



History with a Future

Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby Preservation Association Inc

PO Box 376, Campbelltown, South Australia 5074

NEWSLETTER May 2024 (Year 23 Vol 36)

Editorial

Our newsletter this month leads with an article that gives due acknowledgement to a prominent leader of our Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby Preservation Association Inc, Gil Hartwig. At our 2023 AGM, Gil stepped down from the position of President of our association. His time in the position has seen management of the Bunkers move from that of a series of paddocks, linked to a pastoral property, to a modern conservation reserve under the custodianship of a group of like-minded, private conservationists. Indeed, maps published in this newsletter in recent years have highlighted the widespread establishment of Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby colonies. These have come at a time when Gil has provided coordinated leadership to some highly committed and avid members whose core belief lies in the remediation, progress and future of a significant parcel of land in the Flinders Ranges. From all of us, both members and friends, at the YFRWPA thank you Gil for all your dedication and invaluable leadership.

In Recognition of Gil Hartwig

In the late 1990's, senior members of the then Hunting and Conservation branch of the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, commenced discussions with the owners of Willow Springs, a pastoral station in the Central Flinders Ranges. A steering committee, under the chairmanship of Gil Hartwig, was formed. The focus of the committee: to seek sufficient funds, through both a Federal government, Natural Heritage Trust and 100 private, committed conservation-minded people, resulted in the purchase of 142 square kilometres of land from Willow Springs station. This land, located along the eastern section of Willow Springs, became known as the Bunkers Conservation Reserve. Its management came under the auspices of the

Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby Preservation Association Inc. Inaugural President of the YFRWPA was Gil Hartwig. Our goal was to return the BCR to its natural state and to protect and foster the growth of the endangered Yellow-footed Rock-wallabies who live on the reserve.

Foundation members and friends of the YFRWPA would know what the date, 4th October 2001, means to our organisation and what the following photograph represents.



Photo1 – Opening of the BCR, 4 October 2001

It is the day when the then, Federal Minister for the Environment, the Right Honorable Robert Hill, officially opened the Bunkers Conservation Reserve. Gil, as our President, gratefully accepted the official plaque on behalf of a committed group of conservation-minded people. True, the YFRWPA contains many steadfast members and friends who are devoted to the on-going protection and development of a unique asset in the Flinders Ranges. But, the leadership skills and wisdom of Gil ensured the Association not only got off the ground but has continued to flourish (and will continue to flourish) well into the future.

Thank you Gil for your outstanding service. We are all indebted to you for this wonderful opportunity we have in our lives: to be a part of

a life-enriching experience. I am sure we will see your continued involvement in the YFRWPA at Management Committee meetings and our AGM.



Photo 2 – Gil receiving his award, for recognition of service and his presidency of the YFRWPA, at the December 2023 AGM.

Shane Fantinel (Vice President)

President's Report

Well another new year and more great work has been done by our hard working volunteers.

Work has been done on the Memorial Garden with the installation of the posts (thanks to Peter and Jeanine)



Photo 3 – posts at the Memorial Garden

A park bench has been installed with the bench being donated by the Davey Family (thanks to Grant, Rob and Randy).



Photo 4 – park bench at the Memorial Garden

While I was at the Reserve over Easter, three plaques for deceased members were installed. More plaques have been planned. On the matter of managing these plaques, there is a policy in the Members Area (on our YFRWPA web site) for the Memorial Garden. Plaques are \$150 each - this is what they cost us. We have a standard format for the plaques and no personal plaques are allowed to be placed in the Memorial Garden. They must be purchased through the Committee and installed by the committee.

Recently, the Machine Sub-committee handed down its decision on a suitable machine for the YFRWPA. At a recent Committee Meeting, the Management Committee considered the decision and options. It was put to a vote and the outcome was 7 votes for and 2 against purchasing the machine - one Committee Member was absent from the meeting. From this decision, the order for the machine was placed. The Machine, with all its associated attachments included in the price, will be picked up soon and transported to the Reserve.

We, as an organization, are still doing very well financially. We have substantial funds still in the bank, but we still have more to do. Down the track, a tipper trailer still needs to be purchased to go with the machine. Also, a rain water tank needs to be installed on the rear of the new shed. This will boost the amount of rain water available to members and friends who stay at Davey Hut and the camp ground.

Our baiting and weed spraying group has been busy in the post-Easter period with large areas of the Reserve sprayed in order to control horehound and other weeds. In addition, ground baiting was undertaken by this group.

