

# Palya!

**STRONG PEOPLE HEALTHY COUNTRY and WATER**

*Anangu Kunpu, Ngura Kunpu munu Kapi*

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- 08 National Malleefowl research
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Government of South Australia  
Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board



Australian Government



## From the General Manager, Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board



Welcome to the 2020 summer edition of Palya where we share stories from the Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board and our region.

My name is Damian Miley and I'm the new

General Manager for the Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board. I've been in this role since late October and am fast learning about AW's

highly motivated board and the dedicated team that support their endeavours.

I would like to thank James Thiessen, familiar to you all, who held this role for over six months and has now returned to his standing role as Program Manager. We're very lucky to have you James, thank you.

Though the Alinytjara Wilurara region is new to me, conservation and natural resource management is not. I came from Queensland to South Australia over five years ago to undertake the role of Regional Director for what was then, the Kangaroo Island NRM Board under the Department for Water and Environment.

In combination with this I bring with me significant experience in natural resource management and Indigenous policy, amongst other skills and experiences gained along the way both nationally and internationally.

Working in far north Queensland I led the Torres Strait Land and Sea Management Unit within the Torres Strait Regional Authority delivering on a very ambitious environmental management program. This involved various teams coordinating natural resource and environmental programs with rangers undertaking land and sea based work including cultural commitments, traditional ecological knowledge, conservation, fire, pests and biosecurity.

Working with Aboriginal Cape York and Gulf and Torres Strait communities presented many special moments for me professionally as well as personally with my family.

There's no doubt that 2020 has been an interesting year, with devastating fires in South Australia, the impacts of COVID-19 and the final transition from NRM Boards to the new Landscape Boards.

As Parry suggests in the Chair's column, this is a new era for the board and I look forward to supporting them and to guiding the team to meet the collective challenges ahead, building strong partnerships and effective mechanisms that bring results.

As I gain a better understanding of the natural resource management issues impacting on this arid landscape and on our communities I welcome the opportunity to work together with them to achieve their aspirations for healthy Culture and Country.

Wishing you all a safe and enjoyable holiday season. Happy reading.

Palya,

Damian Miley  
General Manager  
Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board

### So, are we PALYA?

*Palya: Pitjantjatjara word for good, fine, hello, goodbye*

We at AW are keen to hear from you to help us understand what we might do to improve this publication, what you like, what you might like to see change.

Please help us by providing your feedback either through: Facebook/Twitter/Instagram or by emailing us at: [aw.landscapeboard@sa.gov.au](mailto:aw.landscapeboard@sa.gov.au)

THANK YOU

### Where we are and what we do

The Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape region (previously known as 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 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 an NRM region, the AW Landscape Board's aim is the protection of the land for the mutual benefit of the country and its people.





Yalata women and girls who took part in the Minymaku on-Country trip



## 02 Board's strong partnerships



Best outcomes for Community through partnerships - EP and SAAL Landscape Boards and Far West Coast leaders

## 03 New GM on Country

Gaining perspective on Country and meeting the locals



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Ceduna exhibition tells story of Community work

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Community priorities basis of new AW Regional Plan

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Retaining and reviving Aboriginal languages central to cultural heritage

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Pressing need to reduce warru numbers from inside the pintji

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Trapping dunnarts is often full of surprises



## From the Chair



Welcome to the 2020 Summer edition of Palya.

As I reflect on the extraordinary year that has been, it reaffirms to me how resilient Aboriginal people have shown themselves to be during difficult times.

We have all heard so much negative news about the impacts of COVID-19 on health, politics, travel etc. but for me it has brought to the fore a greater awareness of people's strength, resourcefulness and sense of community.

It's a new era, one in which our board is excited at the prospect of meeting the challenges of change with clear-headed strong decisions that will support healthy country and the people of our region.

As an all-Aboriginal board we understand the depth of connection felt by the people of our region and their sadness when they see their country is 'sick'.

But we also know how strong, knowledgeable and resourceful they are and we look forward to continuing to work with them to heal their land and build its resilience in the face of climate change, and the impacts of invasive weeds and feral animals.

We recognise that achieving our vision is not without challenges. However through the contributions of many and with strong and trusted partnerships we will work to see the people of our region realise their aspirations for healthy Culture and Country.

With the key role in supporting us to meet our objectives I am very pleased to welcome our new General Manager Mr Damian Miley. His extensive work with Aboriginal people and landscape management will undoubtedly bolster the Board's capacity to do its work.

As I look forward to the New Year I wish you all the best and hope that you are able to enjoy time with family and friends over the holiday period. Stay safe and well!

