



Palya!

STRONG PEOPLE HEALTHY COUNTRY and WATER

Anangu Kunpu, Ngura Kunpu munu Kapi



Australian Government



Government of South Australia

Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources
Management Board

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From the Regional Manager, Alinytjara Wilurara



Welcome to the 2019 Winter edition of Palya. I'm Leah Feuerherdt and I am honoured to take up the role of AW's Regional Manager for the next 12 months. Mary-Anne Healy, previously our Regional Director, has accepted an Executive position with DEW, as Director of Strategy. I really enjoyed working with Mary-Anne and will miss her guidance and camaraderie.

In our March e-news we paid tribute to Parry Agius who finished his term as Presiding Member of the AW NRM Board in February. Parry was an outstanding advocate for the AW region and I'm personally grateful that I had the opportunity to work with him. Congratulations to our new Presiding Member Mick Haynes. I'm looking forward to working with Mick to support community in caring for their Country in the AW region.

A major change is on the horizon for our team with the proposed Landscape SA Bill, currently being considered by Parliament that, if accepted will replace the NRM Act.

This new legislation will see the NRM Boards become Landscape Boards that will operate independently of DEW. None-the-less, we will continue a strong relationship with DEW and our many partners and community to ensure effective outcomes continue to be delivered across the AW region.

From 01 July, the administration of parks co-management will be managed by National Parks staff in DEW. The Alinytjara Wilurara Region's staff will work with DEW to support ongoing works in parks.

The team is working full steam ahead on delivery of our Australian

Government funded projects under the National Landcare Program phase 2. In collaboration with community we are seeing real progress in looking after Country (more on page 18).

We welcome a couple of new staff members to the team. Tatia Currie is our new Regional Planning Coordinator. She will be assisting our Land Holding Authorities with their Healthy Country Planning and the AW Board with their Regional NRM Plan. James Thiessen has temporarily stepped in as Acting Planning and Sustainable Landscapes Manager from his role with AMLR. The AW team is excited to have them join us.

Our communications staff do a fabulous job pulling this newsletter together with the help of the rest of the team who contribute their work and inspiring stories.

AW staff are a great team who are passionate about the AW region. We remain stronger working together. Enjoy this edition.

Palya

Leah Feuerherdt
Regional Manager
Alinytjara Wilurara Region

INVITATION

The Alinytjara Wilurara NRM Board invite you to join us on Facebook www.facebook.com/awnrm

AW weather stations
Check out data from the weather stations in the AW region on...
<https://www.awnetwork.com.au/>

Next AW NRM Board meeting:
October 2019, Adelaide

Ceduna Arts and Cultural Centre
Features genuine local Aboriginal art
2 Eyre Highway, Ceduna

International Day of the World's Indigenous People
09 August 2019

Where we are and what we do

The Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources Management Region covers the northwest quarter of South Australia.

In Pitjantjatjara, *alinytjara* means 'north' and *wilurara* means 'west'.

The region spans more than a quarter of a million square kilometres, and has a population of approximately 2700 people, many of whom identify with the Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, Ngaanyatjarra, Kokatha, Mirning or Wirangu peoples.

Natural Resources Management (NRM) is an approach to protecting land for the mutual benefit of people and the environment.

The AW NRM Board is the only all Aboriginal NRM Board in Australia.



Title page: A baby warru born in the safety of the *pintji* (fenced enclosure), peeks out from its mother's pouch.

Photo: Steph Cole



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AW and EP NRM Boards cross-regional planning



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Yalata "hoodies" population still fragile

From the Presiding Member



Welcome to the 2019 Winter edition of Palya.

Firstly I would like to say that, having been a member of the AW NRM Board and now

its Presiding Member, I'm honoured to continue as a representative of the people of the AW region. I look forward to continuing our successful collaborative approach to caring for Country.

I would also like to sincerely thank our departing Presiding Member Parry Agius. He has been an inspirational leader and he leaves the Board stronger and more effective for his contribution.

The Board continues to seek and develop important relationships that will strengthen our ability to support the AW communities as part of our ongoing commitment to promoting healthy country and people.

Earlier this year we met with the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board to discuss how we can support each other to most effectively and efficiently deliver on our NRM commitments (see page 2).

We've also held discussions with the Western Australian-based Aboriginal Biodiversity Conservation Foundation which has developed and delivered programs with very promising results in Aboriginal communities (see page 3).

Our ongoing partnership with the 10 Deserts Project also continues to deliver positive results with community consultations held in May guiding prioritisation of future projects.

Delivery of on-ground works are going strong. Our AW team continues to work incredibly hard along with community to undertake a range of programs including managing feral animals and weeds, protecting our threatened species, and helping build a safer, more resilient region.

Mick Haynes
Presiding Member
Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources Management Board



Warru joey kept warm while its mother is checked over

photo: Steph Cole



Alinytjara Wilurara and Eyre Peninsula

NRM Boards talk cross-regional planning

The AW NRM Board held its February meeting in Port Lincoln this year to provide an opportunity to meet with members of the Eyre Peninsula (EP) NRM Board and EP staff.

“Developing strong relationships with neighbouring NRM Boards provides clear benefits that improve our ability to deliver on our NRM commitments” said (then) Presiding Member Parry Agius.

Multi-regional issues such as the spread of buffel grass and the flow of tourist traffic are clear examples of issues with the potential to best be dealt with by partnering NRM Boards.

The recent development of the Far West Aboriginal Tourism Strategy brought into focus the extent and flow of tourist traffic across the EP and the AW regions.

Working together to support consistency in the visitor experience was a key point of discussion at the meeting. Although each region has distinct tourism assets it was considered important that way finding, e.g. signage, maps etc., should have consistent messaging and application.

Although buffel grass is a significant issue in the AW region that links more closely with our eastern NRM neighbour, South Australian Arid Lands (SAAL), it also remains of ongoing concern in the EP NRM region.

Sharing resources, whether it be skills and expertise or equipment will present more efficient and effective ways to undertake NRM operations going forward.

Each region has its unique assets and issues but there are also many commonalities.

Sharing knowledge is invaluable. Whether it be various ways to solve common problems or simply gaining a fresh perspective on a unique problem.

In seeking continuous improvement, it makes sense that our nearest neighbours, who are well positioned to contribute, join us in developing forward thinking strategies.



Left: The end of another successful Board meeting. Parry Agius takes a back seat while Boards continue discussions.

Above: (L-R) Standing: Parry Agius, Sue Agars, Yasmin Wolf, Jono Clarke, Justine Major, Mark Whitfield, Mick Haynes, Peter Miller, Bill Nosworthy, Mary-Anne Healy, Leah Feuerherdt
Seated: Helen Donald, Mima Smart, Julie o’Toole, Debbie Hansen, Diana Laube, Kristy Richards



Talking with the Aboriginal Biodiversity Conservation Foundation

As part of the AW NRM Board's commitment to building strong partnerships, the Chief Executive and co-founder of the Aboriginal Biodiversity Conservation (ABC) Foundation Alison Sentance was invited to speak about their organisation at the February Board meeting.

Alison explained that the ABC Foundation is a majority Aboriginal owned and controlled, charitable social enterprise that works with individuals, businesses and communities to build economic prosperity through land and sea-based business initiatives.

Although the Foundation currently operates in Western Australia, predominately in the Pilbara, Gascoyne and Mid-West regions, it

is keen to explore opportunities for expansion and investment to have wider on-Country impact.

Of particular interest to the Board is that the ABC Foundation incorporates the inherent spiritual connection Aboriginal people have with the environment in the design and implementation of on-Country education, development and training programs.

The Foundation delivers social benefit programs based on principles of respect, working with local people, place-specific language and on-Country activities. The impact of this is measured by educational and employment outcomes for Aboriginal people living in remote and regional communities.

ABC Foundation delivers economic services that create investment back into social impact programs designed by Aboriginal people.

Aims

Education:

Life education designed to empower young people, within a two-way learning environment, providing alternative education support programs and resources.

Development:

On-Country training, leadership and skill development to increase the capacity of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people aspiring to work on Country.

Employment:

Flexible on-Country employment opportunities for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, living in remote and regional areas with a commitment to a minimum of 50% Aboriginal employment.

Enterprise:

Support of micro enterprise research and development for commercial opportunity, increasing the economic independence of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

In recognising how well the aims and methodologies of the Board and the Foundation aligned, discussions were very positive.

Further conversations will continue toward developing the relationship and working together in partnership in the future.

Alison Sentance Chief Executive and co-founder of the Aboriginal Biodiversity Conservation (ABC) Foundation Ltd





The AW NRM Board's unstoppable women

Five AW NRM Board members, Kristy Richards, Mima Smart, Debbie Hansen, Julie O'Toole and Sally Scales have accepted nominations to represent the Board on groups and committees that tackle important issues across the AW region.

