

2019-20

Achievements in the Alinytjara Wilurara NRM Region



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.

Key achievements snapshot

(Note: COVID-19 restrictions in March 2020 significantly impacted operational capacity with the aim to meet any unmet project targets during 2020-21.)



7 fauna surveys
completed



1.5 million ha
managed across
the AW region



5 flora surveys
completed



**3 community
education events**



1 Women's trip
Cultural site management
and Bush medicine



7,037 ha
fire management



48 Aboriginal people employed
in natural resources management



5 training events to
build community capacity
in sustainable
pastoral practice



5,356
feral camels removed



27 Aboriginal people trained
in natural resources management activities



**70 Aboriginal
stakeholders**
endorsed Sustainable
Pastoral Development Plan

Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resource Management Board

Our vision:

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



Changes in the wind

Since 1 July 2020 the Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources Management (AW NRM) Board, transitioned into the Alinytjara Wilurara (AW) Landscape Board operating under the Landscape SA Act (2019).

Following are some of the notable achievements of the Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources Management (AW NRM) Board and staff in delivering on a range of outcomes and priorities outlined in the board's Business Plan 2019-20.

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, Australian Railway Track Corporation and Desert Support Services through the 10 Deserts Project.

...but some things never change

Strong commitment to people and country

The Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board will continue to build on the strong, collaborative connections and trusted relationships developed over the past 16 years by the AW NRM Board.

With full membership of the AW NRM Board transitioning into the AW Landscape Board the many threads that have been woven between the board and the community it serves remain unbroken. This has, and will remain so, even as we face the unpredictable challenges presented by COVID-19.

For the protection of our members (COVID-19) the last meeting of the AW NRM Board was held online in June 2020. Although Aboriginal communities in South Australia were closed under the Biosecurity Act, the board continued its support for the on-country work of the region's community-based rangers many of whom continued working within COVID-19 restrictions.

In October 2019 the AW NRM Board signed an MoU with Eyre Peninsula (EP) NRM Board following discussions held the previous year.

In March 2020 the AW NRM Board held its 67th meeting in Port Lincoln hosting representatives from the Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation, the Presiding Member of the EP NRM Board and EP Regional Manager, the Chairs of Yumbarra Conservation Park Co-management Board and Nullarbor Parks Advisory Committee and the region's Co-Management Senior Executive Officer. Informative discussions were held about working together in the future and maximising the benefits of sharing resources (skills and equipment) knowledge and networks.

In November 2019 representatives from the AW NRM Board joined members of the SA Parliamentary Natural Resources Committee on a 4-day visit through the northern AW region. The group (pictured left) discussed local pastoral management, the Warru Recovery

Program, Buffel grass management and the cultural and environmental impacts of feral animals in the APY Lands.



Supporting Cultural eco-tourism across the region

In partnership with the 10 Deserts Project (10DP) the Alinytjara Wilurara Board supports the development of a Regional Indigenous Tourism Strategy.

The appointment of regional tourism project officers will provide direct practical support to Indigenous groups to develop tourism initiatives.

This important strategy aims to build the capacity of Indigenous groups to care for their Country, and as a result provide beneficial cultural, environmental, social and economic outcomes.



Partnering to realise a shared vision

The AW NRM Board developed many important partnerships prior to becoming the AW Landscape Board. These were strengthened throughout 2019-20 with members of the board and AW staff contributing to and engaging in the development of strategic plans with key partners to establish enduring benefits to the AW region.

The board engages with a broad network of rangers and arid land experts from across Australia's deserts as a partner of the 10 Deserts Project (10DP). The 10DP aims to sustain the health and resilience of Australia's desert country and its people. AW work with 10DP on camel management, fire management, buffel free Great Victorian Desert and regional tourism providing Aboriginal employment.

The board also continues to support the work of the Oak Valley Ranger team through this important partnership.

Planning continues with the Aboriginal Biodiversity Conservation (ABC) Foundation to pursue opportunities that will benefit communities through on-country learning and employment.

Building partnerships with local, as well as state and national organisations, broadens the board's scope of influence.

