

Across the OUTBACK

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Natural Resources Centre SA Arid Lands opens in Port Augusta

Landholders, community groups and visitors to the SA Arid Lands region now have a one-stop-shop in Port Augusta where they can access environment and natural resources services and information.

Opened by the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation Paul Caica in August, the Natural Resources Centre SA Arid Lands is one of a growing network across South Australia aiming to put local communities at the centre of natural resources management (NRM).

'Residents and visitors to the SA Arid Lands now have a 'one-stop-shop' for access to a broad range of services and information including land and water management, National Parks information, wildlife and environment services,' said Mr Caica.

'The Centre will become a focus for community involvement in NRM programs, as well as fostering greater communication between the government and the community,' he said.

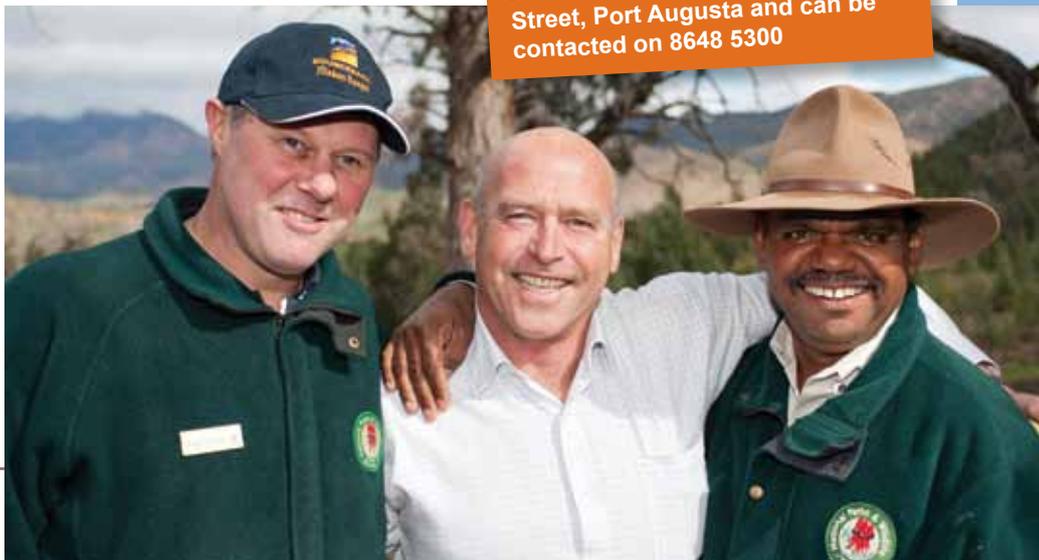
'The Centres have also been developed to make it even easier for communities to connect with their local NRM Board and to get involved in local

NRM issues, with each Centre becoming the home of the local NRM Board.'

Visitors to the centre will have access to the staff that support the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board and the Pastoral Board as well as the region's Park rangers and other Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources staff.

The formation of the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Centre is the culmination of a decision in July 2010 to combine the Outback office of the former Department of Environment and Heritage with the staff of the SA Arid Lands NRM Board creating a single workforce that supports the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board, Pastoral Board, the community and other government agencies to manage natural resources. ■

The Natural Resources Centre SA Arid Lands is based at 9 Mackay Street, Port Augusta and can be contacted on 8648 5300



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Minister Caica has been busy in the SA Arid Lands region. In addition to opening the Natural Resources Centre he also attended the *Bounceback* 20th anniversary celebrations and is seen here with District Ranger Darren Crawford and Wilpena Ranger Arthur Coulthard. See page 10

Pastoral Lease Assessments update

Craig Baulderstone, Principal Scientific Officer

With lease assessments in the North East Pastoral District nearly complete – the final lease should be completed in August – the team is turning its attention to assessments in the Eastern Districts.

Lease assessments in the Eastern Districts commenced with a calibration trip in July where field staff familiarised themselves with new land types and management issues and their assessment methods were examined to ensure land condition is consistently assessed.

In particular we looked at the effects of exceptional seasonal conditions and the influence of fires and feral animals on land condition and across different land uses of production and conservation.

An important part of the calibration trip is the sharing of knowledge and it was a great opportunity for lease assessment and inspection staff and land managers from both production and conservation-based leases to share their experience.

It is anticipated that assessments in the Eastern Districts will be

completed during 2013 after which lease assessments will commence in the North Flinders District.

Meanwhile, the North East Pastoral assessments saw significant changes to the assessment program which are minimising the time taken to complete an assessment – from the initial field work to lessees receiving reports.

The consolidation of functions ‘in house’ within the Pastoral Unit saw four assessment officers trained to consistently assess condition. The team are working cooperatively and with initiative to improve process and reporting.

Staff are now entering data in the field using ‘tablets’ (or field computers) – see *Across The Outback*, April 2012 – and the pastoral lease assessment report format has been modified to improve readability and focus on changes and issues. ■

PASTORAL BOARD AND UNIT CONTACTS

The Pastoral Board of SA
Level 1, 1 Richmond Road
KESWICK SA 5035
(GPO Box 1047, Adelaide SA 5001)

General enquiries

Phone (08) 8303 9751
Fax (08) 8303 9320
Freecall 1800 678 447

Presiding Member

Geoff Mills

Pastoral Board matters

David Hanna (08) 8226 2127

Public access to pastoral lands

David Oag (08) 8648 5174

Lease assessments

Craig Baulderstone (08) 8303 9752

Lease inspections and tenure

Chris Turner (08) 8303 9755

PASTORAL BOARD 2012 MEETING DATES

Meeting 132	Thursday 11 October Adelaide
Meeting 133	Thursday 13 December Adelaide

The Eastern Districts is to the south of the North East Pastoral District. It is the smallest and most southerly of the pastoral lease districts and the only one that lies in the SA Murray Darling Basin NRM Region. It is to the east of Burra, north of the Riverland and River Murray and extends to the NSW border. There are seventeen properties, three of which are now conservation properties and form part of the Riverland (formerly Bookmark) Biosphere Reserve.