*Parry Agius*

Parry Agius  
Chair  
Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board





# Strong Partnerships bring best outcomes for Community

SA Arid Lands Landscape Board • Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board • Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation • SA National Parks and Wildlife

The Alinytjara Wilurara (AW) Landscape region covers over a quarter of a million square kilometres across the northwest quarter of South Australia. To the east we abut the massive land-bound SA Arid Lands (SAAL) Landscape region and to the south the fertile coastal country of the Eyre Peninsula (EP) Landscape region.

Although our regions are unique in many ways we also have much in common so it makes sense to develop trusted relationships in which common issues can be discussed and managed through knowledge and resource sharing.

"Feral animals and weeds don't recognise borders on a map nor

distinguish between one region and the next so working together with neighbouring regions maximises opportunities for effective cross-border land management and adds strength to our ability to influence" said Mr Parry Agius, Chair of the AW Landscape Board.

To this end, in October 2020 the AW Board met in Port Lincoln to talk with representatives from the EP Landscape Board and SAAL Landscape Board and their respective General Managers.

"The enthusiastic and positive response of the Board leaders to our proposal to work more closely together in the future will undoubtedly unfold to benefit the people and the country of all three landscape regions" said Mr Agius.

Key topics of discussion included:

- current opportunities under the Landscapes Priorities Fund
- tourism opportunities
- climate change impacts
- resourcing issues and ways to maximising use of resources
- the need to develop new young leaders - offering traineeships, cadetships and ranger programs that lead to jobs
- supporting opportunities to bring Aboriginal women together e.g. the Aboriginal Women's Conferences (something similar for Aboriginal men)
- the need for Aboriginal Board members on the SAAL and EP Landscape Boards particularly when there are sacred sites where mining is planned or already occurring
- funding management and opportunities.

Earlier in the year the Board met with the Chairs of the Nullarbor Parks Advisory Committee and the Yumbarrra Conservation Park Comanagement Board, and the Chair and Chief Executive Officer of the Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation to consider how we might all work together in the future.

The Board wishes to thank all these leaders for their thoughts and contributions and looks forward to building further trusted and worthwhile relationships that continue to benefit our regions.

Above: meeting with leaders from across the regions

Left: Map of SA showing the area of the three partnering landscape regions





# New General Manager on Country



AW Landscape Board's newly appointed General Manager Damian Miley, travelled to the Alinytjara Wilurara (AW) region's far west coast where he met our Ceduna-based staff and talked with local Community leaders and Co-management representatives.

After meeting AW's Operations team and learning first-hand about their work and work environment, Damian joined the Nullarbor Parks Advisory Committee's (NPAC) on-line meeting. The Department for Environment and Water's Director of Landscape Services Matt Ward chaired the meeting. Matt has a long-standing relationship with both the AW board the NPAC.

During the meeting AW's Regional Planning Coordinator Tatia Currie provided an update on the development of the AW's 5-year Regional Plan 2021-2026. She explained that it will be inclusive of the priorities recorded in the community devised Healthy Country Plans.

"Our Ceduna Office is a shared facility with Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board and National Parks and Wildlife Services staff. It was immediately evident how well they all work together while maintaining a clear understanding of who they work for and each other's roles and responsibilities. Working as one family and watching each other's backs is especially important in this regional and remote setting" said Damian.

Accompanied by AW's Program Manager James Thiessen and Ecologist Brett Backhouse, Damian held talks with the Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation's (FWCAC) CEO John Buckskin and Ranger Coordinator Dale Furley who provided insight into the organisation's governance and their developing ranger teams.

Damian said it was a very positive meeting with FWCAC reaffirming AW's ability to assist and support land management and ranger capacity building through our network of partners.

Together with James and Brett, Damian visited several important on-ground project sites around Googs Lake and Yumbarra Conservation Park including visiting one of many rockholes in the area.

The group walked a few hundred meters through the bush to visit an active malleefowl nest where Brett explained about the importance of AW's Malleefowl work at both a local and national level. He explained that data collected in Yellabinna and Maralinga Tjarutja forms part of the broader research undertaken by the National Malleefowl Recovery Team.



"There is no better way to gain perspective than to surround yourself with the sights, smells and sounds of the country that the people of our region call home".

Accompanied by James and AW's Operations Manager Ollanta (Olly) Lipcer, Damian travelled to the Head of Bight (HoB) stopping along the way at Yalata Community to pick up Yalata Anangu Aboriginal Corporation's CEO David White.

"It's quite a few hour's drive to the HoB from Yalata and back again but it was a perfect time to talk about how we can grow our support and relationship with Yalata and look for potential opportunities to collaborate.

"This trip was invaluable time out of the office, giving me the opportunity to meet face-to-face with our team members and partners. There's no better way to gain perspective than to surround yourself with the sights, smells and sounds of the country that the people of our region call home " said Damian.

