

Across the OUTBACK

AUGUST 2011

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New Presiding Member for the SA Arid Lands NRM Board



The Minister for Environment and Conservation appointed Janet Brook to the position of Presiding Member of the South Australian Arid Lands (SAAL) Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board in June. She takes on the position at an interesting time: the region has never looked better after seeing the best rains for over a decade, and the SAAL NRM Board staff are in the process of integrating with the outback office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Janet has a long association with NRM in the region having been a member of the community-based Marree-Innaminka NRM Group since the Board's inception in 2005 and as a Board member since late 2009.

Prior to that she spent two years on the old Marree Soil Conservation Board where she was involved with the beginnings of the *NRM Act 2004* and the former Rangelands Integrated NRM Group.

Janet is particularly keen to build on the Board's achievements and maintain the relevance of the SAAL NRM Board in the region. And her term as Presiding Member will be critical to delivering on the SAAL Regional NRM Plan which was adopted by the Minister in May 2010 and sets the direction for NRM in the region to 2020.

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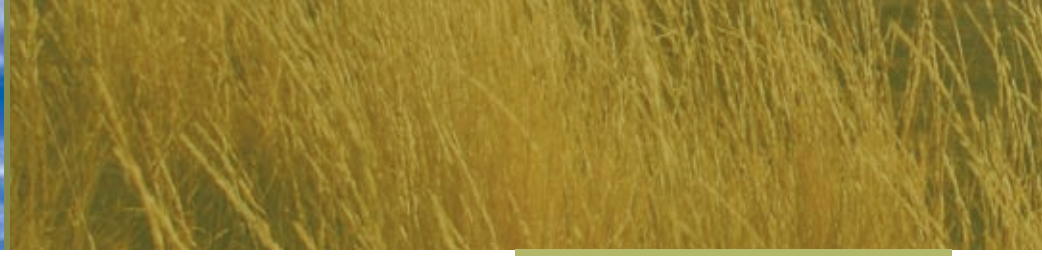
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The first aeroplane to land on the Birdsville Track, chartered by the pastoralist E.A. Brooks and piloted by Major J. Cowper in April 1921, along with Aboriginal people of the Mungeranie district, and Bridget the camel

George Aiston



New sheep breeds need new management

Chris Turner, Senior Pastoral Inspector

With a substantial number of pastoral sheep properties now running stock of different breeds to the traditional Merino enterprise, landholders are encouraged to consider their neighbours and examine all alternatives and modifications to management practices before deciding to run alternative breeds.

Sheep breeds such as Damara or Dorper are the most common alternative. They exhibit different grazing habits and require different management to a Merino operation, particularly when it comes to fencing.

Merino sheep can wander and end up on a neighbouring property but breeds such as Damara and Dorper will do it at a greater frequency and in greater numbers if modifications to fencing are not made.

Current Pastoral Board policy states that if a different breed of stock is introduced to a property and subsequently causes a problem to neighbours, then it is the responsibility of the person who introduced those new animals to upgrade the fence to a standard suitable to control the new breed of sheep.

However, rugged hill country with lots of drainage lines and floodgates in the boundary fences can be a challenge for any pastoralist.

Before introducing new breeds into that environment the pastoralist should consider whether they are prepared to deal with their neighbours and the nuisance that may be caused when the new breeds decide to travel.

If the decision is made to run the new breeds in that environment then the landholder should consider providing a buffer with the new breeds run in internal paddocks away from the property boundary fences and, as recent experience has shown (*see box*), a substantial review of the mating procedures may be required. ■

A MATING MEETING

If you are considering running alternative sheep breeds, a recent meeting between two neighbouring pastoralists shows why reviewing mating procedures may help keep your neighbours' happy.

The pastoralists met to discuss how to manage the Dorper rams from one property coming onto the other's property in winter/spring and mating with the Merino ewes.

Most people know that Merino wool quality may be affected but in this case the breeding program on the Merino property was severely affected because the Dorper rams were getting to the Merino ewes before the Merino rams in November/December.

The solution? All Dorper rams running in the boundary paddocks of the Dorper property would be removed and would not be introduced with the Dorper ewes again until approximately December.

The rationale was that by this time the Merino rams would have mated with the Merino ewes and the Dorper rams would not have such an enticement to breach the boundary fence.



Merino sheep



A Dorper sheep

Public Access Routes update

David Oag, Pastoral Inspector

Many of the Public Access Routes (PARs) throughout pastoral SA have been affected by closures over 2010-11. Some PARs, including Nuccalena, Artimore, Warraweena, Pedirka, Muloorina and Halligan Bay have had works completed to render these tracks safe for visiting travellers and they remain open to four-wheel drive vehicles. Here's an update on some of the other PARs.

PAR 12 Old Peake Telegraph Station

PAR12 off the Oodnadatta Track remains open but there is some corrugation and rough creek crossings. Friends of Mound Springs volunteers have carried out significant work at the Old Peake Telegraph Station ruins, installing walking trails, fencing and interpretive signage to give visitors an appreciation of the complexities of providing communications across the nation in pioneering times.

Walkers Crossing and Warburton K1 PARs

Both the Walkers Crossing and Warburton K1 PARs remain closed until further notice due to persistent flooding of the Cooper and Warburton/Diamantina River systems over 2010-11. They are expected to remain closed for several months yet due to the amount of water in the system, with any additional rainfall in the catchments during the next few months likely to keep these routes closed indefinitely.

