Natural Resources
SA Arid Lands

October 2013
Issue 67

ACROSS THE OUTBACK

Wild dog forum supports advisory group formation

The Wild Dog Forum, convened by the SA Arid Lands NRM Board with support from Biosecurity SA was held in Port Augusta in October. Participants were supportive of a proposal to form a South Australian Wild Dog Advisory Group to identify and oversee delivery of priority actions in the State and national plans.

The terms of reference for the Group are being finalised but it is intended for it to be represented by landholders, industry, Aboriginal groups, conservation interests and government, and that it will have its first meeting before Christmas.

Attended by around 50 stakeholders, the forum was timed to coincide with the public release of the draft National Wild Dog Action Plan *which aims to build national capacity to manage wild dog impacts.*

It brought together representatives from the SAAL NRM Board, Dog Fence Board, Biosecurity SA, the sheep and cattle industry, NRM Groups, and conservation groups as well as natural resource management representatives in the Eyre Peninsula, Northern and Yorke and SA Murray Darling Basin regions.

The main focus of the forum was to seek the input of participants on a draft *State Wild Dog Strategic Plan* currently being developed by Biosecurity SA and how best to integrate this plan with the national plan.

Continued on page 02...

Proposed changes to South Australia's declared weeds will see BUFFEL GRASS DECLARED – find out how you can have your say on p 07.

Participants discussed management issues on both side of the Dog Fence, the Dog Fence and baited buffer zone, and whole-of-state governance issues

...continued from page 01

The need for professional trappers was also discussed but this would be reliant on developing a sustainable funding model to attract greater long-term investment for wild dog control.

Key management suggestions put forward for north of the Dog Fence included the need to relax restrictions on baiting control and to introduce control buffers between cattle production and non-production areas.

Concerns were raised about the lack of control options for organic-accredited properties both north and south of the Dog Fence.

There was a high level of support for the current level of maintenance of the Dog Fence although there was some concern expressed about the ability to respond quickly when the fence was damaged by severe weather events such as floods.

The forum took a state-wide view of the issues surrounding wild dogs and agreed that a collective vision and ongoing collaboration was the only way to address the impact of wild dogs in South Australia.

Janet Brook, SAAL NRM Board Presiding Member said the SAAL NRM Board has been responding to landholder concerns about wild dog impacts, both north and south of the Dog Fence, for some years now.

The forum was convened by the SA Arid Lands NRM Board with support from Biosecurity SA.

SAAL NRM Board, Biosecurity SA

PASTORAL BOARD 2013

MEETING 139
Wednesday 11 December, Waite

PASTORAL BOARD AND UNIT CONTACTS

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Geoff Mills

Pastoral Unit Leader
Chris Turner 8303 9755

Pastoral Board matters
David Hanna 8226 2127

Public access to pastoral lands
David Oag 8648 5174

Lease assessments
Chris Turner 8303 9752

Lease inspections and tenure
Chris Turner 8303 9755

Natural Resources SA Arid Lands appoints new Regional Manager

Janet Brook, Presiding Member, SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board

The SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board is pleased to welcome Stuart Paul to the role of Regional Manager, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands. Stuart brings with him 18 years experience delivering environment and natural resource management services on both public and private lands.

Stuart is a former employee of South Australia's Department of Environment where he was employed in various roles for around 11 years before relocating to the Northern Territory in 2005 to take up a role as District Manager in the Jim Jim district of Kakadu National Park.

In 2009 he moved to Darwin to manage workforce development programs for Parks Australia.

Stuart has relocated to Port Augusta with his young family where he commenced his new role in November. He replaces Trevor Naismith who took up the position of Regional Manager, Northern and Yorke, in August.

The role of Regional Manager provides a critical link between the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board and the Natural Resources SA Arid Lands staff who deliver on behalf of the Board.

'I look forward to working closely with staff to continue to deliver effective management outcomes across some of South Australia's most high profile and iconic protected areas, and to working closely with Janet and the NRM Board to deliver on the wide ranging management targets defined in the *Regional NRM Plan*.'

SAAL NRM Board

Stuart Paul, Regional Manager, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands

A SAAL NRM Board member perspective on the LEB Conference

Matt Turner

Participants in the 2013 LEB Conference

Dulkaninna Station pastoralist Darryl Bell joined 130 delegates at the Lake Eyre Basin Conference in Port Augusta in September as the SAAL NRM Board representative. He shares his perspective here.

I have been involved with the Lake Eyre Basin for many years in various ways and I was very impressed with this conference and the way it tackled long-standing issues, some of them contentious.

Mining, and the impact of coal seam gas and water use in Queensland, was of concern to many and attendees took the opportunity to approve a resolution to collectively express their concern regarding the Queensland Government's intention to repeal the *Wild Rivers Act 2005* and to trade current sleeper licences on the Cooper Creek.

Other topics included tourism, local and cross-border models for feral plant and animal management, woody weeds, water security, and the collection of data on our water resources, something which is especially important for understanding river flow.

It was good to catch up with people who have been involved with the Lake Eyre Basin for many years and to be amongst such articulate and informed community members who are keen to work together and support each other on these issues.

This is only the second time the LEB Conference has been held in South Australia and it was pleasing to see the Aboriginal community well represented as guest speakers, session facilitators and attendees, and a healthy attendance from land managers, community members, scientists, government staff and industry groups.

The Lake Eyre Basin conference was convened by the LEB Ministerial Forum, represented by Ministers from the Australian, South Australian, Queensland and Northern Territory governments.

SAAL NRM Board

New Pastoral Board members

David Hanna, Executive Officer

Presiding Member, Geoff Mills, welcomed new members at the 138th meeting of the Pastoral Board held in Adelaide in October.

Andrew Johnson is one of two new appointments to the Pastoral Board who brings over 30 years experience in land and soil conservation of pastoral land. He was a major contributor to the establishment of Soil Conservation Boards in the State's pastoral regions and subsequently, the NRM Boards. Andrew has worked with Commonwealth agencies in relation to the Murray Darling Basin and Lake Eyre Basin and is now with Primary Industries and Regions SA where he is responsible for SARDI, Biosecurity SA and Rural Solutions.