The committees and advisory group inform and advise various state departments and other organisations. In representing the Board, the women contribute invaluable cultural knowledge and their deep understanding of the AW region's history and Country.

Kristy Richards
Member, SA Wild Dog
Advisory Group (PIRSA)



Dingo sniffs a motion sensor camera set up in Yumberra Conservation Park

Kristy was recently nominated by the AW NRM Board to sit on the South Australian Wild Dog Advisory Group (SAWDAG), to provide knowledge and cultural advice around improving the management and control of wild dogs in South Australia.

The advisory group manages the delicate balance between wild dogs and dingoes, their impacts on livestock, their ecological roles and their cultural significance outside the dog fence.

SAWDAG have a number of goals ensuring good governance and management of wild dogs across SA

Above: Standing L-R Debbie Hansen and Mima Smart
Seated L-R Sally Scales and Kristy Richards

including the detection and destruction of wild dogs inside the dog fence, and the prevention of wild dogs from coming through the dog fence.

Kristy's passion for sharing cultural knowledge about dingoes with the wider community stems from the long association her family has had with the sheep industry including monitoring the dog fence, eradicating wild dogs inside the dog fence, and from her grandfather being on the Dog Fence Board many years ago.

"It's an honour to be part of SAWDAG and represent the AW NRM Board. It is a good opportunity to share our views and knowledge with the greater community about the importance of the dingo in our culture. It is also good for the Board to be able to take information back to the community about the impact of wild dogs around the state and region" said Kristy.

Debbie Hansen and Mima Smart
Members, 10 Deserts Project
Steering Committee

Following the AW NRM Board's decision to partner with the 10 Deserts Project, Debbie and Mima were nominated by the AW NRM Board to represent the region and sit on the Project Steering Committee.

The 10 Deserts Project is an Indigenous-led partnership for healthy country and people with a five-year plan (to December 2023).

The project is led by Desert Support Services and its partners, including the Alinytjara Wilurara NRM Board.

The project aims to build environmental resilience and enhanced Indigenous livelihoods with a strong Indigenous voice through building the capacity of Indigenous people and organisations, managing key threats to natural and cultural assets, and creating new markets for sustainable jobs and income.

The 10 Deserts Project focuses on capacity building through ranger exchanges, Indigenous Desert Alliance forums, fire management, feral camel management, Buffel Free Great Victoria Desert, carbon and its co-benefits, and regional tourism.

Debbie and Mima are proud to represent the AW NRM Board and region and provide a strong cultural voice to the development and future implementation of plans across Australia's deserts.

Sally Scales

Committee Member, Outback Bushfire Coordination Committee (SACFS)

Sally was recently nominated by the AW NRM Board and the Department for Environment and Water, to represent them on the Outback Bushfire Coordination Committee.

This committee sits under the State Bushfire Coordination Committee, which is responsible for bushfire management and planning in SA, and has the highest level of authority when it comes to bushfire.

The Outback Bushfire Coordination Committee has prepared a Bushfire Management Area Plan (BMAP) which identifies the risks and actions individuals and organisations can take to reduce the risk of bushfire. The BMAP draft is available for public

consultation until 7 July 2019 and can be viewed and commented upon through the YourSAy website.

Sally represents the Board and Community by providing important cultural information and advice around the risks and benefits of fire, and preventing loss of life and property during catastrophic bushfire events.



Julie O'Toole

Deputy Member, Outback Bushfire Coordination Committee

Julie has accepted a nomination as a deputy member of the Outback Bushfire Coordination Committee.

Her knowledge of Country around the Coober Pedy area and traditional knowledge of culture and fire regimes make her a valued member of the Committee.

by Sue Agars



Mt Finke Grevillea



The small, isolated rocky outcrop of Mount Finke is an impressive sight driving north along Googs Track within the Yellabinna Wilderness area.

In an endless sea of parallel sand dunes, the Mount starts to appear from some 70km away. Standing approximately 300m above sea level, it is home to some very interesting flora including an unusual Eucalyptus species which produces either large red or large yellow flowers.

More significantly however is the Mount Finke Grevillea (*Grevillea treueriana*) which to date has only been found growing on the southern slopes of this mount, starting approximately 250m above sea level.

It is a small dense shrub when mature, growing to about 1m tall, with showy red flowers in spring. It only grows on the southern side of the hill, away from the extreme summer heat and where the last remnants of moisture are retained.

As Mount Finke is the only known site for this species, it is important to manage threats to the fragile Grevillea habitat such as buffel grass which burns with higher and with greater intensity than native grasses.

The Alinytjara Wilurara team is currently mapping the Grevillea, and working to stop buffel grass getting to the site. This project is supported by the AW NRM Board through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



by Brett Backhouse



Biology students learn about *nganamara* on Country

by Leah Kyriacou

Year 11 Biology students from Ceduna Area School camped out with a team from Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara (AW) at Googs Lake in Yumberra Conservation Park to undertake *nganamara* (malleefowl) surveys in May.

Classified as Vulnerable in Australia under Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation, the *nganamara* construct large mounds in mallee scrub where they lay their eggs to incubate and hatch.

Supported by staff from Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation the students and their teacher Max MacMillian and School Support Officer Amy Fakil joined the AW team to locate and assess the number, and condition of the nests. This important information provides an indication of the size and health of the breeding population and the nature and impact of threats that may need to be addressed in future programs.

The students learned about the use of remote-controlled airborne *LIDAR equipment that records surface structures through foliage. The results showed the locations of a number of previously unrecorded mounds which

the students and AW and FWC teams ground-truthed using hand held Global Positioning Systems (GPS) tracking devices.

As part of the trip, pitfall traps were also set up across eight sites to survey Sandhill dunnarts within the dunnart's preferred habitat of spinifex grass. The students and Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation crew enjoyed checking the pitfall traps and seeing what waited inside.

"We were really impressed with the level of enthusiasm and hard work displayed

by the students and staff from Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation, together with Ecologists John Read and Matthew Launer" said AW Planning and Conservation Systems Officer Leah Kyriacou.

Above: Chey Champion, Charles Coleman, James Peel, Chris Ackland, Jordan Coleman, Steven Kelly, Angel Miller and Barry Coleman (from the Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation); students from Ceduna Area School Haillee Skinner, Nikia Skinner, Sophie Halls, Mardie Hoffrichter, Kayla Gurney, Cain Perry, Hannah Nichols, their teacher Max MacMillian and School Support Officer Amy Fakil; Ecologists John Read and Matthew Launer and AW's Karrena Veltman. Photo Max MacMillian



Below: Evening camp fire
Photo Leah Kyriacou



Above: Evening by the campfire at Googs Lake
Photo courtesy FWCAC

Below: Dwarf Bearded Dragon found during survey
Photo Leah Kyriacou

“We managed to achieve high level project out-comes while sharing a lot of laughs during the week-long trip. We hope the students learned a lot of practical skills, working with Aboriginal people on Country, learning about threatened species management practices and leading edge technology” said Leah.

The students’ participation in the malleefowl ground-truthing and mound assessment was the practical component of a malleefowl project in their Year 11 Biology class. Maybe Sandhill dunnarts might be next term?

The malleefowl and Sandhill dunnart projects are supported by Alinytjara Wilurara NRM Board through funding from the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program.

*LIDAR, which stands for Light Detection and Ranging, is a remote sensing method that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure ranges (variable distances) to the Earth.



Coming together to celebrate and learn about wardu

‘Wardu’ or wombat was celebrated recently in a special day of cultural learning and knowledge sharing at Scotdesco homelands.

Students and community members from across South Australia’s Far West region immersed themselves in the ‘Wardu of a Day’ event held to promote cultural learning to share knowledge on the wombat. The Southern hairy-nosed wombat (*Lasiorhinus latifrons*), named *wardu* across the Far West Aboriginal language groups, is an important species in Aboriginal culture, part of the dream time stories and as a valuable food source.

Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula Aboriginal Partnerships Officer Tayla Westley said over 90 students, aged eight to 12 years old, from local schools and the Ceduna youth hub came together for the event hosted by Natural Resources EP.

“In the morning students were busy creating colourful wombat paintings, learning cultural weaving, enjoying the story corner and wombat-hole tours. We made artefacts together, shared language and had a great time learning more about wardu” said Tayla.

“In the afternoon Aboriginal community members from Ceduna, Koonibba, Scotdesco, Penong and Yalata shared ideas for a new Talking Poster, a collaborative project currently in preparation. Once completed the Talking Poster aims to educate and inform everyone about the importance of wardu, particularly in Aboriginal culture. The Talking Poster will present biological and ecological information

on Southern hairy-nosed wombats, as well as cultural information about wardu best practices, to ensure the sustainable management of the species into the future.”