Gawler Ranges PARs

In the Gawler Ranges region, new signage (see photo) has been installed on the Nonning PAR while the Lake Gairdner PAR (Yardea Station), the Gawler Ranges National Park PAR (Buckleboo Station), and Googs Track (west of Tarcoola) are all in fair condition. A small PAR located at Secret Rocks between Whyalla and Kimba also remains accessible. ■

PASTORAL BOARD AND PROGRAM CONTACTS

The Pastoral Board of SA

Soil & Water Environs Building, Entry 4,
Waite Campus, Waite Road, Urrbrae, SA
(GPO Box 1047, Adelaide SA 5001)

General enquiries

Phone (08) 8303 9751

Fax (08) 8303 9320

Freecall 1800 678 447

Presiding Member

Pastoral Board matters

Glenn Gale (08) 8303 9345

Public access to pastoral lands

David Oag (08) 8648 5174

Lease assessments

Craig Boulderstone (08) 8303 9752

Lease inspections and tenure

Chris Turner (08) 8303 9755

PASTORAL BOARD 2011 MEETING DATES

Meeting 127 Thursday 18 August
Adelaide

Meeting 128 Thursday 20 October
Adelaide

Meeting 129 Thursday 15 December
Adelaide

WHAT IS A PAR?

Public Access Routes are station tracks that provide public access to points of interest in pastoral South Australia that would not otherwise be accessible without the landholder's permission. They are a network of unimproved and unsurfaced dirt tracks that require four-wheel drive access and are not part of the formal road network administered by the Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure. Their condition can change rapidly with the weather and they will only ever have minor maintenance carried out.



Nonning PAR



The road to recovery

Craig Baulderstone, Principal Scientific Officer

In this edition of *Across the Outback* we continue our report on recent observations of our lease assessments and inspections. In this article we reveal the tremendous recovery we have observed in many locations in pastoral South Australia.

One aim of the Pastoral Board's lease assessments and inspections is to monitor the establishment of and increase in the density of long-lived perennial shrubs – and we are seeing evidence of significant long-term recovery.

When you consider that many of these shrub species have a life span well in excess of what we think of trees having, the effect is very significant.

The most widespread effect observed since the first round of assessments in the 1990s has been the establishment of Blackbush (Maireana pyramidata) in previously denuded areas.

This species is not as palatable to stock as some other perennials but it does create a more attractive environment for other more desirable species to establish. It reduces wind

speed at soil surface, builds up finer soil particles, leaf litter and nutrients, reduces overland water flow, and increases infiltration of rainfall into the soil profile.

Establishment of other 'pioneer' species such as Bitter Saltbush (*Atriplex stipitata*) is also significant, but with a shorter lifespan and less drought tolerance the impact might not be as long-lived.

Numerous photopoint sites demonstrate these sorts of changes (see box) and there has also been a dramatic increase in more desirable species at some sites.

For example, between 1994 and 2011, one North East property saw a transect increase from 8 to 56 Blackbush (200 to 1400 shrubs/ha), 48 to 341 Bitter Saltbush (1200 to 8525 shrubs/ha), and 24 to 37 of the more palatable Bladder Saltbush (*Atriplex vesicaria*) (600 to 925 shrubs/ha).

The same station also saw an increase in more desirable species with

Pearl Bluebush (*Maireana sedifolia*) increasing from 43 to 126 plants (or 1075 to 3150 shrubs/ha).

The improvement demonstrated is widespread across this station and the recovery is even more significant given that this site has historically been denuded due to its proximity to rail and past use as a gathering point for stock. ■

TWO PICTURES TO TELL THE STORY

These two photos from the same site on another North East pastoral lease – one taken in 1994 and the other in 2011 – really demonstrate how well the land can recover through good management and some favorable conditions.

They show a clear increase in both Pearl Bluebush and Low Bluebush (*Maireana astrotricha*) and a mix of ages in the plants present.

When you consider that some research has suggested that these species might have a half-life in the region of 250 and 125 years respectively, with good management these improvements are particularly significant.



1994



2011

NEWS FROM ARID RECOVERY

Western Barred Bandicoots get a helping hand

Two genetically distinct populations of the Western Barred Bandicoot that have been living apart on the Arid Recovery Reserve met for the first time in June in the hope that they will breed.

The last Western Barred Bandicoot was recorded on the Australian mainland in 1929 and they have since been confined to islands off the coast of Western Australia, including Bernier and Dorre Islands.

Arid Recovery's feral free area has allowed for the protection and regeneration of the Western Barred Bandicoot since 2001, with eleven bandicoots re-located from Bernier Island to the Arid Recovery Reserve. Since then the Reserve population has increased to about 180 individuals.

In June, this population was introduced to Western Barred Bandicoots which had been translocated to the Reserve in 2009 from Faure Island off Western Australia. It is the first time the two genetically different populations have met in the wild.

Through much coordination, effort and time, Arid Recovery's ecologist, Helen Crisp, volunteers and staff, were able to successfully transfer three of the five Faure Island bandicoots to the Northern Expansion of the Reserve where they are now settling in well. ■

In this edition of *Across The Outback*, we thought we'd give a plug to the great conservation work undertaken by Arid Recovery, a not-for-profit organisation based in Roxby Downs.

Arid Recovery is an ecosystem restoration initiative based in the South Australian outback and dedicated to the restoration of Australia's arid lands.

Established in 1997, the program is centred around a 123 square kilometre fenced reserve located just north of Roxby Downs.