Kathryn Bellette has also been appointed as a new member of the Pastoral Board and has a background in environmental science, management, policy and education. She has held executive positions in the SA Government across different portfolios and been a member of several SA Government boards and ministerial advisory committees. Kathryn's most recent professional interest in the region was as the Flinders University representative on the Steering Committee for the "Allocating Water and Maintaining Springs in the GAB" research project.

Three new deputy members have also been appointed: Stephanie Williams, Keith Slade, and Greg Cock.

During the meeting, the Board received presentations from representatives of the Woomera Prohibited Area and SA Native Title Services as well as reviewing several policies from the Pastoral Board and other agencies including the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board's Feral Goat Policy.

The Board will be considering assessment reports for leases in the Eastern Districts over the next couple of months and will also be determining stock maximums for leases in the North East Pastoral district.

The Board was advised of the general drying conditions in the region and asks pastoralists to be vigilant with their stock numbers and to destock where required to ensure the sustainability of their land.

Pastoral Board

Dry Sheep Equivalents – frequently asked questions

Jeff Stringer, Pastoral Inspector

The Pastoral Board and its Dry Sheep Equivalents (DSE) sub-committee have been investigating possible changes to bring the stock maximum definition in line with accepted industry standards to provide a more realistic measure of stock grazing pressure in the rangelands. Here's the answer to some frequently asked questions.

What is a Dry Sheep Equivalent?

A dry sheep equivalent (DSE) represents the grazing impact associated with a 45 kilogram dry sheep (ewe or wether) that is maintaining body weight.

A sheep that is heavier than 45 kilograms, gaining weight, pregnant, or rearing a lamb will have a DSE of greater than 1.0 as they require and consume more fodder.

Class of Sheep	Dry Sheep equivalent
Dry ewe, maintaining bodyweight	1.0
Dry ewe, gaining 50 grams a day	1.3
Pregnant Ewe, last 2 months	1.5
Ewe with single lamb at foot	2.6
Ewe with twin lambs at foot	3.0

Do DSE ratings only apply to sheep?

No, any type of grazing animal can be rated in comparison to a 45 kilogram dry sheep, including cattle, horses, kangaroos and rabbits. For example, one 45kg dry sheep has the same grazing impact as 1.4 kangaroos or 13 rabbits.

Why talk about DSE?

Under the current *Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989*, pastoral lease stocking maximums are defined in terms of sheep equivalents. All sheep older than six months of age are currently defined as 1.0 sheep equivalent.

The use of DSE provides the pastoral industry with a more accurate way of expressing the feed requirements of different livestock.

A flock comprised mainly of wethers has a lower DSE rating (lower grazing impact) than a flock comprising mainly ewes. Consider the following table;

Flock	Total Sheep	Structure	Unit DSE	DSE	Total DSE
A	5000	4000 wethers	1.0	4000	5800
		1000 ewes	1.8	1800	
B	5000	2500 wethers	1.0	2500	7000
		2500 ewes	1.8	4500	
C	5000	1000 wethers	1.0	1000	8200
		4000 ewes	1.8	7200	

Comparing the flocks in the table above shows that the higher the percentage of ewes in a flock, the higher the DSE rating of that flock.

By comparing the grazing requirements of different classes of stock pastoralists are then able to incorporate into their management the ability to measure, or quantify, the capacity of a given parcel of land to carry different classes of stock. This is an important management tool for pastoralists faced with the implications of adapting to seasonal and land type variations on their lease.

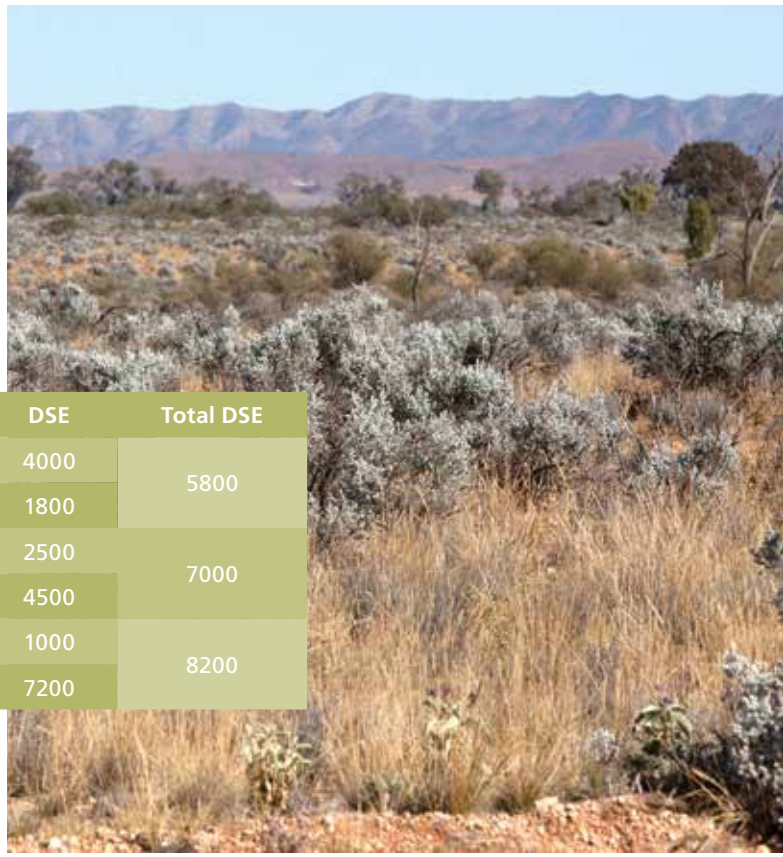
What next?

Whilst some initial work has been undertaken on behalf of the Pastoral Board, there is still more to consider before DSE could be, or would be, introduced.

Further information

Contact Jeff Stringer, Pastoral Inspector, 8648 5195 or mobile 0417 845 451 or Chris Turner, Team Leader, freecall 1800 678 447 or mobile 0418 812 484

Pastoral Board, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands



Craig Baulderstone leaves his mark

Chris Turner, Team Leader, Pastoral Unit

The Pastoral Board bid farewell to Principal Scientific Officer Craig Baulderstone in July. After more than 20 years supporting the work of the Board, Craig leaves behind a wealth of experience in rangeland condition assessment.

