



ACROSS THE

# OUTBACK

## Dry conditions in the Far North

The SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board is working closely with Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) to monitor the severity of the extended dry in the north.

On some pastoral leases there has not been a significant rain for two years, which is cause for growing concern over water supplies, stock condition, land condition and of course cash flows for pastoral businesses.

Darryl Bell from Dulkaninna Station is representing the Board in a regional coordination and leadership taskforce that is providing the key link between the region and government in considering the situation.

Others in the group are representatives from the Outback Communities Authority, Regional Development Australia Far North, the Pastoral Board, the Rural Financial Counselling Service, and PIRSA.

The SAAL NRM Board also has its feelers out through its district-based NRM Group members who provide feedback on conditions and needs.

The taskforce will assist in the delivery of the recently announced package of support announced by the State Government and which includes opportunities for approvals for triple road trains to move stock, individual management advice and review of business plans, and increased presence of the Rural Financial Counselling Service.

*Continued on page 09...*

*Pastoralists in the far north area actively reducing their cattle numbers in response to the extended dry spell*

### 01 BOARD NEWS

### 03 LAND MANAGEMENT

03 New funds for land management to benefit threatened species

04 Pastoral Lease Assessment update

05 Arid Lands staff lend a hand during Bangor fires

### 06 TOURISM

06 Safety flags now required for 4WDs crossing the Simpson Desert

07 Popular tourism brochures now online

### 07 NRM GROUP NEWS

### 08 WILD DOG MANAGEMENT

### 10 ABORIGINAL NRM NEWS

10 Sharing the stories of our outback parks

11 Vulkathunha Gammon Ranges National Park entry sign project

### 12 PEST MANAGEMENT

12 Camel program leaves legacy for SA rangelands

### 13 OUTBACK ROUNDUP

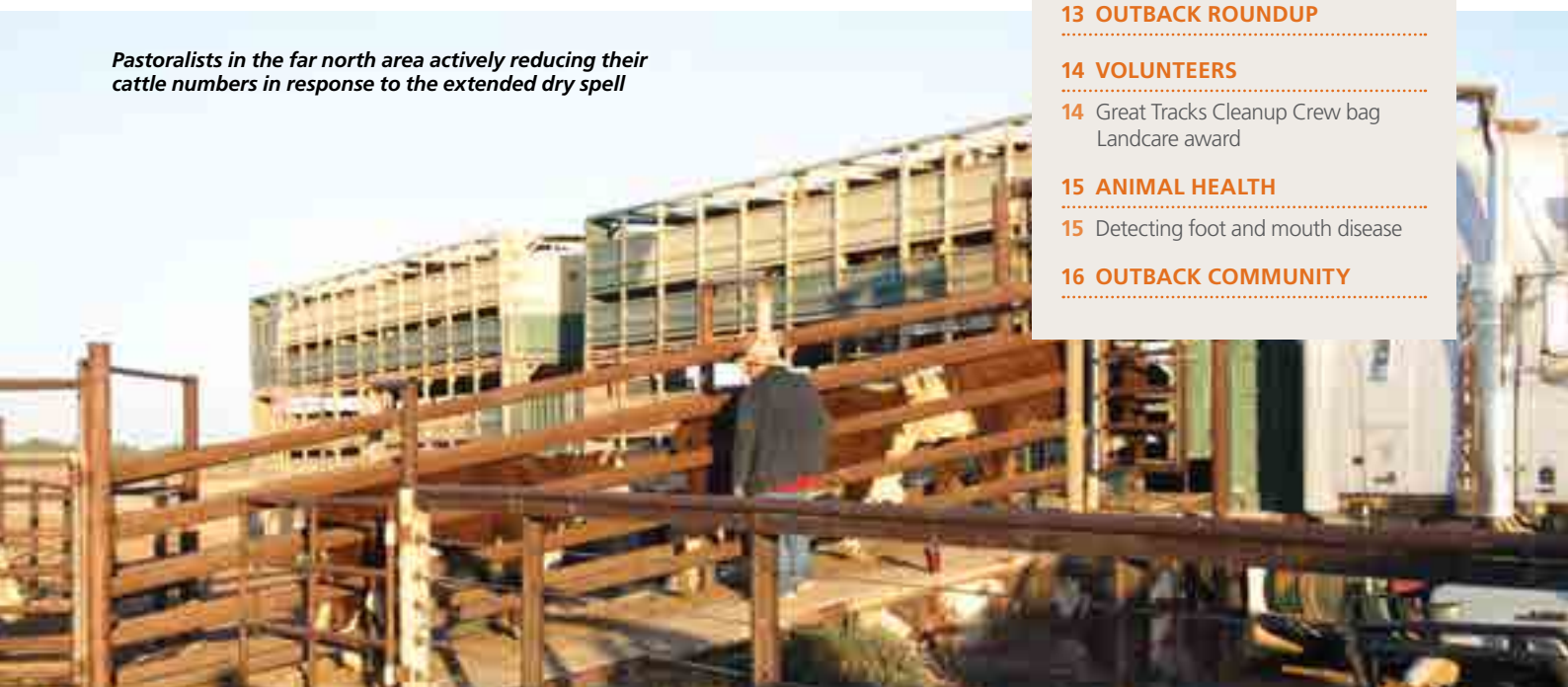
### 14 VOLUNTEERS

14 Great Tracks Cleanup Crew bag Landcare award

### 15 ANIMAL HEALTH

15 Detecting foot and mouth disease

### 16 OUTBACK COMMUNITY





# Your community NRM Board

## There are some new faces on the SA Arid Lands (SAAL) Natural Resources Management (NRM) Board.

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

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



### Janet Brook – Presiding Member

Janet was appointed to the SAAL NRM Board as Presiding Member in 2011 after a long association with NRM in the region and brings a great deal of experience and energy to her role. Janet is particularly keen to build on the SAAL NRM Board's achievements and maintain the relevance of the board in the region.