\$\$ AVAILABLE FOR RANGELANDS CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

23-27 SEPTEMBER 2012

The South Australian Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board is sponsoring the attendance of community members to the 17th Biennial Australian Rangelands Society Conference in Kununurra, Western Australia.

Join a mix of natural resource professionals, managers of rangeland for grazing, tourism, conservation and cultural purposes, scientists and students to discuss the rangeland, its use and management.

For successful applicants the Board will pay registration costs and a contribution towards travel costs.

There are limited spaces.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Ros Consoli, Natural Resources Centre SA Arid Lands 8648 5300 for further information or a copy of the sponsorship form or visit www.meetings.com.au/ars/

The Department for Water and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources amalgamated on 1 July 2012 to form the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources.

This will build on the Government's agenda to improve the management of natural resources which commenced two years ago with the integration of natural resources and environmental services. The new fully integrated approach will be more effective in delivering services to the community and will reduce management and operational overheads.

NRM BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED

The South Australian Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board is looking for new members.

People who are passionate about how we manage our natural resources, have strong community links and good leadership skills are encouraged to apply.

NRM Board members have experience or knowledge in areas such as primary production, the management of land, soil and water, urban or regional planning, conservation, indigenous land management, business or local government administration,

New Regional Manager for SA Arid Lands

Regional Manager Geoff Axford has exchanged roles with Trevor Naismith who, for the last two years has been Regional Manager of Alinytjara Wilurara (AW) Region which encompasses the Aboriginal Lands in the north and west of the State.

Trevor Naismith has a long history in the environment field including a 10 year stint as a District Ranger and Parks and Wildlife Manager based at Hawker.

From there, Trevor was appointed Regional Conservator to establish the Northern and Yorke Region and was an inaugural member of the Northern and Yorke NRM Board. He went on to the Deputy Director position in Adelaide and then became the Director of Regional Operations.

Trevor considers his time in the north of South Australia as some of the most rewarding in his career.

'One of my career highlights has been to initiate the Bounceback project in the Flinders Ranges which recently marked 20 years of operation,' said Trevor. 'Bounceback was an NRM program before its time.'

Trevor was a long serving member of the North Flinders Soil Conservation Board and also served on a number of other Soil Boards in northern SA.



Trevor Naismith speaking at the recent Bounceback 20th Anniversary celebrations. See page 10

'It's great to be back in the Arid Lands Region and I look forward to working with the community for a sustainable future,' concluded Trevor.

Geoff Axford will commence as Regional Manager for the AW region in October.

Geoff, who can speak Pitjantjatjara, has experience in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands from his days as manager of Granite Downs Station, and many of his former associates are now community leaders in the APY Lands ■.

Carbon Farming Initiative workshops coming soon

Land managers in the SA Arid Lands region who are interested in carbon opportunities in the rangelands will have an opportunity to attend information sessions on the Carbon Farming Initiative over the next year.

Leonard Cohen from Canopy, based in Adelaide, will be running workshops in conjunction with NRM Group meetings and with a number of Aboriginal community groups to provide an insight into the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) and the mechanics of getting involved.

Leonard has been running workshops with Aboriginal groups around South Australia – at Raukkan, Murray Bridge, Mannum, Point Pearce, Port Germein, Ceduna, Whyalla and Umuwa – to raise awareness about the CFI discussing climate

change, the carbon market, threats and opportunities, and finding out Aboriginal communities' priorities.

He has also toured the Eyre Peninsula, providing information to farmer groups on these same topics.

'This is an opportunity for land managers to ask the questions that they may have about carbon credits, the science and the economics of climate change, to hear about what can be done now, what might be possible in the future and what the costs and benefits are,' said Leonard.

'It usually ends up as a question and answer session,' he said. 'Attending the course will also give people access to advice and support for those questions that may arise down the track.'

The work he will undertake in the SA Arid Lands region is supported by the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board and funded by the Australian Government. ■

WHAT IS THE CARBON FARMING INITIATIVE?

Launched in December 2011, the CFI is a voluntary carbon offsets scheme being established by the Australian Government to encourage land-based activities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide opportunities for farmers and landholders to participate in carbon markets.

The primary role for farmers, landholders, forest growers and community groups will be to carry out activities that can create carbon offsets.

A carbon offset is a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to compensate for emissions generated elsewhere.

The program is new and opportunities for the rangelands are still being investigated.

Examples of the activities which are being considered across the rangelands of Australia are carbon storage in plants through the management of grazing pressure and decreasing emissions through the management of fire regimes and destruction of feral ruminants.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry
www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/cfi
or 1800 156 858

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST NOW!

If you are interested in attending a CFI workshop in the SA Arid Lands region contact Leonard Cohen 0408 966 751 or leonardcohen@canopy.org.au and we will keep you informed with key dates and locations

TREES FOR TOWNS PLANTING DAYS

Mark Shirley, *Outback Communities Authority*
& Perri Carter, *Community Engagement Officer*

Andamooka and Marree are a little greener after holding Trees for Towns planting days.

About a dozen community members and students from the Andamooka Primary School and Marree Aboriginal School assisted with planting local native plants such as Mulga and Western Myall.

For the students it was a chance to get out of the class room and, in Marree, Perri Carter taught the kids about the important role plants play in the ecosystem and how to plant trees.

The trees were planted in town parks and squares, cemeteries, community recreational areas and public congregation areas providing shade and shelter to both community members and tourists who visit the town.

The Progress Associations in both towns have committed to looking after the plants

and trees and support watering programs and weed control. The planting days were both followed by a barbeque at the local community park.

Trees for Towns is a Trees for Life initiative sponsored by Electranet. The Andamooka and Marree planting days were supported by the Outback Communities Authority, and members of the local community with trees sourced from Trees for Life.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If your community group or Progress Association have ideas for natural resources management projects around your town contact Perri Carter, Natural Resources Centre SA Arid Lands 8648 5300



Andamooka students learning how to plant their very first seedling

DO YOU NEED A GOAT TRAILER?

The Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources on behalf of the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board is inviting expressions of interest in tendering for one or more of eight portable goat yard trailers.