The event was made possible through the planning and input of the Yumbarra Conservation Park Co-management Board and Nullarbor Parks Advisory Committee while developing the Far West Healthy Country Plan. The plan has been a significant driver behind the work being undertaken with wombats across the Eyre Peninsula and Far West Coast.

Far West Aboriginal Women’s Council Chairperson, Cecilia Cox said the *Wardu of a Day* event was filled with two-way learning.

Engaging with over 100 school and community members, the event was a collaboration with key stakeholders that are leading the way to a more sustainable future.

Key partners: Far West Aboriginal Women’s Council, Far West Language Centre, Scotdesco, Ceduna Aboriginal Corporation, Ceduna Arts and NR Alinytjara Wilurara and NR Eyre Peninsula.



Article courtesy of Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula



Photos Hamish Morgan

Planning for Tourism in the Far West

A workshop was held in May by 10 Deserts Project (10 DP) facilitator Hamish Morgan in Ceduna to support representatives of the Far West Coast's community to work through the many considerations involved in managing and expanding tourism across the region.

Assisted by Leanne Miller (10 DP tourism strategy consultant), Hamish worked systematically through the day from looking at ways to better manage and develop regional tourism, the support that would be needed to do it and finally how to build a case to gain appropriate resourcing.

The workshop group included representatives from various regional parks' co-management and advisory groups, communities and organisations, the AW NRM Board and Natural Resources staff from Alinytjara Wilurara and Eyre Peninsula.

Hamish explained that the 10 Deserts Project's Tourism Strategy would be developed based on the feedback of desert groups across Australia.

The strategy would include ways to manage tourism, increase income, look after important sites, identify training and knowledge, and enable groups to share information and learn from each other. This strategy will support groups to develop new tourism products and experiences that build respect for and promote the culture and Country of desert mobs.

The first question, *Why is Indigenous tourism important*, was met with well-considered and very positive responses including that tourism can create social, economic and environmental benefits; help build self-esteem, confidence, and wellbeing – be proud to share culture; help build leadership, empower people and create self-determination; be a way to protect culture and heritage.

We have the oldest living culture in the world. We want to carry on our culture and promote it. Tourism is a way that we can do this.

In the following session the group identified what is happening in each region they were familiar with, indicating on a map where existing sites were, possible improvements that may be made and any issues that would need to be taken into consideration.

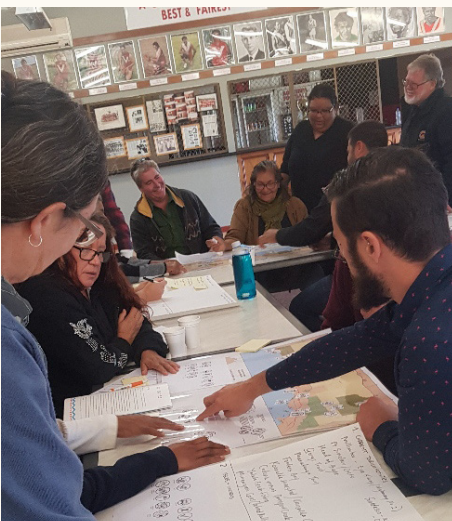
In considering the support and resources needed to take tourism into

the future in the region, the group were both thoughtful and practical. Some of the key responses included:

- the need for better signage that displays cultural, safety, things to do and see, and how to respect Country information as well as a *Welcome to Country* when entering new Country
- the need for Aboriginal rangers to help manage and develop country and an on-ground local person to drive Aboriginal tourism in the region.

As part of the strategy, 10 DP plans to produce a 'toolkit' for Indigenous land management groups. The toolkit will be a practical, how-to-guide that will support Indigenous groups to develop and manage tourism on their lands.

Feedback from the attendees was collated by Hamish to inform development of the 10 Deserts Project's Tourism Strategy.



AW staff train in Healthy Country Planning in Tasmania

by Jo Sullivan and Karrena Veltman

The Alinytjara Wilurara (AW) NRM Board has supported implementation of the roll out of Healthy Country Planning across the region since 2014. This process focuses on participation and engagement of Aboriginal community members and the inclusion of their traditional knowledge and priorities as the foundation of AW NRM plans.

Earlier this year Sustainable Communities Coordinator Karrena Veltman and Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Officer Jo Sullivan from Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara spent a week in the Tasmanian Midlands attending a Healthy Country Planning/Open Standards adaptive management planning course.

Healthy Country Planning enables land managers of all backgrounds and experience levels to think more deeply about the long term effects of our actions on the environment, its people and culture.

photos Jo Sullivan

The course provided an introduction to the concepts, steps and structures of Healthy Country Planning/Open Standards methods, using the Tasmanian Midlands as a case study to demonstrate its application.

All participants were thrown into the deep end when they were expected to produce a Healthy Country Plan for a region in Tasmania that was completely unfamiliar to them and an equally unfamiliar planning team. The purpose of this was to help create a better understanding of the process of Healthy Country Planning, regardless of the area or its influences.

There are five key steps in the process:

1. Identifying key stakeholders to develop a shared vision for what the plan is about
2. Developing strategies, actions and monitoring plans
3. Doing and monitoring the work
4. Reviewing progress and making changes when needed
5. Communicating the progress of the plan



Jo Sullivan takes the opportunity to enjoy the spectacular Tassie forest

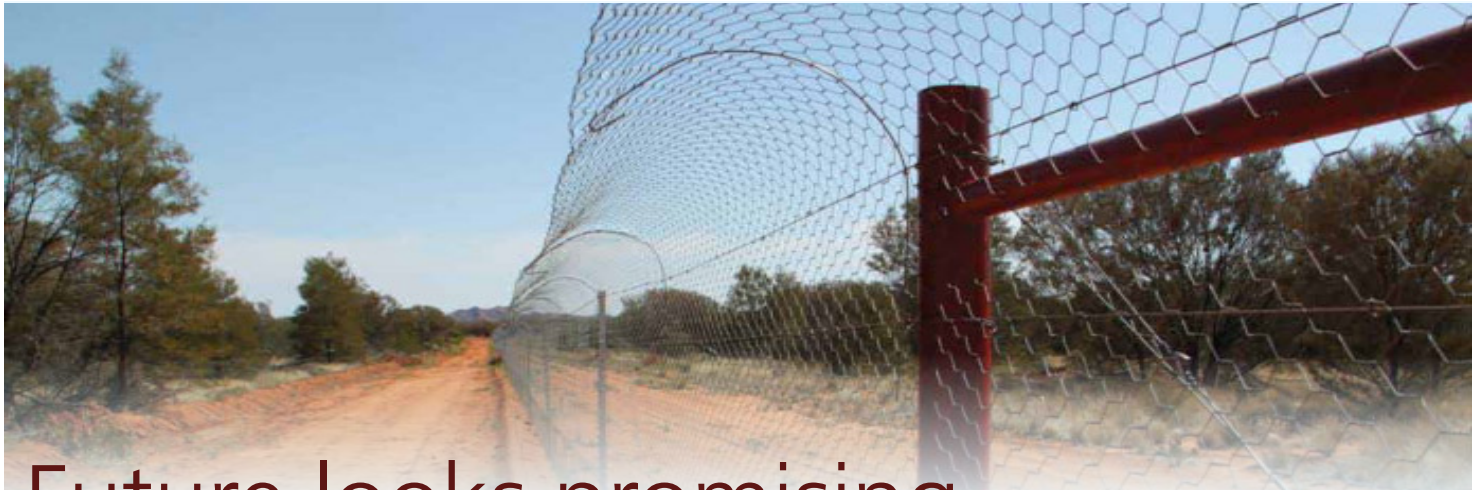
Apart from developing a great understanding of this planning process, a highlight of the course was the opportunity to meet and spend time working, learning and sharing experiences with a passionate and dedicated group of people, many of whom work with Aboriginal communities across the country.



AW's Karrena Veltman works on her team's Healthy Country Plan

The group also had a chance meeting with Bob Brown (leader of the Australian Greens 1992-2012) at his former property *Oura Oura*, which he donated to Bush Heritage Australia in 2011.





Future looks promising for translocated warru

by Jo Sullivan

In late March, Regional Ecologist Brett Backhouse and Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Officer Jo Sullivan from Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara travelled to the APY Lands for a week to assist APY Land Management Warru Rangers with their annual warru (*Petrogale lateralis*) survey at the 'warru pintji' (warru fence). Warru or black-footed rock-wallaby are considered to be one of South Australia's most endangered mammal species.

The *pintji* is a 100 hectare predator-proof warru enclosure that was constructed in 2010 as a way to help 16 captivity-bred warru from Monarto Zoo safely acclimatise and adapt to local conditions. The translocated population was established as part of the successful Warru Program which has been active in the APY Lands since 2010.