Above left: James Thiessen, David White (centre) and Damian Miley (right) at the Head of Bight

Centre: Entering Yellabinna Regional Reserve

Below: Damian - a quick stop on the way to the Head of Bight







# NAIDOC Exhibition in Ceduna

The AW Landscape Board were proud to celebrate NAIDOC this year with an exhibition of photos and stories about the work being done by the Aboriginal people who live in the region caring for their Country.

The people of Yalata Community have shown particular dedication to the care of their local coastal region. Collecting marine debris from the beaches and dunes, creating signage to reduce visitor impacts and participating in various surveys with the AW team over the years.

“Working with the Traditional Owners on Country in our region is an incredible experience. I’ve learned so much from them and greatly respect their cultural knowledge and how they apply it in caring for their Country and its people” said AW’s Sustainable Communities Coordinator Karrena Veltman.

Two-way knowledge sharing is an important part of reconciliation and remains a key priority of the AW Landscape Board.

The exhibition was staged at the Ceduna Foreshore Hotel, well known for its excellent food, accommodation and friendly staff. The hotel kindly presented the collection of poster-sized boards in their foyer area where they were viewed by guests and patrons.

# Community remains at the heart of AW’s Regional Plan

## Progressing the Alinytjara Wilurara Regional Landscape Plan 2021-2026

The new five-year plan builds on the previous Alinytjara Wilurara Regional NRM Plan 2011, our foundational ten-year regional plan. This plan involved extensive consultation with Traditional Owners, Elders, general community, council members, scientists and technicians during all stages of its development.

The new plan is being developed using the ‘Healthy Country Planning’ (HCP) approach, also referred to as the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation, a planning framework that utilises participatory methods useful for planning with multi-stakeholder and diverse groups.

This planning approach is used by landholders across the AW region and an increasing number of organisations in Australia and around the world to ensure community input remains central to the process.

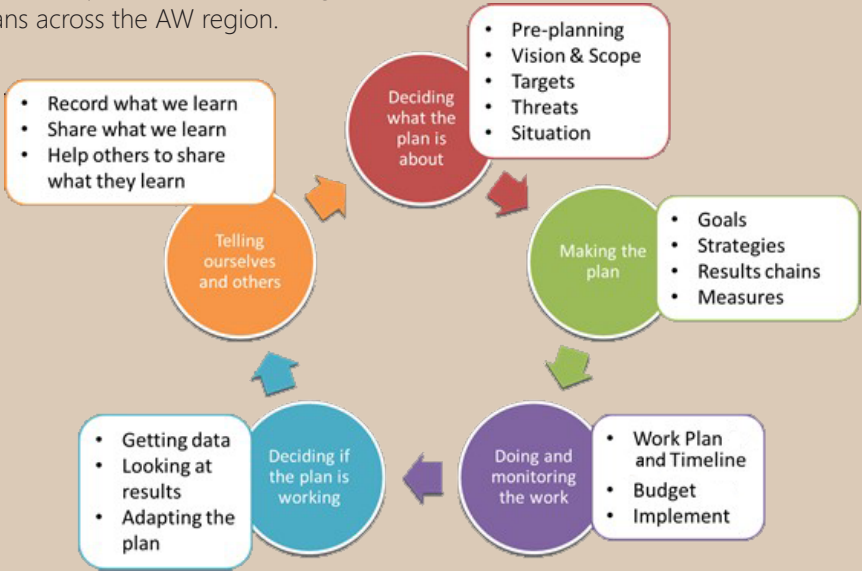
To ensure alignment between regional and sub-regional targets, the plan is informed by landholder Healthy Country Plans, Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) plans and Park Management Plans across the AW region.

Current planning included a Prioritisation workshop with members of the AW Landscape Board in October to develop the Vision statement and regional targets, for example: Leadership, Surface Water, Healthy Soils, Traditional and Ecological Knowledge and Places of Significance.

**AW’s Regional Plan is based on Healthy Country Planning which develops adaptive management plans with local communities for Indigenous land management programs ensuring that culture, people and their knowledge are central to the process.**

The Alinytjara Wilurara Regional Landscape Plan 2021-2026 will support and build upon the on-country work undertaken by landholders over many years. The draft plan is expected to be presented for community feedback in early 2021.

For more details on AW’s regional planning process, please contact Tatia Currie, AW’s Regional Planning Coordinator: [tatia.currie@sa.gov.au](mailto:tatia.currie@sa.gov.au)



Healthy Country Planning process undertaken by Traditional Owner groups to guide land management



# Languages of the Far West Coast

Historically, there were a number of First Nation's groups living in South Australia's Far West region each with distinct languages and cultural relevance. The impact however of colonialism, imposed relocation programs and atomic bomb testing on traditional lands has since caused much to be forgotten.