The trailers range from single or dual axle, between 27 to 49 panels. Each trailer has been upgraded for rangeland conditions, is fitted with brakes, jockey wheel, spare tyre and registration.

THE TENDER PERIOD WILL BE OPEN ON 27 AUGUST AND CLOSE ON 21 SEPTEMBER.

Trailers will need to be picked up from Port Augusta by 1 October.

Interested parties outside the SA Arid Lands region are also welcome to tender.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Tender forms, terms and conditions can be accessed by visiting www.saalnm.sa.gov.au or contact the Natural Resources Centre SA Arid Lands 8648 5300 and ask for Greg Patrick

Cliff-face control of Wheel Cactus

Lorraine Edmunds, Coordinator, Blinman-Parachilna Pest Plant Control Group

Most of us would consider abseiling in Parachilna Gorge an extreme sport – but for Frank Bernhardt and his team it's another way to control invasive Wheel Cactus in the central Flinders Ranges.

Several hundred plants have now been treated on cliff-faces and high, steeply dipping slopes along the Blinman Pools walking trail in Parachilna Gorge thanks to Frank and his team who received specialist abseiling training in 2010.

Abseiling-delivered pest plant control is logistically challenging – all of the gear, including 200 metre lengths of rope, helmets, harnesses, knapsacks, injector guns and cordless drills, must be carried to the cliff-tops.

A spotter must remain in the gorge below to help abseilers navigate to plants that may be hidden from view at the top of the cliffs.

Ropes can become tangled on rocks and other obstacles during descents, requiring a second attempt. In some places, it may take half a day to reach a single plant, making cliff-face cactus control very expensive.

To the Blinman-Parachilna Pest Plant Control Group (BPPPCG), a small group of landholders who

have been delivering Wheel Cactus control in the area since 2004, the cliffs once seemed totally inaccessible, compromising control that had been achieved in adjacent areas.

Although progress is slow and further work (and funding) is required to complete the job, the BPPPCG are confident that cliff-faces will be free of Wheel Cactus within a couple of years.

The BPPPCG is funded through State and Australian Government funding. ■



BE QUICK! APPLY FOR \$\$ FOR PEST CONTROL AND LAND REHAB

TO APPLY

Applications are welcome at any time before Friday 9 November and will be considered immediately they are received. Whether you're a Progress Association or community group, or manage Aboriginal or pastoral land, you are eligible to apply. Visit www.saalnm.sa.gov.au to download a factsheet and application form, or call the Natural Resources Centre, SA Arid Lands 8648 5300. Ask for one of the engagement team staff.

Applications are still open to all land managers and community groups in the SA Arid Lands for assistance with pest control and land rehabilitation projects – but be quick as applications close soon.

There are a range of activities that will be considered for funding including a number of priority pest animal and weed species that are serious threats to rangelands condition.

Land rehabilitation projects may include erosion control and revegetation, contour furrowing, water ponding, and revegetation.

Visit www.saalnm.sa.gov.au to read how Gary Fuller (Wabricoola) and David and Carol Warwick (Holowiliena South Station) have used funds from the program to get on top of rabbit and weed issues on their properties.

Marree kids get on hopping mouse trail

Reece Pedler, Community Fauna Officer & Perri Carter, Community Engagement Officer

Thirteen Marree School students took part in surveys for Dusky Hopping-Mice in May checking deep pitfall traps in canegrass sand dunes and looking for tracks and burrows on Mundowdna Station.

Although no Dusky Hopping-Mice (*Notomys fuscus*) were caught this year, there was much excitement over the capture of a Knob-tailed Gecko, a Sandy Inland Mouse and other critters and the kids helped weigh and measure the animals before their release.

This work followed a 2011 survey of 70 sites in the North East Pastoral, North Flinders and Marree districts which confirmed the south-westerly range expansion of this little known species; see *Across The Outback*, August 2011.

At this time Dusky Hopping-Mice were found in high abundance in a range of places that they previously hadn't been recorded to the south and west of their known range inside the Dog Fence, including stony and hilly areas instead of their usual preferred sand dune habitats.

Unfortunately the kids lucked out at Mundowdna Station, but during the wider 2012 survey, Dusky Hopping-Mice were detected at only a few sites suggesting that their numbers have dropped off considerably since last year.

It is hoped that further monitoring in the coming years can continue to shed light on this interesting species, formerly known from just a few sites and considered rare.

Thanks to the Marree School students for their enthusiasm and involvement. Hopefully we'll catch a hopping mice next time!

The project is funded by the Australian Government's *Caring for our Country* initiative. ■

For further information on our threatened fauna programs or to contribute a sighting or a specimen, contact the Natural Resources Centre and ask for Reece 8648 5300



Dusky Hopping Mice captured at Mundowdna during 2009, after their first discovery in the local area



Desert Banded Snake



Delma Legless Lizards

Search for the Bronzeback

Reece Pedler, Community Fauna Officer

Volunteers continued the search for the elusive Bronzeback Legless Lizard – this time spending three days searching leaf litter at Evelyn Downs Station – and while only one Bronzeback was found the team uncovered plenty of other interesting reptiles.

Amongst other species, local volunteers from Mt Willoughby Station and Coober Pedy captured lots of Delma Legless Lizards as well as an exquisite Desert Banded Snake, both pictured here.

The July survey in the spectacular Breakaway country builds on the March survey at Mt Willoughby Station Indigenous Protected Area where 15 Bronzebacks were captured; see *Across The Outback*, April 2012.

Funded by the Australian Government, the work aims to improve knowledge of the Bronzeback's distribution and habitat requirements. ■

‘Great Tracks’ tourist brochure

The community-based Marree-Innamincka Natural Resources Management (NRM) Group launched its much anticipated tourist brochure at Innamincka in June which promises to be a popular resource for travellers to the remote, far north-east corner of South Australia.

Birdsville Strzelecki: legendary tracks of the Marree Innamincka district is a full-colour, 12-page brochure packed with interesting information including the history and origin, environment and ecology, and contemporary land-use of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks, famous stock routes that extend 520 kilometres from Marree to Birdsville and 446 kilometres from Lyndhurst to Innamincka.