Feral cats, rabbits and foxes have been eradicated from a total of 60 square kilometres and this has provided an area of complete protection into which four species of locally extinct mammals have so far been reintroduced.

Arid Recovery is a unique example of a highly successful partnership between industry, government, education and community.

Further information

www.aridrecovery.org.au

8671 8282 or info@aridrecovery.org.au



A tiny Western Barred Bandicoot is released into its new home



Arid Recovery staff and volunteers assist in the relocation

Come and see what we do...

Open Day, Sunday 21 August, noon until sunset

Don't miss Arid Recovery's Open Day on Sunday 21 August when the reserve will be open to visitors to learn about research and conservation in the arid zone. There will be nature walks, sunset tours, 4WD tours to remote areas of the reserve, expert talks from our staff and researchers, and activities for children.

An entry fee of just \$5.00 per adult will include any accompanying children, a copy of the day's program, a raffle ticket and free barbeque.

...and meet our new General Manager

Arid Recovery has a new General Manager with Kylie Piper taking up the reigns of the research and conservation organisation based in Roxby Downs.

Kylie comes to Arid Recovery with a background in science having working for not-for-profit organisations in both city and regional areas, including working as the Administrator for the Australian Geographic Society.

Feral Facts

Arid Recovery has recently published *Feral Facts: A resource for land owners*. This 15-page booklet brings science and on-ground management together by sharing a decade's worth of research outcomes gathered at Arid Recovery in a user-friendly format.

Feral Facts primarily focuses on feral animals of the arid zone, their impacts on native flora, fauna and ecosystems, best-practice methods to control them and the benefits of controlling them.

Feral Facts was produced in consultation with local landholders with funding received from the State Government. Contact Arid Recovery if you would like a copy. ■

STATION LIFE

Janet's association with the SAAL NRM region began just outside of it when she moved to Birdsville, Queensland in 1995 but her skills in land management and a Bachelor of Agricultural Science were really put to the test when she married Anthony and moved to Cordillo Downs in 1998. Her experience of station life had begun!

Cordillo Downs is an 8000 square kilometre cattle station in the far north-east corner of South Australia. It has been with the Brook family for 30 years and runs 6000 head of cattle.

Despite having four kids, three of them being schooled through distance education, Janet says the remoteness of her home isn't really a challenge.

'You just need to be super-organised!' she said. 'It's 1600km to Brisbane, 1300km to Adelaide, 1650km to Cairns, and 1000km to Port Augusta – we look at it as being central to everywhere!'

Janet and Anthony take on a shared role in the management of Cordillo with Janet getting out to camp as much as she can and plans for infrastructure improvement and cattle made together.

And she says it has been wonderful to see the place come to life again in the last two years.

'When we took over the management of Cordillo we experienced a couple of really good years, but we also experienced a long stretch of really poor years, and those are the times when you really get to grips with the place.'

'You hear of people talking about the 1974 floods and those good years – what the country was like, what the cattle were like – maybe we will be talking of 2010/11 the same way.'

And the kids have been making the most of their big backyard too.

'Lately one of their favourite things to do is go spotlighting for rats – the introduced sort only of course – and they have named two barn owls that have nested just outside the back door Screech and Hoot.'

New Presiding Member for the SA Arid Lands NRM Board

continued from front cover...

She also credits the many other projects and initiatives that the Board has undertaken including the Water Allocation Plan for the Far North Prescribed Wells Area, initiatives to manage dingoes on both side of the Dog Fence, the adoption of the Ecosystem Management Understanding™ process, and projects to manage the Gawler Ranges rockholes and the Neales River catchment.

And she would also like to continue the Board's involvement in cross-border initiatives like the Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Committee, the National Camel Project, and the Rangelands NRM Alliance where the Board has been able to work collaboratively on projects that benefit the whole of the rangelands.

Janet lists climate change, increased activity in mining, petroleum and gas industries, and rising operating costs for primary producers as some of the top challenges for the region but she says the real test will be turning these challenges into new opportunities for NRM in the region.

True to the Board's platform, she is keen to get more people interested and involved in NRM whether they live on the land or in the region's towns, and she has a special interest in better engaging with Aboriginal communities.

She also hopes to achieve a smooth and successful transition with the integration of the SAAL NRM Board staff with DENR outback staff. ■



Emma, Megan, Neve and Harry enjoying camp life





FAREWELL AND A BIG THANK YOU

Janet Brook, Presiding Member

This year has seen the expiration of the terms of four long-serving Board members who were appointed to the inaugural SAAL NRM Board in 2005. Their combined experience and commitment to community-driven NRM in the Arid Lands region will be missed.

Carolyn Ireland and Katherine Moseby provided the Board with essential ecological expertise. Both were instrumental in driving the Board's Pest Advisory Committee and great advocates of NRM Groups, with Carolyn the Board representative on the North Flinders and Kingoonya NRM Groups. The Board also benefitted from Carolyn's experience in working with mining companies and the Pastoral Board.

Trevor Whitelaw was a font of information for anything mining and petroleum. He helped establish the Industry Partnerships Program, an initiative that he is keen to remain involved with and he was also the Board's representative on the Marree-Innaminka NRM Group.

Bill McIntosh (Gum Creek Station) has had a long connection with the land and the region and, through his position as Chair of the Outback Communities Authority. Bill helped the Board understand the challenges confronting communities in outback areas. Bill brought to the Board a 'big picture' vision of NRM which effectively meets the conservation, production and social needs of the region. Bill was also the Board's representative on the North Flinders NRM Group.