Craig started as a pastoral assessment officer in 1990 where he quickly became an experienced assessor and travelled regularly throughout the Kingoonya, Gawler Ranges, North East Pastoral and Eastern Districts. In his own words:

We were part of a team that was going to set up a network of thousands of vegetation monitoring sites over half the state, pretty much one in every paddock, and we had 10 years to get it done. It was ground breaking stuff but also had its fair share of challenges.

We were mentored closely by great people with great passion for the rangelands but it soon became clear to me that the greatest education came from the landholders who were so generous in sharing their years of observations, day in day out throughout the variations in seasons.

Since those beginnings, Craig has overseen the completion of second round pastoral lease assessments in the Gawler Ranges, North East and Eastern Districts, the rebuilding and training of the assessment team, and the introduction of digital data collection to the assessment process.

Craig includes some of his career highlights as being the establishment of monitoring sites for the Arid Recovery area at Olympic Dam, participating in the initial monitoring program for the *Bounceback* program in the Flinders, Gawler and Olary Ranges, and his participation in the national Australian

Collaborative Rangeland Information System (ACRIS) program, and the Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN).

Craig is enjoying spending time with his young family and considering options for his future. We're confident that this is not the last we have heard from him!

Pastoral Board, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands

Control of ferals fosters Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby recovery in the Gawler Ranges

Trish Mooney, Bounceback Project Officer

Recent monitoring in the Gawler Ranges National Park and on nearby Hiltaba Nature Reserve confirms the steady recovery of Yellow-footed Rock-wallabies as a result of concerted goat and fox control.

Monitoring was carried out as part of *Bounceback* – a landscape scale conservation program. These positive results are an endorsement of the program's long term efforts to maintain low goat and fox numbers in the area.

Seven Yellow-footed Rock-wallabies were captured near Stone Dam in Gawler Ranges NP, some kilometres east of previously recorded locations.

Some of these animals had been caught previously at the Yandinga monitoring site indicating that they are starting to move back into previously occupied suitable habitat within the park.

It was exciting to find that all adult females were carrying pouch young and that juvenile wallabies were also present.

However, on-going breeding success relies on the continued control of goats and foxes on the park to ensure that the wallabies have enough food resources to breed and that the young can survive to adulthood.

On neighbouring Hiltaba Nature Reserve, *Bounceback* is working collaboratively with Nature Foundation SA to manage threats to bring the Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby back from the brink.

Monitoring on Hiltaba also revealed females with pouch young and juvenile wallabies.

This is the first sign in a long time that Yellow-footed Rock-wallabies are increasing

A young Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby captured during a recent survey in the Gawler Ranges

on Hiltaba and it is hoped that numbers will grow to the point where this population is sustainable in the long term.

In the past year, nearly 7000 goats have been removed from Hiltaba and 9000 fox baits laid, building on work carried out by *Bounceback* in the Gawler Ranges over the past 10 years.

SAAL NRM Board, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Nature Foundation SA

Catchment approach to fighting Mimosa Bush

Janet Walton, Marla-Oodnadatta NRM Officer, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands

The Marla-Oodnadatta NRM Group has taken a catchment approach to tackling the problem plant Mimosa Bush in the district completing a two-year project to contain its spread in the Peake Creek and lower Neales River catchment.

After first surveying the extent of Mimosa Bush (*Acacia farnesiana*) in the catchment in 2012, land managers identified four priority sites for targeted control – The Peake, Allandale, Evelyn Downs and Mt Barry Stations.

Traditional herbicide control was undertaken on Allandale and The Peake and these properties will continue to monitor the treatment sites and undertake follow-up control.

Evelyn Downs Station has fenced a section of drainage line adjoining Mt Barry Station to trial a number of control methods in priority areas (see inset).

And to minimise downstream spread Mt Barry Station is installing vegetation filters for monitoring purposes and to protect neighbouring properties.

In taking a whole-of-catchment approach, this project has successfully raised community awareness about Mimosa Bush with land managers identifying areas most at risk, devising strategies for the management of priority sites, discussing options for control methods, and understanding the active sources of dispersal.

Even properties that did not have identified Mimosa Bush populations have improved awareness and are able to contribute to ongoing monitoring.

Further information

Contact Janet Walton, NRM Officer, 8672 3648

SAAL NRM Board, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Marla-Oodnadatta NRM Group, Australian Government

Mimosa Bush (*Acacia farnesiana*)

Roger Peggie's long-reach spray arm in action

TRIALLING INNOVATION ON EVELYN DOWNS

An organic property, Evelyn Downs is trialling three different methods of treatment of Mimosa Bush in a fenced section of the upper Peake Creek catchment, including the use of a unique long-reach spray arm which mixes the chemicals at the point of delivery.

The spray-arm was first demonstrated to the Marla-Oodnadatta NRM Group in August by its inventor Roger Peggie.

Originally designed for weed control on waterways, its extending arm can be fitted onto the back of a vehicle (or a boat) to spray weeds along creeklines, hover over sensitive cultural sites, and reach inaccessible sites.

Mixing chemicals at the point of delivery ensures full effectiveness of the herbicide's active chemical ingredient and reduces the risk of herbicide spillage and damage to non-target plants.

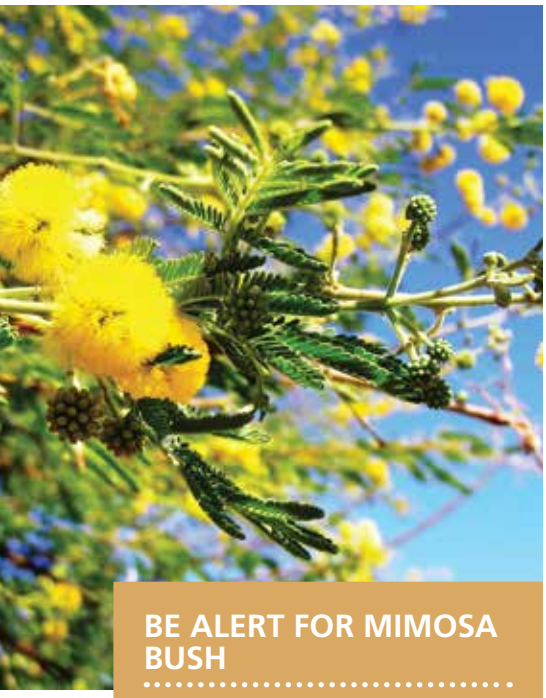
The other methods being trialled are hand spraying smaller individual plants and cutting and painting smaller plants close to native trees and shrubs.