### Daryl Bell

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



### Murray Tyler

For his mining industry and regional community experience and for his expertise in environmental science. Murray is also the mining sector representative on the Great Artesian Basin Coordinating Committee.



### Mark Sutton

For his wide experience with regional issues in his role as General Manager of the Office for the Outback Communities Authority (OCA). His input is frequently sought in the development of regional policy ranging from economic development to drought response to infrastructure provision.



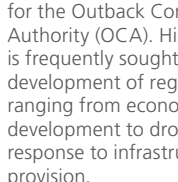
### Catherine Hollingsworth

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



### Ross Sawers

For his previous experience as a pastoralist, knowledge of the mining industry and regional communities.



### Rick Barratt

For his 25 year experience as a scientific officer with the SA Government and more recently as an ecologist with Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM). Rick has extensive skills and experience in biodiversity assessment and monitoring and the management of natural ecosystems, in particular the arid and semi arid regions of South Australia.



### Pauline McKenzie

An Adnyamathanha person with significant cultural connection to the Flinders Ranges Landscape. Pauline has been a member of the Parks Co-management Board since its inception in 2005, where she provides advice and guidance on a range of cultural issues for park. She is the SAAL Board's representative on the Aboriginal statewide advisory committee, and is committed to teaching Adnyamathanha language at the Hawker Area School.



### Leonard Nutt

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

## PASTORAL BOARD 2014

### MEETING 141

Wednesday 16 April, Waite

### MEETING 142

Wednesday 25 June, SAAL region

### MEETING 143

Wednesday 20 August, SAAL region

### MEETING 144

Wednesday 15 October, Waite

### MEETING 145

Wednesday 10 December, Keswick

## 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 8303 9751

Fax 8303 9320

Freecall 1800 678 447

### Presiding Member

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

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



### Michael Malavazos

Department for Manufacturing, Innovation, Trade, Resources and Energy



### Neil Power

Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources



### John Virtue

Primary Industries and Regions SA



# New funds for land management to benefit threatened species

Louise Gavin, NRM Officer

Land managers and community in the North Flinders and North East Pastoral districts will be invited to share their knowledge of threatened plants and animals – and land management measures that can benefit production and these species – as part of a new funding package.

The five year, almost one million dollar project will build on relationships and ecological gains established through previous and existing programs such as *Bounceback*, as well as seeking to establish management in new areas.

*The Flinders and Olary Ranges support many native and nationally significant species, including four animal and four plant species which are listed on the National Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Register.*

Collaborative planning sessions will explore management options for these species and the outcomes will form the basis of management agreements between land managers and Natural Resources SA Arid Lands to fund management actions to 2017.

The agreements will map out a plan for on ground works that improves the resilience of the landscape for both threatened species and productivity. Monitoring the effectiveness of these actions will be an important aspect of the project.

Habitat assessments and management activities funded by this program will include training opportunities for community members, volunteer organisations involved in natural resources management, and local school students.

The project has a strong focus on providing training and employment opportunities for local Aboriginal people. It is being facilitated by Natural Resources SA Arid Lands staff on behalf of the SAAL NRM Board with funding from the Australian Government.

## Further information

**Louise Gavin, NRM Officer**  
**8648 5300**

*Natural Resources SA Arid Lands,  
SAAL NRM Board, Australian  
Government*

*Slender Bell-fruit*

*Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby*

## TARGET SPECIES

### ANIMALS

Australian Painted Snipe  
(*Rostratula australis*)

Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby  
(*Petrogale xanthopus*)

Flinders Worm-lizard  
(*Aprasia pseudopulchella*)

Flinders Ranges Purple-spotted Gudgeon  
(*Mogurnda clivicola*)

### PLANTS

Small-leaved Xerothamnella  
(*Xerothamnella parvifolia*)

Slender Bell-fruit  
(*Codonocarpus pyramidalis*)

Spidery Wattle (*Acacia araneosa*)

Menzel's Wattle (*Acacia menzelsii*)

*Spidery Wattle*





# Pastoral Lease Assessment update

Gavin Baird, Pastoral Assessment Officer

**With lease assessments in the Eastern district nearly complete – the last of the 17 properties is scheduled for assessment in March 2014 – the team will now be concentrating on completing assessments in the North Flinders district.**

General observations in the Eastern district have shown that most areas of chenopod shrubland comprised an increasing density and diversity of palatable perennial shrubs, and areas of low woodland or open shrubland comprised a mixed understorey of regenerating palatable shrubs.

The condition of most properties has improved since the first round of assessments undertaken in the 1990s.

This is supported by improved paddock and photopoint condition ratings. Jessup transect results typically recorded an increase in perennial density for the majority of palatable species.

*Most of the land condition improvements can be attributed to the management of total grazing pressure and to feral animal control.*

Goats are an ongoing management issue across the Eastern districts where woodlands provide ideal refuge and their widespread occurrence can contribute significantly to increased total grazing pressure.

Infrastructure improvements – including an increase in the number of goat trap yards and the installation of goat exclusion fencing – have enabled managers to reduce total grazing pressure and assist land condition improvement.

Total grazing pressure was consistently reported to be low to moderate (this compares to the moderate to high rating reported on most properties during 1990s assessments).

High graze lines (consistent with goat grazing) were also much less than was reported during the 1990s; many palatable tree and shrub species were present with foliage extending well below graze lines.

*Pastoral Board, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands*

## SAVE THE DATE!

The 18<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the Australian Rangeland Society will be held in Alice Springs from 12-16 April 2015, with the theme of 'Innovation in the Rangelands'.

How do we live sustainably in the rangelands – now and into the future? How can we nurture, then develop and share, innovative solutions to the challenges of living successfully in our rangelands environments, where climate extremes, remote urban decision making and small, isolated communities are common? What advances can we build on to ensure the social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of people, businesses and communities who depend on our natural landscapes? Both the nature of the land and the people who live here have generated many imaginative and practical solutions to living in the rangelands – let's hear about them!