Camp sunset – Cordillo Downs

Meet the Board

With a new Presiding Member and a number of Board member terms recently coming to an end, we thought it was timely to introduce you to the current SA Arid Lands (SAAL) Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board.

The *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* provides for the appointment of nine NRM Board members, appointed by the South Australian Governor on the recommendation of the Minister for Environment and Conservation.

They are appointed on the basis that they collectively have the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to enable the Board to effectively carry out its functions. Generally this means they live and/or work in the region.



Leonard Nutt for his skills in primary production, soil conservation, biodiversity management and pest animal and plant control and for his experience as a member of a number of boards and committees.



Catherine Hollingsworth for her strong skills in primary production and urban/ regional planning and for her experience on a number of boards and committees.



Daryl Bell for his strong knowledge and skills in pastoral land management, strong knowledge and experience in primary production, good links and connections within the community and sound understanding of the South Australian Arid Lands landscape.



Leanne Liddle for her proven abilities as a current board member and her expertise in Aboriginal related matters and environmental conservation.



Kylie Fuller for her experience as a landholder and producer, proven abilities as an NRM Group member and her community focus.



Ross Sawers for his previous experience as a pastoralist and knowledge in his current role with Oz Minerals.

In addition to the appointment of community representatives, there are currently two non-voting Board members authorised by the Minister to represent the interests of the State.

There are presently two vacancies on the SAAL NRM Board.

For further information on Board appointments or to register your interest in becoming a Board member contact Kelly Andrew 8648 5977 ■



Michael Malavazos
Primary Industries and
Resources South Australia



Neil Power
Department for Water

Greening Oodnadatta

Oodnadatta residents may be feeling a little cooler in summers to come after nearly 200 advanced Eucalyptus and Acacia trees were planted in the town in July.

The revegetation project was established to support the community in its efforts to look after and hold together the town's soil in the windy spring months.

This should help suppress dust over summer which will also benefit the health of the town's people.

The planting occurred at various locations around Oodnadatta including near the public playground where they will provide shade for residents' children.

Twenty residents turned out to help with the planting and the installation of the watering system and the trees will be watered at least once a week by Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) workers and Oodnadatta Progress Association members.

Residents of Oodnadatta have clearly experienced a real sense of ownership with Dunjiba Council Chair, Anthony Smith, remarking that 'the kids who helped plant the trees are now encouraging other kids to make sure they aren't damaged so their work is protected.'

The revegetation work was facilitated by the Outback Communities

Authority and funded by the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board. Thanks to Jeff, Doug and Bobby from the Oodnadatta Progress Association, Anthony and crew from Dunjiba Council, and to CDEP workers, Herbie, George and Ali, for digging the holes. ■



Freshly planted: the main street of Oodnadatta



The local police, Jeff Page and Bobby Bailes, pitching in during the planting

Aboriginal cemetery rehabilitation complete

Ros Consoli, Aboriginal Engagement Officer

The South Australian Arid Lands (SAAL) Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board is keen to acknowledge the hard work of the Aroona Council whose members successfully saved the Aboriginal cemetery at Copley after it was nearly washed away by floods at the end of last year.

Many sections of the community have worked very hard on this project which was developed in partnership with the Board with the goal of reinstating the levee bank and stabilising the soil at the site through revegetation.

Importantly, the Council was a part of every phase, initiating the idea, developing and planning the on-ground works, writing the funding application, carrying out the work, and planning for the future management of the site.

The project commenced when 12 Adnyamathanha people from Copley and Nepabunna communities, attended a three-day plant survey in November last year. During the workshop, participants identified and recorded over 50 species of plants including scientific names, traditional names and uses.

Members of the local Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) fixed the original levee bank and constructed a new bank on the river side of the cemetery, before the site was planted in July with local native plants using the knowledge gained from the plant survey.

Fifteen community members planted approximately 150 trees at the site with each plant protected by a tree guard.

The site will continue to be managed, with the community council and

CDEP members making sure the young plants have enough water to establish and the levee banks remain in good condition.

The Board would like to thank Aroona Council for project managing, the old people who shared their traditional ecological knowledge with the younger people in the community, the CDEP members who worked hard to reinstate the levee bank, and the local copper mine for supplying materials. The knowledge gained from the plant survey is owned by the community and will be stored at the Aroona Council for future reference and to continue sharing knowledge with the young people in the community.

Further information

Ros Consoli and

Jonathon Fatt-Clifton 8648 5977 ■

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

Our goals as Aboriginal Engagement Officers are to help the SAAL NRM Board better engage with Aboriginal communities in the Arid Lands and to provide an opportunity for Aboriginal communities to successfully achieve their project outcomes. Does your community have a project in mind? Call 8648 5977 or look out for the car when we are on community. Ask for Ros or Jon.



Watering the plant before it goes into the ground

The project site with Aboriginal cemetery and new plants within the enclosure on the right and the new levee bank on the left



DINGO UPDATE

BITEBACK BAGS AN AWARD

Janet Brook, Presiding Member

Heather Miller accepted the Animal Control Technologies Australia Award for Practical Pest Management Excellence before 300 attendees at the Vertebrate Pest Conference in Sydney in June.

Heather has demonstrated enormous commitment to the *Biteback* program for dingo control since it commenced in 2009, promoting the benefits of this work to local communities but also at State and national levels.