The property is also undertaking herbicide trials. RoundUp BiActive® with wetting agent will be compared with Starane® on selected Mimosa Bush plants to review their success as alternative herbicide controls to the more traditional Access® and diesel mix.

As well as being a management control site, the fenced section on Evelyn Downs provides a means to restore landscape function.

Through fencing the area and managing total grazing pressure, riparian vegetation can be restored, reducing erosion through slowing and spreading the rate of overland flow through the system, calming the drainage line, and reducing the conditions favourable to the germination of Mimosa Bush.

Soil conservation work higher up the catchment also involved working towards restoring the natural landscape base level to ensure conditions are more favourable to the regeneration of the productive riparian vegetation rather than to Mimosa Bush.



BE ALERT FOR MIMOSA BUSH

The Pastoral Board are asking land managers in the SA Arid Lands region to be vigilant and to control outbreaks of Mimosa Bush on their properties.

Principally occurring in the Marla-Oodnadatta and Marree-Innamincka districts, Mimosa Bush can develop into dense thickets which have the potential to choke drainage lines, prevent stock access to waterpoints, particularly around dams, and reduce plant biodiversity.

Mimosa Bush is a prickly, light green, rounded, spreading and multi-stemmed shrub that grows between 4-7 metres high. The flower is a yellow cylindrical ball which develops through autumn to early summer.

Land managers should maintain good vehicle and livestock hygiene and take measures to contain Mimosa Bush and prevent further dispersal.

Mechanical and/or chemical management techniques for control can be employed.

Further information

Contact the Biosecurity team, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands 8648 5300

Pastoral Board, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands

Have your say

24 new weeds proposed for declaration

Land managers in the SA Arid Lands are encouraged to have their say on the first comprehensive review of South Australia's declared weeds in 20 years.

Statewide, the review proposes changes to the legal status of 50 weeds. Under the proposed changes an additional 20 weeds will be prohibited from sale and/or transport in the SA Arid Lands region – Buffel Grass among them – and five for delisting.

It is important the community has their say on new weed policies as they may have information vital to our understanding of how a particular weed affects the land, or concerns about how it is being managed.

The eight regional Natural Resources Management Boards are asking the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation to declare these new weeds now so that we can minimise their spread by coordinated management to protect our native vegetation and productive lands. The declarations of weeds differ in each region, and in levels of control required, depending on the risks assessed for the landuses in that region.

An important proposed change is the declaration of Buffel Grass, which is known as a transformer weed in rangelands as it can change vegetation character over wide areas. Buffel Grass has invaded the semi-arid rangelands and is encroaching southwards.

Information about the review and proposed changes to declaration for the 50 plants can be found at www.environment.sa.gov.au/haveyoursay/declaredplantreview

The website includes a feedback form, summaries of the proposed changes, draft policies for each weed, frequently asked questions and contact information.

Alternatively, people without access to a computer can obtain an information pack by contacting 8303 9620.

The public consultation period closes on 15 January 2014.

Of particular relevance to the SA Arid Lands region, the following weeds are proposed for listing and delisting:

In

- Buffel Grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris* and *C. pennisetiformis*)
- Espartillo (*Amelichloa brachychaeta*)
- Fountain Grass (*Cenchrus setaceus*)
- Carrion Flower (*Orbea variegata*)

Check the website for the different levels of control proposed for each of these weeds

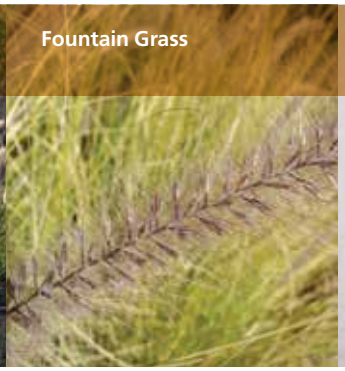
Out

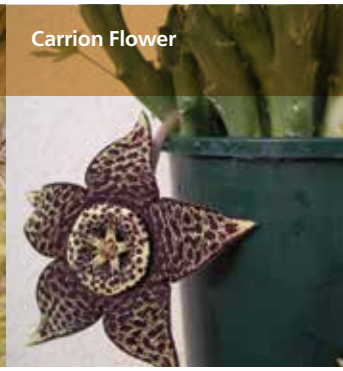
- Onion Weed (*Asphodelus fistulosus*)
- Slender Thistle (*Carduus tenuiflorus*)
- Soldier Thistle (*Picnomon acarna*)
- Soursob (*Oxalis pes-caprae*)
- Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)

Under the proposed changes an additional 20 weeds will be prohibited from sale and/or transport in the SA Arid Lands region.

Biosecurity SA, Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, SAAL NRM Board


Buffel Grass


Fountain Grass


Carrion Flower

Hookina Creek, Mayo Gorge Waterhole

Aquatic ecosystems clear health check

An assessment of the health of major rivers and key permanent waterholes in the SA Arid Lands region has revealed that 95 per cent are at least in 'fair' condition and, of these, 62 per cent were rated 'good' or 'very good'.

The assessments, which were undertaken on public and private lands in 2012, sampled 54 priority aquatic ecosystems in the Flinders region (including Balcanoona and Brachina Creeks) and the Lake Eyre Basin (including Algebuckina and Hookeys waterholes).

Information was collected on water quality, associated flora and fauna, and looked at any potential impacts to the sites from mining and tourism activities, feral animals, or weeds. At each site, assessments were made of water chemistry, turbidity, aquatic vegetation, shade cover, bank erosion, siltation and pollution indications, as well as an assessment of the nearby area to provide context.

Most sampled sites showed evidence of nutrient enrichment and some disturbance due to stock and/or feral goat access. This warrants further investigation in the future.

With the work contributing to several targets in the *SAAL Regional NRM Plan*, the data provides a baseline against which future results can be measured; the intention is to repeat the field work every five years in order to highlight any changes in condition and to inform management interventions.

Further information

Condition reports for each of the assessment sites can be accessed here www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au/Systems/EPAWQ/Pages/Map.aspx. Each site contains a summary, findings, description of special environmental values, pressures and management responses, and links to the raw data.