Kym Groves (President)

Maintenance and Construction

A big thankyou to Grant Davey for constructing and installing the shutters on the camp kitchen. Rob Piro and myself assisted Grant with the final part of the install over Easter. It has made an amazing difference to the area (please note the shutters must be closed and locked before leaving the camp site).



Photo 5 – the camp kitchen.



Photo 6- the recently installed shutters on the camp kitchen

Some minor work was done on the fence around the donkey boiler with capping installed on the fence.

Inspection in the shower areas found the shower heads were leaking. This was because someone had interfered with them, so I removed them, cleaned them and reinstalled with new seals. Please leave the shower heads alone. They are a fixed shower head and are not adjustable for any reason.

I also needed to replace 10 tap washers as they had been completely over tightened; as a consequence, the washers were completely destroyed (see photo). There is no reason to tighten the taps like this. It is a low pressure system.



Photo 7 – damaged tap washers.

Upon leaving the amenities block, please close the building doors properly and turn off the lights. The area is very windy. If the doors are caught in a gust of wind they could be damaged .

All other equipment was found to be in good working order. Please, if you find something not working report it on a Visit Report sheet and email it to the secretary. This way we can be notified in advance of the parts we need to take with us in order to carry out necessary repairs.

The facilities are there for members to use. But, they need to be looked after and not abused. Rest assured, maintenance will be carried out if there is a fault.

Some fence repairs were undertaken at Pinnacle Bore to stop animals from damaging the fence.

Finally, if anyone has access to a concrete saw please contact me (kym@yellowfoot.org). We need to cut up the old concrete slabs from the old toilet block

Kym Groves (President)

Vice President's Report

Work Health and Safety

Since the October 2023 Newsletter, no Incident or Hazard Reports were received.

All out-of-date, fluid-type items in the First Aid kit at Davey Hut were replaced in November 2023. In addition, a new First Aid book was purchased. A check on the battery in the defibrillator showed that it is working fine.

Over the course of 2024, I will carry out a check of the various WHS documents. Some may be up for review.

Cleanliness

It is a timely reminder for us all that we, as visitors to the BCR, leave a minimal foot print. This includes ensuring that the facilities at the camp ground – Davey Hut; the camp kitchen; the amenities block; the camp sites and the general surrounds – are left free of rubbish. If you take anything with you on your trip to the BCR please take it away with you; do not leave any items at the camp ground. If you believe you have an item that would benefit the YFRWPA, and you would like to donate it to the Association, then please let the Management Committee know. Finally, a report was received regarding discarded cans and bottles found along Caernarvon Track. This is most unsightly and not acceptable. No-one is being singled out here. But, can I ask if you are travelling along the track, and you do come across such items or rubbish, could you help out the YFRWPA and collect the items. This would be much appreciated.

Firewood

Some meetings ago, an agreement was put in place to alleviate the Committee of the job to supply firewood for campers at the camp ground. In the agreement, it was understood that the responsibility providing firewood for a camp fire rested with the visitor, that is, bring your own. Recent observations have found that some members and friends are establishing their own supply of fire wood at the camp ground. Committee has decided to look into the storage of said fire wood. It must be remembered that according to fire prevention regulations, any source of fuel for a wild fire must be stored a certain distance away from buildings and important assets. More information will follow on this matter.

Local Liaison

After several, productive meetings with our local pastoral station neighbours arrangements have been put in place to facilitate the mustering and removal of stray livestock off the BCR. Our neighbours have been extremely active and steadfast in their efforts. I must

commend them on their work and cooperation with us.

Communication

I receive regular comments from members about how informative our newsletter is. However, this is not to say we cannot always improve. The invitation is there for any member to contribute articles or photos. The only provision is that the article must promote the vision and work of the YFRWPA and the Caernarvon Track venture. Of especial need would be items of a scientific nature. The deadline for the October newsletter is 25 September 2024. People can contact me at shane@yellowfoot.org



Photo 8 – the curious effect of nature; our camp ground at 12 midnight, lit up by a lightning flash!

Feral animals and other unwanted species on the BCR

Since our last newsletter, a lot of activity has been undertaken in the area of control of feral animals and other unwanted animals on the BCR. Our regular, ground baiting activity (focusing on foxes and wild dogs) was carried out by members and friends in April. This was followed up with an aerial, bait drop by the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board.

