

Achievements in the Alinytjara Wilurara NRM Region

2018-19



Government of South Australia
Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources
Management Board



Natural Resources
Alinytjara Wilurara

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people should be aware that this publication may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.

Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources Management Board

Our vision:

**A healthy and valued region, managed responsibly now,
for the future benefit of people and country.**



Our partners

Funding partners



Community, government, and other partners



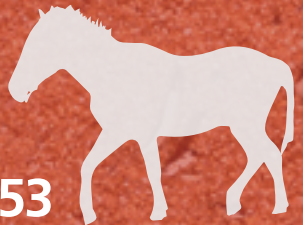
Key achievements snapshot



16 fauna surveys
completed



5162
camels eradicated



753
horses eradicated



5 weather stations maintained this year



176.5 million ha of land managed across the AW region



32 flora surveys completed



1 water affecting activity permit issued

73 Aboriginal people trained in natural resources management activities



42 Aboriginal people employed in natural resources management

4 workshops held to increase community awareness of sustainable pastoral management



7 training events to build community capacity in adopting sustainable pastoral practices





The Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources Management (AW NRM) Board and staff work to deliver on a range of outcomes and priorities as outlined in the board's *Business Plan 2017-18 to 2019-20*.

Following are some of the notable achievements of 2018-19.

These projects were directly funded or supported by the board with funds from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, State Government's NRM Fund, South Australian Native Vegetation Council, and Desert Support Services through the 10 Deserts Project.

AW NRM Board: Building and strengthening partnerships

The AW NRM Board strives to connect with communities by building and maintaining collaborative relationships with organisations at all levels (local, state, and national).

The board seeks and builds strong relationships with other NRM Boards to elevate its effectiveness in achieving its NRM objectives.

In February 2019 the board held its 63rd meeting in Port Lincoln to further develop a partnership arrangement with its southern neighbour, the Eyre Peninsula NRM Board. The two boards discussed multi-regional issues and looked at ways they might both benefit from sharing resources (skills and equipment) and knowledge.

Representing the board

Representing the board on various other related boards and committees ensures members are well informed and well connected to share an understanding of, and an interest in, the AW NRM Board's work.

Board member Kristy Richards represents the board as a member of the South Australian Wild Dog Advisory Group.

Michael (Mick) Haynes, Debbie Hansen and Mima Smart represent the board and the AW region as members of the 10 Deserts Project's Steering Committee.

Sally Scales and Julie O'Toole represent the board on the Outback Bushfire Coordination Committee.

In November 2018, then Presiding Member Parry Agius and board member (now Presiding Member) Mick Haynes attended the fifth annual Indigenous Desert Alliance Conference. Along with the Oak Valley Rangers they shared in national discussions about traditional fire management practices, feral animal and threatened species management, regional tourism initiatives, and ranger leadership across the country.



Recognising culture and community

Board member Peter Miller joined South Australia's west coast locals and other dignitaries at the official opening of the Elliston Coastal Trail and Wirangu Reconciliation ceremony in September 2018. As a Wirangu Elder, Peter strengthens the board's relationship with Aboriginal community groups, local councils, state governments, and national peak bodies.



Partnering to realise a shared vision

In 2018, the board partnered with the 10 Deserts (10D) Project which aims to sustain the health and resilience of Australia's iconic desert country and its people.

Project activities supported by the board through the 10D Project in the AW NRM region include camel management, fire management, buffel free Great Victorian Desert, and regional tourism.

In May 2019 the board assisted a tourism workshop in Ceduna to engage Far West Coast Aboriginal people in developing a 10D supported Tourism Plan.

The board also supports the work of the newly established Oak Valley Ranger team through this important partnership.

In building strong partnerships that benefit the AW region, the board committed to establishing a formal relationship with the *Aboriginal Biodiversity Conservation (ABC) Foundation* in February 2019.

This partnership offers the opportunity to have education and employment programs developed specifically for the AW region that support Aboriginal custodians in managing the natural resources of their Country.

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



People and the Community

The wellbeing of the people living in the AW region is central to the board's undertakings and as such, a key objective is increasing Aboriginal employment opportunities and engagement across the region.

New Ranger team in Oak Valley

The AW NRM Board supported the newly established Oak Valley Ranger team to undertake land management projects on Country through the 10 Deserts Project and National Landcare Program. Through these projects, an additional 16 Traditional Custodians have gained employment.

Employment and education

Having completed Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management in XXXX, APY Lands Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator Walter Tjami continues to receive support and mentorship from AW staff including mapping using the online tool FarmMap4D, and presentation at the 2019 National RALF Conference.