Environmental Protection Authority, SAAL NRM Board, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands

LAKE EYRE BASIN - PEOPLE & PASSION

Michelle Rodrigo, Lake Eyre Basin Communications Officer

A new online collection of 20 inspiring short films celebrates the characters of the Lake Eyre Basin capturing why they go that extra mile to look after the Basin.

Graziers, ecologists, Aboriginal rangers and land managers, tourism operators and botanists from all corners of the Lake Eyre Basin are featured in this collection.

It includes several passionate individuals from the SA Arid Lands region – Travis Gotch (Natural Resources SA Arid Lands), Trevor Wright (Wrightsair, William Creek), Douglas Lillecrapp (Todmorden Station) and Bill Lennon (Mount Willoughby).

Ecologist Steve Eldridge – who has been working on the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board's Dingo Research Project – is also profiled.

View these short films online at www.dcq.org.au/lakeeyrebasin

Screen shot from Douglas Lillecrapp's film

Great results! After 12 days of drilling and construction, the new well 'New Chapalanna' at 421 m deep and using high grade stainless steel was opened up and tested at greater than 90 litres/second yield

Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative

Nicholas Kruger, Hydrogeologist, DEWNR

More than $4.2 million has been committed to the third phase of the Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative (GABSI-3) that aims to reduce groundwater waste from the Great Artesian Basin (GAB).

Since the program first commenced in 1999, GABSI has been working with land managers to rehabilitate (cap) uncontrolled bores and replace wasteful earthen bore drains with sealed water delivery systems.

The signing of the *South Australian GABSI-3 2012-2013 Implementation Plan* by the Gillard Government allows the program to continue to improve the health of important groundwater-dependent ecosystems associated with GAB springs and ensure continued access to artesian water by industry.

With estimated water savings of 6687 mega litres per year, the commitment of funds will ensure work can continue on the deep and technically challenging Poollowanna, Poonarunna (White Bull), Haddon Downs and Purni wells. Their successful rehabilitation and control will contribute to large water savings. Additional works including Toonketchen redrilling and decommissioning on Murnpeowie Station will also be undertaken.

Further Australian Government funds will also be used to undertake an audit of the state and condition of all artesian and non-artesian well heads in the GAB. This audit will inform the likelihood of future risks to any infrastructure failure.

A part of this work also includes measurement of the water level (pressure) of the GAB aquifer. This information will feed into the State and national database where it can be used to assess groundwater resource condition at a regional scale.

The funds were a combination of Australian Government, State Government and industry contributions. The implementation plan for the 2013-2014 financial year is currently being drafted.

Further information

Contact Nicholas Kruger, Hydrogeologist, Department of Environment, Water & Natural Resources 8463 6699 or nicholas.kruger@sa.gov.au

DEWNR, GABSI Consultative Committee, Australian Government

GREAT ARTESIAN BASIN SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE (GABSI)

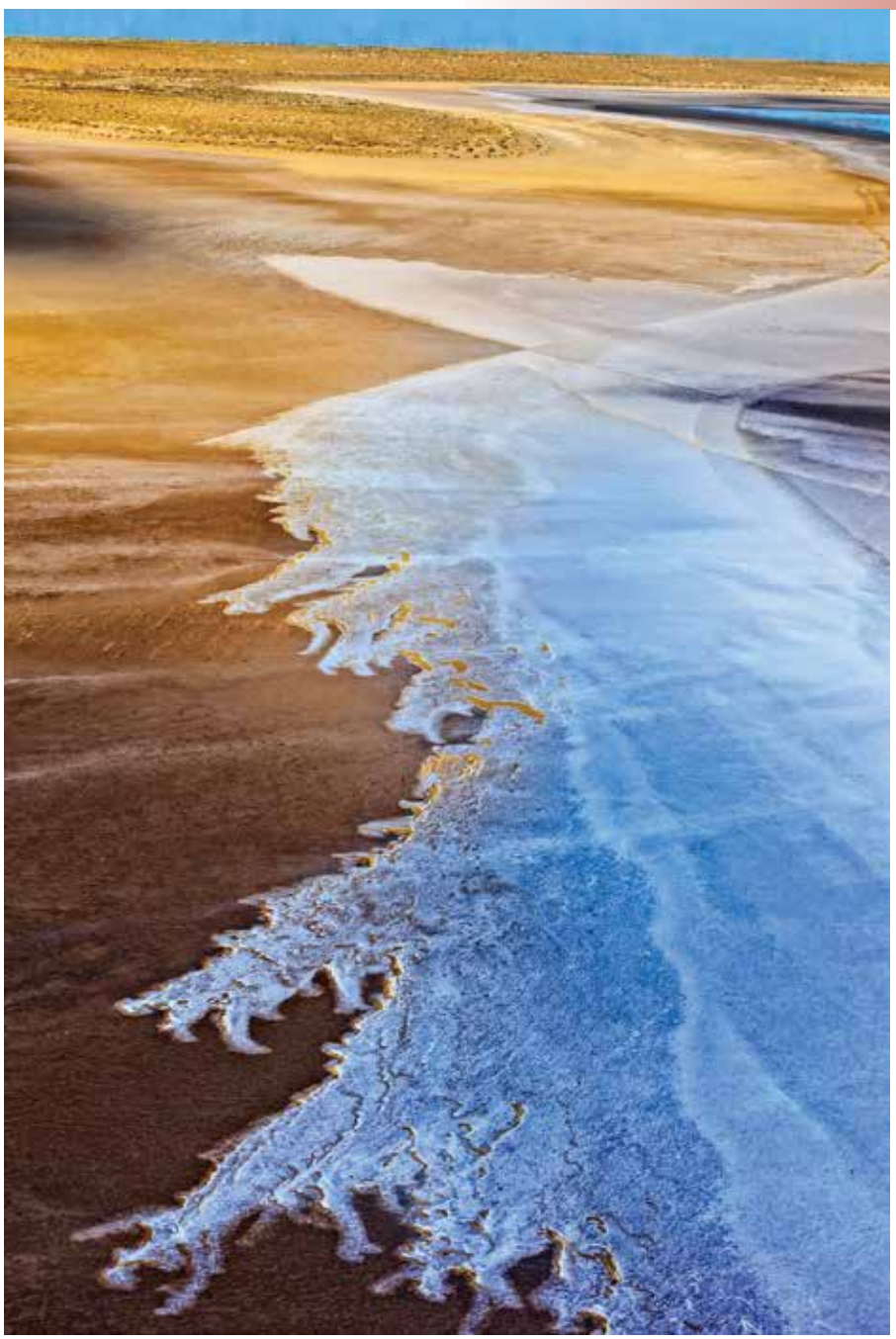
In 1999, Australian and State Governments began a basin-wide co-ordinated, 15 year program known as the GAB Sustainability Initiative (GABSI) to cap free-flowing bores and replace open drains with pipes. This water infrastructure renewal has meant that more than $350 million has been committed over the life of the program.