In March, an aerial culling activity by the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board despatched some 132 feral goats. Ground culling activities

by members, from November to April, saw the despatching of a further 48 goats. Whilst these numbers seem large (in comparison to previous years), it must be pointed out that as a result of the significant price drop in the export value of feral goats, commercial mustering has dropped off. Nonetheless, the YFRWPA is committed to a regular program of feral animal control.

Another regular program that has been doing extremely well on the BCR is the reduction in sheep numbers. Readers will recall recent, news items outlining the effort of our neighbouring pastoral stations, Wirrelapa and Willow Springs, to muster up their livestock. Their efforts entailed both ground and aerial mustering as well as the complete rebuilding of a boundary fence line. In March, the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board helicopter reported no sightings of sheep on the BCR. In April, our conservation team reported 5 woolly sheep on the Middle Track and 2 dorpers near Fifteen Mile bore. This information was passed onto our neighbours for their follow up.

All of the above is excellent news as far as conservation goes. However, it must be remembered that vigilance and constant effort will be required as we move into the future.

Shane Fantinel (Vice President)

Reflective (Memorial) Site

After consultation with members, the Association has established a reflective area where we can recognise the Traditional Owners of the land and where the names of members who have passed on can remain a part of the BCR, as long as the YFRWPA has tenure over the land.

This area is the only approved place for any permanent memorial on the BCR. There is a policy about the reflective area on the members page.

The area takes the form of a site close to Davey's Hut campsite where a simple plaque, ordered through the Committee, can be attached to a jarrah sleeper. The cost for a plaque, at the moment, is \$150.00.

The plaque will include the name, age, date of death, years of YFRWPA membership (where applicable), and designation as a Founding Member (where applicable). Placement on the sleepers will be in a random pattern.

If the family also wishes it, a Deceased Members Page will be also maintained on the YFRWPA web page. We will ask the family to provide a photo, details of years as a member and any other information about the departed member's contribution to the BCR. Annually, the Committee, in consultation with the family, will review this page with the potential to archive the information.

If you are interested in having a plaque for a family member who has passed on placed at the Bunkers Conservation Reserve Grove of Reflection please contact the Secretary, Jim Kennelly, via email (admin@yellowfoot.org) and provide the information requested in the attached form.



Photo 9 - View of the Reflective site, looking towards Davey's Hut

Conservation

[Horehound on the Bunkers Conservation Reserve – things you can do to help](#)

Jeanine Baker with Acknowledgements to the Weed Spraying folks

Weed spraying on the Bunkers Conservation Reserve is an ongoing activity. The major weed infestation we are currently trying to deal with is horehound ([Government of SA Fact Sheet on horehound](#)). Activities occur twice a year in April and September. These months

are selected so we can optimise the impact of the chemical we are using to control horehound. Anyone is welcome to join us on these activities, which also include baiting for wild dogs. Dates are on the yearly program and feel free to contact Jeanine Baker (Jeanine@yellowfoot.org).

Horehound seed is being spread by vehicles along the Caernarvon Track. The worst infestations have been the result of seed being brought in by vehicles entering via the emergency track entrance at Tommy Gunyah.

Over time this led to seed being spread further south along the Track by vehicles exiting via the Boralinna emergency exit. It is important to note that the Tommy Gunyah Track and Boralinna Emergency Exit Track (out to the weighbridge near the Dunbar barites mine) are to be used only in the cases of emergencies and once or twice a year for a maintenance check. They are not to be seen as general, tourist tracks.

It is important that spread along Mount Caernarvon Track is limited as much as possible, especially as fewer infestations are found after the southern picnic ground. The map (over page) shows the areas where most of the weed spraying has been undertaken (shown in orange).