In addition to being important trade routes for Aboriginal people, the Tracks support three of our largest industries – in pastoralism, tourism and petroleum exploration – and resonate with tales of exploration and adventure.

In brief easy-to-read snapshots, travellers on the Tracks will be able to explore points of historical, Aboriginal and biological interest by consulting the brochure’s detailed map, gaining a fuller appreciation of the region’s rich history, culture and natural diversity.

The permanent population of the district is approximately 400 people but a further 300 transient workers service the petroleum industry and some 50,000 tourists visit annually.

Visitors will learn about the importance of the Tracks as major

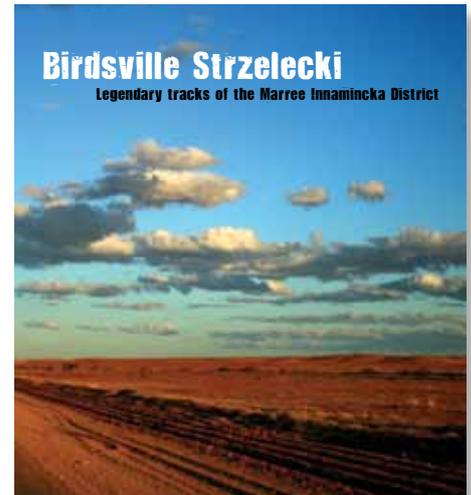
stock routes for pastoralists and trade routes for Aboriginal people, and the importance of groundwater, wetlands and the famous Cooper Creek in sustaining life in the region.

The brochure also contains tips for travelling respectfully and safely through the area.

This is the key information that locals want you to know to ensure you have a safe trip – but also one that respects the privacy of local landholders and the security of livestock, and limits the impacts on our natural resources.

Launching the brochure at the Innamincka Hotel, Janet Brook, Presiding Member of the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board was keen to acknowledge the efforts of the Marree-Innamincka NRM Group.

‘This is vast country, and the uninitiated often think that there’s not much out here,’ said Ms Brook. ‘But the region is loaded with truly incredible stories – of its plants, animals and people – and I commend the Group on initiating this brochure and investing considerable time in seeing it through.’ ■



Birdsville Strzelecki

Legendary tracks of the Marree Innamincka District



Copies of the brochure are available in the major tourist information centres in the SAAL region or from the Natural Resources Centre in Port Augusta 8648 5300

NORTH FLINDERS PLANT ID WORKSHOP

Matthew Westover, Assistant NRM Officer

About 30 people attended a plant identification workshop at Commodore Station in early July held in response to the germination of plants not commonly seen in the region as a result of the recent rains.

The day began with an opening address from Ian Ferguson, North Flinders NRM Group member, who provided an overview of the role of the NRM Group in representing the North Flinders community on local NRM issues before handing over to Mick Durant of Greening Australia.

Mick started with a presentation on the theory behind plant identification and shared some practical tips that can be used when trying to identify a plant.

Armed with plant identification manuals, the group – a mix of landholders,

government, and Australian Arid Lands Botanic Gardens staff – then walked a short distance from the Commodore Homestead and attempted to identify different plants.

This provided an opportunity to learn from Mick and put some of the theory into practice but also gave attendees a chance to learn from one another.

The day finished with information on how to collect and press plant specimens, some suggestions for where to obtain further assistance with plant identification, and a brief presentation on monitoring the preferred palatable species of goats.

Thanks to Chris Reynolds and Bridie Ferguson, Commodore Station, for providing the venue and a delicious morning lunch.



Chris Reynolds (Commodore Station) and Mick Durant (Greening Australia)



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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 survey – and some key stats

With the initial three-year funding term for *Biteback* complete, 170 landholders south of the Dog Fence were surveyed in April to gather feedback on the program – and the results were very positive.

Over 60 participating landholders (or 35%) returned their feedback either online or in hard copy.

Landholders agreed that *Biteback* has improved their knowledge and general understanding of wild dogs, has been good value for money, and has given them additional tools to manage wild dogs.

There are 21 Local Area Planning groups participating in the *Biteback* program – these cooperative groups of land managers determine and map where wild dog predation and movement is occurring and target and coordinate their wild dog control efforts across their district.

Survey respondents found these groups have helped improve coordinated control, information sharing amongst neighbours and communications with the SAAL NRM Board. They also agreed the group contact person was an invaluable and integral part of coordinating wild dog control and that local area planning encouraged landholder participation in the project. Overall, the majority of respondents found they are continuing to see



Bait injection at Commodore Station, July 2012

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact the Dingo Management team at the Natural Resources Centre SA Arid Lands 8648 5300

tracks and sightings of wild dogs, though they are not sure if the stock loss they are seeing is attributable to specific wild dog predation.

Landholder participation and baiting statistics

Meanwhile, we have compiled figures tracking landholder participation from 2006/07 to 2011/12 in wild dog baiting across the SA Arid Lands region south of the Dog Fence, as well as the amount (in kilograms) and number of baits that have been distributed; see Table 1.

The figures show that landholder participation in some form of wild dog baiting increased by 50% in the first year of *Biteback* – from 19 landholders (11%) in 2008/09 to 104 landholders (61%) in 2009/10.

Meanwhile, the amount of bait produced (in kilograms) has increased by five times from 2006/07 to 2011/12 while the number of baits produced

has increased by seven times. This is a reflection of increasing landholder participation through a coordinated baiting program that is driven through local contacts.

Across the districts (Table 2), landholder participation has been highest in the North Flinders (75%) and Kingoonya (74%) districts followed by the North East (51%) and Gawler Ranges (34%).

In the last two years (2010/11 and 2011/12) landholder participation, while still high, has dropped off. It is thought that this is a result of the changing season and landholders have become busy with other activities like fixing up roads and fences.