Forty-three Aboriginal people received training through community training events as part of delivering improved vegetation and biodiversity work in APY pastoral areas.

Community members from Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation and the new Oak Valley Ranger team were employed in malleefowl ground-truthing surveys, flora and fauna surveys, and the camel management control program.

BirdLife Australia was engaged to deliver on-ground training and education to Yalata Anangu School students and Yalata Land Management rangers on bird identification and threat mitigation related to Hooded plover.

After training in early 2019, landcare trainees from the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara Lands worked on vegetation monitoring surveys recording camel impacts in Tallaringa Conservation Park. They also learned techniques to treat, map and monitor Buffel grass and other weeds from a qualified pest management technician.





People and Country

Visitor access management

With approval from the Nullarbor Parks Advisory Committee (NPAC), access management works were undertaken around Koonalda Cave to protect its cultural and environmental values, and provide safe and appropriate public access.

The cave is considered a key regional tourist destination with significant economic potential.

Working together with Aboriginal contractors and Eyre Peninsula staff, a stairway was constructed to provide safe access to the entrance. The main track to the site was graded to improve visitor safety and public access and a new car parking area was defined away from the crumbling edges of the cave.

Other tracks were closed and rehabilitated to reduce impact to vegetation.

Community-led planning

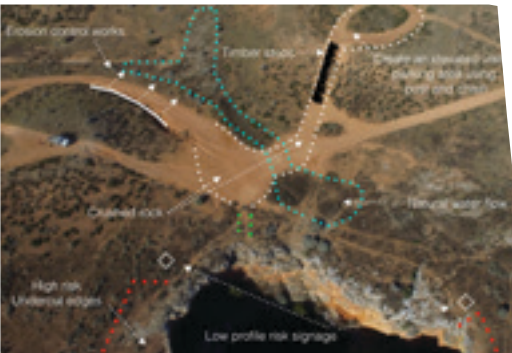
In partnership with Tjuntjuntjara Community, AW staff spent a week on Country mapping various features across the remote Maralinga Tjarutja Lands and developing plans for future land management work.

More than 50 people (including 28 Aboriginal Elders and 14 Aboriginal youths) took part in the trip which was supported and facilitated by the Oak Valley Ranger team in June 2019.

During the trip, the group:

- found signs of malleefowl activity in a previously unknown area
- located and mapped a previously unrecorded rockhole.

Anangu Elders also visited more than 30 culturally significant sites across the Lands.





Sustainable pastoral practices in APY Lands

In the APY Lands, the board continues to support employment of the:

- Pastoral Manager to guide an increased awareness and utilisation of sustainable practices that improve soil, biodiversity and vegetation cover
- Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator to provide cultural liaison between pastoral staff, Traditional custodians, and other land managers in APY Lands. This role provides a vital conduit for Indigenous capacity building.

Using FarmMap4D technology 290,000 hectares of pastoral land were mapped and ground truthed.

Supported by AW staff and contractors:

- seven training events were delivered focussing on weed management, vegetation ground cover monitoring methods, and spatial mapping
- four community meetings were held focussing on sustainable grazing methods to improve native vegetation ground cover and reduce risk of wind erosion.

The board's Natural Resources Audit report was endorsed by APY Lands Pastoral and adopted as the official guide to pastoral practices on APY Pastoral Lands.

Fire management

The board supported Oak Valley Rangers to conduct traditional burning across the Maralinga Tjarutja Lands over a week in June.

Approximately 1800 hectares were burnt in accordance with traditional land management practices and buffer zones were created around Oak Valley community and several other significant sites.

The board's Regional NRM Manager presented at the Tri-state Fire Management workshop held in Mutitjulu Community in February 2019, where Traditional custodians met to plan burning regimes for the year.





Country: Threatened species projects

Mount Finke Grevillea and Ooldea Guinea-flower

In May and June 2019, flora surveys conducted by the AW team included recording baseline data for two threatened species, Mount Finke Grevillea and Ooldea Guinea-flower, and ground cover vegetation surveys at Immarna and along Googs Track.

This data will be used to determine population and growth trajectories for the two threatened species over the next four years, and provides a better understanding of the impact of invasive species such as camels and Buffel grass in the region.

Quandong trees

Various projects to protect the region's native vegetation were undertaken including monitoring the population and health of quandong trees.

AW staff, members of Friends of the Great Victoria Desert, and two cultural advisers, surveyed camel damage to quandong trees in the Great Victoria Desert in August 2018.

The survey was part of an ongoing program that provides the state herbarium, NRM ecologists, and the local communities with an overview of vegetation changes in various specific locations over time.