The warru pintji population appears to be doing well and continuing to increase in size with 55 individuals trapped during the survey (19 more than were trapped in 2018). There

are three established trap lines at the warru pintji with around 10 traps along each line. Warru traps are baited and set each evening and then checked early the following morning before being closed until baited that afternoon. All warru trapped were microchipped and tagged to allow identification of individuals. The weight, head, tail, foot and condition of individuals caught is also recorded to allow analysis of age, growth and animal health to be undertaken. All females caught are checked to see if they have pouched young to determine breeding success within the population.

Small vertebrate populations are also monitored at the same time as the warru surveys using established pitfall trap lines located in and outside of the warru pintji. By comparing results from in and outside of the warru pintji, ecologists are able to study the impact that predators are having on populations of small vertebrates in the APY Lands.

When not setting or checking traps the group undertook various activities



Young warru held by Ranger in preparation for microchipping and tagging (Steph Cole)

Top: Completed warru pintji, Donald's Well (Matthew Ward)

Bottom: Aerial photo of the warru pintji (J Muhic)

including buffel grass control within the warru pintji, scat monitoring in areas where wild populations of warru are present and undertaking maintenance of motion sensor cameras and Felixers that are used to monitor and control feral predators around wild warru populations. The Felixer is a device that was developed by Ecological Horizons to control feral predators without the risk of non-target native species being killed. They use a series of sensors to identify the body shape of animals passing the





device and when the body shape of a cat is identified, the Felixer shoots a sealed dose of toxic gel which the animals ingest when instinctively grooming their body. Felixers hold 20 measured doses of the toxic gel and are fitted with programmable audiolures to attract feral predators and a camera that photographs all animals detected by the sensors.

They are also solar powered so they can be left in remote locations for extended periods of time with minimal maintenance required.

The Warru Program also monitors and manages wild populations of warru in the APY Lands, including a translocated population at Wamitjara.

This program will continue to work towards increasing the current population and distribution of the warru in APY Lands over the next four years by establishing a third translocated population of warru.

It is part of the Australian Government's *Translocation and population management of warru (black-footed rock-wallaby) into former habitats within the APY Lands, South Australia* project.

Top: Warru on rocky outcrop (Brett Backhouse)
Below: Motion camera and Felixer set up in APY Lands (Steph Cole)



Seeking Sandhill dunnarts and friends at Googs Lake

Written and photographed by Leah Kyriacou

In May, students from Ceduna Area School who joined the AW team doing malleefowl surveys also learned about surveying for Sandhill dunnart (SHD).

Pitfall traps were set up across eight sites within the dunnart's preferred habitat of spinifex grass with drift fences used to funnel small species to the large diameter pits.

Four male SHDs were caught, a great result for the species in this area.

Other interesting catches in the traps included a long-tailed dunnart, several Mitchell's hopping mice and an Owlet nightjar that had fallen in and could not fly out again.



'Not happy' long-tailed dunnart

In addition to pitfall trapping, two motion sensor camera grids were set up to learn about SHD abundance, distribution and associated threats. Each camera grid consists of 15 cameras spaced 500m apart.

The recorded images from these cameras will be analysed and recorded.

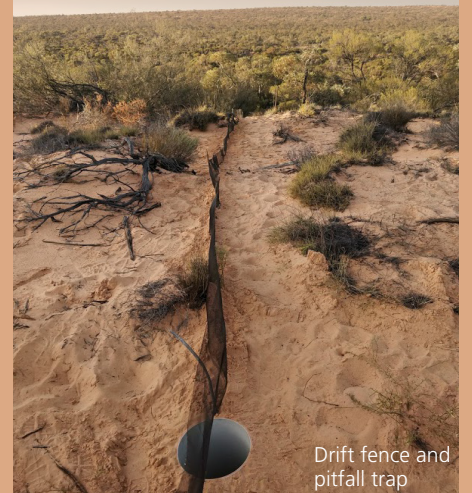
This project is supported by AW NRM Board through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



Owlet nightjar



John Read shows students how to handle the animals



Drift fence and pitfall trap



Oak Valley Rangers

on-Country mapping, burning and planning

In mid-June, a week-long on-Country trip, supported and facilitated by the Oak Valley Rangers was undertaken to map, perform traditional burning and plan future work across the Maralinga Tjarutja lands.

Additionally in focus was the transfer of traditional knowledge from older Traditional Owners to younger generations. This was particularly important as there were several Elders from the neighbouring community of Tjuntjuntjara (Western Australia), who were born and/or lived a traditional life and travelled through the Maralinga

Tjarutja lands prior to European contact, some until as recently as 1986.

Well over 50 people participated in the event for the entire week, not including various visiting groups and individuals.

Significant on-ground land management outcomes were achieved including 1200 - 2000 ha burnt in accordance to traditional land management practices. Buffer zones around Oak Valley community and several significant sites were also created. There was also a confirmed sighting of *Nganamara* (Malleefowl) in an area where they

had not previously been found. An unrecorded rockhole was located and rockhole maintenance was undertaken at a known rockhole site.

Above: Group photo on the last day of the trip
Below left: Talking about learnings and direction

Below: AW's Kerrena Veltman (far left) and Caro Bird (OV Field Coordinator) help OV Rangers set up motion cameras



AW Board member Debbie Hansen (Tjuntjuntjara) sharing her knowledge about bush medicine plant



From a cultural perspective there were also many positive outcomes. Small groups of women and men travelled separately in the helicopter and visited more than 30 culturally significance sites. This is the majority of cultural significance sites in the western third of the Maralinga Tjarutja Lands, including Mamungari Conservation Park.

Amongst the many successful on-ground outcomes, was that agreement was reached on the foundations of the new Maralinga Tjarutja lands management plans based on Traditional Owners' knowledge and priorities.

The key value identified was *Tjukurpa*, (the foundation of Anangu life and society) emphasising the strong connection with the culture and Country of the Oak Valley Rangers and community.

Unauthorised access to sites of cultural significance was identified as a most important threat.

The strategy and on-ground actions will reflect this concern and support implementation of visitor management and awareness.

Productive discussions on this topic including the need to develop clearly demarcated camp sites for tourists to use and improve signage to ensure visitors use designated campsites and behave appropriately.

Tatia Currie, AW's new Regional Planning Coordinator was greatly impressed by the work done over the week.

"I felt very privileged to have this opportunity to work with the Oak Valley Rangers, Spinifex Land Management team, Elders and community members from Oak Valley and Tjuntjuntjara. There are so many positive outcomes from this kind of work" she said.

"It was also great that students and school staff from Oak Valley Community spent a day on site with us to learn about the role of Indigenous Rangers.

"The Rangers are looked up to as role models by younger generations, particularly in remote communities such as Oak Valley with many young people aspiring to become a Ranger when they finish school.

"This was a highly successful, cross-community, cross-border and cross-organisational activity integrating on-ground actions with management planning for the future" said Tatia.

This trip was led by Anangu, supported and facilitated by the Oak Valley Rangers and aided by several staff and contractors, including: Ben Deslandes (Land Management Coordinator), Caro Bird (Field Coordinator), Stephen Rapp (Ranger Coordinator, OV Land Management); Scott Cane (consulting Anthropologist/ Archaeologist); Adam Pennington (consultant planner and field support);

Karrena Veltman and Tatia Currie (AW); Tim Anderson and Erin Gibson (Helicopter, safety and communications) and; Scott O'Loughlin (Oak Valley (Maralinga) Aboriginal Corporation) and his team and Jeremy LeBois (Chair, MLUCP Board).

This project was supported by the AW NRM Board in partnership with the 10 Deserts Project and the Tjuntjuntjara community.



Above: A wall map, created to aid mapping, planning and reporting was used. It will be relocated to Oak Valley Land Management office



Article based on AW Report by Adam Pennington

photos Tatia Currie



Australia's Desert Rangers meet in Mulan to talk about endangered species

Aboriginal Ranger groups from across Australia's desert regions gathered for the biennial Species of the Desert Festival in June at the remote Aboriginal community of Mulan in north-east Western Australia.

The Festival, sponsored by Indigenous Desert Alliance as part of the 10 Desert Project, brought rangers,

scientists and stakeholders together to build knowledge and develop strategies to look after the many species that call the desert home.

More than 200 rangers, scientists, conservationists, Traditional Owners and local community members from Mulan and Balgo attended the 3-day Festival. Groups drove into Handover Campsite from many hundreds of miles away and in no time set up tents and chairs to catch up with old friends, and make new ones around open fires.

Alinytjara Wilurara's Sustainable Communities Coordinator Karrena Veltman and Communications Coordinator Helen Donald travelled from South Australia to join the Rangers and share in their experience.

After starting the Festival with each ranger group introducing themselves and speaking briefly about their regions, broader discussions were held about the background and purpose of the Festival and the Country it was being held on.