Thank you to those landholders who took part in our *Biteback* survey. This feedback is important in evaluating and improving the *Biteback* program should we be successful in obtaining further funding. ■

Table 1 Number of landholders involved in wild dog baiting south of Dog Fence in SA Arid Lands region and amount (kg) and number of baits produced – 2006/07 to 2011/12

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Number of landholders involved in 1080 wild dog baiting (total 170 landholders)	33	34	19	104	101	97
Amount (kg) of baits produced (includes injected meat and manufactured baits)	2,263 kg	3,855 kg	5,911 kg	8,958 kg	11,379 kg	12,134 kg
Number of Individual baits (including manufactured baits)	11,315	19,275	33,221	62,478	93,342	89,649

Biteback in operation

Table 2 Landholder participation in wild dog baiting per NRM district – 2006/07 to 2011/12

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
North Flinders/Marree (Total 65 landholders)	18	21	9	49	42	41
North East (Total 41 landholders)	2	2	1	20	21	19
Kingoonya (Total 23 landholders)	10	9	9	16	16	17
Gawler Ranges (Total 41 landholders)	3	2	0	18	12	14

Biteback in operation 

Dogger results

Twenty-four wild dogs were caught by doggers in 2011/12 after landholders on 14 properties took advantage of an SA Sheep Industry Fund grant.

Doggers spent a total of 90 nights trapping wild dogs across the properties with the soft-jawed traps checked daily. Forty-nine foxes and 21 cats were also captured.

The fourteen participating properties were from the North Flinders/Marree, Kingoonya and Gawler Ranges district.

Providing landholders with access to a dogger is an important component of the *Biteback* program with trapping most effective when it follows a coordinated baiting program to specifically target wild dogs that have not taken the bait.

In addition to the trapping service, doggers also taught landholders how and where to set the traps, how to entice dogs into traps, different trap sets that can be laid, the type of lures to use, and the occupational health and safety and animal welfare regulations around trapping.

Funding for the dogger service was provided by the SA Sheep Industry Fund with approved landholders employing and paying for the dogger and reimbursed through the grant process. ■



Male dingo seen on 1 April 2012 on the mail road between Narcoona and Wilkatana Station homesteads

Peter Langdon

PROPOSED DATES FOR NEXT MEAT INJECTION SERVICE

GAWLER RANGES	2-3 October
NORTH FLINDERS MARREE	22-26 October
KINGOONYA	20-23 November
NORTH EAST	3-5 December

New projects for Umoona and Nipapanha

Congratulations to the Umoona and Nipapanha communities who were both successful in securing funding for local projects from the Australian Government's 2012 Community Action Grants.

The Nipapanha Community, located in the North Flinders, will be using the funding to collect, collate and record Traditional Ecological Knowledge shared by Adnyamathanha elders for the benefit of their people and land. The information will be used by rangers to guide revegetation work on priority land. The project will also restore biodiversity, improve ecology, and increase wildlife habitats by reducing feral animals.

The Umoona Community of Coober Pedy will be poisoning Buffel Grass and cactus from the local area and providing land stabilisation to the creek banks that run through the community using geotextile matting.

Activities will restore natural landscape function and enhance biodiversity conservation values of land surrounding the Umoona catchment and community.

The project uses the Ecosystem Management Understanding (EMU)TM principles and Traditional Owner priorities and knowledge in caring for country.

We hope to bring you more news on these projects in future editions of *Across The Outback*. ■

Further information

If your community – Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal – would like assistance with natural resources management projects, contact the Natural Resources Centre SA Arid Lands 8648 5300 who will put you in touch with NRM staff

Bounceback celebrates 20 years

Trish Mooney, Bounceback Project Officer

Bounceback, the program responsible for boosting Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby numbers in the SA Arid Lands, celebrated its 20th anniversary in July at a ceremony attended by the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Paul Caica.

Bounceback is a natural resources management program which aims to restore habitats and foster recovery of native animal populations across the Flinders, Olary and Gawler Ranges.

The Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources program operates across public and private land, working with volunteers, landholders, traditional owners, and local communities on pest control, habitat restoration, surveying and monitoring, and works to reverse some of the impacts of the last 150 years on our environment.

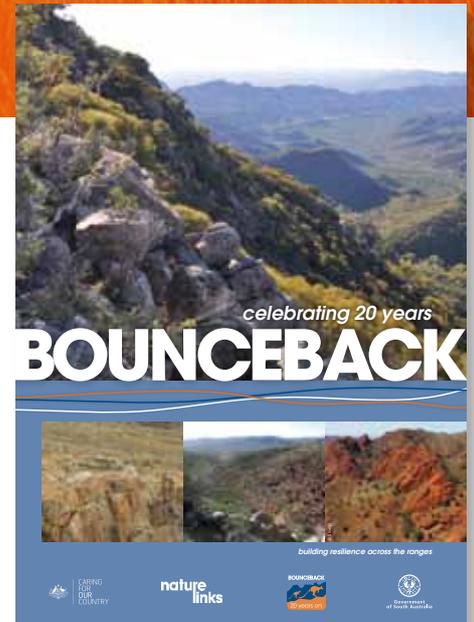
Minister Caica joined 60 past and current *Bounceback* partners at the 20-year celebrations at the Old Wilpena Homestead.

'*Bounceback* is a magnificent success story for ecological restoration in South Australia,' he said.

'Yellow-footed Rock-wallabies are shy, beautiful animals and we came close to losing them forever, but now when you visit the Flinders Ranges National Park, you have a chance of actually seeing them in the wild.'

When the program began in 1992, there were fewer than 50 Yellow-footed Rock-wallabies in locations such as Flinders Ranges National Park and Plumbago Station in the Olary Ranges.

Their numbers had been brought low by the fur trade in the early days of European settlement, and later by the impact of feral pests.



PICK UP YOUR COPY OF THE BOUNCEBACK BROCHURE!
Contact the Natural Resources Centre SA Arid Lands in Port Augusta 8648 5300

At last count, the populations in these locations had boomed to more than 1000, with similar increases across the ranges, where coordinated pest control occurs.

Bounceback's broadscale 1080 baiting has significantly reduced losses of young rock-wallabies to fox predation. Reduced numbers of goats has not only benefited rock-wallabies, reducing competition for food, but also assisted the regeneration of native vegetation.

Key partners include the Adnyamathanha community, Landscape Partnerships, Australian Wildlife Conservancy, Biosecurity SA, Bush Heritage Australia, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Nature Foundation SA, NRM Boards, the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, the Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby Preservation Association, Zoos SA and local landholders and tourism operators.