As part of this the board presented at various relevant conferences over 2019-20 including the Indigenous Desert Alliance Conference, Rangelands Conference, Private Land Conservation Conference, and the National NRM Knowledge Conference.





People and the Community

The board recognises that the health of the people and communities in the AW region goes hand-in-hand with the health of their Country. Supporting Aboriginal employment and enterprises to achieve this remains a key priority.

Ranger teams in Oak Valley and APY Lands

The AW NRM Board continued its support for the Oak Valley Ranger team to undertake land management projects on Country through the 10 Deserts Project and National Landcare Programme – Regional Land Partnership. Through this project, 20 Traditional Owners gained employment and continue to up-skill.

The board also continued funding support to the APY Lands Warru project. In addition seventeen Aboriginal people were employed on the APY Lands Buffel Grass biological survey.

Employment and education

Two-way education plays an important role in maximising sustainable environmental outcomes. Learning about traditional land

management and cultural practices from the region's traditional custodians and the sharing of western knowledge is an invaluable approach to land management.

A public presentation about coastal care was co-delivered with partners EP NRM and SA Parks and Wildlife in November 2019.

In October 2019 our support team presented to Ceduna Area School students on Climate Change. Training in recording scientific data was delivered to Yalata youths during marine debris surveys.

In the APY Lands, AW staff provided on-going support and mentorship to further extend Aboriginal Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator Walter Tjami's pastoral land management capabilities.

Community members from across the APY Lands, Far West Coast and the Oak Valley Ranger team were employed on various AW supported flora and fauna surveys, and weed and feral animal control programs.

AW employed an Administrative Support Trainee through a merit-based Aboriginal Traineeship Program in July 2019. As part of her traineeship, she is required to complete a Certificate III in Business Administration. She will be offered a position with either DEW or AW once her traineeship is complete.



People and Country

Community driven research

The AW NRM Board supported the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) in partnership with Charles Darwin University to undertake research to determine specific impacts of the introduced species Buffel grass, on Country. This was at the request of Anangu who have been involved in this research since 2017.

Seventeen Anangu were employed during the cross-cultural buffel grass survey. The data gathered provided invaluable insight into future management options.

A workshop was delivered by APY Pastoral in which Anangu discussed options for managing Buffel grass, fire and cattle in a trial project in the same survey area.



Community-led planning

The APY Lands' Sustainable Agriculture Project, was endorsed by 70 local Traditional Custodians. This was developed in consultation with APY Anangu to support delivery of the APY Sustainable Pastoral Development Plan (SPDP).

This included confirmation to have 5 *Landscape and Livestock Management Centres (LLMCs) installed. Due to COVID-19 restrictions only 1 was able to be erected.

**Portable yards for corralling livestock, managing animal health and sustainably graze the land.*





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 is a vital conduit for Indigenous capacity building.

Using FarmMap4D satellite mapping program to map pastoral regions of the APY

Lands five paddocks covering 202 295 ha were mapped over the past 12 months.

In September 2019 a milestone meeting was held in the APY Lands to progress development of the APY Sustainable Pastoral Development Plan (SPDP). AW's Regional Manager attended as part of the board's continued support of the future development and implementation of the SPDP.

AW supports APY Pastoral's continued work on monitoring the spread of Buffel grass and controlling other Weeds of Significance across the APY Lands including Athel Pine and Opuntia (prickly pear).

Fire management

Oak Valley Rangers, supported by the AW NRM Board, undertook cultural burning across the Maralinga Tjarutja Lands during August and September 2019.

The Oak Valley Ranger team monitor their Country to ensure it is kept healthy using burning regimes in accordance with seasonal and environmental indicators.

Over 7037 ha were burnt in accordance with traditional land management practices with buffer zones created around Oak Valley Community and several other significant sites.



Country: Threatened species projects

Mount Finke Grevillea and Ooldea Guinea-flower

In May and June 2019, flora surveys 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. These were repeated in May and June 2020.