### WHO ARE THE AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY?

The Australian Rangeland Society is an independent and non-aligned association of people interested in the management and sustainable use of resources in natural or semi-natural landscapes, such as grasslands, shrublands and woodlands. Members of the Society are generally interested in one or more of the businesses conducted in the rangelands, as well as the wellbeing of remotely living people and communities.

Visit [www.austrangesoc.com.au](http://www.austrangesoc.com.au) for further information

## North Flinders district

Lease assessments in the North Flinders district are being assessed in a south to north orientation and, to date, the field work for 10 of the most southern properties has been completed.

Field staff have familiarised themselves with new land types and management issues relevant to the district and assessment methods have been examined to ensure consistency is maintained.

Assessments in the North Flinders district will be completed in 2015-2016 after which lease assessments will commence in the cattle districts (completing the second round of assessments).

The Eastern district 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. Three of the 17 properties are managed for conservation and form part of the Riverland (formerly Bookmark) Biosphere Reserve.





# Arid Lands staff lend a hand during Bangor fires

Natural Resources SA Arid Lands staff (on behalf of the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources) worked alongside CFS crews during the recent Bangor fire. The fire continued to burn for more than 30 days and burnt in excess of 35,000 hectares of public and private land. We have included a selection of images taken by staff in often hilly terrain during times of extreme weather.



## PROPERTY INFORMATION PACKS

A booklet and poster providing information on rare or significant plants and animals was developed for Evelyn Downs, Billa Kalina/Miller's Creek and Todmorden Stations in the Marla-Oodnadatta and Kingoonya districts.

Developed in conjunction with land managers and combining their local knowledge with scientific data, the information packs describe each property's land systems along with the plant, bird, mammal and reptile species of conservation interest that are linked to those systems. General information on species distribution and habitat requirements is also provided.

They also consider the extent to which different land systems are grazed on each property and the extent that each land system is protected (eg in reserves) or unprotected elsewhere in the region. The information has been developed to assist land managers in making management decisions, inspire surveys and to prioritise areas for potential stewardship opportunities.

The data utilised the records of the SA Museum, the State Herbarium of SA, DEWNR's Biological Database of SA, local knowledge, and other sources.

*Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Trans-Australia Eco-link, Ecological Horizons*



## GET INVOLVED

Funding exists to assist land managers in the Gawler Ranges and Kingoonya NRM districts to develop information packs for their properties. Contact Kirrily Blaylock, Team Leader Sustainable Industries, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands 8648 5300





# Safety flags now required for 4WDs crossing the Simpson Desert

Visitor safety in South Australia's outback parks will be further improved with a new mandatory condition for vehicles travelling in the Simpson Desert Regional Reserve and Simpson Desert Conservation Park.

In line with the parks re-opening on 16 March, all 4WDs are now required to attach tall, high visibility flags when crossing the Simpson Desert while motorbikes will be required to drive with their lights on at all times while travelling.

Vehicle safety flags have always been recommended for visitors undertaking the iconic 4WD Simpson Desert crossing but the terrain and increased numbers of travellers has elevated the safety flag condition from recommended to mandatory. Cresting dunes with safety flags on the front bullbar and with lights on, gives people more chances of seeing each other and avoiding what could be, disastrous accidents.

More than 12,000 people crossed the Simpson Desert in 2013, and the volume of vehicles and motorbikes has increased the risks, while near misses are also on the rise.

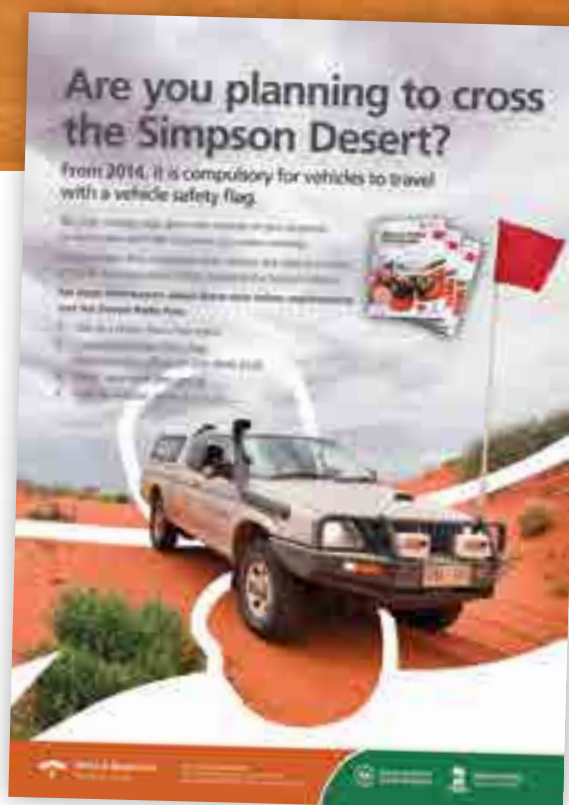
*This 4WD experience, is on many enthusiasts 'bucket list' and while it has historically been a journey undertaken by the experienced, many travellers now are under-prepared and without experience in remote area travel.*

Consultation and endorsement with key stakeholders including Friends of Parks groups, 4WD SA, local businesses, industry and interstate national parks services contributed to the formation of the safety flag requirements.

Flags that meet the new requirements will be available for purchase at Mt Dare, Oodnadatta, Birdsville and Innamincka and a widespread communication campaign will spread the word to visitors.

#### Further information

**Tony Magor, District Manager  
Outback, Natural Resources  
SA Arid Lands 8648 5300**



Karen English

## ABOUT THE DESERT PARKS PASS

The Desert Parks Pass entitles the visitor to 12 months entry (and up to 21 nights camping) into our state's desert parks including Coongie Lakes National Park, Innamincka Regional Reserve, Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park, Simpson Desert Conservation Park and Regional Reserve, Tallaringa Conservation Park, Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park and Witjira National Park.