Bounceback is part of the NatureLinks program, which manages and restores large areas of land across South Australia and aims to create corridors linking significant areas of native vegetation and native animal populations. ■

Further information
Contact Trish Mooney 8648 5300



Bounceback 20-year celebrations at the Old Wilpena Homestead



Gil Coulthard at the launch of Uncle Gil's Walk

Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges Open Day

Denise McCourt, Executive Officer Co-management

The Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park Co-management Board held its third successful Open Day at Balcanoona on 17 May 2012.

The Open Day was held to celebrate the launch of Uncle Gil's Walk. Gil Coulthard was an Adnyamathanha Elder whose story has been told through an interpretive walk around the Balcanoona shearing shed. Sadly, Gil passed away less than a month later (see back page).

Members of the local Adnyamathanha community, park neighbours and local businesses joined the Board and DEWNR staff for a BBQ lunch and an opportunity was provided for the Board to showcase the achievements of the Park.

The Board Chair, Pauline McKenzie hosted the event.

Established in 2005, the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park Co-management Board manages the cultural landscape, still known and understood by its Aboriginal traditional owners, in a way that also protects and conserves the Park's outstanding natural and cultural features. The Co-management of the Park involves a partnership in which the Adnyamathanha people work together with the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources to share responsibility and decision-making for the management of the Park. ■

Further information

Contact Denise at the Natural Resources Centre SA Arid Lands
8648 5300

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.

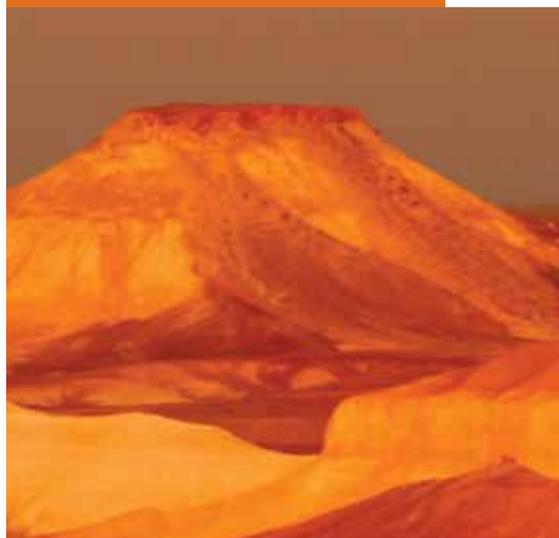
Please include your name, mailing address and email address (to receive electronic notification).

CALL FOR CONTENT

Across the Outback
October 2012 edition

Content due by COB
Friday 28 September 2012

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



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.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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



OUTBACK ROUNDUP

Mineral exploration – your rights as landholders

A brochure on mineral exploration in South Australia outlining your rights as landholders was recently released by the Department for Manufacturing, Innovation, Trade, Resources and Energy (DMITRE). Given the growing mining and exploration interests in the SA Arid Lands *Across The Outback* decided to reproduce it here.

What you need to know

Landowners should expect that if a company is considering exploring on their property, the company will communicate with them (via telephone, in person, email), well ahead of any intended activities.

To access your land to undertake any form of exploration, an explorer must either:

- » issue you with a form called a *Notice of Entry*, and then wait 21 days before entering your land, or
- » negotiate an agreement with you that includes the conditions of entry.

If the explorer intends to use equipment such as earthmoving and drilling equipment, they must also issue you with a *Notice of use of Declared Equipment* form or negotiate an agreement.

In either case, the explorer should provide you with company details, the intended work, the timing and location, and any associated impacts.

As a landowner, you can request additional information from the explorer about their plans.

Some areas, called ‘exempt land’ — including cropping land or land close to a residence — are treated differently. Explorers cannot access exempt land unless both parties reach agreement.

Best-practice exploration is built on respectful working relationships between explorers and landowners

Whether negotiated at the first stage of exploration or at some later time if exploration continues on your property, formal agreements between landowners and explorers should include conditions and timing of access

(including working around lambing or harvest periods for example), preferred communication methods and appropriate compensation.

You may be entitled to compensation for exploration that occurs on your property. Compensation should be negotiated in good faith and set at a level that recognises the impact of the exploration activities on the landholder.

You may also be entitled to compensation for legal costs. Compensation for your legal fees may form part of any agreement you negotiate with the explorer.

As a landowner you have a say in what happens on your land

As a freehold or perpetual landowner, if you don’t object to a *Notice of Entry*, the explorer can enter your land after 21 days. You have up to three months after receiving this notice to formally object to the explorer entering your land.

As any type of landowner, if you don’t object to a *Notice of use of Declared Equipment* form, the explorer can use such equipment on your land after 21 days. You have up to three months after receiving this notice to formally object to the explorer using declared equipment on your land.

Ultimately, if you object, or an agreement between you and the explorer cannot be reached:

- » as a freehold or perpetual landowner you have the right to object in court to an explorer accessing your land
- » explorers may also seek permission from the court to access the land.

In either case, the court will take the concerns of all parties into consideration.

WHAT IS EXPLORATION?

In SA, minerals are not owned by landowners, but are vested in the Crown.

Mineral exploration licences are granted to allow the search for mineral deposits. Every new mine has its beginnings as an exploration project but most exploration projects do not advance to become mines.

Exploration can take many forms, from a prospector walking through the bush mapping rock types and collecting rock or soil samples by hand, to drilling and complex geoscientific activities.

As a landowner you have time to consider any proposal to explore on your land

You should expect that explorers will continually communicate with you throughout the duration of their work, regardless of whether or not it proceeds to a mining operation. ■

Further information

Contact DMITRE Customer Services 8463 3000 or visit www.minerals.dmitre.sa.gov.au and download the *MG4 Guidelines: landowner rights and access arrangements* (go to Forms and Guidelines, Minerals Regulatory Guidelines)





A truck full of roadside rubbish at Montecollina Bore



Supervisor dog keeping an eye on the clean up

Great Tracks Cleanup

Outback roads have been cleared of 38 tonnes of rubbish thanks to the efforts of the Great Tracks Cleanup crew.

