be implemented in Cape York, as the challenge involves 20 universities across Australia and thousands of students. It will be some time before one is announced.

Which ever way it goes, Amanda is without doubt on track for a very bright and purposeful future.

Amanda's team design plans for a mobile solar power unit for remote use by rangers



## AMYAC supports development of a Healthy Country Plan

In October 2021, the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal Corporation (AMYAC) Board endorsed a proposed project to develop a Healthy Country Plan (HCP) which identifies priority on-ground land management projects.

The Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board (AWLB), with funding through the 10 Deserts Project, will support AMYAC to develop a HCP for their native title area and implement up to three on-ground projects by the end of December 2022.

Establishment of a nine-member working group is underway, with representation from AMYAC, Umoona Community Council, Coober Pedy District Council, Kanku-Breakaways and Tallaringa Conservation Parks. The working group will lead the development of the plan, supported by AW Landscape Board and local co-management staff.

In order to pull together all land management priorities, the planning process will begin with a review of the various related management plans for areas within the AMYAC native title area, for example: Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Plan 2021-26, AMYAC Strategic Plan, Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park Management Plan 2017, SA Arid Lands Regional Plan, Umoona (Coober Pedy) Strategic Plan.

The HCP will then be developed through a series of consultative workshops starting in early 2022. Once the on-ground projects have been identified by the working group, Expressions of Interest (EOI) will go out for local contractors to deliver.



AW's Regional Planning Coordinator Tatia Currie, accompanied AW Landscape Board member and Chair of the Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park Co-Management Board Julie O'Toole to the AMYAC Board Meeting in Port Augusta to present on the proposed development of Healthy Country plan.

# New funds for camel and Buffel grass control

supporting APY Lands' pastoral industry



By Tatia Currie

**In mid 2021, the Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board was notified that its application for funding to address two of the most destructive pest species impacting on the health of Country in the APY Lands had been granted.**

The Minister for Environment and Water's Landscape Priority Fund (LPF) South Australia Round One funding was granted through DEW to deliver large feral herbivore (LFH) and Buffel grass control to support the pastoral industry in APY Lands over a two year period.

The main objectives are to protect water resources, sustainable agriculture and threatened species that are under significant pressures from overgrazing by camels and the widespread distribution of Buffel grass in the APY Lands.

The two main strategies for achieving this are: increased protection of 100,000 ha of pastoral leases and native habitat through camel control (and other large feral herbivores where approved); and the protection of at least one black-footed rock wallaby translocation site (e.g. Wamitjara) from fire impacts through Buffel grass control.

Large feral herbivore management has been an ongoing concern in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands with the 2016 report indicating that impacts of camels to the APY Lands cumulatively total approximately \$4.2 million per annum.

In addition feral camels damage ecologically and culturally significant rockhole sites, cause public safety concerns, including public health and vehicle collision concerns. Under severe drought conditions, animal welfare is another significant issue when camels perish from thirst.

Although historically camel mustering has been the method for controlling feral camel numbers across the APY Lands, in January 2020, APY conducted their first aerial removal of camels as camels were entering communities, destroying pastoral infrastructure and found dying of thirst at soaks, pastoral water points and culturally significant rock holes.

This project aims to capitalise on the first aerial removal of camels conducted in January 2020. APY are committed to implementing regular large feral herbivore removals to protect their cultural lands. AW's Program Management team met with APY Executive and management staff to co-design the project plan in November 2021. In early 2022, when the APY Lands re-opens, the APY Cultural, Land and Heritage Unit (CLHU) will conduct community consultation with respective Traditional Owners in relation to removal of camels and other large feral herbivores (where approved).

Buffel grass or mamu tjanpi/tjanpi kura (devil grass/bad grass in Pitjantjatjara) is widely recognised as a significant threat to the culture and safety of Anangu communities in the AW region, because



Top left: Cattle in the APY Lands  
Above: Buffel grass management training  
Below: Camels in fire recovery area



heavy infestations prevent traditional hunting, foraging and cultural activities and lead to dangerous fires. As it grows so thickly, the dense grassy fuel can feed bigger, hotter and sometimes unexpected fires. These new fires are a risk to wildlife, people, and the large older trees. Buffel also damages important cultural sites by choking water holes. Thick grass makes it difficult to walk through Country and to see tracks or animals (including snakes). Together with the loss of species, this inhibits the transfer of cultural knowledge from one generation to another.