The Desert Parks Pass includes a comprehensive handbook of maps and information and they can be purchased from a variety regional outlets.

For further information contact the Desert Parks Pass Administration Officer on 8648 5328 or visit [www.environment.sa.gov.au](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au)



# Popular tourism brochures now online

Visitors to the region now have greater access to key information prior to and during travel with two popular tourism brochures now available online and as apps.

Previously available only in hard copy and in limited numbers, *The Oodnadatta Track – String of Springs* and *Birdsville Strzelecki Legendary Tracks* have long provided visitors with an insight into the region's plants and animals, history, current pastoral and mining industries, and our relationship with both surface and ground water.

Both publications have proven popular for visitors to our outback tracks and with visitor information centres.

Updated last year, the new online versions offer visitors additional features such as image galleries, factsheets, and other brochures as well as connecting to useful websites.

- To download the apps visit the App Store (Apple) or Google Play (Android) and search under 'australia outback travel'
- To view and download *The Oodnadatta Track – String of Springs* digital brochure log onto [stringofsprings.naturalresources.sa.gov.au](http://stringofsprings.naturalresources.sa.gov.au)
- To view and download *Birdsville Strzelecki Legendary Tracks* digital brochure log onto [legendarytracks.naturalresources.sa.gov.au](http://legendarytracks.naturalresources.sa.gov.au)

There are also limited hard copies in stock: contact Natural Resources SA Arid Lands 8648 5300 if you would like copies.

SAAL NRM Board, Marree Innaminka NRM Group, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, SA Tourism Commission, Australian Government



## Community turnout for Dorper/Merino discussion

Twenty community members from across the region attended a discussion on alternative sheep breeds hosted by the North Flinders NRM Group in November 2013.

The discussion *Dorpers/Merinos – what's the cost?* centred on the differences between Dorpers and Merino sheep and the management implications of both sheep breeds.

Many of the attendees had extensive experience with Merino sheep, some with Dorpers, and all were keen to learn about the differences, share their experiences and discuss management strategies.

Jamie McTaggart from Saltbush Livestock has run Dorper sheep for several years and spoke about his experiences with the breed.

Jamie's chief advice took him a few years to learn: 'Don't make decisions based on history, habit and influences out of your control'.

The Pastoral Board were also represented by Chris Turner who spoke to the attendees about the management issues associated with alternative sheep breeds.

### Further information

**The Pastoral Board provided some pointers for managing Dorpers and Merinos in the August 2011 edition of *Across The Outback* where they encouraged lessees to consider their neighbours and to examine modifications to management practices before deciding to run alternative breeds. Visit [www.saalnm.sa.gov.au](http://www.saalnm.sa.gov.au) and download the August 2011 edition.**

SAAL NRM Board, North Flinders NRM Group

## NRM GROUP NEWS



### NRM GROUPS

NRM Groups are the on-ground contact for the SA Arid Lands community, feeding district information or concerns relating to the natural resources in the region up to the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Board.

There are currently six NRM Groups operating at the district level each with a maximum of seven members.

### NRM GROUP CHAIRS

Gawler Ranges	Sandy Morris
Kingooonya	Graeme Noll
Marree-Innaminka	Raelene Ogilvy
Marla-Oodnadatta	Mark Fennell
North East Pastoral	Glen Norris
North Flinders	Keith Slade

### Further Information

For a full list of members for each NRM Group, to find out which district you belong to, or for NRM Group meetings, agendas and minutes, visit the Natural Resources SA Arid Lands website [www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/aridlands](http://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/aridlands) or contact the Natural Resources Centre 8648 5300





# South of the Fence

## Aerial baiting set to go...

*Peter Bird, Biosecurity Officer*

### A third year of aerial baiting is about to commence, again targeting problem wild dogs inside the Dog Fence.

The nine day program gets underway on 1 April complementing the *Biteback* ground baiting program by focusing mainly on inaccessible areas such as rocky ranges and lake margins.

After a favourable response by local land managers last year, an expanded program will see 50,000 baits distributed along a 10,000 kilometre baited flight path onto 96 properties.

Site selection followed broad consultation with Local Wild Dog Groups and individual permission from all participating landholders.

All flight paths are carefully GPS mapped to minimise risks to domestic dogs and the location of all baits are GPS logged as they leave the plane to ensure accuracy of placement.

Twenty or more land managers volunteered to manufacture the necessary dried meat baits overseen by Biosecurity SA and program coordinator, Bill McIntosh.

#### Further information

**Peter Bird, Biosecurity SA, 8303 9519**

*Biosecurity SA, SA Sheep Industry Fund, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands.*

## ...but ground baiting is key!

Land managers participating in the aerial baiting are reminded that this must be coordinated with *Biteback*'s ground baiting program.

With aerial baiting targeting only inaccessible areas, *Biteback* ground baiting is still the primary form of control and its coordination with aerial baiting will ensure a thorough coverage of wild dog control over the autumn months.

*SAAL NRM Board, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Regional (land-based) NRM Levy, Sheep Industry Fund, Australian Wool Innovation*

## LISA STEVENS ROLE CHANGE

We know that Lisa Stevens has been ringing land managers south of the Fence, but some lessees may not have caught up with the news that she has resigned from the position coordinating the *Biteback* program.

With the guidance of Heather Miller, Lisa has ably managed this program for the past two and a half years.

As the Regional Landcare Facilitator, Lisa will continue to play a key role working with land managers to link them with information that matters to them and supporting them through training and education programs, property trials, demonstration sites, and bestprac groups.

We thank Lisa for her dedication to the role and wish her well in her new position of Regional Landcare Facilitator.