Prior to 1999, a number of programs (initiatives of both government and landholders) to control flowing bores and eliminate open drains helped to restore some artesian pressure but with more than 1500 artesian bores continuing to flow into more than 34,000 kilometres of open bore drains by the late 1990s, the need for a collective approach with sustained funding was required.

By mid 2013, 1143 wells had been capped and more than 24,843 kilometres of bore drains removed and replaced by 27,000 kilometres of piping. This has resulted in returning 191, 862 megalitres of water back to the environment every year and continues to assist the recovery of artesian pressure in the Basin.

Further information

www.environment.gov.au/water/policy-programs/gabsi



Salt formations on the edge of Kati Thanda – Lake Eyre. Peter Elfes © 2013

Have your say

COONGIE LAKES NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

People with a stake or interest in Coongie Lakes National Park are invited to comment on a draft management plan released by the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources for a three-month period of public consultation.

The plan provides clear strategic management direction for the next 10 years, identifies the vision for the reserve and the objectives and strategies necessary to meet that vision.

Contact Natural Resources SA Arid Lands 8648 5300 for a copy of the draft or download a copy at www.environment.sa.gov.au/managing-natural-resources/Park_management/Management_plans/Plans_in_preparation

FEEDBACK IS DUE BY 31 JANUARY 2014

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

Natural Resources SA Arid Lands' Aboriginal Partnerships team helps provide opportunities for Aboriginal communities to successfully achieve NRM project outcomes. Does your community have a project in mind? Call 8648 5300.

Outback parks – share your stories

Do you have treasured memories of experiences at Lake Eyre National Park or Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park?

You have the opportunity to help shape the future management of these iconic outback desert parks by sending in the stories and pictures that best represent your experiences and memories of these parks.

It is often said that a 'picture is worth a thousand words' and this visual storytelling in combination with your comments will contribute to the Arabana Parks Advisory Committee's insights into what people value, what needs protecting and what the future could look like in the outback desert parks.

This call has been inspired by the work of award winning Australian photographer Peter Elfes. Peter's stunning photographic story of Kati Thanda – Lake Eyre featured in a recent edition of *f11*, a renowned international photography magazine.

The Arabana, together with Natural Resources SA Arid Lands and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources are working in partnership as a recently formed co-management Advisory Committee (see pg11) to manage Lake Eyre National Park, Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park and Elliott Price Conservation Park.

A discussion paper on the parks will be released and draft management plans will be available for public consultation.

Share your stories by 1 December. Load your stories and photos onto www.facebook.com/ParksSa or email DEWNRProtectedAreaManagement@sa.gov.au

Further information

Contact Emily Fatchen, Project Support Manager 8124 4817

Arabana Parks Advisory Committee

Participants in the Inspector training

New inspectors protecting Aboriginal heritage in parks

Ten National Parks staff have been nominated for appointment as inspectors under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*.

These appointments will enable the staff to make a better contribution to the protection of Aboriginal heritage in their regions.

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988* ensures that the State's Aboriginal heritage is protected and preserved, and makes it an offence to damage, disturb, or interfere with an Aboriginal site, object or remains. Disturbing sites or interfering with, or removing, objects or remains from an Aboriginal site diminishes the cultural heritage values of our state and attracts a penalty.

The training has enabled Aboriginal people to demonstrate leadership in the protection of their heritage and will help to encourage compliance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*.

The training was held in Port Augusta in September and was delivered by the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation division.

Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division (DPC), SA Native Title Services, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula, Natural Resources Murray Darling Basin

Arabana Advisory Committee members and Natural Resources SA Arid Lands parks staff

Left to right: *Wendy Webb, Aaron Stuart, Barry Hayden (front), Kirrily Blaylock, Nerissa Haby, David Hull (front), Travis Gotch, Fiona Gill – Chair (front), Frank Lyman, Jodie Warren, Dean Stuart, Peter Watts (front), Tony Magor*

ARABANA PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Representatives of the Arabana Aboriginal Corporation, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources have formed the Arabana Parks Advisory Committee. The group met together for the first time in Marree in August.

'This partnership is an important step in the journey toward recognition of Indigenous rights over traditional lands and improving park management through a combination of tradition and modern science', says Tony Magor, District Manager, Outback, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands.

Aaron Stuart, Deputy Member of the Arabana Parks Advisory Committee says, 'parks are our future, like our history and our parks are our past'.

Following the signing of the co-management agreement in June 2012, one of the first tasks of the Committee is their collective contribution to the park management plans.

This sign is located near Coober Pedy at a regular overnight stop-over for caravans and campers

New signage for responsible travel

Three NRM Groups have completed a long-term project to deliver 11 visitor information signs at key rest areas along the Stuart Highway in a partnership that will benefit travellers to the region.

The South Australian section of the Stuart Highway from Port Augusta to the Northern Territory border crosses the Marla-Oodnadatta, Kingoonya and Gawler Ranges NRM districts.

After identifying a gap in the provision of regional visitor information, the three NRM Groups based in these districts devised the signs to raise visitor awareness that they are travelling through someone's backyard and whilst it may look very different to their own, it is valued by the community who inhabit it.

The signs encourage visitors to consider their actions carefully offering advice on rubbish dumping, firewood collection and burning, toilets and hole digging as well as road conditions and travel advice.

Five of the signs also impart particular information at specific locations including the region's unique and often threatened animal and plant species, the spread of Buffel Grass, and how a lack of vehicle hygiene can spread weeds.