"The loss of language is a loss of connection to our cultural heritage. It's important that we continue to speak the languages and record and revive them before there is no-one left to pass them on to future generations" said Lynette Ackland, Coordinator of the Far West Languages Centre.

"Our languages give us our identity, they connects us to everything as First Nation's people. The land/sea sceneries connect to our dreaming/stories, songs connect with the stories/dreaming and dance/art connections. They all need language to tell the stories, its all interconnected and entwined. We are the oldest living culture in the world and as Kokatha, Wirangu and Mirning people we need to embrace all of our culture. Language is a very big part of our identity as First Nations people" she said.

With an all-Aboriginal membership the Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board understands the importance of this

connection and is a strong advocate for retaining and reviving Aboriginal languages and of sharing a wider appreciation of them.

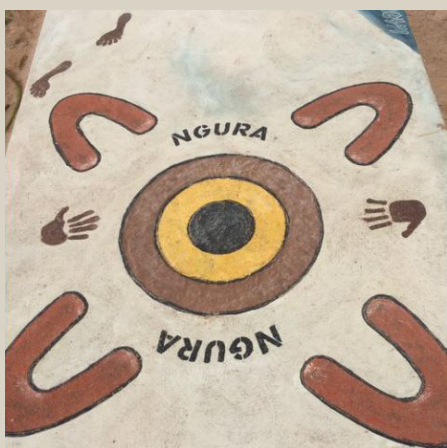
The Far West Languages Centre in Ceduna is one of only two Aboriginal language centres in South Australia. It provides support and assistance to revive the local endangered languages of the Far West Coast region as well as supports and maintains local Southern Desert languages.

The Centre initiates programs and supports empowerment of the Far West Coast's Aboriginal people through knowing, understanding, speaking and celebrating their languages, and reconnecting to their cultural heritage and country through them.

"The power of communicating in the language of our ancestors is an important step to re-empowering ourselves as First Nations People, proudly taking responsibility for moving forward into self determination. This is good not just for Aboriginal people but for everyone" said Lyn.

The Foreshore Pathway project, displays local First Nations language but the Language Centre would like to see more around the Ceduna township and region to show that local languages are still well alive.

Below: *Ngura* (home) and *Gabi Yala* (waterhole) designs set into Ceduna's foreshore footpath



## Connected through IDA Conference

10 November to 12 November 2020



AW's Program Manager James Thiessen 'ZOOM' in on the 2 day Indigenous Desert Alliance (IDA) Conference reinforced to him why AW partners with them and their affiliates.

"With desert ranger groups joining the conversation from across Australia there was great camaraderie and sharing of information" said James.

He said the sessions that allowed ranger groups to discuss how their projects were being delivered and possible better ways of doing things were really valuable, not just for the rangers but for everyone to gain a better understanding of their challenges and successes.

Other key topics covered included:

- development of a new National Threatened Species Strategy (Threatened Species Commissioner Dr Sally Box)
- new Desert Journeys website aimed a desert travellers, it highlights all the different Aboriginal groups and communities (Dr Hamish Morgan)
- Changes to Country as a result of Climate change being seen by rangers Oak Valley Rangers and Muru Warinyi-Ankkul Rangers
- night parrots found on Parna Ngururpa Aboriginal Corporation rangers Country using song meters
- development of ranger mentoring project to help keep rangers growing



# Yalata Minymaku Project

## Grassroots

by Karrena Veltmann

In February 2020 the Yalata Council agreed that they would like to pursue an opportunity presented to them by AW's Sustainable Communities Coordinator Karrena Veltman regarding the AW Landscape Board's Grassroots Grant.

The statewide Grassroots Grant program, funded by the state's regional landscape boards, was established to help communities improve their environmental outcomes and be more directly responsible for managing natural resources in their regions.

"The aim (of the Grant) is for communities to play a greater role in managing and improving landscapes, including carrying out on-ground works" said Minister for Environment and Water David Spiers.

In accordance with this, the Council decided on a project to support the women in their community to pass on cultural knowledge about Country.

The community's successful application for the Grassroots Grant was tailored to provide an opportunity for women,

young and old to feel empowered and to become future leaders in caring for Country and culture.

Goals for the project were to:

- fill gaps in opportunities for women
- inspire young people in the community
- encourage ownership and pride in land management
- promote the responsibility of caring for Country
- create a bilingual knowledge exchange book for current and future generations to use

**"You are the generation who will keep culture going, for the next generation, for your children, and your children's children"**

Mima Smart

Right: AW Board Member and Yalata Elder Mima Smart spoke to the younger generations about their cultural responsibilities

- create videos of teaching and learning on-country.