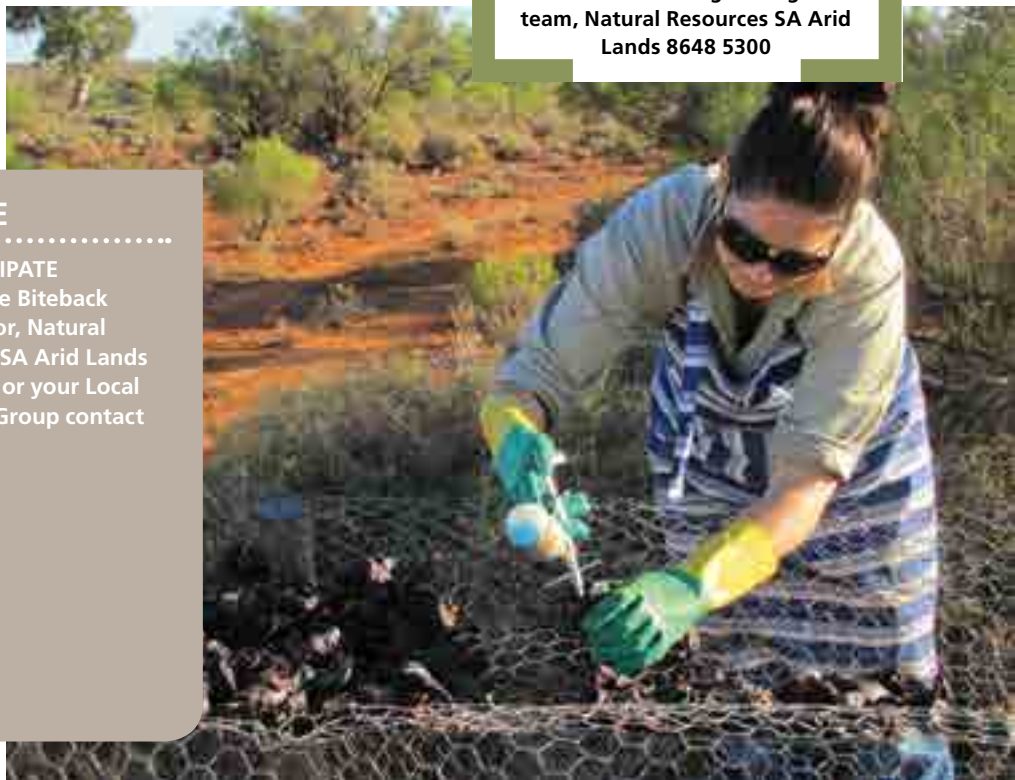
A replacement is currently being sought to fill the position.

*Stuart Paul, Regional Manager, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands*

### FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out more about the region's wild dog management programs, contact the Wild Dog Management team, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands 8648 5300

*Lisa Stevens at Biteback's injection service*



## AUTUMN INJECTION SERVICE

The first round of *Biteback*'s bi-annual bait injection services for 2014 will be occurring between March and May. Land managers will be notified of the location ahead of the injection services.

North Flinders/Marree  
24-28 March

North East Pastoral  
14-16 April

Kingoonya and  
Gawler Ranges  
28 April-2 May

TO PARTICIPATE  
Contact the *Biteback* Coordinator, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands 8648 5300 or your Local Wild Dog Group contact person.





## HAVE YOUR SAY ON REGION'S WILD DOG MANAGEMENT PLAN

*Heather Miller, Dingo Project Manager*

Work to gather land manager perspectives and input into wild dog control will provide important information for the development of the SAAL NRM Board's Wild Dog Management Plan. North of the Dog Fence consultation is well underway with the majority of properties now surveyed. Attention is now turning to canvassing land manager opinion south of the Fence.

Taking in approximately 45 properties, land managers north of the Fence are being consulted on a variety of issues using questions developed in consultation with the Marree-Innaminka and Marla-Oodnadatta NRM Groups.

Issues include the difference between a 'wild dog' and a 'dingo', the

effectiveness of current management strategies, monitoring and data collection, the value the dingo has in the environment, baiting, cultural issues around dingo management, and the best way to develop a management plan.

The feedback is contributing to the development of the Board's Wild Dog Management Plan for improved cattle and biodiversity outcomes north of the Dog Fence and the control program south of the Dog Fence where the wild dog is a declared pest.

Across the SAAL NRM region the survey will involve managers of pastoral and conservation leases, parks, Aboriginal landholders, Co-management and Advisory Boards, mining companies, and tourism interests.

Consultation is also expected to involve the 22 Wild Dog Groups participating in the Biteback program for wild dog control and the four NRM Groups operating in this area.

In addition to land manager input, the Wild Dog Management Plan will take into account existing state and national policy including the National Wild Dog Action Plan (due March 2014) and Biosecurity SA's draft State 5-year strategic plan which is currently being reviewed by the recently formed SA Wild Dog Advisory Group.

The SAAL NRM Board's Wild Dog Management Plan is expected to be completed by the end of the year.



*The Dog Fence, Strzelecki Track*

### HAVE YOUR SAY ON DRY CONDITIONS

**If you have concerns about land condition or the support measures, contact your local NRM Group. See page 07 for contact details**

*Karen English*

### ...continued from page 01

Some elements of the Australian Government's recently announced \$320 million drought assistance scheme could potentially provide further support for the region.

That package initially includes:

- More generous criteria for accessing income support to farmers from 3 March 2014 instead of 1 July 2014
- Drought Concessional Loans totalling \$280 million to give eligible farm businesses the resources to recover from the effects of drought
- \$12 million to be added to existing emergency water infrastructure schemes,

including supplementing those in New South Wales and Queensland

- \$10 million in assistance for pest management in drought affected areas, and
- \$10.7 million to help increase access to social and mental health services in communities affected by this drought.

The announcement focused on New South Wales and Queensland. With the Board's support, the South Australian Government is working to have more of the scheme extended to our State, where the conditions are not unlike those across the border.

The SAAL NRM Board has been encouraged by PIRSA to develop project proposals in anticipation of the scheme's details being finalised, and in the hope that South Australia will be eligible to apply.

We expect to be able to bring you further information on the implications of the drought assistance scheme in the next edition of *Across The Outback* and through the NRM Groups.