Gawler Ranges NRM Group, Kingoonya NRM Group, Marla Oodnadatta NRM Group, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Australian Government

GET INVOLVED

Do you live or have an interest in the SA Arid Lands region? Are you interested in providing a local perspective to the SAAL NRM Board on key natural resource management issues in your district? Then perhaps you'd like to be a NRM Group member. Expressions of interest are taken throughout the year for membership on your local NRM Group.

To register your interest contact Natural Resources SA Arid Lands 8648 5300 or visit our website www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/aridlands

DORPERS/MERINOS – WHAT'S THE COST?

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Land managers are invited to join the North Flinders NRM Group and Pastoral Unit representatives to gain a clear understanding of the differences in managing Dorpers and Merinos. This special session initiated by the North Flinders NRM Group will help you consider the financial value of these breeds for your property and gain an awareness of your legal obligations.

Wednesday 27 November, 1:30pm (lunch will be provided at 12.30pm)

Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Railway Station, Port Augusta

RSVP Louise Gavin, District Liaison Officer Flinders-Olary 8648 5300

Newly appointed North East Pastoral NRM Group members: Terrence Coulthard, Ross Sawers (Board representative), Glen Norris (Chair), Carina Staer, Louise Gavin (Natural Resources SA Arid Lands) and Ian Falkenberg

NORTH EAST PASTORAL NRM GROUP FORMED

The first meeting of the North East Pastoral NRM Group held in Olary in September marks a new opportunity for a district voice in regional natural resource management matters.

The group will provide the on-ground conduit for the North East Pastoral community to feed information or concerns relating to the natural resources in the district to the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board.

Amongst other projects, the group want to collaborate with the Olary Weed Management Group and would like to seek funding to grow the community weed control efforts for greater outcomes for the whole district.

The North East Pastoral NRM Group is still seeking additional community membership, particularly from a land manager to balance perspectives and offer opinions relating to district pastoralism.

Further information

Contact Louise Gavin, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands on 8648 5300

Mt Eba mini school participants checking Elliot traps for small mammals

Budding scientists uncovered at Mini Schools

School of the Air students participated in Mini School events on three pastoral stations in early August and Natural Resources SA Arid Lands staff were there to share information about natural resources management.

At Merna Mora Station in the North Flinders district, students of varying ages learned how to assess landscape health using a modified version of the 'Landscape Function Analysis' method - a scientific method used for looking at the health of the country. Over a 10 metre line, students were required to record a description of the area, the type of soil and the main vegetation type. Then, they measured how far it was between each plant and how wide each plant was. In the gaps where there were no plants it was important to note if there were stones, logs or leaf litter which would minimise the impact of heavy rain and wind. This combined to give the area a rating for erosion and ground cover.

The students worked together as a group to report on what they found. Most were amazed at the number of different plants in the analysis range!

Students at Thurlga Station in the Gawler Ranges district took an excursion to Tandaie rockhole where they learned about the importance of rockholes to animals, plants and people with rangers from the Gawler Ranges National Park.

At Mt Eba in the Kingoonya district, students learned about scientific techniques for surveying animals by setting pitfall and Elliot traps in the hope of collecting some small mammals to study further. Just one lizard was trapped in this exercise! Students were also taught to identify animal tracks and scats that they could continue to recognise at home.

Further information

If you are interested in finding out more about our school programs contact Perri Carter, Community Engagement Officer, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands 8648 5300

Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, School of the Air

ARE YOU ON THE *ACROSS THE OUTBACK* MAILING LIST?

Across the Outback is a free publication that is issued to 1500 individuals or organisations with a stake or interest in the SA 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
February 2014 edition

Content due by COB
14 February 2014

Contact jenny.barker@sa.gov.au or 8463 3354 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

Eric Dahl, Ranger-in-Charge, Innamincka, inspecting boundary fences with Friends of Innamincka volunteers

Innamincka working bee

Gavin Agius, Ranger, Innamincka, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands

A two week working bee in the Innamincka Regional Reserve and Coongie Lakes National Park in August saw volunteers rack up more than 1500 hours on a variety of projects and visit some of the State's most picturesque and remote locations.

Fourteen members of the Friends of Innamincka (FOI) from South Australia and interstate joined forces for part of the time with the Toyota Landcruiser Club to repair termite damage at Kudriemitchie Outstation.

The FOI members also completed major repair work to the Cullyamurra Waterhole enclosure fence, installing floodgates to exclude stock and pest animals and provide greater protection to the native plants and animals that rely on this significant waterhole.

The group's annual bird surveys took place at a number of the reserve's waterholes, at Innamincka and Coongie Lakes National Park. This year the group finally made it to Coongie Lakes where their survey uncovered the Wandering Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna arcuata*), an uncommon sighting in the area.

Members also installed directional signs within the Reserve and surveyed the Coongie Lakes National Park eastern boundary fence to check and repair damage. They also provided support to the Innamincka community, maintaining the historic Australian Inland Mission (AIM) building, cleaning around the town dump, township, race track and visitor sites, and installed a cement border around one of the graves at the town cemetery.

In total the group tallied 555 hours of on-ground works. That's equivalent to 113 days working in the field for one staff member and proves that whilst volunteering is fun, it also genuinely contributes to the protection of our community and environmental assets.

Friends of Innamincka, Toyota Landcruiser Club, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands

Water Whistle ducks, Spoonbill and Pelican, Innamincka

Desert Parks call for volunteers

Tony Magor, Acting District Manager (Outback)

Are you interested in meeting like-minded people, forming strong friendships, and working in our remote desert parks? Then why not become a volunteer?

As the cooler months draw to a close and the region prepares for another hot summer, the desert parks volunteers down tools and turn their thoughts to attracting new members.

Members of the Friends of Simpson Desert, Friends of Innamincka Reserves, Friends of Mound Springs and Toyota Landcruiser Club work in some of the most remote parks and reserves in South Australia.

Volunteers come from far and wide, with many based in Adelaide but others coming from other parts of Australia.

Respective working bees are scheduled roughly at the same time each year in the cooler months and last up to two weeks with some Friends groups heading out more than once a year.

Volunteers can get their hands dirty with a variety of activities and often get access to areas of our parks and reserves that few will ever get to see.

Most working bees combine a variety of activities and you might be involved in clearing vegetation along tracks, maintaining walking trails, fencing springs, controlling weeds, stabilising heritage sites like the State Heritage Listed-Dalhousie Ruins, installing signs, or participating in bird, plant or mammal surveys.