Twenty-seven people and 10 four wheel drives and trailers spent six days on the annual Great Tracks Cleanup travelling 1721 kilometres, donating 3254 volunteer hours and overcoming flat tyres and vehicle breakdowns, to pick up rubbish along the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks.

Departing from Leigh Creek on 1 July, one team travelled to Lyndhurst and then along the Strzelecki Track to Montecollina Bore while a smaller team travelled to Montecollina Bore via Copley, Iga Warta, Nepabunna, Balcanoona and Mount Hopeless.

The next day, while one team cleaned up to the Santos Moomba Recycling Depot and unloaded the trucks and trailers, another cleaned Della Road and Dillons Highway to Innamincka.

The group then worked its way up the Cordillo Road and Arrabury Road before setting up a bush camp for the night.

At Birdsville, the group unloaded at the recycling depot and met with ABC TV's Landline crew who

travelled down the Birdsville Track through to the Mungerannie Hotel filming the group's efforts.

In addition to general camping and household rubbish, the trucks and trailers were filled with all manner of vehicle parts including tyres, rims, diffs, galvanised iron sheeting, rusted out water tanks, fuel tanks, bottles and cans.

Founded in 2007 by volunteers from the Leigh Creek SES Unit, the Great Tracks Cleanup is a not for profit initiative run by volunteers who give of their time and vehicles to clean up outback tracks and roads.

Thanks to the generous support of Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure; Alinta Energy-Leigh Creek; SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board; Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources; Santos; and the numerous small supporter companies. ■

Further information
www.greattracks.com.au

RICE ACTIVITY DAYS

The Remote & Isolated Children's Exercise (RICE) will be hosting fun activity days for children at a number of upcoming events.

Coober Pedy Races and Gymkhana, 11 August

Year of the Farmer Race Day at Port Augusta, 16 August

William Creek Bronco Branding, 18 August

Glendambo Gymkhana, 6 October

Prominent Hill Family Day, 6 October

Blinman Gymkhana, 20 October

Based in Port Augusta, RICE has been providing support to families in rural and remote South Australia for more than three decades, providing childcare, health and wellbeing to eligible families, and hosting crèches and activity days at community events.

RICE provides a range of programs including Outback Childcare, play days, toy and book library, parenting resources, kindergarten and support through a Child and Family Worker and a Community Child Health Nurse to families living across 650,000 square kilometres of the State.

RICE staff welcome new families.

FURTHER INFORMATION
8642 4477 or admin@rice.org.au



OUTBACK ROUNDUP

OUTBACK TOURISM DESTINATION ACTION PLAN

The Outback Tourism Working Party met with the South Australian Tourism Commission on 18 July to review a first draft of the Outback Destination Action Plan (DAP). There was substantial agreement on the draft, with some discussion around targets for upgrading existing and building new accommodation over the years to 2020. The parties hope to finalise the DAP in the next few weeks. The Outback Tourism Working Party will publicise the DAP's

priorities and progress on implementing its actions in a new newsletter which it plans to begin circulating shortly. The newsletter reflects a strong commitment by working party members to strengthen in-region communication on tourism issues and developments.

FURTHER INFORMATION
Peter Cahalan, SATC Industry Partnerships Manager 0402 890 096

Concerns with lambing rates

Trent Scholz, Animal Health Officer

There have been reports in western New South Wales and southern Queensland of low lambing rates or marking percentages over the last 12-18 months despite at least adequate rainfall and pasture growth. Are there other factors limiting reproductive rates in the pastoral zone?

When we see adequate to high levels of pasture growth we generally correlate the higher level of nutrition in this feed to higher numbers of ewes in lamb and more lambs through the cradle.

Generally this assumption is true: normally it is available nutrition in a pastoral situation that limits reproductive rate.

Reproductive loss can occur if ewes fail to become pregnant or abort foetuses, or lambs die, and these can be affected by the nutrition of the ewe, ram or lamb on the ground or by stress, disease, environmental factors (temperature, rain etc) and predation.

While the most common reason for low reproduction is nutrition – and we may have limited opportunity to manage nutrition on pastoral properties – there are ways to maximise the impact of supplementary nutrition.

Aim to target certain groups of animals at strategic times. This may mean supplementing rams and ewes with a high energy ration prior to joining, with maiden ewes given particular consideration to ensure optimum body weight and condition.

General health status of ewes and rams is also important. Rams that have experienced an infection may remain infertile for seven weeks after the infection has subsided. Maintain vaccination programs to reduce the risk of clostridial diseases.

Brucellosis is also an important consideration in assessing sheep reproductive loss as infection in rams



Cattle and feral pigs

Jason Wishart (Courtesy of Invasive Animals CRC)



Feral goat

Rocco Pirottina (Courtesy of Invasive Animals CRC)

2012 FERAL PHOTOS COMPETITION

The Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre is looking for original photographs of pest animals living in our environment, pest animal damage, and pest animal control or monitoring activities in Australia.

The 2012 Feral Photos photography competition is open to all members of the public.

There will be prizes and the winning entries will be featured in the next Feral Photos calendar. Competition closes 30 September 2012.

FURTHER INFORMATION
Visit www.invasiveanimals.com/feral-photos for further details and to see the winning photos from last year's competition.

can render them infertile. Ensure you are purchasing rams from accredited Brucellosis-free studs.

There are also other infectious diseases that can result in ewes not becoming pregnant or aborting fetuses pre-term.

Consideration should also be given to general husbandry and management:

- » Time of shearing in relation to joining and lambing
- » Time of joining/lambing
- » Length of joining period
- » Predation control
- » Adequate protection for lambing ewes

If you are experiencing lower than expected lamb marking percentages consider:

- » Are the ewes getting in lamb?
- » Are lambs being born?
- » Are lambs dying?

These questions will help you focus your attention on possible causes. Pregnancy scanning is a tool that can help determine if ewes are getting in lamb. ■

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au
Contact PIRSA or a private vet if you are experiencing lower than expected lamb marking rates. PIRSA may be able to assist with an investigation into the problem. Reporting a suspected issue can also help us assess if there is a broader issue affecting reproductive rates.