In recognition of the inseparable link between healthy people and healthy Country, well-known Indigenous activist David Cole then delivered a powerful segment on healing and building a better future for Aboriginal children.

The group spoke about the need to carefully manage the release of information about new sightings of endangered/rare species. This is particularly relevant when details revealed on social media result in

Top left: Mulan Elder Mr Brown spoke about the importance of "making sure kids do the right thing"

Bottom left: The turn off on Tanami Road to Balgo and Mulan Communities

Above: Five groups visited various sites to discuss local issues and share possible solutions, in this case, managing a water course rockhole and spring

Below: Night fires under a full moon at Handover Camp





Threatened Species Commissioner Sally Box took the opportunity during the 3-day Festival to talk with the Rangers and Community members, hear about their work, and to learn what is important to them on Country and within their communities.

The Ranger groups each sketched out illustrated maps of their regions on large canvases that indicated the native and feral species that live there.

On the last day, the Rangers worked on a large canvas map of all the desert regions, approximately 35% of Australia to show where they thought habitat was suitable for night parrot; where there was some evidence that the parrot lived e.g. recordings, nesting sites, footprints and; where there were actual sightings.

“This is a major change to the way we have worked in the past regarding endangered species. Having Ranger teams operating across these remote regions is the only way that such important and detailed knowledge can be recorded at such a scale. Rangers have invaluable knowledge about the Country that they care for and manage and have a deep understanding of its ecology and cultural significance” said Simon Nally from the Australian Government’s Department of the Environment and Energy.

negative impacts on the species’ habitat, disrespectful entry onto traditional lands and unplanned disruption to nearby communities.

Information about species found on traditional lands should be released to appropriate parties at the discretion of the traditional owners.

In 2017, the Kimberly’s Paruku Rangers discovered evidence of the endangered and elusive Night Parrot on their Country. Photographic evidence led them and others, to undertake further investigations to find out more about it, where it lives and how best to protect it.

Top: Rangers indicated on a canvas map the areas they considered might be suitable night parrot habitat

Below: Community members put on a delightful performance of song and dance for the visiting Rangers

Right: Northern Territory Rangers visit Lake Gregory’s shores

Article and photos by Helen Donald



Welcome James



James Thiessen joined the AW team in early April as A/Manager, Planning and Sustainable Landscapes and has already proven himself to be a committed leader.

His love for the environment started as a child with camping trips in the Victorian highlands and hikes in Wilson Promontory. The connection to land grew with trips into central Australia as a teenager and taking any opportunity in his spare time to get out onto the land.

After a brief stint in the SANFL (Norwood) and AFL (Adelaide Crows) James turned his attention to working in and for the environment. After volunteering to chase penguins on Pearson Island, working along side scientists on biological surveys on the Eyre Peninsula, River Murray, arid rivers in the north of SA and a trip to Mamungari Conservation Park he took an opportunity to briefly work as a Fauna Officer at Roxby Downs. After six months he moved to Queensland for four years and worked on Habitat Condition Assessments in the Brigalow Belt and Mulga Land in the east of the state.

On returning to SA James worked for seven years on a Vegetation Program as part of a team that planted five million plants on Ngarrindjeri land around the Coorong and Lower Lakes. From there he spent three years working for the Adelaide and Mount Lofty NRM Region working with teams delivering natural resource management programs across the hills. James comes to AW to listen and help the traditional land managers achieve their goals.





Farewell to good friend and colleague

Bruce Macpherson

After seven years with Natural Resources AW, our Community Engagement Manager Bruce Macpherson, has headed off for some well-earned rest and relaxation at his peaceful home overlooking valleys of native bushland in the Blue Mountains.

The NR AW team, members of the AW NRM Board and the many colleagues who have had the pleasure of working

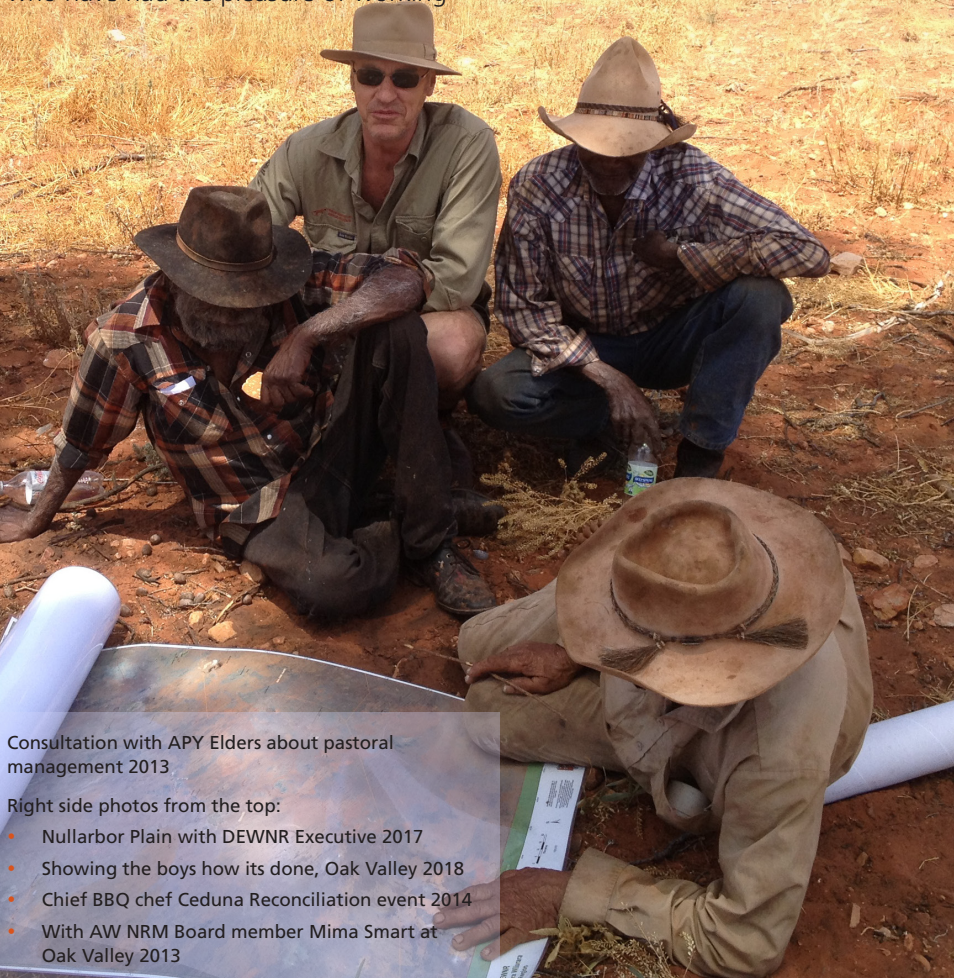
with Bruce already miss his quick wit and ready smile. Bruce's enthusiastic and passionate support for the Aboriginal people of the region drove the AW NRM Board's engagement agenda and resulted in many successful outcomes and the establishment of strong ongoing relationships across the region.

He remains a dedicated advocate for Reconciliation and Aboriginal self-determination. This was particularly evident in his approach to the delivery of skills training and employment across the region, including staff with the Natural Resources team and the successful delivery of a school-based traineeship.

Amongst his many achievements he facilitated Aboriginal work experience students coming to Adelaide to work on NRM projects with NR Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges, managed the *Adelaide meets the Bush* project including the highly successful exhibition at Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute and; keenly supported the region's Landcare Facilitators, volunteer groups and cultural-based undertakings such as the back to County Big Women's Trip.

Bruce shared some of his lesser known talents recently when he performed a number of songs with musically inclined friends and colleagues at a large private gathering held at a local hotel. (The man can sing and strum!)

We thank him for all he brought to our team and to our region and sincerely wish him and his lovely partner Jane well.



Consultation with APY Elders about pastoral management 2013

Right side photos from the top:

- Nullarbor Plain with DEWNR Executive 2017
- Showing the boys how its done, Oak Valley 2018
- Chief BBQ chef Ceduna Reconciliation event 2014
- With AW NRM Board member Mima Smart at Oak Valley 2013

Kenmore Park kids join team



During the warru trapping surveys in March, students and teachers from Kenmore Park Anangu School spent a morning visiting the survey team at the warru pintji to observe the warru and pitfall trapping surveys and learn more about the work that was being done.

Their day began by heading out on one of the warru trap lines to check the traps and learn about how the warru are surveyed.

Above: Walking cross-country to see the traps

After this the children helped out with the collection of the animals which had been caught in the pitfall traps. Animals caught were carefully placed in cloth bags and brought back to the camp for identification and measuring before being returned and released at the location they were trapped.

John Read from Ecological Horizons spent some time talking to the children about the ecology of the animals that had been trapped and the threats that introduced predators pose to small mammals and reptiles of the APY Lands.