The women of Yalata community were very excited at the prospect of being part of this experience, finding carers for their children, checking medical provisions and preparing equipment and supplies.



In September, 30 women from Yalata spanning six generations gathered outside the Community eager to begin a four-day journey, not just of the Country but also of learning and sharing. Their key destinations included Pidinga Rockhole, Footness Cave and the coast near Mexican Hat Island.

They were joined by Karrena and AW's Operations Manager Ollanta Lipcer, and Parks and Wildlife Eyre and Far West Ranger Tamahina Cox. Well-known local artist Pam Diment also supported the group's day-to-day activities.



Left: Campfire talks continued well into the night





Senior Yalata Elder Rita Bryant walked out of the bush with her family as a child



Cultural knowledge was shared about the various uses of plants including the animals that rely on them as food and for habitat

There were many discussions held around what would be appropriate to share in the bilingual Community book they were developing.

Seated on the ground under the trees the women brainstormed about what was most important to share. They drew up an outline of what should be included including Tjukurpa (cultural stories), cultural, knowledge, the importance of plants and animals and how the next generation can look after country for many generations to come.

"As you get stronger and stronger, you'll be the teachers for the next generation" – Mima Smart

The women created small artworks to illustrate the book.

The Elders showed the younger women where various plants grew and explained about their use, both as food and as medicine, and how when and where they are grow.

"Being on Country with our nana's and our friends where we could talk and

have fun and be part of something good for our Community was really great. They taught us how we can be leaders and carry on the knowledge of our ancestors to future generations" said Nicole Koko, Yalata school student.

This trip marked the first in what is hoped by the women to be one of many.

Special mention to the senior school students and teachers from Yalata Community School for making sure everyone was fed and looked after throughout the trip.

The next step is to complete the artwork and stories for the book and follow up on these works in workshops held in Yalata community.

This project was driven and shaped by the women of the Yalata community. It was supported by the Yalata Council, and CEO David White and funded through the Grassroots Grants program.

Below: The women from Yalata gathered outside the Community eager to get started



## Meet Amanda Bowne



After finishing Year 12 I was lucky enough to gain a traineeship through the Department for Environment and Water's program and joined the Alinytjara Wilurara team as a Business Support Trainee in July 2019.

I had always had an interest in land management and was looking to start a career in environmental management. Part of my traineeship was involved the completion of a Certificate III in Business Administration which I have now completed. Once this was signed off I continued with AW but now as a Project Officer.

Working with the Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board has exposed me to many different learning experiences from working closely with the Board in various capacities and supporting the administration staff to ensure that the business runs smoothly and achieves good governance. As well as being exposed to government processes and understanding how Aboriginal Culture is respected in the SA Government.

I hope to continue my journey with AW into the future and am just about to embark on a new phase of my employment working with our Operations team in Ceduna, which I'm pretty excited about.

Although I plan to begin a Bachelor of Environmental Science later in 2021 to further my studies and career opportunities I am grateful for what I have learned and am continuing to learn with the AW team.

It's my hope that one day I can play a part in bringing western and Aboriginal land management together to create healthier Country for all to share respectfully.





## Working with FWC Rangers and the Far West Languages Centre

The Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board supports the National Malleefowl Recovery Team in implementing the National Recovery Plan to help save the endangered Malleefowl in regions across Australia.

This continues to be an important part of our on-country work with two Malleefowl survey trips into the northern and northwestern sections of Yellabinna Regional Reserve undertaken during September – October this year.

AW's Ecologist Brett Backhouse, Sustainable Communities Coordinator Karrena Veltman and Community Project Officer Stuart Sexton were assisted by the Far West Coast (FWC) Ranger team.

FWC Ranger team members, Angel Miller and Dale Furley, worked with the AW crew

on their first Malleefowl survey, conducted over late September – early October north of Googs Lake. Ranger Coordinator Dale Furley's son, Paddy, and Lyall Ware-Campbell from the FWC Languages Centre also came along to help out and record activities.

This survey incorporated manual observations of Malleefowl mounds (to see if they were active or disused, and to note any predator tracks around the nest), as well as the establishment of motion-activated cameras on grids around nesting sites to track the movement and density of feral predators (e.g. foxes and cats) in the vicinity of nests.

The camera grids were set up as a part of AW's involvement with the Adaptive Predator Management Experiment (APME) joint program to monitor the

Above: Barry Coleman Leads the way using his GPS. Brett Backhouse (AW Ecologist) and Lyall Ware-Campbell (FWC Languages Centre) following

effects of predators on the ongoing recovery of Malleefowl.