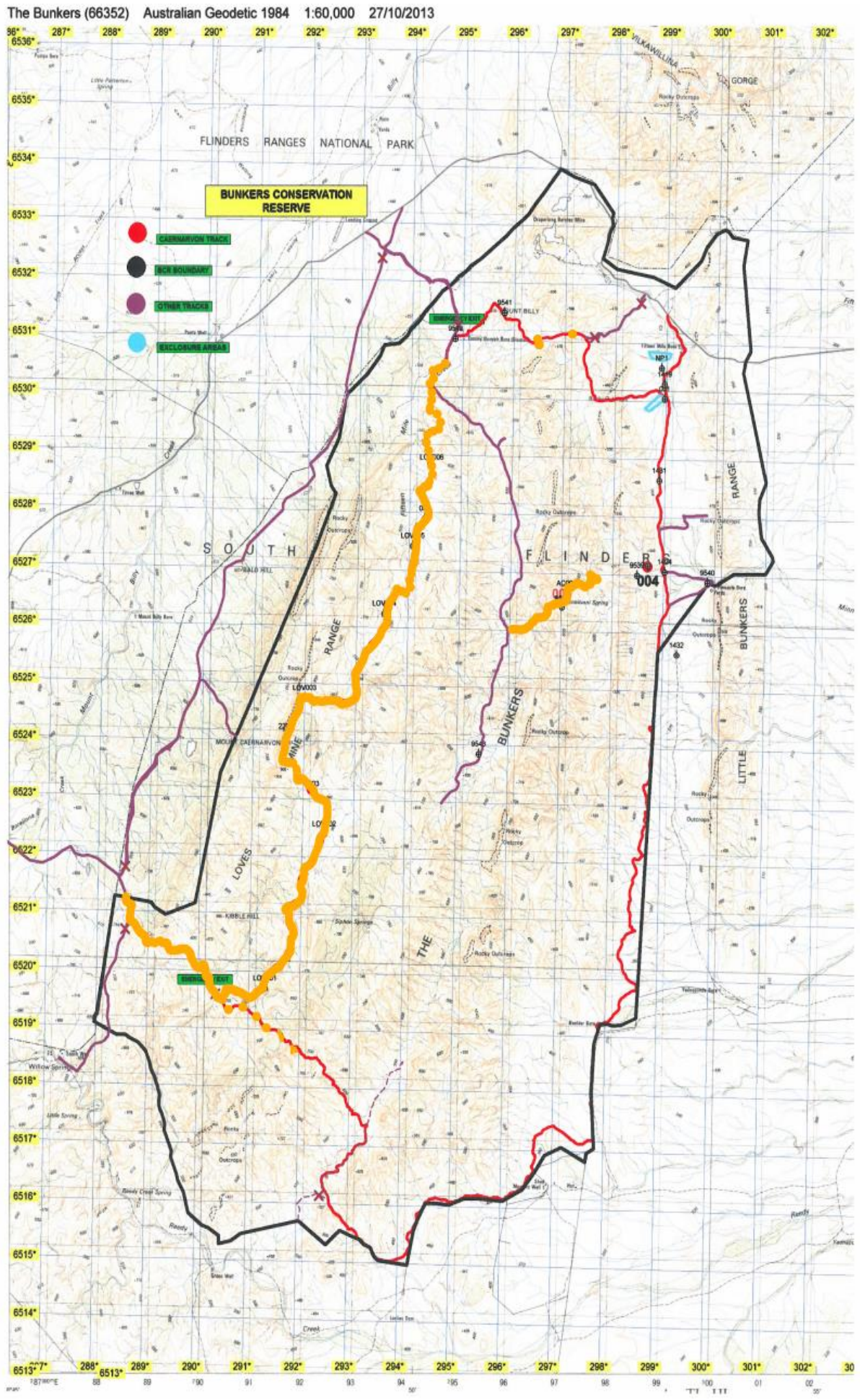
Given resources are limited our efforts have focused on spraying within 5 metres of the track where horehound has been found. This is to prevent vehicles picking up seed and continuing to spread it along the track. There are also other major infestations, such as those being tackled in priority areas of Minitinni Creek and Middle Track. However, we know if we don't control horehound along the Track, it will eventually be spread to areas where there are no or small incursions. Once we control the major incursions along the track we can eventually move on to other areas, such as these smaller incursions and creek lines where horehound has spread.

While we will keep controlling existing infestations, preventing the spread of horehound is the best control measure. There is no way we can stop the spread of seed on the fur or wool of animals but there are things we can do to protect the Bunkers Conservation Reserve. Everyone can be aware of:

- the risks of machinery and vehicles picking up seed and carrying it further along the Track
- avoid driving through any areas where heavy infestations occur. Simply, stay on the track which we try to keep clear and avoid using the Boralinna and Tommy Gunyah emergency exit to enter the Reserve.
- when you are out hiking and move through patches of horehound clean your shoes and clothes before returning to areas clear of the weed. Pick the seeds off and put in a plastic bag, don't just drop them on the ground. Take the sealed bag back to camp and put in your rubbish to go to landfill or burn in one of the campfires
- if you find any other major infestations of horehound when you are out hiking send a description and the GPS location to Jeanine@yellowfoot.org.