One of the more interesting animals caught was a dwarf bearded dragon (*Pogona minor*) and Matthew Miller, APY Warru Ranger told the children a story about the dwarf bearded dragon in traditional language.

The children seemed to have a great time at the pintji and their visit was also greatly enjoyed by the survey team.

Right: John Read from Ecological Horizons and APY Warru Ranger Matthew Miller talked to the children about their work and shared cultural stories



Above: Investigating the finds of the pitfall traps



Story and photographs by Jo Sullivan

by James Thiessen

Funding our projects



The Australian Government's National Landcare Program (NLP) is the major funding commitment supporting Alinytjara Wilurara (AW) to undertake natural resource management projects in the AW region.

AW applied for funding for a number of projects that align with the program's aims. These include:

Hooded plover project: One year funding July 2018 - June 2019. Hooded plover - undertaking interventions to maintain the Hooded plover population along the remote Yalata coastline.

Sustainable pastoral development projects: (2018-2019 and 2019-2023). Sustainable pastoral development in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) pastoral areas. These projects aims to implement activities to increase capacity of landholders in the APY Lands to adopt practices that will

improve native vegetation and biodiversity on-farm.

Malleefowl adaptive management project (2018-2023) aims to confirm and increase baseline knowledge of malleefowl in the AW region to contribute to the National Malleefowl Recovery Plan. Monitoring Sandhill dunnarts, Ooldea Guinea-flower and Mount Finke grevillea, near malleefowl locations is part of the project. Camel removal and vegetation monitoring will be established to support healthy habitat for malleefowl. Feral predator removal (foxes and cats) will be undertaken as well as fire and buffel grass management to reduce threats to malleefowl and Sandhill dunnart habitat. All activities will include engagement with Aboriginal land managers to build community capacity.

Warru project Translocation and population management into former habitats within the APY Lands 2019-23.

The project builds upon the success of the Warru (black-footed rock-wallaby) Program (active in the APY Lands since 2010) by implementing a discrete set of activities to increase the current population and distribution of warru.

Risks to threatened plant species associated with warru habitat will also be addressed. The capacity of the APY Lands community to ensure the long-term survival of the warru will be increased. Activities are: monitoring existing and translocated warru populations, identifying warru translocation sites, translocating warru, threatened flora surveying and mapping, identification and management of threats to warru and threatened flora populations, increased engagement with, and job opportunities for the APY Lands community through delivery of information sessions and by increasing opportunities for local Aboriginal rangers.



Access to Koonalda cave made safer

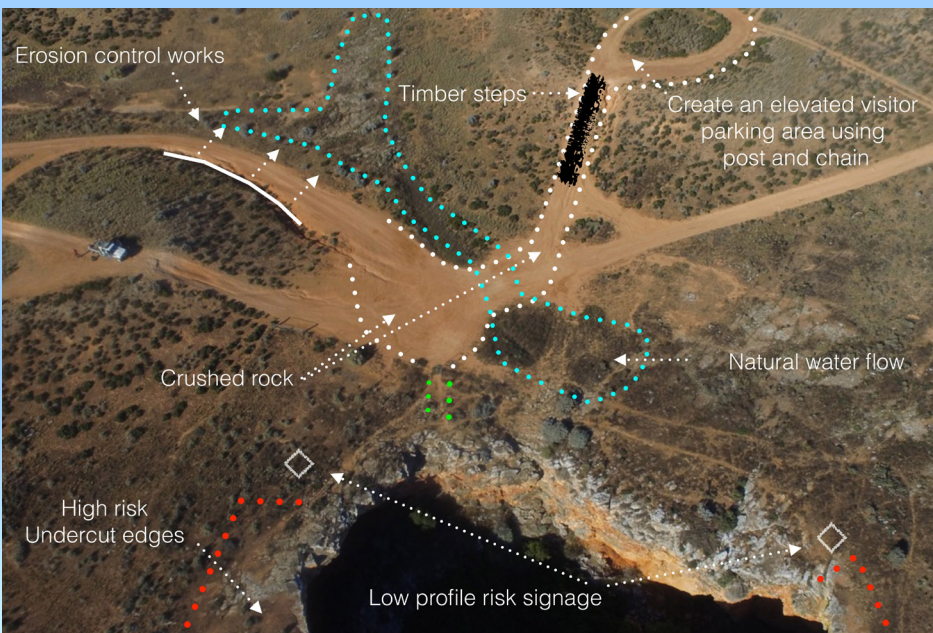
By Dalin Song



Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara (AW) and Eyre Peninsula (EP) staff have been working hard with community members from Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation (FWCAC) to complete various works identified in the Koonalda cave access management plan.

AW and EP Senior Ranger Robert Sleep presented the access management plan to the Nullarbor Parks Advisory Committee (NPAC) in early May 2019. The plan was fully endorsed by the committee on the condition that appropriate cultural advisors were taken to the site to assess and provide guidance on cultural sensitivities that needed to be taken into account and acted upon prior to any works occurring. NPAC Chair Clem Lawrie and Member Neville Miller attended the site with staff following the meeting and provided cultural clearances, conditions and final endorsement for the work.

With support from FWCAC community members and independent contractors, AW and EP staff Robert Sleep and Ashleigh Wild (EP) constructed a staircase to ensure safe access to the edge of the cave and a designated car parking zone away from the crumbly edges of the cave. The main track to the site was graded to improve visitor safety and public access, whilst other tracks were closed and rehabilitated to mitigate impact to flora.





“On top of providing safe and appropriate public access and vehicle parking, these works will protect the cultural and natural values of the cave and its surrounding areas.”

“The works will prevent water erosion and expansion of un-controlled track networks around the cave” said AW and EP Senior Ranger Robbie Sleep.

NPAC Chair Clem Lawrie expressed his excitement to see the beloved Aboriginal heritage listed site of national significance being protected while also providing employment and training opportunities for the traditional custodians in the region.

Koonalda cave was one of the sites visited by senior staff from the Department for Environment and Water back in October 2018. It was considered to be a key tourism site for economic advancement in the AW region.



photos: Robbie Sleep



Wall map developed for Oak Valley Rangers

There has been a pressing need for a large wall map in Oak Valley to allow Traditional Owners and rangers a point of reference to talk about Country, discuss issues and plan natural resource management (NRM) work.

Oak Valley Land Management Coordinator Ben Deslandes and NR AW Coordinator, Data and Information Management Adam Wood met in Ceduna to try and determine what sort of map is best suited to the rangers’ requirements. It was decided that the most useful map would be large and basic and include the Maralinga Tjarutja area overlapping into WA showing the locations of sand dunes, lakes, conservation reserves and vehicle and mining tracks.

The map will only be available for Oak Valley community to use.

Below: Oak Valley Rangers checking the prototype map at shed tank



by Adam Wood

A key feature of the wall map will be the attachment of a dry gloss overlay. This will allow the map to be drawn over as many times as needed using whiteboard markers.

It is hoped that the map will help support facilitation of communications around cultural and NRM issues among the community.

Using GIS (Geographical Information System) and environmental data, Adam Wood produced a number of prototype maps for the rangers to consider.

The most appropriate map was selected and confirmed by Oak Valley Rangers during a visit on Country.

The large wall map (4.5m wide by 2.5m high) was printed and delivered to the community in June.

Above: Evening during on county consultations with Oak Valley Rangers



photo Bruce Hammond



Keeping weeds at bay in the APY Lands

by Jo Sullivan

Infestations of two species listed as Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) are being tackled in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands with control work in 2019 already undertaken across more than 100ha.

Having received training in weed mapping and control techniques in early March, Cleon Kenny, Glen Ward, Sandy Tjangala and Walter Tjami have been putting their skills to good use, working hard to remove Athel pine (*Tamarix aphylla*) from creeks near Yunyarinyi (Kenmore Park) and 'prickly pear' cactus (*Opuntia sp.*) from Mintabie. Stump cut and poison techniques have been employed to kill the weeds with follow-up spraying occurring 2-3 weeks after the initial treatment.

There are currently thirty two species listed as WoNS across Australia due to their invasiveness, potential for spread and environmental, social and economic impacts.

Athel pine affects pastoral country in the APY Lands by forming dense stands along inland rivers where it consumes water more quickly than native plants. This lowers water tables and reduces the number and quality of watering holes. As well as displacing eucalyptus and other native vegetation, Athel pine also excretes salt through its leaves which increases salt levels in soils and further reduces the diversity of native vegetation.

Prickly pear often grows in dense patches that are virtually impenetrable to livestock and other animals. These

dense patches can harbour pest animals such as rabbits and reduce land productivity and biodiversity by smothering native shrubs, grasses and ground cover species.

