



NEWSLETTER October 2026 (Year 25 Vol 41)

Editorial

Throughout the history of the Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby Preservation Association Inc., our management committee has been blessed with a number of supportive representatives from the Department of Environment and Water (DEW). In recent times, we were indeed privileged to have DEW Ranger, Alan Harbour, as their liaison contact on our committee. Kym expands on the excellent service both Alan, and his marvelous wife Linda, have given to the YFRWPA and the Bunkers Conservation Reserve (BCR). We wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

Rainfall across the BCR this year has been very high and consistent. The result has seen vigorous growth in vegetation, both ground shrubs as well as medium plants and trees.



Photograph 1 – Sturt Desert Peas (*Swainsona Formosa*) was seen flourishing in many parts of the BCR, even on the main track into the Reserve.

Moreover, extensive rainfalls has seen native fauna bounce back from previous years of near drought conditions.



Photograph 2 – one of our male Red Kangaroos (*Osphranter rufus*), feeding on Silver mulla mulla (*Ptilotus obovatus*).

Indeed, our resident male and female emu have taken the opportunity to raise the next generation of youngsters.



Photograph 3 – male Emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) takes the family out for a morning exercise.

Our conservation group expands on the work being carried out in controlling feral cats on the BCR. Further, following the discovery of rare Bell-fruit trees and the Silver Daisy, work is about to commence on erecting protective enclosures round the sites.

Lastly, special mention must be made of the dedicated hard work being carried out by our

treasurer, Di Farrell. Later, in this Newsletter, Di expands on the success the YFRWPA has achieved in obtaining grants for a variety of projects on the BCR.

All this as we celebrate our 25th year as an organisation. Please help us celebrate this event at our forth coming AGM.

Shane Fantinel (Editor)

2026 AGM Announcement



Photograph 4 – Fullarton Park Community Centre.

Our 2026 AGM will be held at the

**Fullarton Park Community Centre
411 Fullarton Road, FULLARTON**

on

Sunday 15th November 2026.

**Commencement time is 12.00 noon
and the finishing time will be around
3.30pm.**

An advanced thank you goes out to all our sponsors, past and present for their on-going support.

Commendation - thank you and best wishes

Well Alan.

I am happy that the news is now out.

The news for the future is fantastic, however, it is with some sadness that our relationship with you, in a professional manner, is coming to an end.

I had prepared a speech for Thursday night but it seems fitting that you are getting it now.



Photograph 5 – Alan and Linda Harbour and family

Alan, after 11 years of having you on our committee as the DEW representative, you have become an integral part of this Associations history.

You have been a consistent source of advice to the YFRWPA committee on the many different subjects that we deal with. It is my pleasure to thank you for your considered advice.

Alan, without doubt you have been the best DEW Representative our committee has ever had. I'm sure I speak for all members and friends of the BCR when I say we will miss your counsel and friendship.

I would like to thank Alan and Linda for their outstanding contribution to the running of the Caernarvon Track. This contribution has contributed several thousands of dollars to the YFRWPA income.

I would also like to thank Alan for his donation of the painting, that was auctioned off, to contribute to the YFRWPA funds.

I am personally sad to see Alan move on but he is, as always, putting his family first.

Alan, Linda and family, anytime you are back on Country you will be very welcome on the BCR.

Thankyou Alan and Linda for being a part of the continued journey and development of the YFRWPA, the BCR and Caernarvon Track.

Alan, may this move be the most positive outcome for yourself, Linda and the family.

Jacqui and I will be catching up with you and your family when we are up North, for sure. Cheers and Best wishes.

Kym Groves
President

President's Report

From the Presidents Desk

So far this year, we have had a very successful time with amazing amount of rain. Fortunately, there has been minimal damage to tracks and infrastructure.

The Bunkers looks amazing, with green foliage as far as the eye can see, but also with the special added bonus of wild flowers and Sturt Desert Peas and Wild Hops out in abundance.



Photograph 6 – Wild Hops (*Rumex vesicarius*)

This is the best I have seen the BCR in the 25 years of coming here.



Photograph 7 – Native Tomato (*Solanum sturtianum*) in flower and with fruit.

The YFRWPA, together with the BCR, turned 25 years old on the 4th October 2026. We should all be proud of the position we are in.

With outstanding efforts by the few, we have discovered rare species of plants and native animals that are still active on the Reserve.

Rare plant species are going to be propagated in an attempt to broaden the number of plants we have on the reserve.

The planting program, which has been undertaken around camp by Grant, Brandon, Randy and others, is now completed. Maintenance of the seedlings will be undertaken in the short term to ensure longevity. All plantings have been grown from seed collected on the Bunkers.

The facilities, that have been built, are there for members, their families and friends to use. Often I receive comments, by customers and friends, about our facilities. They speak highly of the excellent quality of what we have built in such a remote location. Again, this is because of the hard work of the few.