Photo 10 – significant reduction in horehound will enable our native vegetation to flourish



Map 1 - showing (in orange) where heavy horehound infestations occur along the Caernarvon Track and Minitinni Creek.

Instead of the horehound monoculture shown in Photo 11 we really want to see diverse native vegetation, such as that shown in Photo 12, on the Bunkers Conservation Reserve.



Photo 11 - Horehound monoculture (from Government SA Fact Sheet)



Photo 12 - Native vegetation on the Bunkers Conservation Reserve

Jeanine Baker

Succession Planning

After some 25 years of regular (twice a year +) involvement in baiting, maintenance and conservation tasks, I recently missed out due to health (family and mine) events.

This made me realise that many other “founding members” may be reaching their fitness and/or interest limits too after some 25 years of supporting our YFRWPA conservation project.

Members’ initial support, whether purely financial, or including management or on site work – all has been critical, and has borne success.

However, when the time comes to consider who to entrust your membership to, please ensure that the next holder of the membership is aware of the following.

The Natural Heritage Trust (NHT – Commonwealth) substantially (66.67%) funded the purchase and establishment of our BCR project – conditional on a Financial Agreement (FA - lasting for 999 years), defining the purposes and conditions of our YFRWPA conservation project. I am happy to supply a copy (kazoom@adam.com.au) and summarise effects simply as follows:

- We do not “own” the BCR – our land tenure is only as custodians.
- Because our funding from NHT was on the basis of the BCR being part of the National Reserve System (NRS), it has to be managed to IUCN category IV conservation requirements as set out in the FA. Quote: “A *habitat or species management area (IUCN Category IV)* is similar to a natural monument or feature, but focuses on more specific areas of conservation, like an identifiable species or habitat that requires continuous protection rather than that of a natural feature”. Or, as per the FA definition: “Area of land and/or sea subject to active intervention for management purposes so as to ensure the maintenance of habitats and/or to meet the requirements of specific species”.

This means that as custodians, we must act and be able to demonstrate that the BCR is being returned to its original natural state. The present situation appears to be that site development has established

members' facilities which are the best in the Flinders.

Environmentally, we have "baseline" data in form of: photo points, bird and vegetation lists, site visit reports and YF surveys. We also have feral animal and weed control regimes, etc. – all of which need to be monitored, continued, developed, and communicated/publicised, to develop our credibility in the environmental community.

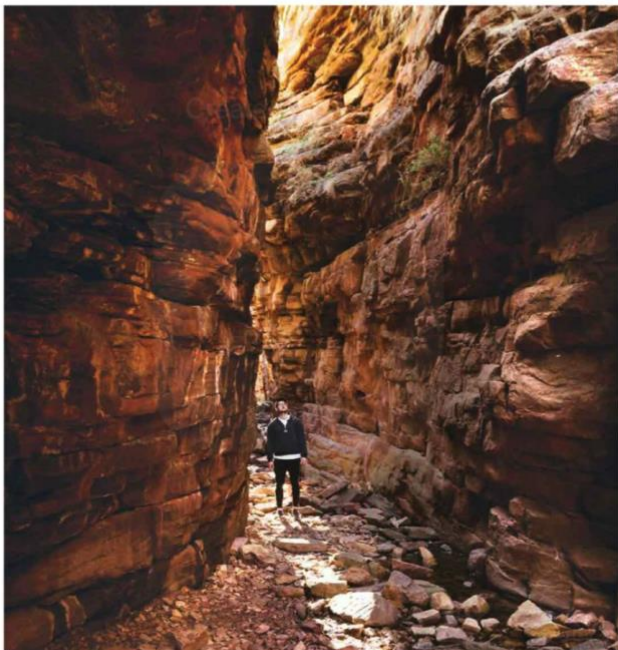
The individual commitment is not excessive – just basic fitness, time commitment and interest – guidance always available, and experts are welcome too!

Kaz Herbst OAM

Caernarvon Track and Visitor Access News

Members and friends of the YFRWPA would be interested to learn that news of our Caernarvon Track self-guided tour is mentioned in the current edition of the *Flinders Ranges and Outback* publication.