This work has been delivered as part of the *Improving vegetation cover for soil erosion and biodiversity outcomes in APY Pastoral Area's, South Australia* project. This is delivering a range of activities aimed at improving vegetation cover and biodiversity and reducing soil erosion in APY pastoral areas. This project is supported by the AW NRM Board through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Above: Team uses stump cut and poison techniques to remove Athel pine

Left: Well established stand of prickly pear

Below: Grazing feral horses (Athel pine centre)



photo Bruce Hammond



photo Jo Sullivan

APY Pastoral mapping

by Adam Wood



Walter with map of Balfours Well paddock infrastructure plan. This will be forwarded to the APY Anthropologist for site clearance.

Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator Walter Tjami recently completed mapping five pastoral paddocks using the online mapping tool FarmMap4D.

Walter has worked closely with NR AW's Coordinator, Data and Information Management Adam Wood to learn how to effectively use FarmMap4D and apply it to map pastoral areas in the vast and remote APY Lands.

FarmMap4D has a range of inbuilt mapping tools designed for non-specialist users to be able to accurately map their pastoral paddocks and its infrastructure. The mapping provides better understanding of paddock sizes, bore locations, tanks/troughs, grazing circles, elevation for proposed pipelines, lengths of fences, vehicle tracks, grid and gate locations etc.

Other important tools include time series ground cover monitoring and sustainable stocking rate calculator based on paddock sizes, grazing circles, land types and land condition.

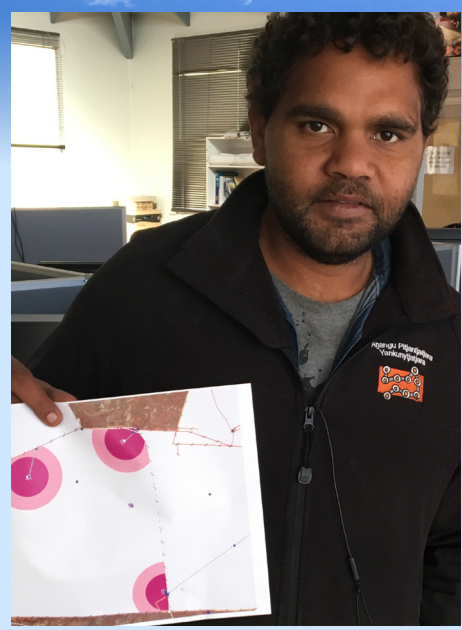
Proposed works can also be mapped for future planning. Having access to this information supports more effective and efficient decision making.

Seventeen pastoral paddocks have now been mapped in the APY Lands, a total of 290,000 hectares.

Adam and NR AW's Acting Manager, Planning and Sustainable Landscapes James Thiessen visited the APY Lands in May and were pleased to see Walter competently using the FarmMap4D program.

While in APY Lands, Adam and James also met up with the warru project staff and rangers on site near Wamitjara.

Attending the Warru Annual General Meeting provided Adam and James with



Map of proposed pipelines from existing bores and 3 x 5 km grazing circles

fresh insight into the project. They also visited a few warru traps and checked out a Felixer in the morning before heading to Murputja to complete some maintenance on weather station.

"It was great having James visit the APY Lands, meet the people, and get out to a project site. Although he has extensive project and operational management background working in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM region, this trip gave him the opportunity to better understand the size and scale of the challenges in managing natural resources in APY.

"His input and fresh look at projects was much appreciated by all of us at NR AW" said Adam.



James talking to Brett, Peter and ranger over Felixer.





AW's project delivery in the APY Lands

In early May, Natural Resources Alinytjara Wilurara's Regional Manager Leah Feuerherdt, and Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Officer Jo Sullivan, travelled to Umuwa in the APY Lands to discuss the progress of APY Pastoral Areas project. There they met with Michael Clinch, APY Pastoral Manager, Walter Tjami, APY Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator and Tania King, APY Stakeholder Engagement Manager.

The 12-month project aimed at improving vegetation cover for soil erosion and biodiversity, delivered through a partnership between the AW NRM Board and APY community and is supported by the AW NRM Board through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Invasive species - weeds

Weeds generally out-compete native plants and reduce the quality of habitat and available food for native species. Invasive athel pines (*Tamarix aphylla*) have been removed from more than 100 hectares of creeks and rivers and 'prickly pear' cactus (*Opuntia sp.*), removed from the Mintabie area.

Large feral herbivores

Large feral animals such as horses, donkeys and camels reduce ground-cover as well as damage fences and water points. This increases farming costs, reduces potential stocking rates and increases the risk of erosion. Feral animals also damage native vegetation reducing available food and habitat for native animals. As part of the program 2949 feral camels and 753 horses have been removed so far from over two million hectares.

Pastoral land mapping

At completion of the APY Pastoral Areas project in June 2019 infrastructure (including fences and water points) will be mapped across seven grazing paddocks using FarmMap4D Livestock Management Software. Vegetation cover will also be monitored at 26 established land-condition monitoring sites located on grazing paddocks.

The vegetation monitoring and paddock mapping provides pastoral land managers in the APY Lands with up-to-date information on the current condition of their paddocks and allows seasonal stocking rates to be calculated for optimum grazing management.

Training delivery

Training in sustainable pastoral management, weed control, vegetation monitoring and spatial mapping is also being delivered as part of this project to increase community awareness, skills and adoption of sustainable pastoral management practices, while also increasing employment opportunities in the APY Lands.

Livestock management centres

The 2019-23 Sustainable pastoral development in APY Pastoral Areas project will also fund construction of five Landscape and Livestock Management Centres (LLMCs). These will be used as training facilities for pastoral managers in the APY Lands.

LLMCs are specifically designed self-muster yards and processing centres where stock can be regularly monitored for health, growth rates and fertility.

LLMCs also allow for better managed cattle grazing and feral herbivore management around water access points and help facilitate early interventions to prevent land degradation.

Warru (black-footed rock-wallaby)

The planning of the translocation and population management of warru into former habitats within the APY Lands, project continues. It builds upon the success of the Warru Program (active in the APY Lands since 2010) by increasing the current population and distribution of warru in the APY Lands through the establishment of a third translocated population of warru into a former habitat.

Risks to the threatened plant species, Mount Illbillie mintbush (*Prostanthera nudula*) and Mimili orchid (*Pterostylis sp.*) which are both associated with warru habitat will also be addressed as part of the project along with weed, feral animal and fire management activities.

The project will also increase skills, awareness and job opportunities for the APY Lands community, increasing the community's capacity to ensure the long-term survival of warru.

This project will be overseen by the Warru Recovery Team which is a partnership between Traditional Owners of the APY Lands, the communities of Kalka, Pipalyatjara, Pukatja and Kenmore Park on the APY Lands, Alinytjara Wilurara NRM Board through funding from the Australian Government National Landcare Program, APY Land Management, Ecological Horizons Pty Ltd, Conservation Ark (Zoos SA) and The University of Adelaide.



Signage for Hooded plover

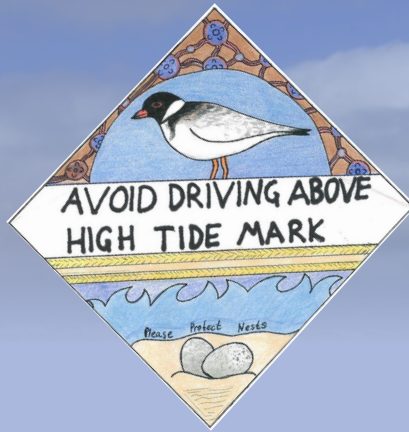
Yalata Anangu School and IPA Rangers

Through a combined effort from Birdlife Australia, DEW Eyre Peninsula and Alinytjara Wilurara staff, Yalata IPA Rangers, Yalata Anangu School students and teachers, we were able to identify and help mitigate threats to vulnerable Hooded plovers along the Yalata coastline. School students and rangers worked to create signage to educate those visiting Yalata's beaches on nest protection and their threats, all supported through education by BirdLife Australia staff. The key messages were:

1. Hooded plovers nests above the high tide mark, where vehicles often drive. This results in accidental nest destruction and chick deaths through human activity.

2. Hooded plovers are also threatened by introduced predators such as foxes and cats. This results in low success rates of Hooded plover chicks and therefore lower populations.

In June upper school students installed their access management signs with assistance of Yalata IPA Rangers and Alinytjara Wilurara's Community Coordinator Karrena Veltman.



Ranger Jeromy and student Clinton work together to make sure the signs are sturdy.



Choosing where to put the sign – a group effort!



Yalata Beach signs in situ



Left: Students from Yalata Anangu School with the Ranger team during the sign installation day at Jaxson's beach

Above left: Collaboration of access management designs created by upper school Yalata Anangu School students

by Kerrena Veltman

Welcome to the AW team



Tatia Currie

The AW NRM Board and AW team are pleased to welcome Tatia Currie who recently joined the team as our Regional Planning Coordinator.