Angel, Dale, Lyall, Paddy and the AW crew visited multiple mounds, many of which showed positive signs of activity (indicating breeding). These indicators tell us that endangered Malleefowl continue to thrive in the AW region.

As a new Ranger, Angel was trained by AW's Ecologist Brett to use GPS devices to find the mounds, and in the use of AW's data collection software (Fulcrum) on a tablet to record her observations in real time at each mound visited. In

Centre: Angel makes a new friend – a Thorny Devil  
Below: Setting up a camera for the grid

Angel leads the team to another mound using GPS







Left: Barry Coleman observes a Malleefowl mound, shaded from the hot Yellabinnna sun

The AW Landscape Board supports our Malleefowl research with funds from the Australian Government's Regional Landcare Program.

Right: FWC Rangers Charlie Coleman (left) and James Peel (right) keeping hydrated (photo credit: Lyall Ware Cambell)



addition, she received training in setting up camera grids. It is planned that the FWC Rangers will take responsibility for monitoring and maintaining these grids on behalf of AW over the coming years.

Our second Malleefowl survey in late October, was in the northernmost region of Yellabinnna Regional Reserve, adjacent to the Barton Siding on the East-West railway. AW's Brett Backhouse and Stuart Sexton were accompanied by FWC Rangers Barry Coleman, Charlie Coleman and James Peel, again with further audio-visual documentation provided by Lyall Ware-Campbell from the FWC Languages Centre.

On this trip the crew visited multiple mounds, again checking for activity and signs of predators. They were pleased to see that Malleefowl appeared to be successfully breeding in this part of Yellabinnna too, with many mounds observed to be active.

FWC Rangers James, Charlie and Barry were shown how to use Fulcrum to record details about the mounds visited. The rangers also led the way, demonstrating their skills at using GPS to find the marked mound locations.

Lyall from the Far West Languages Centre documented all activities using his cameras. This trip involved many kilometres of walking to each mound (in the hot Yellabinnna sun), but all the Rangers showed great stamina and enthusiasm to visit the mounds and learn valuable new data recording skills.

## AW's role in the National malleefowl adaptive predator management experiment

The **Adaptive Predator Management Experiment** (APME) is a joint program being coordinated around the country by the National Malleefowl Recovery Team, in conjunction with the National Environmental Science Program (NESP), various universities and the Landholding Authorities where works are being undertaken.

The experiment compares the impact of predators on malleefowl populations over a set period of time in a 'control' (unmanaged) area with a similar area where predator management devices (Felixers) are installed.

The solar powered Felixer is a humane automated tool that uses rangefinder sensors to distinguish cats and foxes from wildlife such as dingoes. A measured dose of toxic gel is fired onto the feral animal's fur which is ingested during grooming causing them to go to sleep - permanently.

Within the AW Landscape region, two areas have been identified for the APME – Yellabinnna in the Far West Coast Native Title claim, and the Maralinga Tjarutja Lands. Both areas are in the Great Victorian Desert, and differ from many other APME sites as one is a park, the other Aboriginal free hold lands outside of the dog fence, meaning that the malleefowl cohabit with dingoes.

The two areas (zones) will be in close proximity to each other (separated by a minimum of 20 kilometres), have similar habitats, and contain malleefowl. One zone will have a Felixer operating, the other will not. This will occur in both Yellabinnna and Maralinga Tjarutja.

Camera grids will be set up in both the treatment (Felixer in use) and controlled zones. These consist of 10 remote trail cameras set in a loose grid 500m apart which will record insight into the effectiveness of employing Felixer (or other possible control techniques) as well as information on the effect of feral cats and red foxes on malleefowl.

The cameras will be in place for the entirety of the program, and will be checked approximately once every six months, for the rechargeable batteries to be replaced, and images retrieved from the SD cards.

**The National Malleefowl Recovery Team collate and consider the data gathered in the AW region as part of the Adaptive Predator Management Experiment. This will enable them to provide informed advice at a national level on the most effective ways to aid the recovery of malleefowl populations.**

Red fox caught on a motion sensor camera at a Malleefowl nest



by Brett Backhouse



# Warru Rangers to the rescue

In a four-day rescue operation in early November Warru Rangers and support teams relocated 40 endangered black-footed rock wallabies (warru) from the 100 hectare predator-free enclosure (pintji) in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands' to relieve pressure on the increasingly scarce food resources within the pintji.

The Rangers and team members from APY Land Management, Zoos SA and Ecological Horizons successfully undertook the emergency translocation of the animals from the pintji, to Wamitjara (Sentinel Hill).

APY Land Management's warru project coordinator, Peter Hamnett, praised the "extraordinary hard work" of the other 16 people involved in ensuring warru were given the best chance for survival at their new home.