She has shown great leadership in undertaking strategies to successfully influence State policy and practice (including the recent policy change to aerial baiting for dingoes), and through engagement with industry to secure extra funds for the *Biteback* program.

Having lived on pastoral properties herself, Heather has a real understanding of the challenges facing pastoral communities and has brought a unique perspective to the *Biteback* program.

Biteback was initiated by landholders in the North Flinders NRM Group, and through Heather's involvement, it has continued to be a shining example of community empowerment as landholders make key decisions about how the program is implemented in their district.

Characteristically modest, Heather went to great pains in her acceptance speech to ensure that landholders were also credited for their efforts in making *Biteback* a success. We are sure the landholders involved with the *Biteback* program will join with the SAAL NRM Board in congratulating Heather.

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The *Dingo Update* brings you the latest news from the Dingo Research Project, an initiative of the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board, as well as ongoing management news. North of the Dog Fence the Board is investigating the impacts dingoes have on beef cattle in baited and unbaited areas to determine optimum dingo management strategies. South of the Dog Fence, the Board is busy delivering the landholder-initiated *Biteback* program for dingo control, a critical program for protecting the region's sheep industry.

Biteback gets a boost

Landholders in the SA Arid Lands region south of the Dog Fence have been given a great opportunity to step up their dingo control efforts with a fresh injection to the *Biteback* program from Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) and Biosecurity SA.

After an application by the SA Arid Lands (SAAL) Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board, AWI have contributed an extra \$50,000 in funds, responding to landholder requests for more freezers, traps/lures, and subsidised baits.

Meanwhile Biosecurity SA have also made a significant contribution by providing 20,000 manufactured baits to the program.

Along with the Sheep Industry Fund, AWI have shown considerable support for the *Biteback* program with this latest cash injection following a

\$25,000 contribution made earlier this year to bring forward the roll-out of *Biteback* in the Gawler Ranges.

More baits – but how will we use them?

All landholders are encouraged to attend their next meat injection service to decide how best to use/distribute the extra baits, freezers, traps and lures.

It is also an important opportunity to discuss the recent announcement by the Minister for Environment and Conservation to allow aerial baiting of dingoes in specific areas below the Dog Fence in the SAAL region (see p. 15). Where would aerial baiting be most appropriate in your district and how can aerial baiting be delivered?

And, with *Biteback* funding due to run out after June 2012, the future of dingo control in the region will also be high on the agenda. ■



Contact the Dingo Management team for further information 8648 5977 and stay tuned for news from north of the Fence in the next edition





Lisa Stevens

New staff

In other good news, *Biteback* will have two hands on deck now that Lisa Stevens has taken on the role of Dingo Project Officer. Formerly the Board's Assistant NRM Officer, Lisa will largely work on the Board's dingo activities south of the Dog Fence, where she will be assisting Heather Miller.

Lisa will be continuing the roll out of *Biteback* across the Gawler Ranges coordinating workshops for properties who haven't so far been involved in local area planning. She will also be providing a meat injection service throughout the region.

This will give Heather an opportunity to oversee all the SAAL NRM Board's dingo management activities, both North and South of the Fence, but she will continue to coordinate *Biteback*. ■

NEXT INJECTION ROUND

As a result of *Biteback*, there are now about 20 local area dingo control groups operating across the region so there will be a meat injection service near you.

Dates for the next injection round are:

Gawler Ranges 4-7 October

North Flinders-Marree 17-21 October (TBC)

North East 31 October-4 Nov (TBC)

Kingoonya 14-18 November (TBC)

You will be notified of exact dates and locations in the mail in September/October but please contact the Dingo Management Team for further information 8648 5977.

Threatened dusky hopping-mouse extends its range

Reece Pedler, Community Fauna Officer

Pastoralists and other residents played a crucial role in recent work that has confirmed that dusky hopping-mice, a threatened species have significantly extended their south-westerly range.

A total of 71 dusky hopping-mice (*Notomys fuscus*) were captured from a number of locations across the North East Pastoral, North Flinders, and areas surrounding Marree during the surveys.

Many landholders added a great deal of local knowledge regarding hopping mice, with some even freezing valuable specimens that were found dead on the road or brought in by the cat.

The results from this work confirm that dusky hopping-mice have extended their distribution considerably in the last few years, to areas well inside the Dog Fence and in habitats where they have not been previously recorded such as stony plains and hilly areas.

It is thought that these changes may be a combination of lower rabbit numbers over the last decade, since the introduction of calicivirus, as well as the exceptional rainfall conditions of late which will have produced conditions conducive to breeding. It is hoped that future monitoring can determine whether the changes are long-lasting.

This work was commissioned by the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board and carried out by ecologists Rick Southgate and Katherine Moseby.

Thank you to the large number of people who contributed to the study and supported the field surveys. A report will be ready for distribution in coming weeks. ■

Further information

Reece Pedler 8648 5977



Dusky hopping-mice at Mundowdna Station near Marree, well south and west of their previously known range in the Strzelecki Desert

To contact police with any information or to report stock theft, please call BankSA Crime Stoppers 1800 333 000

Operation Poach: taking stock

With livestock theft escalating this last financial year, South Australia Police are rolling out Operation Poach through the country areas, to head up and move out stock thieves.

Thinking in broader terms than raising a traditional task force, or stock squad, Operation Poach is a long term strategic approach to managing and coordinating dedicated criminal investigations throughout rural policing districts, known as Local Services Areas.