Tatia has extensive experience working with Indigenous communities across the Southern African and Indian Ocean Region as well as in Australia, implementing various aspects of sustainable development,

including community tourism and agricultural certification.

More recently, she worked in public policy and joins us from the Higher Education sector where she tutored Aboriginal students in Social Sciences at Wirltu Yarlur and Yunggoorendi.

Although Tatia is now based in Adelaide she has lived and worked in many locations around the world. She is keen to spend more time on Country and get to know the people of our region.



Yalata Beach

Hooded plover genetics study

During December 2018 and April 2019, two four-day trips were made to undertake surveys that would inform management plans for interventions to maintain the Hooded plover population along the remote Yalata coastline.

The surveys were undertaken by a BirdLife Australia (Beach-nesting Birds) team and collaborators from Deakin University and Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula and Alinytjara Wilurara staff.

On the December 2018 trip, the BirdLife Australia team set out to trap, band and take genetic samples from Hooded plovers. Conditions were challenging with the birds primarily using rock platforms and being unwilling to move along the beach where traps were set. In April, high tides and the cessation of breeding behaviours increased difficulty with trapping.

There was no evidence of nesting or chicks detected during either trips.

From the small population (maximum 9-10 birds), six were banded and sampled for genetics.

Yalata Aboriginal Rangers

During the April trip the team spent three days on the beaches working with rangers from Yalata. They helped search for the birds and shared their local knowledge of the area providing guidance through the logistically challenging landscape. After being shown capture techniques, the rangers assisted in setting traps and herding the birds toward the traps. When a hooded plover was captured the BirdLife team demonstrated the entire process from capture to release to the rangers.

Two rangers also attended the presentation to the school group, where they saw many photos of nests in situ and heard about the challenges of protecting them. Habitat scrapes along

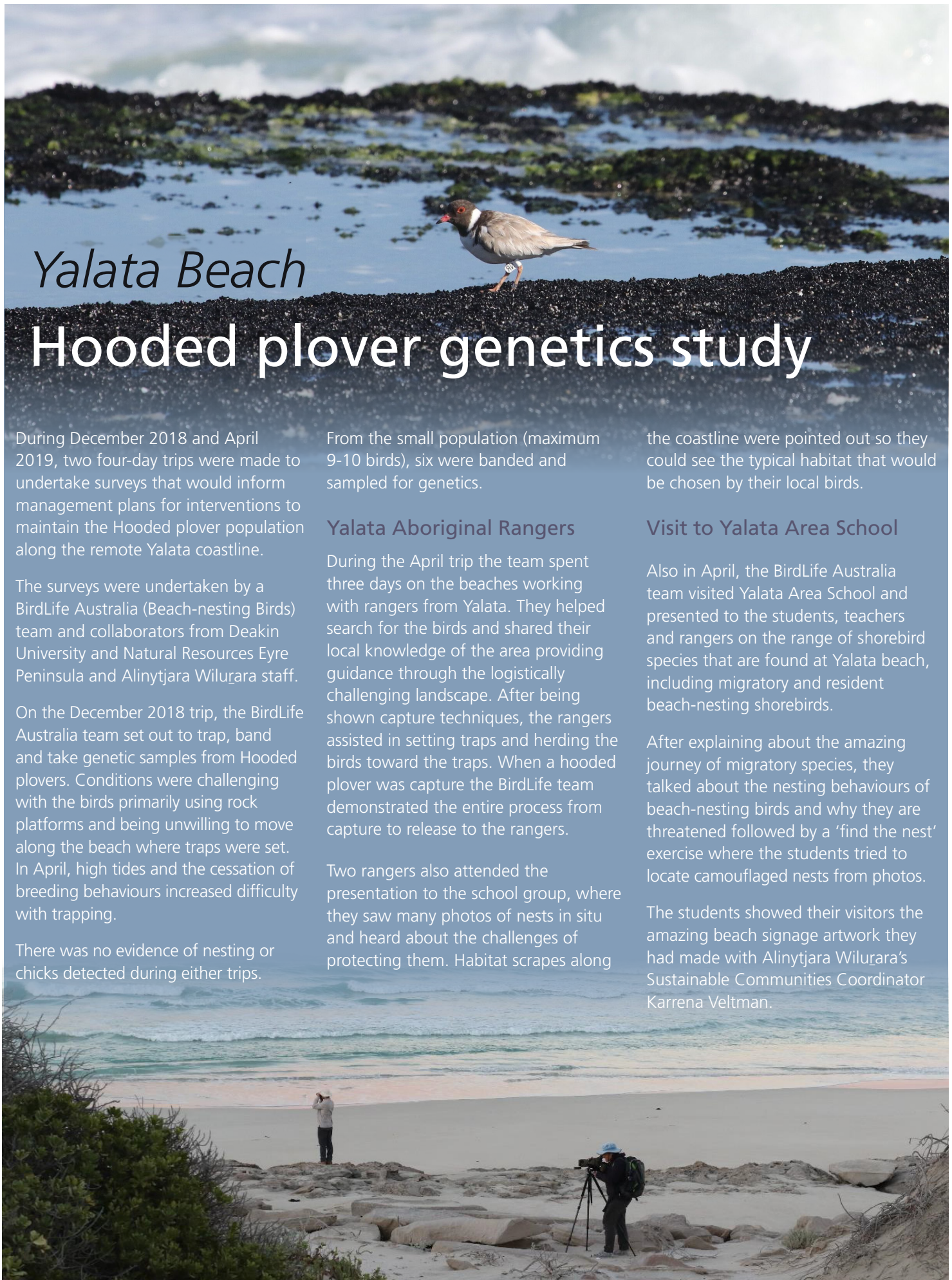
the coastline were pointed out so they could see the typical habitat that would be chosen by their local birds.

Visit to Yalata Area School

Also in April, the BirdLife Australia team visited Yalata Area School and presented to the students, teachers and rangers on the range of shorebird species that are found at Yalata beach, including migratory and resident beach-nesting shorebirds.

After explaining about the amazing journey of migratory species, they talked about the nesting behaviours of beach-nesting birds and why they are threatened followed by a 'find the nest' exercise where the students tried to locate camouflaged nests from photos.

The students showed their visitors the amazing beach signage artwork they had made with Alinytjara Wilurara's Sustainable Communities Coordinator Karrena Veltman.



DNA sampling

Genetic surveys are used to gain a better understanding of the Yalata Hooded plover population and to identify any potential links with WA or SA in order to better adapt management actions in the future.

Blood samples were taken from the local birds to inform genetic research. These samples were large enough to separate, with one sample sent to DNA Solutions to provide the sex of each bird, and the rest of the sample supplied to Museums Victoria, among a total of 92 samples from elsewhere in South Australia and Victoria.

Food sources and habitat

The BirdLife team suggested that a survey of food resources along the Yalata coastline would assist in identifying marine and terrestrial coastal factors that influence the presence/absence of Hooded plovers. Nesting habitat on the other hand is in no shortage, with expansive foredune and dune habitats with sparse to no vegetation and evidence that the birds were using the dunes up to at least several kilometres inland from the waterline.

Educating beach drivers

Controlling vehicle access for the protection of the birds poses a number of challenges due to the nature of Yalata beach landscape. It is often impossible to drive below the high tide mark due to the steepness of the beaches, soft and sinking sand, and risks with incoming tides.

Protection of the nests located in the dunes will be easier as these areas



Yalata rangers search the dunes



Andrew Sleep (EP) and Dr Mike Weston (Deakin University)



Hooded Plover tagged and ready for release



Karrena Veltman (AW) helps with bird release



could be roped off to encourage drivers to avoid nesting habitat.

One option is to install signage to remind drivers to:

- watch out for birds running out in front of the vehicle and slow down if they see the movement of birds and going around (seaward side) them
- slow down as they approach the main Hooded plover territory zones
- slow down when driving on the beach in low light or poor visibility
- slow down when seaweed is ahead as chicks and adults often shelter behind it and it's harder to see until the vehicle is close by
- move away from any area where behaviours like broken wing display are seen and not settle within 100m

The permit system for Yalata also presents a perfect opportunity to pass on information as a succinct 'cheat sheet' about nesting birds and what to do if they are seen.

This survey was supported by the Alinytjara Wilurara NRM Board through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



photos BirdLife

Mick Haynes
Presiding Member



AW NRM Board

Mima Smart
Board Member, Yalata



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

Debbie Hansen
Board Member, Tjuntjuntjara



Kristy Richards
Board Member, ALT



Julie O'Toole
Board Member, AMYAC



Peter Miller
Board Member, Far West Coast



Anton Baker
Board Member, APY Lands



Sally Scales
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