The Buffel grass control component contributes to the on-ground land management activities conducted by APY Waru Rangers in relation to protection of the black-footed rock wallaby (waru), supported by the AW Landscape Board with funds from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

# Quick Snips...

In December 2021, AW's Presiding Member Parry Agius joined all Landscape SA Board Presiding Members in signing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statement of Commitment to undertake and uphold its stated principles. Through these commitments, each Landscape Board values the opportunity to achieve stronger relationships with Aboriginal People and organisations in South Australia, support greater economic prosperity and wellbeing for Aboriginal people and communities and look after our country and sea better together.



SA's Minister for Environment and Water David Speirs was joined by Local Member Peter Treloar and AW Landscape Board members Mick Haynes and Peter Miller in a visit to the AW region's beautiful Googs Lake in Yumberra Conservation Park in mid October 2021.



They were accompanied by AW's Operations Manager Olly Lipcer and Ecologist Brett Backhouse who provided insight into AW's work in the region, including restoration and protection of the lake's surrounds and threatened and feral species monitoring and management programs.



The group took up the opportunity to take a close-up look at a moloch (thorny devil) while travelling in the Yumberra Conservation Park, when AW's Regional Ecologist Brett Backhouse stopped their vehicle to move the tiny reptile off the track.

Unfortunately members of the Yumberra Conservation Park Co-Management Board were unable to attend due to short notice.

APY Executives, Managers and Board Members came together in AW's Adelaide office in August to discuss plans for the APY Pastoral Project while reflecting on last year's successes. They also talked about progressing an AW and APY Lands MoU, and possible candidates to represent APY on the AW Landscape Board.



At the December AW Landscape Board meeting, the board members renewed commitment to fairness and equality officially adopting the following ideology...

**"Every day, as members of the Alinytjara Wilurara Board, we recommit to healing ourselves, each other and the communities we represent, to co-creating alongside our fellow Australians, allies, and family a culture where each person feels seen, heard, and supported.**

**We acknowledge, respect, and celebrate differences and commonalities.**

**We work vigorously for freedom and justice for Aboriginal people and, by extension, all people"**

AW's Project Officer Alex Fraser came across this very impressive threatened species of *Grevillea* while conducting flora surveys in Yellabinna wilderness protection area in September with members of the Far West Coast Ranger Team and AW Ecologist Brett Backhouse,



The Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board and team are proud to be working in partnership with Oak Valley Rangers on the National Malleefowl Adaptive Predator Management Experiment.

This experiment is designed to identify threats such as feral carnivores that live within the malleefowl habitat. This is a nationwide project, with over 20 land management agencies undertaking experimental research that will benefit the species by providing key information on the interactions of malleefowl with foxes and cats.

Below: Operations Manager Ollanta Lipcer and Project Officer Paul Gregory travelled to Oak Valley to meet with the Oak Valley Ranger Team. They spent two nights camping out with the rangers to check malleefowl survey sites, and helped to install camera grid for Malleefowl Adaptive Predator Management Experiment.



# AW's Hellos and Goodbyes

In a whirlwind of comings and goings the dust has settled (at least for a while we hope) with a few new faces in the team and minus a few whose professional contributions and friendships we will all miss.

## Hello and welcome

### Gill Peacey

Welcome Gill Peacey to the role of **Acting General Manager**.

Born in Australia, Gill grew up surrounded by national parks in New Zealand so it seems natural that between uni studies she worked in parks including Tongariro National Park working beside local Ngati Tuwharetoa iwi (Maori). After uni she moved to Australia and worked in several NSW national parks before moving to the Coorong where she enjoyed the privilege of learning about the area working alongside Ngarrindjeri rangers.