Around 50 reported incidences of livestock theft in South Australia for the 2010/11 financial year have made it the highest year for stock theft since 2004.

Apart from financial loss, stock theft raises the risk of stolen animals with fraudulent health status papers entering the market and processing chain, with all the problems and ultimately lack of confidence that can cause at home, as well as to our international trade.

Police are aware that sheep appear to be the livestock of choice for thieves.

The easy disposal of sheep and the highly attractive price tag, with \$244 brought for each lamb at a recent sale in southeast South Australia, means there is no denying sheep represent the ideal target for stock thieves.

Police aim to reduce stock theft by identifying preventative and intervention actions to reduce and eliminate theft opportunities, and through education.

This will include identifying various opportunities to steal, identifying the principal offenders, and then identifying those who receive the stolen livestock.

A primary focus will be localised policing – local police using local knowledge are considered to be best placed to identify people involved in stealing and receiving in the area.

Police will also be visiting saleyards and businesses who deal in livestock, providing education and advice, to make it more difficult for offenders to dispose of the proceeds of their crime.

Importantly, police will be re-enforcing the need for farmers and stockyards to report thefts to police. ■

POLICE NEWS IN YOUR PALM

The SA Police has launched its own mobile web app which features articles on arrests, police operations, serious and fatal road accidents as well as appeals for witnesses to a range of crimes – all formatted to display easily on your mobile phone.

By accessing the SA Police News web app you can:

- » Read all the latest news articles from the SA Police News website
- » Watch the 'caught on CCTV' clips and videos from the SA Police News YouTube Channel
- » Receive information about natural disasters and emergencies
- » Check speed camera locations
- » Find how to report a crime
- » Find your local police station
- » See the list of SA's most wanted criminals
- » Access SAPOL's social media sites
- » Share news articles on Facebook and Twitter

To access the free SA Police News web app visit www.sapolicenews.com.au from your iPhone, Android or Windows Mobile smartphone

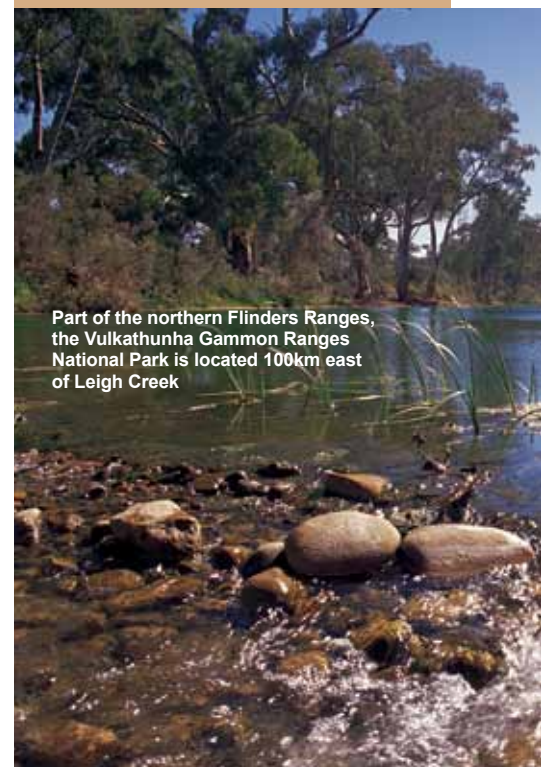
Premier's Award goes to Vince Coulthard

Adnyamathanha man Vince Coulthard has received the Premier's NAIDOC Award for his contributions to the promotion of Aboriginal culture and the preservation of language and heritage.

Premier Mike Rann said Vince's dedication has made a real difference to the lives of Aboriginal people in South Australia.

"Vince has devoted his life to his family, people and culture and this has resulted in great gains not only for them but for the wider South Australian community," said Mr Rann, who presented him with the award.

Vince was instrumental in the first Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) over a National Park in South Australia. As a result, Vulkathunha National Park now has an ILUA and is co-managed by a partnership between National Parks and the Adnyamathanha Peoples. ■



Part of the northern Flinders Ranges, the Vulkathunha Gammon Ranges National Park is located 100km east of Leigh Creek

Outback towns to benefit from OCA tree-planting grant

The Outback Communities Authority (OCA) has been successful in obtaining a \$22,000 tree planting grant through the Trees for Towns initiative of Trees for Life and ElectraNet.

The grant will be used to assist the Progress Associations in Andamooka, Marree and Copley plant up to 1000 trees which will provide shade, shelter and amenity while maintaining local character and dust suppression, assisting in the maintenance of healthy lifestyles in the towns.

The trees will be planted in town parks and squares, community recreational areas and public congregation areas with the aim of beautifying the townships for the enjoyment of community members and tourists who visit the town.

Once the trees are ready for planting the Progress Associations intend staging a community planting day involving local schools, community groups and business people which will be followed by a sponsored barbeque at the local community hall.

Further information

www.oca.sa.gov.au

ARE YOU ON THE ACROSS THE OUTBACK MAILING LIST?

Across The Outback is a free publication that is issued to over 1200 individuals or organisations with a stake or interest in the Arid Lands region.

If you would like to join the mailing list or update your details please contact the editor jenny.barker@sa.gov.au.

Please include your name, mailing address and email address (to receive electronic notification).

CALL FOR CONTENT

Across The Outback
October 2011 edition

Content due by COB
Friday 23 September 2011

Contact the editor (details on back page) for further information.