There are a few projects on the go at the moment. Accordingly, coordinators for these activities will be asking for help soon, so if you can please put your hand up and join in this would be appreciated. There will be a fencing project which entails installing lightweight fence panels to protect some rare species of plants.

We will need extra hands to help move the lightweight fence panels into place and secure them in position. No previous experience needed; we will need many able bodied people to help with this project.



Photograph 8 – the view from Mt. Caernarvon with a yacca (*Xanthorrhoea quadrangulate*) standing watch.

Maintenance

Currently, we have had some issues with people not knowing how to run particular bits of plant around camp. Therefore, the committee has decided to do things slightly different. We will not be relying on the written instructions and videos online alone. We will be showing people how to use particular bits of plant and equipment – for example, the diesel pump at Pinnacle bore. So if you are proficient at operating a particular piece of plant or equipment please pass on this knowledge to others who do not know how the plant or equipment operates. This will entail a simple short onsite familiarisation with any plant and equipment on site.

With regard to water at campground:

- (a) anyone arriving at the camp site should check the water level in the main, camp tank behind Davey hut;
- (b) If its water level is low, proceed to Pinnacle bore and check the water level in the bore tank.
- (c) If there is sufficient water in the Pinnacle bore tank, and if they have done the familiarisation, start the pump as per the new instructions until the camp tank over flows (note, it can take many hours to pump water from the Pinnacle bore tank to the main camp tank).

- (d) The above should also be done before leaving to ensure the main camp tank is maintained at a high capacity.

If, during your stay at the campground, you have pumped water from the bore tank up to the main camp tank, release the windmill tail located just up from the base of the frame. This will allow the wind to refill the bore tank. Naturally, if you find the BCR is experiencing strong winds, shut off the windmill tail. Finally, should you have released the tail when you have arrived, shut the tail off before you depart.

Please ask to be shown how any plant or equipment is to be operated. Reading instructions is a good, first step. However, receiving personal instructions will assist in minimising any of this plant or equipment being damaged due to incorrect operation.

The toilet, in the Southern bathroom, will be out of service in the near future. I am awaiting spare parts to carry out maintenance, therefore, do not use this toilet. The shower and hand basin will still be operative.

I should not have to bring this up but due to some thoughtless member, or their friends, the chopping blocks that were in place at the central fire ring and at the hot water heater for the amenities for many years, have disappeared. It appears someone decided to cut up the chopping blocks for fire wood and burn them. We have worked very hard to supply suitable items for members to experience a pleasant stay and this act is just not on.

Firewood is each members responsibility. Members who plan a short or, indeed, an extended stay at the campground must bring enough fire wood for the water heater and fire rings. The YFRWPA has never supplied wood for this purpose. If wish to have hot water and a campfire, bring your own firewood. Occasionally, there maybe a small amount of firewood left by members - wood they did not use during their stay and did not want to cart home. But don't rely on or sponge off others.

Please look after the buildings and structures that have been supplied for members use. It took a great deal of effort, by our generous members, to put these facilities in place.

Power Use at Camp

Please use the power, that is provided at our campground, conservatively. We are not connected to the grid. All power in Davey hut, the amenities and the camp kitchen come from the Solar Battery System. All the available power is reliant on the sun to charge the batteries. Please be aware that if the system batteries get discharged, to a certain point, the system will shut down. It will not come back on until it is recharged with the sun. I am currently looking at supplementing the charging for the Solar Battery system with a vertical wind generator.

On a final note, 'Happy 25Th Anniversary' to all Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby Preservation members and friends. The Bunkers Conservation Reserve is looking fantastic. Here's to the ongoing success into the future.

Kym Groves President

Our Grants Program in action

We have applied for, and been successful, in obtaining five grants this year. These applications brought in just over \$47,000 for the organisation. The primary focus of these funds was that they were to be spent on ecology and land care improvements. The grants have been through the Friends of Parks and Nature and also Grassroots Arid Lands.

Projects successfully funded to date are:

- Protection of Short Tailed Grass Wren – hiring a Felixer from the Thylation company to eradicate feral cats. The amount was \$16,500;
- Protection of Silver Daisy, with fencing infrastructure, to surround the vulnerable plants from feral animals grazing. The amount was \$11,000;
- Common, boundary fence between the BCR and Willow Springs – to replace a short, dilapidated boundary fence to stop sheep and goats from entering the BCR. The amount was \$14,500;
- Castor Oil Spraying – to eradicate this noxious weed. The amount was \$2,750;

- Volunteer fuel – to reimburse freight transport and fuel costs associated only with projects. The amount was \$2,200.

Projects applying for now to action in 2027 are:

- Protection of Short Tailed Grass Wren – 2nd year Felixer hire from Thylation;
- Solar pump for Pinnacle Bore – to change from the diesel pump to solar operation;
- Propagation and a misting humidifier to propagate threatened species of shrubs and bushes.