You could even combine your trip with a visit to the races. Friends of Innamincka Reserves' working bee sometimes coordinates with the Innamincka Races and members have pitched in to clean the racecourse ahead of the races and also assist in maintaining the town's graveyard.

There are a variety of volunteer groups operating in the SA Arid Lands region in the desert parks but also south in the spectacular ranges of the Gawler, Flinders and Olary areas and on public and private land. If you would like to find out more contact Natural Resources SA Arid Lands 8648 5300.

Natural Resources SA Arid Lands

New Chief Vet shares his views on animal health

Roger Paskin has joined Biosecurity SA as South Australia's Chief Veterinary Officer. Roger has worked in animal health in Victoria since 2007 and previously with the Meat Board of Namibia and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations in Italy. Roger shares his insights into how animal health services have evolved and current livestock market requirements.

'Veterinary inspectors' were common in the late 19th and early 20th centuries at a time when numerous diseases were having seriously deleterious effects on livestock production.

Rinderpest and pleuropneumonia were still around and the vaccines available at the time were, to say the least, primitive (indeed, a thermo-stable rinderpest vaccine didn't come into being until the 1980s).

Botulism wasn't even understood until the 1920s, a trustworthy anthrax vaccine only came about in the 1930s, and with dodgy arsenical dips being the only 'remedy' for external arthropod parasites, effective control of ticks and a cure for lice and mange only became reality in the 1950s and '60s.

There was, therefore, plenty of room for government-sponsored research and (often in the absence of effective vaccines, dips and drenches) government regulation of animal health to nurture the developing livestock industry.

Over time, that changed. New veterinary remedies put what became known as 'endemic disease' control firmly in the hands of producers. And, critically, a new generation of consumers emerged who had very different ideas about what they wanted on their kitchen tables.

Veterinary services changed slowly but massively; it was now no longer about keeping animals productive – it was about making sure that products met a plethora of market requirements.

So what are the markets concerned about today? Well, in a nutshell, the following:

- livestock and their products must be 'biosafe' – they mustn't be the bearers of diseases such as foot and mouth disease, anthrax or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) which might infect animal or human populations in areas into which they are imported;
- products must be free of residues – no heavy metals from contaminated pastures, or traces of antibiotics or growth promotants which might affect consumers;
- products must be free of contaminants – no nasty enterobacteria which might cause food poisoning;
- products and the animals from which they originate must be traceable, so that if an exotic disease, residue or contaminant is found, the point of origin in the production chain can be identified and dealt with; and
- with consumer tolerance for 'welfare issues' waning rapidly, animals must be raised and slaughtered in a humane fashion.

Animal health services are all about guaranteeing the above. It's about having, auditing and enforcing a range of production standards and having effective surveillance to detect unwanted disease. Animal health services are also about tracing animals and their products, and ensuring good public health and food hygiene.

In short, our business is about keeping our farmers in business. We have to ensure that our animal health services meet international standards in order to remain credible guarantors of our health situation.

And it goes even further than that: we face new challenges. Climate change will bring about new livestock population demographics with marked changes in disease vulnerability. Over time, the threat of exotic disease incursion is set to escalate significantly as international cargo and passenger traffic increase. And consumers at home and abroad will become ever more demanding.

Our animal health services and our producer community will need to work together very closely to meet these challenges.

Biosecurity SA – Animal Health

FURTHER INFORMATION

For advice or to report animal health issues on your property contact Trent Scholz, PIRSA Animal Health Officer 8648 5166 or 0427 970453

Yankaninna Station, the base for Operation Flinders youth program

Operation Flinders turns its hand to property management at Yankaninna

Emma Bloomfield, Acting Community Engagement Officer

Operation Flinders is probably best known for its adventure challenge which helps wayward youth get back on track. But, as owner of Yankaninna Station in the North Flinders, the sustainable management of this pastoral lease is also a focus for this South Australian-based charity.

A 560 square kilometre station which borders the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park, Yankannina Station was bought by Operation Flinders Foundation to enable the expansion of its youth program and to provide the program with more long-term security.

However, with around 600 people visiting the property annually and the property bought following a 10-year drought, the foundation is very aware of limiting their environmental footprint and running their youth program without doing any further damage to the environment.

After an initial survey of the property to look at the issues, the foundation formed a committee to develop, implement and review an Environmental Management Plan.

The main focus for the foundation over the next five years is to eradicate the estimated 6000-8000 feral goats on their property which are responsible for a lot of vegetation damage. They are looking at supplementing aerial removal as part of the *Bounceback* program with trapping work as well as fencing areas of the property and systematically removing goats from that area.

Once the goats are removed they will focus on maintaining the native vegetation and weed control.

Yankaninna has been participating in wild dog baiting through the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board's *Biteback* program and while they have feral cats on their property, this is not a management priority

Meanwhile, the group has formed a Property Liaison Group to preserve the property's Aboriginal and European cultural heritage.

Currently they are looking at the preservation and sectioning off for safety of some of the copper mine sites on the property.

Some of the kids taking part in the adventure challenge have been participating in wildlife surveys armed with survey sheets, cameras and GPS units. So far they have sighted a few colonies of Yellow-footed Rock-wallabies, Bustards and Woma Pythons.

This work isn't a compulsory part of the youth program but with many of the kids coming from urban areas it is an opportunity to educate them about the environment and the Foundation are considering ways in which they can incorporate the environmental work in their mentor program.

Thanks to the Operation Flinders Foundation, particularly John Shepherd and the amazing volunteers out at Yankannina Station, for their hospitality and for inviting Natural Resources SA Arid Lands to the station.

Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Yankaninna Station, Operation Flinders Foundation

WHAT IS OPERATION FLINDERS?

Operation Flinders Foundation is a South Australian based charitable organisation that runs a world leading wilderness adventure program for young offenders and young people at risk. The program takes participants between the age of 14 and 18 on an eight day exercise in the far northern Flinders Ranges, providing an opportunity for its participants to break away from their past and grow as valued members of the community.

Further information

www.operationflinders.org.au

ACROSS THE OUTBACK

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Comments and suggestions are always welcome.

This edition edited by Meg Barker and Jenny Barker.

Please contact jenny.barker@sa.gov.au or 8463 3354

Government of South Australia