OUTBACK CALENDAR

The SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board has a web-based 'events calendar' to roundup all the exciting events and activities that bring people together in the Arid Lands region.

Visit www.saalnm.sa.gov.au/AboutUs/UpcomingEvents.aspx to see what's happening in your area.

SEND US AN EVENT!

We're particularly interested in events that relate to natural resources management in the SA Arid Lands region but any event that brings the people of the Arid Lands together is welcome. Events may include gymkhanas and race days, field days, public meetings, forums, open houses, conferences, workshops, festivals etc.

Just email the details to jenny.barker@sa.gov.au

HEALTH: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

The rights of every South Australian seeking or using a health or community service are now clearly spelled out in the Charter of Health and Community Services Rights released by the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner (HCSCC). If you have an unresolved complaint about a health or community service visit www.hcsc.sa.gov.au for more information

Further information
HCSCC Enquiry Service 8226 8666
or toll free from a country landline
1800 232 007

THIS SPACE COULD BE YOURS!

Across The Outback remains committed to reporting on government activities in the region in the single publication and we welcome contributions from other agencies. We'd also like to hear from non-government organisations, Progress Associations or Friends groups operating in the area. Tell us what you're doing to support your community and if we have space we'll try to accommodate you.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
contact the editor
jenny.barker@sa.gov.au
or 8463 3354.
A fee per article may apply.



New faces for Bounceback

Landholders involved in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Bounceback program might have noticed a few changes to staffing in the last six months.

After a decade working in and around the Flinders Ranges National Park, Peter Watkins is transferring to Bimbowrie Conservation Reserve in the Olary Ranges to be the Ranger in Charge.

Peter has been involved in delivery of a wide range of Bounceback's activities and was central to the introduction of a Kimseed Rangeland Contour Furrower for revegetation works in the region. This equipment has now been used for direct seeding across numerous properties in the North Flinders and Gawler Ranges.

During his time involved with Bounceback in the Flinders, Peter has seen that a focus on reducing total grazing pressure has paid off, particularly when combined with good rainfall events like those over the last 12 months.

This is particularly notable on the Pantapinna Plain in the Flinders Ranges National Park where the recent good season has allowed native plants and revegetation works to establish and thrive. In this area, historic grazing and extremely high rabbit numbers had completely removed seed sources for some palatable perennials such as Bladder Saltbush.

Peter will be missed in the Flinders as a Ranger and a member of the local community, but he will still be involved in Bounceback activities occurring in the Olary Ranges and in DENR's annual goat control program. Meanwhile, Lucy Dodd (Flinders-Olary Naturelinks Coordinator) has taken on the strategic management of the Bounceback program and Trish Mooney has moved to Port Augusta from Kangaroo Island to be the Bounceback Project Officer. They join Louise Gavin (Community Liaison Officer), who recently transferred from the SA Arid Lands NRM Board,

Nicki de Preu (Regional Ecologist) and park staff in delivering the program.

Get involved in Bounceback

There are several ways for residents of the semi-arid ranges of the outback to get involved in Bounceback.

If you have a Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby colony on your property you can take part in coordinated fox and feral goat control programs to help with the protection of this threatened species.

The team is also looking to work with landholders to minimise the impact of feral goats on soil erosion, native vegetation and ground cover to improve conservation and sustainable use values of land in the ranges.

Bounceback can also provide assistance for vegetation restoration on your property.

But you don't need to be a landholder to contribute. There are several volunteering opportunities available which focus on pest plant control and monitoring works.

Further information

To get involved or find out more about Bounceback call 8648 5300 or visit www.environment.sa.gov.au



Key Bounceback staff: Lucy Dodd, Peter Watkins, Nicki de Preu, Trish Mooney and Louise Gavin



2004



2010

Revegetation works on part of the Pantapinna Plain, Flinders Ranges National Park. The contour lines were sown in 2004, and the response by late 2010

WHAT IS BOUNCEBACK?

Established in the Arid Lands nearly 20 years ago, Bounceback is an award-winning, broadscale ecological restoration project operating across a range of landholdings, including national park reserves, privately managed sanctuaries and pastoral properties in the Flinders, Gawler, and Olary Ranges.

The protection and recovery of the Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby is a major component of Bounceback, with the project area encompassing most of the species natural range in South Australia.

Bounceback is working with landholders and the community to achieve conservation outcomes across different land uses, and is a key supporting project for the Flinders-Olary Naturelink.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources partners with landholders, local community, the Australian Government (through its Caring for our Country program), the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board, Flinders University, Adelaide Zoo, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Warraweena Conservation Reserve and Arkaroola Sanctuary.



Peter Bird

DINGOES TO BE AERIALY BAITED

Aerial dingo baiting, south of the Dog Fence, will be allowed in the SA Arid Lands region following calls to protect the rangelands' sheep industry.

Environment and Conservation Minister, Paul Caica, said allowing private landowners to aerially dispense baits on their properties would add strength to the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board's three-year 'Biteback' program.

High dingo numbers on many properties south of the Dog Fence are causing significant stock losses. The greatest gains from aerial baiting could be made across multiple properties, in areas difficult to access from the ground.

Dingoes are presently in high numbers on many properties inside the Dog Fence, and have caused significant stock losses for sheep producers.

Inside the Dog Fence, dingoes are a declared pest under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* and there is a requirement that landowners control them. This provides an additional control tool to landowners for dingo management.