FLINDERS RANGES & OUTBACK



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Flinders Ranges
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FLINDERSANDOUTBACK.COM.AU



Item 1 – Front cover of *Flinders Ranges and Outback*

Apologies for the somewhat blurred appearance of the advertisement, but here is what they have to say:



Self-drive 4WD

- The highest self-drive track in the Flinders Ranges.
- Breathtaking 360° views • 55km loop track, challenging ascents and descents, 4WD experience necessary.
- Located within the Bunkers Conservation Reserve and supporting the work of the Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby Preservation Association • Open all year, subject to weather and availability.

E: bookings@caernarvontrack.com



www.caernarvontrack.com

Item 2 – Outline of Caernarvon Track

Caernarvon Track

An initiative in keeping with peoples' travels along Caernarvon Track is the submitting of photographs and articles of the experience. Keep an eye on the Gallery tab on the website <https://www.caernarvontrack.com/>

We are adding more images soon. If you have a few you'd like to share – action, flora, fauna or just a damned good shot, please drop them here <https://www.dropbox.com/request/d0lbKEC49VK2IG1j8r07>

You're welcome to watermark them with your name if you want the credit! Thanks in advance.

Small Group Base Camp

With the completion of recent works at Davey Hut Campground, we are excited to promote ourselves to small groups (less than 20p) for the purpose of research or outdoor education. This will further enhance our position as a

Conservation Reserve, fulfilling elements of our constitution.

Please spread the word amongst family, friends and industry colleagues and in the first instance, direct them to the flyer on our website under **Small Group Base Camp**.

All enquiries are then back through me philip@yellowfoot.org

All bookings will need to be endorsed by the Management Committee before confirmed.

Moving forward, we see this is a real positive for the Association and a potential sustainable revenue stream.

Phillip Wells

How is Skull Rock faring these days?

This was taken back in November 2023. For those who recall the natural feature from back in the 1990's and 2000's, you might notice that a little erosion has taken place.

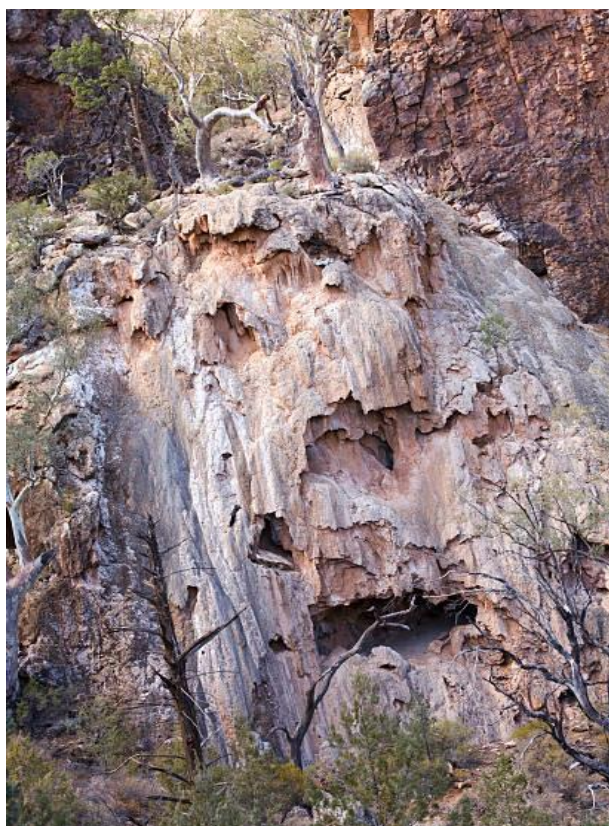


Photo 13 – Skull Rock in Sept 2023



Photo 13 – Skull Rock in Nov 2023

Update on the old Barites Mine site

Members and friends of the YFRWPA will recall that, for the past 5 years or so, the old Barites Mine site area (on the northern end of the BCR) has undergone extensive restoration. This was carried out by the previous mining company, who held the lease, under the oversight of the relevant State government department.

As of the 17 April 2024, the restoration work was signed off. The area of the old mine workings is fenced off. Accordingly, under the Department of Mines regulations, this fenced off area is out of bounds to everyone.

A study of an up-to-date map of the BCR reveals the presence of a track slightly to the south of the mining area. This track follows part of the original entrance track, off the Wirrealpa Road (through a padlocked gate), along a creek and south up to a junction point (a padlocked gate) with the track on Mt Billy. This particular track, through this southern section of the mine area, is very rough. It is not recommended for general use.

Shane Fantinel (Vice President)