Warru

The AW NRM Board proudly supported the Warru Recovery Program in the APY Lands. Various activities included:

- an annual warru survey within the 100 hectare warru predator-proof enclosure. The population appears to be increasing with 55 individuals trapped during the survey period, 19 more than the 2018 annual survey



- a survey of the translocated warru population at Wamitjara found a decline in numbers raising concerns about predation impacts.

Sandhill dunnarts and malleefowl

Four sites, identified using *LIDAR technology as having potential malleefowl nests, were ground truthed in surveys covering an area of approximately 13,000 hectares. Between May and June 2019, 13 malleefowl mounds were confirmed, building on the baseline data on malleefowl populations within the AW region and contributing data to the Australian malleefowl monitoring program.

The Oak Valley Ranger team undertook six threatened fauna species surveys in October 2018, April and May 2019 in the Maralinga Tjarutja Lands. Results included:

- signs of predators around many suitable malleefowl habitats

indicating a strong correlation with the lack of malleefowl sightings

- almost all surveyed areas showed signs of feral animals such as camels and fox and cat predators.

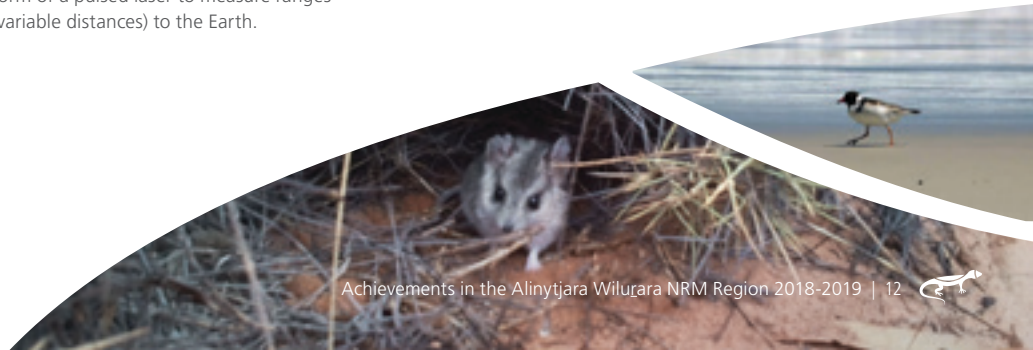
In May and June 2019, the AW team conducted two Sandhill dunnart surveys using pitfall traps and drift nets across eight sites. Motion camera grids were also used to learn more about abundance and distribution of the species and associated threats.

*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.

Hooded plovers

Two successful Hooded plover surveys were undertaken along the remote Yalata coastline in collaboration with staff from Deakin University and Eyre Peninsula.

- The survey team trapped, banded, and took genetic samples from six Hooded plover populations of nine to ten birds.
- Yalata Anangu School students created and installed awareness raising and educational signs at beach vehicle access points near Hooded plover breeding territories.



Country: managing pests



Camels and horses

To reduce damage to threatened species habitat and conserve precious water resources, the board funded the feral herbivore management program with a total of 5162 camels and 753 horses eradicated in 2018-19.

Buffel grass

The AW NRM Board funded various projects to implement the priorities identified in the Alinytjara Wilurara Buffel Grass Operational Strategy. Together with the AW Buffel Grass Best Practice Guide, the publications provide up-to-date, long-term management directions aimed at protecting the natural ecosystems in the AW region.

- Buffel grass monitoring during November 2018, found that a number of native grass species were growing in 20 sites previously treated for Buffel grass using a three-in-one mix (glyphosate/ flupropanate and pine oil).

- Three trips completed with AMYAC trainees focussing on mapping, monitoring and treating Buffel grass in Tallaringa Conservation Park to protect its natural ecosystems and limit its spread into adjacent pristine country.
- Contracted by the board, the Oak Valley Ranger team mapped and treated 18 known Buffel grass sites of various sizes.
- Creating a strategic response to Buffel grass control was identified as high priority by Oak Valley Rangers and other Traditional custodians as part of developing a Healthy Country Plan for the Maralinga Tjarutja Lands.





Water

The AW NRM Board values and protects water resources in the region by supporting communities to manage coast and marine areas, and map and maintain surface water collection points (rockholes).

- Marine debris collected from Yalata beach by local Aboriginal youths stored for use in future Ghost Nets Arts projects.
- Previously unrecorded rockhole located and mapped in the Maralinga Tjarutja Lands and rockhole maintenance works undertaken.
- Feral species removed from Country to reduce impacts on surface waters.

The board also manages impacts on APY Lands' water resources through a water permitting process and application of the board's Water Policy.



For further information please contact:

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