Aerial baiting of dingoes is still banned north of the Dog Fence.

South Australia's newest mine declared at Peculiar Knob

Construction work at South Australia's newest major mine is set to get underway at Peculiar Knob, south-east of Coober Pedy after the State Government announced the State's newest mine in July.

WPG Resources' Iron Ore mine at Peculiar Knob is to become South Australia's 17th approved mine.

The mine is expected to create about 180 jobs during the construction phase and about 250 jobs when the mine begins production.

WPG Resources also gained approvals for an iron ore receipt, storage and export facility to be constructed at Port Pirie.

WPG Resources has committing \$250 million for the construction phase.

Peculiar Knob is Australia's highest grade undeveloped iron ore deposit. It is expected to produce 3.3 million tonnes of high grade iron ore fines per annum for a minimum of six years.

Peculiar Knob will provide a big boost to the region in terms of jobs, infrastructure and investment.

Meanwhile, final negotiations are well underway between the State

Government and BHP Billiton for the proposed Olympic Dam expansion which, if approved, will create the world's largest mine.

Earlier this year, with the Federal Government, the State Government also announced that an area almost the size of England would be unlocked for exploration in the Woomera Prohibited Area, an area which is estimated to hold mineral resources worth in excess of a trillion dollars. ■



For all the latest news from Biosecurity SA visit www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa



Government of South Australia

Across the Outback is prepared and edited by Jenny Barker (SAAL NRM Board). It is published every second month for the Outback SA Government and Community Alliances. It is currently jointly funded by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources; the Pastoral Board; Biosecurity SA (a division of Primary Industries and Resources SA) and the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board. Comments and suggestions are always welcome. Please contact jenny.barker@sa.gov.au or 8463 3354

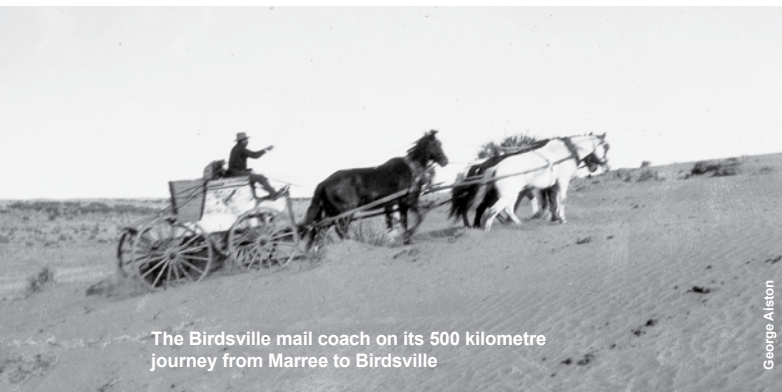
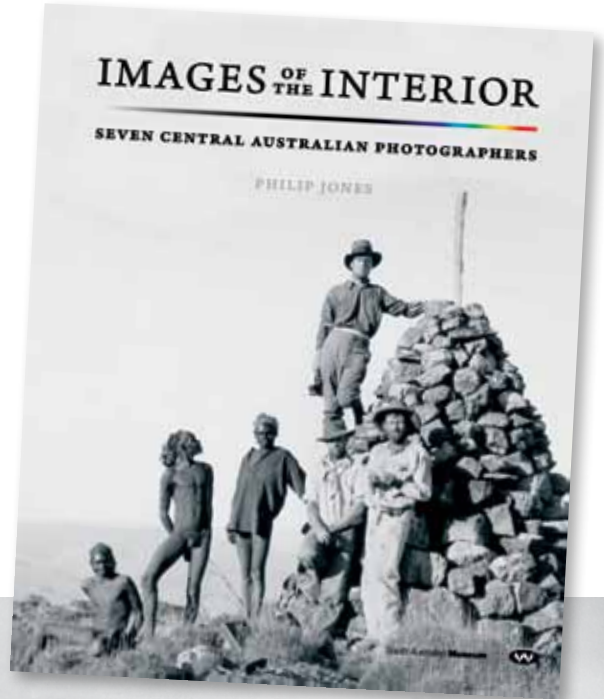


Outback imagery

In the last edition of *Across The Outback* we brought you photos from the South Australian Museum's recent *Images of the Interior* exhibition, including one of a pastoral family on the Cooper Creek punt during the 1920 floods and another of ornithologist Samuel Albert White hunting for bird specimens in the Gawler Ranges in 1912. The exhibition, and accompanying book of the same title, includes many photos of the South Australian Arid Lands region that were taken in the first half of the 20th century and held in the archives of the museum. Knowing that many of our readers would not have been able to attend the exhibition, I've selected a couple of others that I hope will be of interest. *Jenny Barker, Editor.*

Further information

The book *Images of the Interior*, by author and historian Dr Philip Jones, is available from Wakefield Press www.wakefieldpress.com.au



The Birdsville mail coach on its 500 kilometre journey from Marree to Birdsville

George Alston



Alec Scobie wins the 'Farewell Handicap' at the 1915 Mungeranie Races

Samuel Albert White



Skinning a goat at an outback abattoir on the Crombie family's Mungeranie Station, ca. 1920

George Alston



Edgar Waite, naturalist and Director of the South Australian Museum, taking notes in his swag at a camp on Cooper Creek, 1916.

Samuel Albert White



Wild camel removal near Oodnadatta in 1927; once integral to outback transport, by the 1920s motor transport had rendered them obsolete

William Delano Walker