*SAAL NRM Board, Outback Communities Authority, Regional Development Australia Far North, Pastoral Board, Rural Financial Counselling Service, PIRSA*



# Sharing the stories of our outback parks

**Do you have something to contribute to the conversation about the future of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park, Elliot Price Conservation Park or Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park?**

The Arabana Parks Advisory Committee have released a discussion poster and paper for Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park and Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park to continue the conversation about our community assets.

The discussion poster tells a visual story of the parks and their management, and both the poster and paper raise questions about balancing the use, appreciation, enjoyment and protection of the parks.

Your comments will be used to develop draft park management plans for release later this year that will be open for a further three months review.

To get your copy of the discussion poster and paper, register your interest in the planning process, or to find out more visit [www.environment.sa.gov.au/haveyoursay/Home](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/haveyoursay/Home) or email [DEWNRProtectedAreaManagement@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEWNRProtectedAreaManagement@sa.gov.au)

**Comments are due 30 April 2014.**

**Further information**

**Policy and Planning Officer 8124 4817**







## CHECK OUT THE FACEBOOK WINNERS!

The winners of a Facebook campaign (*Across The Outback* October 2013) to collect people's experiences, stories and images of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park and Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs have been announced. The spectacular images show the vivid colours and varied expressions of these remote parks, demonstrating the variety of experiences from the air and the ground. Check out the winners' images at [www.facebook.com/ParksSA](http://www.facebook.com/ParksSA).

Congratulations to Michael Alexander, Ann Go, Bob Robinson, Denise Wilson, Ebook Traveller, Inara Powell, Katherine Stoate and Paul Keen who each won a Desert Parks Pass.

Michael Alexander

# Vulkathunha Gammon Ranges National Park entry sign project

Visitors to the Vulkathunha Gammon Ranges National Park are now welcomed by two large entry signs located on the Copley and Wertaloon roads.

An initiative of the Vulkathunha Gammon Ranges Co-management Board, the entry signs represent the deep connection the Adnyamathanha people have to country.

The signs represent the view of the hills that overlook Balcanoona in the northern Flinders Ranges, a view interpreted as the profile of Virikuthanha Mangu, translated as the 'old lady's face'.

The reference to the 'old' is for respect, as this is the story of a woman of the dreaming and is connected to the stories of the two sisters in Adnyamathanha culture. (source: Tunbridge 1988: 72)

With assistance from a local stonemason, the large laser cut steel signs were laid in stone collected from the Park, and Park staff and local contractors from the Nipapanha (Nepabunna) community worked together to complete the installation.

Arthur Coulthard, Cultural Ranger, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, says engaging young, Adnyamathanha men to work on country was a successful component on the project:

*One of the young guys who helped us put the signs in visited again recently and said he felt really proud of what he'd done and that made me feel really proud, because we'd helped him connect with his country.*

The Board's Chairperson, Pauline McKenzie, said that the project demonstrates the strong partnership arrangements between the Adnyamathanha community and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources working together with a shared vision.

Vulkathunha Gammon Ranges Co-Management Board, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Nipapanha (Nepabunna) community



*New entry sign greets visitors to Vulkathunha Gammon Ranges National Park*



# Camel program leaves legacy for SA rangelands

John Virtue, Manager NRM Biosecurity, Biosecurity SA

**Over 22,000 feral camels were removed from South Australia's rangelands through the Australian Feral Camel Management Project reducing the threat to biodiversity, especially aquatic habitats, and pastoral and remote community infrastructure.**

The three focus areas in South Australia were the Simpson Desert, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands and the Great Victoria Desert region, including the Maralinga Tjarutja Lands and Nullarbor and Yalata protected areas.

Fourteen thousand camels were removed via mustering for commercial use from the APY Lands and the remainder via aerial culling from the Simpson and Great Victoria deserts.

Mustering continues on APY Lands with local teams trained through the project in safe and humane camel handling.

The majority of animals are being processed through the Peterborough abattoir.

*In the APY Lands, feral camel density has decreased substantially, with an April 2013 aerial survey estimating around 22,000 animals remaining.*

In the Simpson Desert, culling undertaken by Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, combined with the influence of fire and drought, resulted in an over 90 per cent reduction in pre-project numbers; about 2000 camels were estimated to be remaining at very low density in April 2013.

In the Great Victoria Desert, where camel numbers are very low, several aerial cull operations resulted in the removal of more than 1100 camels reducing the threat to fragile coastal habitats, collisions with motorists using the Nullarbor section of the Eyre Highway, and the integrity of the Dog Fence.

The SA Arid Lands and Alinytjara Wilurara NRM Boards are continuing with regional control programs to further reduce numbers and maintain feral camels at low densities, including the continued use of 'Judas' collars (see box).

The four-year Australian Feral Camel Management Project wound up in November 2013.

*Primary Industries and Regions South Australia, SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board, Alinytjara Wilurara NRM Board, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, Flinders University*

## COLLARS DETECT CAMELS

'Judas' satellite-trackable collared camels proved to be very successful in the Simpson and Great Victoria deserts in detecting camel congregations to enable efficient aerial cull operations.

Currently there are two active collars from the original ones put out about three years ago.

As of mid-March records showed one was in the SA Arid Lands region east of Lake Eyre and the other was in Queensland just east of the Simpson Desert National Park.

Eleven of the original collars have been retrieved and it is planned to collar an additional six camels in the Simpson Desert in April-May. The remainder will be in the Alinytjara Wilurara region.

These will be monitored to see where camels are moving and any particular resources they may be impacting.

If reports of camels are sufficient to warrant a cull, the collars can be used to identify where mobs may be present.

### Further information:

If you would like to learn more about the use of satellite collars in detecting camels visit [www.feralcamels.com.au/resource/SatelliteCollaringCaseStudy.pdf](http://www.feralcamels.com.au/resource/SatelliteCollaringCaseStudy.pdf)



Feral camels in Yalata, Nullarbor region

Robert Sleep





# LambEx

Early bird registrations are now open for the third sheep and lamb industry's LambEx exhibition from 9-11 July 2014 at the Adelaide Showgrounds, Wayville.