She moved to Adelaide working in national parks and was seconded to develop and deliver a pilot Aboriginal Land Management competency-based Cert 1-3 training program in several SA Aboriginal communities. This resulted in a nationally accredited curriculum, now delivered extensively in the NT and WA.

As part of a SA Government policy team Gill finalised the Natural Resources Management (NRM) Act, and establishment of regional boundaries, the boards and their administration. In Gill's substantive management role with DEW's National Parks and Wildlife Service she manages multiple state-wide national park volunteer programs.

As a government representative on the AW NRM Board in the past and in combination with her many skills and experience we welcome Gill and look forward to working with her.

### Judith Bemmer

Welcome to the AW Landscape Board's new **Acting Executive Officer** "Judi" Bemmer. Judi has worked in government roles for over 25 years, 15 of which were spent in various personal assistant roles including for high level senior management, deputy CEO and CEO.



AW's Programs team with new Program Manager. (L-R) Damian Miley, Adam Wood, Aude Loiser, Jeff Foulkes, Leah Kyriacou and Tatia Currie

Having worked in highly political environments where sensitivity and political nous are essential she has comprehensive experience liaising with multiple agencies and sectors as well as external boards and committees Judi will no doubt prove to be a great asset to the team.

With experience as a multiculturalism trainer she is passionate about equity for all, especially Indigenous Australians, and has worked alongside the Aboriginal Education Directorate.

In addition Judi has had a lifetime creating and appreciating art in many different forms and taught art. We're sure she'll enjoy spending time with our board's talented artistic members.

As an animal lover with two dogs she is also a registered flying fox carer. Welcome Judi

### Jeff Foulkes

Welcome to AW's new **Program Manager** Jeff Foulkes (photo above with his new team).

Originally from Whyalla Jeff developed an interest in ecology through exploring the local shrublands and myall woodlands. After undertaking studies in Natural Resources at Roseworthy College in Adelaide he went on to study at the University of Canberra, completing a PhD on the ecology of Common Brushtail Possums in central Australia.

Jeff worked closely with Anangu during the four-year feasibility study to re-introduce Brushtail Possums to Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. It proved to be a successful collaboration integrating Indigenous and western science to decide that reintroduction was indeed feasible.

In addition Jeff has worked as a ranger in Kakadu National Park, undertaken research in the Tanami Desert and Great Sandy Desert, and participated in multiple surveys. He co-authored chapters and edited volumes on the Biological Survey of the Maralinga Tjarutja Lands, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, Yalata Lands, Mt Willoughby IPA, and Simpson Desert.

With Jeff's extensive experience in monitoring, ecological research and vegetation mapping in the arid rangelands of SA and the NT since the mid 1980's, Jeff developed a strong knowledge and love of Australian ecosystems, particularly in arid South Australia and particularly the Aboriginal Lands.

Great to have you on board Jeff, looking forward to working together.

### Paul Gregory

Welcome back Paul! After winding up with AW six years ago to join his wife working in Yalata Community, the team is very pleased to have him back as a **Project Officer**. His reputation as a dedicated, efficient worker and all round great guy to work with preceded him.

In Yalata, Paul ran a number of local programs for the Work for the Dole Community Development Program provider.

"I looked after both the Men's and the Women's programs which was diverse and really interesting. Of course, this was pre-COVID-19 so community was a busy place with lots of people involved in the program" said Paul.

In early 2018 he was offered the opportunity to return to working in his original trade as a diesel mechanic, at the Iluka mine. Meanwhile Paul and his wife built a new home in the Yorke Peninsula town of Port Broughton and relocated there in early 2019.

"I took up a job working as a diesel mechanic for a local farmer for a few years, but really missed the far west Country. When the opportunity came up to return to my original Project Officer role with AW I jumped at it and thankfully was successful. I really enjoy being on-Country and nurturing the land. It's great to be back! Palya".



# Goodbye and all the best

## Damian Miley

Just over 14 months ago Damian joined the AW team as our new General Manager. After quietly checking out the lay of the land he developed and began to take action on a clear vision of how the team could best serve the Board and the region.