Prolonged drought conditions over the last few years have led to poor regeneration of food plants in the pintji," "Mr Hamnett said.

"Meanwhile, warru numbers within the enclosure have continued to increase and are outstripping available food resources. If allowed to continue, this could undermine the long-term viability of the pintji and cause the captive population to crash.

"It was a huge undertaking but went incredibly smoothly thanks to the skill and experience of the Warru Rangers and Warru Recovery Teams."

Mr Hamnett said there was ample evidence of warru consuming non-preferred food plants, with clear browse lines on shrubs and trees, including the leaves of native apricot (*pittosporum angustifolium*), several species of acacia and native fig (*ficus brachypoda*).

Tracey Miller releasing a warru back into the Pintji. We retained about 1/3 of the warru we caught to ensure breeding continues in the pintji so we have more warru ready for upcoming translocations.

"Warru have even been eating the bark of several shrub and tree species where the leaves were no longer within reach and amazingly climbing into the canopy of native figs to consume the leaves and bark.

"The pintji population continues to grow due to the absence of predators within the fence; but due to the fence, warru within the pintji are unable to disperse naturally, which they would normally do when resources become scarce," Mr Hamnett said.

Below: The landscape at Wamitjara release site where food is currently more abundant. It is hoped they will settle in with the warru released there in 2017 and 2018 to help establish a strong self-sustaining population.





Despite the latest removal of 40 warru and the removal of another 34 from the pintji in May, there is still concern about the potential for a lack of significant rainfall this summer, which will place further strain on the warru remaining within the pintji.

APY Land Management and the Warru Recovery Team is looking after the last remaining wild populations of warru/black-footed rock wallabies in South Australia.

The enclosure allowed warru from Monarto Wildlife Park's captive breeding program to be reintroduced to the APY Lands without the threat of predation from feral foxes and cats.

The safe space provides a source population of warru in the APY Lands from which warru, considered one of South Australia's most endangered species, can be reintroduced to other sites where previous populations once existed.

Warru used to be common across all rocky outcrops within central Australia, including the APY Lands, but their numbers had declined sharply.

Isaac Gibson (holding the bag), Quentin Lewis extending the tail for measuring, Claire Hartvigsen-Power with tape measure at the ready and John Read in the background

Warru are a culturally significant species to Anangu and were once a prized food source as well as totemic animal.

The APY Lands' warru program provides significant employment and training opportunities for Anangu, allowing them to earn an income and develop skills on country, maintaining important connections to their land and culture.

APY Lands General Manager Richard King said the warru program helped restore the balance of nature as well as setting right the spiritual soul to the environment.

"For every animal we lose from our country a small light goes out which diminishes the overall brilliance of our country. Making sure we protect all our endangered species is all of our responsibility," Mr King said.

"Since the inception of this program, we have been able to increase the population of warru across the APY Lands. I would like to thank Peter Hamnett and recognise the Land Management team for their amazing efforts during the most recent bout of dry weather.

"After some recent rains we have seen a resurgence of young warru coming on. This bodes well for the future of warru on the APY Lands."

The AW Landscape Board proudly supports the work of the Warru Ranger Team with funds from the Australian Government's Regional Landcare Program.

The weary team squeeze in a quick snack on the last day in between checking the traps and translocating the final batch up warru to Wamitjara



Below: The pintji fence and cooler weather rolling in at sunset on the second to last day



Article and photography courtesy of APY Lands





# Sandhill Dunnarts search reveals surprises

by Stuart Sexton

This October AW's Regional Ecologist Brett Backhouse and Community Project Officer Stuart Sexton supported Ecological Horizons' lead Ecologist, John Read, to conduct a Sandhill Dunnart survey near Immarna, in the Northwest corner of the Yellabinna Regional Reserve.

This work was carried out as part of ongoing research into population dynamics of the elusive Sandhill Dunnart within the region, which has been carried out annually since 2008.

John and AW staff were assisted by Far West Coast's (FWC) Ranger Coordinator Dale Furley and Eyre Peninsular Landscape Board's NRM Officer, Alex Fraser. In addition, Lyall Ware-Campbell from the Far West Languages Centre came onto country to document the survey process with his AV equipment.

To survey the Sandhill Dunnarts, pitfalls were established with netting leading directly over the top of the pits. At night, when the Dunnarts are most active, they run into the net, follow it along and (sometimes) fall into the pit.

As Sandhill Dunnarts are an endangered species, they are quite rare to find in the traps. But on this trip the team did manage to capture one

Above: Pitfall traps with guide-netting

healthy female, with multiple tiny babies (joeys) in her pouch. This was great news and everyone was excited that this little Dunnart mother is doing her bit towards keeping the population thriving.