Keynote speakers include UK food marketing professor David Hughes and Meat and Livestock Australia's (MLA) global marketing general manager Michael Edmonds, both of whom will examine changing consumer preferences and the on-farm production practices needed to meet evolving market requirements.

Thomas Food International's Darren Thomas will discuss how producers can capitalise on market opportunities; MLA's Alex Ball on new generation eating quality for lamb and yearling sheepmeat; JBS innovation manager Graham Treffone on robotics in processing; and consultant Jason Trompf on improving profit margins.



Lamb producers from across Australia will also contribute to the event in discussion topics such as managing the Merino as the backbone of the sheep industry; lifting stocking capacity, growth rates and lean meat yield; optimising profit margins; becoming masters of pastures; predator management; and drought-proofing family farms.

## Further information

[www.lambex.com.au](http://www.lambex.com.au)



## SEE YOU AT YOUR LOCAL RACES!

Natural Resources SA Arid Lands staff love the chance to get out into the region and exchange knowledge and information with the community about natural resources management. From children, to pastoralists to community members and visitors alike, everyone is welcome to drop by!

Look out for our stall at the Yunta Picnic Races and Gymkhana on 26 April and at the following events throughout the year:

- Oodnadatta Races and Gymkhana, 10 May
- Marree Picnic Races, 7 June
- Glendambo Gymkhana, 11 October
- Blinman Races, 18 October

If you are planning an event; gymkhana, race day, field day, public meeting, festival or forum, we'd like to include your information on our website, [www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/aridlands](http://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/aridlands). Simply email the details to [SAAridlands@sa.gov.au](mailto:SAAridlands@sa.gov.au)

## 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 at [barker@sa.gov.au](mailto:barker@sa.gov.au).

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

## CALL FOR CONTENT

*Across the Outback*  
April 2014 edition

Content due by COB  
11 April 2014

Contact Jenny Barker at [jenny.barker@sa.gov.au](mailto: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](mailto:jenny.barker@sa.gov.au) or 8463 3354  
A fee per article may apply





**Carmel and Stuart Paxton with Perri Carter, Community Engagement Officer, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands**

## FRIENDS OF MOUND SPRINGS AWARD

Friends of Mound Springs has been recognised for its outstanding contribution to biodiversity conservation picking up a Friends of Parks Inc award in November 2013.

The Group – who shared the Best Biodiversity Project award with Birds Australia's National Shorebirds 2020 Program – were commended for their 'significant contribution to the management and stewardship of one of South Australia's unique features, the mound springs of the Far North.'

'Through collaboration with pastoralists and government agencies the Friends of Mound Springs has conducted works on Peake, Strangways Springs and Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park,' said Ms Janet Brook, Presiding Member, SAAL NRM Board.

'This is a significant achievement in negotiating with people and agencies with different priorities and motivation and will have on-going benefits to the springs and heritage in these areas.'

Established in 2006, the Group's 80 members assist with surveys, construct walking tracks, install signage and protective bollards, remove waste, and comment on proposed developments and measures that have the potential to impact upon the mound spring features.

New members are always welcome: visit [www.friendsofmoundsprings.org.au](http://www.friendsofmoundsprings.org.au)

## Great Tracks Cleanup Crew bag Landcare award

The SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board congratulates the Great Tracks Cleanup Crew who were winners at the 2013 SA Landcare Awards in Adelaide last November.

The Qantas Landcare Innovative Community Group award recognised the group's annual pilgrimage to the South Australian Arid Lands where, for the last seven years, volunteers have led an entourage of four-wheel drives and trailers to collect rubbish from tracks, including the legendary Birdsville, Strzelecki and Oodnadatta Tracks.

The award was accepted by Stuart and Carmel Paxton on behalf of the Great Tracks Cleanup Crew.

'The scale that this Group operates on is simply phenomenal,' said Ms Janet Brook, Presiding Member, SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board. 'Through their work, the region's tracks are over 350 tonnes lighter – that's 350 tonnes of rubbish that, if it remained, would send a message to visitors that our outback tracks are not cared for and treated as rubbish dumps.'

'And when we added up the distance travelled and the number of vehicles, we discovered that the group has travelled 16,872 kilometres in seven years – that's nearly half way around the world!'

Stuart and Carmel Paxton will represent the Group at the National Landcare Awards in 2014.







# Detecting foot and mouth disease

Roger Paskin, Chief Veterinary Officer

**A 2011 report commissioned by the Australian Government raised concerns about our ability to detect and respond to foot and mouth disease. The last foot and mouth disease outbreak was in 1872 and in this edition of *Across The Outback* Roger Paskin, Chief Veterinary Officer, considers if an outbreak of the most contagious disease known could happen again.**

A recent report (Matthews 2011) noted a few holes in our preparedness to manage a foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak in Australia.

One aspect which raised concern was our ability to detect the disease. Would we recognise it? Would we detect it early enough? How far would it have spread before we knew it was here?

*The fact is that FMD viruses are the most cunning and resourceful foes any veterinarian can ever face.*

They are very creative in their symptoms and can mimic numerous 'innocent' diseases.

They can slip through almost any net; hitch a ride with any possible vector; go underground and be transported around invisibly in sheep; and use pigs as amplifiers to create enormous clouds of infection.

And FMD is quite capable of ignoring border controls.

We already know that our borders aren't impervious to other diseases as is evidenced in the recent past with equine influenza and pigeon paramyxovirus entering the country.

And more recently, an Asian variant of rabbit calicivirus turned up in New South Wales.

As if this short list of diseases isn't scary enough, our FMD preparedness was tested when, in December 2010, quarantine inspectors intercepted hundreds of tonnes of illegally imported pork products from South Korea in a shipping container in Sydney Harbour.