His role as General Manager amidst the still evolving reforms associated with changing from an NRM board to a Landscape board meant there was scope to introduce new approaches to the way the AW team would operate into the future.

Calling on his considerable wealth of experience and under the direction of the AW Landscape Board, Damian supported the AW team in developing a number of important initiatives that now underpin the on-going success of the team and the operation of the board.

Damian's professional confidence, willingness to support his team and find the best way forward on any challenges combined with his cheery, personable disposition mean he will be greatly missed by the team and the board alike.

The only upside to his leaving is knowing that he has taken up a position in which his valuable skills will be used in an even wider arena to benefit other First Nations people and their Country.

All the best Damian and thanks for being a "real good boss".



## Angela Whiting

With over 10 years working with the AW Board Angela Whiting decided last November it was time to kick back, hang up her well-worn AW hat and retire. Ange very capably undertook a number of different roles since starting with the board back when it was still part of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), stuck with us when it became part of the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources and saw us through to becoming an independent Landscape Board.

As an experienced Human Resources consultant she brought a range of skills to her work and did, for a period of time desert us to take up a position within the HR area of Department for Environment and Water.

We knew she still loved us however when she returned to take up the role of Business Support Officer and later the very demanding role of A/Executive Officer for the board.

Amongst other talents, Ange's knowledge of the board and involvement in its, and the team's evolution over the years made her an invaluable asset. Her diligence and commitment to achieving all tasks put to her were enhanced by her caring and supportive disposition.

Thank you for the many kindnesses you showed to the team and board members over the years.

We know it's not in your nature to sit back and relax so, whatever you put your mind to we hope it brings you happiness and fulfilment.



## Sue Agars

Although we tried to keep her as long as we could, in late-January Sue farewelled the AW team to take up a most deservedly won two-year contract with Green Industries SA. (Thankfully she's still in the Waymouth Street Adelaide Office, so catch ups will be frequent.)

Sue started with the AW NRM Board as their Executive Officer in 2013.

Born and raised on a property on the Eyre Peninsula, about 90 kms east of Ceduna, she was already well attuned to the Far West Coast and the people of the region, and maintains a deep attachment and ongoing passion for the area and its landscapes.

Her intelligent professional approach and great sense of humour made her a great asset to the team. She was also very highly regarded by the AW NRM Board and AW Landscape Board members for whom she never failed to go above and beyond for, ensuring that every meeting was managed to a high standard. This was not an easy task given the many challenges involved in organising travel accommodations and governance requirements for members who live in remote communities.

Sue has also recently gained some valuable experience working with the Native Vegetation Council of SA, and the Office of the Chief Executive (Department for Environment and Water). Following her term with the Green Industries SA Board, Sue hopes to return to the AW Landscape Board and bring with her some fresh ideas and inspiration to complement the Board's already high level of achievements.

All the best Susie!

Parry Agius  
Presiding Member



Mick Haynes  
Board Member, Far West Coast



Debbie Hansen  
Board Member, Tjuntjuntjara



## Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board

# Serving the PEOPLE, COUNTRY, WATER of the Alinytjara Wilurara Region

Kristy Richards  
Board Member, Far West



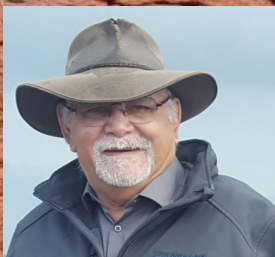
Julie O'Toole  
Board Member, AMYAC



Sally Scales  
Board Member, APY Lands



Peter Miller  
Board Member, Far West Coast



### Adelaide Office

Level 9, 81-95 Waymouth St  
ADELAIDE, SA 5000

GPO Box 1047  
ADELAIDE 5001  
Tel: 8463 4860

### Ceduna Office

50B McKenzie Street  
CEDUNA, SA 5690

PO Box 569, CEDUNA 5690

[aw.landscapeboard@sa.gov.au](mailto:aw.landscapeboard@sa.gov.au)

[landscape.sa.gov.au/aw/](http://landscape.sa.gov.au/aw/)