PIRSA Port Augusta
8648 5166 or 0427 970 453
24 hour Emergency Animal Disease
Watch Hotline 1800 675 888

Camel movement cameras detect rare pigeon

Nick Secomb, Project Manager, State Feral Camel Management Project

Motion detector cameras at Purni Bore, on the edge of the SA Simpson Desert, have been used to monitor the movement of feral camels and other visitors to the water – and we've been collecting some interesting records courtesy of some itchy animals!

The cameras have been in place for the last 12 months to monitor changes in feral camel impact with studies underway to link camel visits (activity) with measured environmental impact and to look at how this relationship changes as feral camels are removed.

However, we have an ongoing problem with animals rubbing against some of the cameras and dislodging them, resulting in photos of blue sky, moving branches and plenty of red dirt.

While scrolling through a number of repeat records of blue sky we happened to note a shot of a very large flock of birds, which a subsequent site visit confirmed to be a rare occurrence of the Australian Flock Bronzewing Pigeon. The flock at Purni Bore has been estimated to contain over 2000 birds!

Along with camels and other large feral herbivores, the cameras have confirmed the presence of Barn Owls, Australian Bustards, Mulga Snakes, Variegated Fairy Wrens, Lesser Long-Eared Bats, Rainbow Bee-Eaters, and Spotted Harriers.

These records supplement the feral camel activity data being captured by the remote cameras, reminding us of the range of species that rely on scarce watering points in the Simpson Desert that stand to be affected if feral camel impact is not controlled. ■



Flock Bronzewing Pigeon (inset) and at Purni Bore

FLOCK BRONZEWINGS

According to Reece Pedler, SAAL NRM Community Fauna Officer, Flock Bronzewings (*Phaps histrionica*) are an uncommon visitor to the western Simpson Desert, usually only making an appearance during favourable seasons.

This species has declined markedly since European settlement, with explorers and early pastoralists recounting tales of flocks of hundreds of thousands blackening the skies.

Flock Bronzewings still can be seen in immense flocks in areas further north such as the Mitchell Grass downs of the Barkly Tableland in the Northern Territory and adjacent parts of Queensland.

Over recent good seasons they have been frequently seen along the Birdsville Track and Channel Country areas in large flocks of several thousand and in smaller groups south of these areas.



Ewe and lamb



Vale Gilbert Coulthard (Uncle Gil)

Lorraine Edmunds & Judi Francis

Gilbert Coulthard, a Senior Adnyamathanha man, a *mathari* (south wind) man, touched the lives of a generation of National Parks and Wildlife rangers.

Few people, who have worked for the department, have had such a strong ripple effect as Gil. And no other *yura* (Adnyamathanha person) has had such a lasting impact on their *udnya* (white) colleagues.

On country, up north, mustering goats on horseback, out camping, Gil connected with his parks colleagues and gave generously of himself.

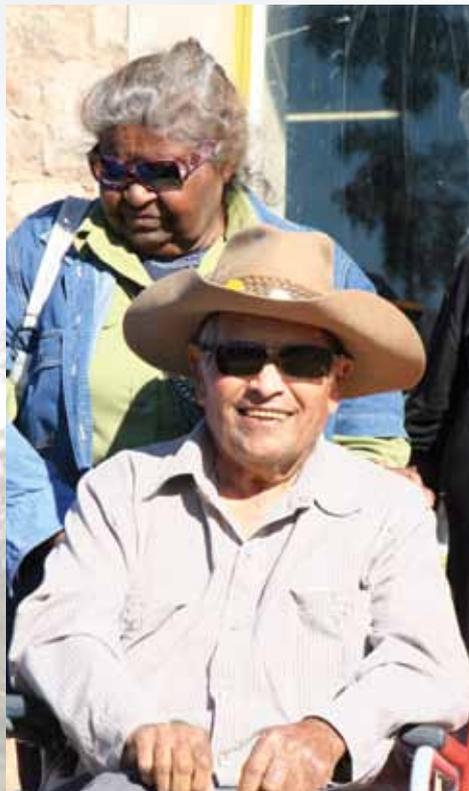
Gil was born on Wertalooona Station in 1940. He lived on the banks of Balcanoona Creek in a brush hut. Aged twelve, Gil began work on Wertalooona Station, and by the late 1950s he was head stockman, a position he held for sixteen years.

In the 1960s Gil and Linda lived for a few years at Wyambana Outstation where Gil looked after the windmills, stock troughs and stock on that section of Wertalooona.

In 1978, he became one of South Australia's first Aboriginal park rangers and worked for the department for over 20 years.

Gil remained close to his ancestral country throughout his working life. His years with National Parks took him 'up the road' a few miles to neighbouring Balcanoona, which was purchased by the State Government in 1980, and added to the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park.

As negotiations began about Balcanoona Station becoming a national park, Gil provided a vital communication link between the department and his community. He could see the importance of the station becoming a park and was a powerful influence for change,



Gil and Linda

helping his community see the value of protecting the park in the interests of the native flora and fauna and as a means to celebrate and share Adnyamathanha culture.

Gil had immense knowledge and experience and one of his greatest gifts was his willingness and generosity in sharing that knowledge with all who knew him.

He embodied reconciliation, never missing an opportunity to help others understand his culture but displaying enormous respect and tolerance of white culture. His unwavering belief in a 'fair go' was applied consistently throughout his life and will be a trait many of his colleagues will remember him for.

Gil's life and work were recognised in 2009 when he was awarded NAIDOC Elder of the year, a great honour for himself, his family and his people.

But perhaps the proudest moment for Gil was the opening of 'Uncle Gil's Walk' on 19 May. This short walking trail around Balcanoona Station was developed to highlight the role the Adnyamathanha people played in the region's pastoral heritage. (See page 12 for more information on the opening of the trail.)

After a long illness, Gil passed away on Tuesday 12 June.

To his life partner, Linda, their children, and extended family we share our deepest condolences for a life and contribution that was both inspiring and humbling. ■

Vale Uncle Gil.