While only one Sandhill Dunnart was trapped on this trip, many other animals, including: lizards, snakes, marsupials, and rodents were recovered. The team recorded the species, the size and weight, and the sex of each animal. This was done early each morning, so that the animals were released in time to get out of the on-coming heat of the day.

The Sandhill Dunnart's preferred habitat, Spinifex grass, was also surveyed measuring its density, size and the overall condition around the survey sites.

The spinifex appeared to be bouncing back after the fires of 2012 was now providing habitat for the endangered marsupial.



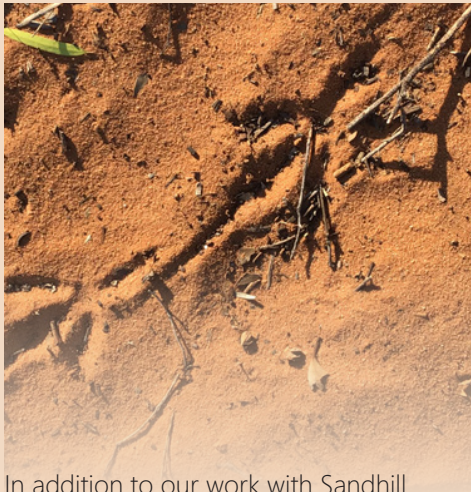
Above: Sand goanna about to be released

Below: Ringed Brown snake released onto the rain splattered sand

Left: Sandhill Dunnart (photo credit Department of Environment)







In addition to our work with Sandhill Dunnarts on this trip an opportunity arose to follow up on reports of Malleefowl in the area. AW have long been involved in surveying Malleefowl populations in our region, and the chance sighting of Malleefowl tracks while setting up pitfall traps was a lucky break.

The team followed the tracks for two kilometres, and were very happy to find an active Malleefowl nest. The nest's location and details were recorded and added to AW's ongoing work on Malleefowl recovery in the region.

Funding from the Australian Government, through the National Landcare Programme enables AW to continue contributing to the Malleefowl recovery program, and to survey other endangered or threatened species in our region including the Sandhill Dunnart.

*John Read (Ecological Horizons) and Brett Backhouse (AW Ecologist) celebrating after tracking down a new Malleefowl nest (Photo: Alex Fraser, EP Landscape Board)*



## The mysterious Night Parrot ... once part of SA's landscape

The Night Parrot (*Pezoporus occidentalis*) is a small Australian parrot that was thought to be extinct for over 100 years with no credible sightings of the species between 1912 and 1979. It was not until 2013 that a confirmed sighting proved it still existed.

**Based on the fact that many of the original specimens of the species collected in the late 1800 and early 1900's were from South Australia and that their typical habitat is abundant in northern South Australia there is good reason to think there may still be populations in the AW region.**

As the name suggests this small parrot is nocturnal, which for parrots, not only in Australia but around the world, is very unusual with only two truly nocturnal parrot species internationally recognised. One is the Night Parrot, the other is the large flightless New Zealand Parrot, the Kakapo (*Strigops habroptilus*).

Since 2013, much work has gone into working on identifying areas in which the species may still exist, with surveys focusing first in South Western Queensland where the original population was rediscovered. They have since then been discovered in Western Australia, with a number of populations being found in the

Pilbara region. The species has also been located in the Northern Territory, and while not found as yet in South Australia, areas of excellent habitat exists and there is historical evidence of previous population in the arid regions.

AW is currently working with landholding authorities and communities to attempt to relocate the species within our region. The species is found in Spinifex grass (*Tridoia*), which is found throughout much of the AW region. With Desert Support Services funding it is planned that targeted surveys will be undertaken using Song Meters to potentially locate the species.

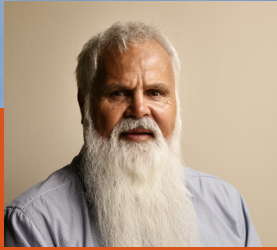
Threats to the species include introduced carnivores, such as the cat (*Felis catus*) and red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) as well as changes to fire regimes. Night Parrots tend to be found in areas with long-lived old growth Spinifex grass and as such changes to fire frequency can alter habitat making it unsuitable for the parrot.

Introduced weeds such as buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) also have an effect on Night Parrot habitat, in that it recolonises areas affected by fire faster than Spinifex, effectively out competing the preferred habitat and reducing the chances of Night Parrots living in this area again.

by Brett Backhouse  
Photo courtesy of Steve Murphy



Parry Agius  
Chair



Alinytjara Wilurara  
Landscape Board

Mima Smart  
Yalata Community



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

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