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

Wayanu (Quandong) trees

An important local bush food, Oak Valley Rangers monitored and recorded damage caused by camel browsing on 142 trees during November and March.

Warru (black footed wallaby)

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

- an annual warru survey within the 100 ha 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 impact.

Minkiri (Sandhill dunnarts) and Nganamara (Malleefowl)

*LiDAR surveys were completed in known *Nganamara* (malleefowl) habitat in Maralinga Tjarutja and Googs Lake areas. The LiDAR results showed a total of 20 possible malleefowl mounds over six areas. On-ground surveys of these locations indicated malleefowl activity at 12 mounds but also the presence of feral carnivorous species. This builds on the baseline data on malleefowl populations within the AW region and contributes data to the Australian malleefowl monitoring program.

Supporting AW, Friends of the Great Victoria Desert spent six days assessing potential malleefowl mounds identified by AW LiDAR

*LiDAR, (Light Detection and Ranging), is a remote sensing method that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure variable distances to the Earth. The laser measurements detect “bumps” on the Earth’s surface that may be *Nganamara* (Malleefowl) mounds.

surveys and recorded 17 vegetation sites by drone and photographed 30 on ground sites.

The Oak Valley Ranger team undertook two threatened fauna species surveys in 2020, in Maralinga Tjarutja. Almost all surveyed areas also showed signs of feral animals such as camels and fox and cat predators.

Pitfall trapping surveys were abandoned over this period due to COVID-19 but an additional remote motion sensor camera was installed.

Motion camera grids were used to learn more about abundance and distribution of the species and associated threats.

Wipu wiru (Princess Parrot) and Night Parrot

As much of the Mamungari area is considered key breeding habitat for Princess and Night Parrot, Oak Valley Rangers undertook two surveys during June 2020 in an effort to locate either species in their region.

Princess parrots have been recorded throughout much of the Great Victoria Desert.

Night Parrots have only recently been rediscovered in central Australia after almost 100 years of their last recorded sighting.



Country: managing pests



Camels and Cats

Severe drought in the APY Lands increased the impact of feral camels depleting precious water resources and damaging infrastructure. At the request of the APY Lands Executive and in partnership with the 10 Deserts Program, AW supported humane removal of 5356 camels.

The use of *Felixers to manage feral cats was restricted as electrical components were not available due to the COVID-19. These units will be deployed in spring 2020 and will provide long-term protection for *Nganamara* and *Minkiri* in the MT and Yellabinna regions.

**Felixers use lasers to distinguish between native species and feral animals as they pass it. When detected, a gel is squirted onto the fur which when ingested during grooming puts them to sleep (permanently).*

Buffel grass and Athel Pine

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.

- Contracted by the board, the Oak Valley Ranger team mapped and treated 82 ha known Buffel grass sites of various sizes.
- 116 ha of Buffel grass treated along the east-west Railway corridor, Eyre Highway and main roads by contractor during COVID-19 Community lock down.
- Supported by AW, land management trainees from Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal Corporation usually monitor and manage Buffel grass in Tallaringa Conservation Park to protect its natural ecosystems and limit its spread into the adjacent Great Victorian Desert. This year however they were unable to operate due to COVID-19.
- In consultation with local Traditional Owners, the APY Pastoral team effectively implemented a stump-cut and poisoning program to control Athel Pine and spray treated *Opuntia* (prickly pear) over 136 ha in the southern APY 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 points (including rockholes).

- Marine debris collected from Yalata beach by local Aboriginal youths.
- Feral species removed from Country to reduce impacts on surface waters.
- Pastoral water requirements planning in the APY with satellite mapping of grazing circles for rotational paddock management and elevation profile mapping for pipelines and water storage planning.

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



L-R Peter Miller, Julie O'Toole, Kristy Richards, Party Agius (Presiding Member/Chair), Debbie Hansen, Sally Scales, Anton Baker, Maureen (Mima) Smart, Michael (Mick) Haynes (Presiding Member 2019)

The Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board

(Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources Management Board 2004 - 01 July 2020)



Funding Partners



National
Landcare
Programme



Government of
South Australia

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