This was at the height of the 2010-2011 Korean FMD outbreak, which spread across most of the country and led to the slaughter of millions of pigs. The outbreak lasted nearly six months.

Further tracing within Australia found that illegally imported meat products from Korea had been distributed across New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria and had ended up on the shelves of various grocery dealers.

We know from recent work done in Victoria that swill feeding is alive and well in Australia. We also know that the feeding of swill containing FMD virus – for example, illegally introduced infected pork products – is a common manner of virus introduction.

*Putting all of that together, the risk of FMD entry into our livestock population is very real.*

A further example can be made of Japan's FMD experience also in 2010. Japan is a modern country with sophisticated veterinary services not unlike our own. FMD travelled from Hong Kong and into Japan where it was misdiagnosed. By the time the authorities had made the right diagnosis, the disease had run wild. And the worst is, our Japanese counterparts still haven't worked out how the virus entered the country. On the shoes of an airline passenger who later visited a farm? Who knows?

The point is that if it happened in Japan, it can happen here.

*We are at risk – and it is incumbent on everybody to be vigilant.*

## Further information

**Ken Matthews (2011)** A review of Australia's preparedness for the threat of foot and mouth disease. Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra.

Full report [www.daff.gov.au](http://www.daff.gov.au)

## THINK THE WORST FIRST

If you see any sign of ill-health in livestock that makes you worry about the possibility of foot and mouth disease – lameness, drooling, blisters on the tongue or around the hooves of your cattle, sheep or pigs contact PIRSA's Emergency Animal Disease Hotline  
1800 675 888



For advice or to report animal health issues on your property contact Trent Scholz, PIRSA Animal Health Officer  
8648 5166 or 0427 970 453



**Steve Kowalick  
with his  
Bounceback  
colleagues Michael  
Trebilcock, Tim  
Earl and Dylan  
Koerner**

**Steve Kowalick, one of the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources' (DEWNR) long standing and well loved staff members, died suddenly at Oraparinna on 29 January.**

Steve spent almost 30 years working in national parks across the state including Cleland, Innes, Mt Lofty, Barossa, North and Far North regions, and in the fire program. He was a valued member of the Flinders Ranges National Park team and many people have shared their thoughts, recollections and stories. Part of a selection of these are shared below.

**Our heartfelt, sincere sympathy and thoughts go to Steve's wife, Nicolle.**

## ACROSS THE OUTBACK

*Across the Outback* is prepared and edited by the Communications team, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands, a division of the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources.

It is currently jointly funded by the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board; Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources; the Pastoral Board; and Biosecurity SA (a division of Primary Industries and Regions SA).

Comments and suggestions are always welcome.

This edition edited by Meg Barker and Jenny Barker.

Please contact [jenny.barker@sa.gov.au](mailto:jenny.barker@sa.gov.au) or 8463 3354



**Government of  
South Australia**

Steve epitomised what we were looking for in our field workers - a desire to do a good job and get it done with the minimum of fuss and maximum result. Like most, his first impression was a lasting one - a fair dinkum bloke who called a spade a spade and enjoyed life to the full. He didn't care much for hierarchies and regarded me as a friend and colleague not the boss. We will miss Steve but we will remember him as one of our best.

**Allan Holmes (Chief Executive, DEWNR)**

A couple of years back, Steve was a welcome addition to the Bounceback team in the Flinders and he made Oraparinna his country home. He seemed so comfortable in that rugged Flinders landscape, it was like he's never been anywhere else. When we'd catch up for a yarn, it was clear that he not only believed in what we were doing but he saw it as 'real work' - the stuff that matters.

Rest easy my young friend.

**Trevor Naismith (Regional Manager, Natural Resources Northern and Yorke)**

Farewell Steve - A great workmate and friend.

I first remember Steve as a young work experience lad at Black Hill. He'd rock up every day throughout the long school holiday break with a great level of enthusiasm and that infectious smile. At the time, as a maintenance worker myself, I can recall thinking - this lad has a really strong passion for parks. How many of us, as kids would spend all our school holidays working for free?

...Steve built very good leadership and firefighting skills, one of the best in our organisation. If there was ever a complex prescribed burn or back burn at bushfires, Steve would regularly be given the job regardless of the country. He demonstrated, on numerous occasions, his outstanding abilities on the fire ground. He had a real feel for fire behaviour and all operational aspects of fire management.

Steve was simply a great bloke, a great story teller and a man that had a high degree of pride for his work. He made you laugh - you know the kind that gives you a tummy ache! He loved parks and had enormous loyalty to his work place and work mates. He developed many meaningful friendships along the way of which I was just one.

**Richard de Groot (Manager, Fire Management Unit, AMLR Region, DEWNR)**

Hard to believe, Steve Kowalick gone, the bloke built like a brick shithouse. So practical, so capable, he absorbed the practical skills and was so good at what he did. He could get a bit cranky at times, especially when those around him didn't perform at the speed or standard that Steve expected. That was a bit scary for the uninitiated, but Steve would just take over and get it done.

...I'd been working on the Mound Springs between William Creek and Oodnadatta, it was a tough slog in heat fencing those cattle pugged, sulphurous, muddy patches in the desert. A team of six from Adelaide came up to lend a hand. Most were well seasoned park staff, but amongst them was this young bloke Steve. He was the master of the jack hammer and straight away took the lead, not just with the work, but with the camp, full of humour, camaraderie and a strong sense of justice for his mates. The springs are now beautiful oasis of reeds, rare invertebrates, fish and birds. One of Steve's many legacies.

Steve collected the practical skills, jack hammers were just the beginning, chainsaws, bikes, quad trucks, boats, loaders, fire in all its manifestations, explosives. There was not a tool or piece of plant in any National Parks workshop or technique of using it that Steve didn't master. At any meeting Steve was the first one on his feet to defend the rights of the ones that actually got things done. We have lost a champion.

**Erik Dahl (Senior Ranger, Outback District, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands)**