Grant applications take patience, time and collaboration from both ecology and maintenance areas of the organisation. Those involved from the committee are offering the best information. Members are using their devotion to YFRWPA to get information, licenses, quotes, approvals and supply to get respective projects and running. This is a total team effort. Everyone is welcome to get involved.

Di Farrell Treasurer

Vice President's Report

Recently, my wife (Margaret) and I undertook a visit to the Ediacaran Fossil site on Edicacara Nilpena NP. The tour – which is conducted by the NP&W - has been going for the last three years.



Photograph 9 – fossil from the Ediacaran period which dates back approximately 600 million years ago.

The experience got me wondering about the geological history of the BCR.

So here it is. I guess if you are not into geology then you might skip this section. I hope not. After all, one day we may all become fossils! (tongue in cheek everyone).

(acknowledgement to https://www.yellowfoot.org/secret_squirrel/Caernarvon%20Track%20Documents/Doc%20001%20-%20Caernarvon%20Track%20Guide%20-%20From%20Rangers%20Camp%20V-040526.pdf)

'GEOLOGY OF THE BUNKERS RANGE

For 3 billion years of Earth's history, the only inhabitants on the planet were simple, single-celled microbes. Colonies of these organisms, known as 'cyanobacteria' (or blue-green algae) blanketed every quiet shallow-water environment and with no predators or other mobile creatures to compete with, they dominated life on Earth.

However, 635 million years ago something changed on the Earth's surface that irreversibly altered its biology on a global scale. In a geological instant, complex animal life appeared in the rock record and eventually became the incredible diversity of animal life we see today. What caused this change from a world of microbes to a world of animals is poorly understood and represents one of the most important questions in modern science.



Photograph 10 - Red: Siltstones, Blue: Limestones - Etina Formation

The Bunkers Range region has a world class record of this important interval in Earth's history. The rocks that crop out here are a near-complete record of this great evolutionary event, with a series of rock layers that end at the base of the Ediacaran Period where the first animals appear in the geological record.

Tapley Hill Formation Age: 750 million years

Rock types: Siltstone with some carbonate siltstones.

The Tapley Hill Formation blankets the entire Flinders Ranges region and has equivalent formations as far South as Kangaroo Island and as far North as Alice Springs. The Tapley Hill was deposited after glaciers melted during a major ice-age and sea-level rose greatly, forcing the coastline to migrate inland and allowing fine-grained material (mud and silt) to settle out of deep waters over an extended period of time. Siltstones such as these are typically very easy to break down and erode - most of the low-lying areas seen here are so because of this. The Tapley Hill Formation is cut by two units (called Members) here:

Mount Caernarvon Greywacke Member

The Mount Caernarvon Greywacke occurs only in the Bunkers Range and is the unit that makes up the summit of Mount Caernarvon and the North-South trending range. This member is a greyish-coloured, fine grained 'greywacke', a type of sandstone that includes mostly quartz sand, feldspar. It is coarser and includes a large amount of quartz in its composition which makes it more resistant to weather than the siltstones above and below.



Photograph 11 - Gritty Limestone - Etina Formation

This causes the Mount Caernarvon Greywacke to form a prominent ridge.

Wockerawirra Dolomite Member

Similarly, the Wockerawirra Dolomite occurs only in the Bunkers Range and surrounding areas. Layers of dolostone, a carbonate rock, occur in-between Tapley Hill Formation siltstones and form a series of prominent ridges parallel to the Mount Caernarvon ridge.

Etina Formation Age: 720 million years
Rock types: Siltstones and Limestones
Lower Etina Formation - Winna Limestone

The lower Etina Formation is informally named the 'Winna Limestone' and is a thick unit of alternating siltstones and limestones. Again, siltstones form the lower-lying areas between ridges, the ridges themselves are made of resistant limestones. The Winna Limestone is made up of a series of cycles: Siltstones here are deposited in deep water and settle slowly out of the water, limestone rocks overly these and are deposited in much shallower water. Much of the limestone here is likely created by microbes which convert carbonate that are dissolved in the water column to solid carbonate minerals. The main types of limestone here are: (1) a gritty limestone with millimetre-scale round grains; (2) Microbe



Photograph 12 - Ancient ripples - Etina Formation minerals

limestones including stromatolites; and (3) Oolitic limestones.

Upper Etina Formation

The upper part of the Etina Formation includes thick intervals of siltstone overlain by much thinner limestone layers. The wider spaces between ridges here supports this, with the thicker siltstones creating wider low-lying spaces. Limestones here are mainly gritty and microbe types. The tops of cycles here sometimes include surfaces of ancient wave-ripples. Again, these sediments are likely deposited in a deeper environment than the

Winna Limestone, as shown by the thicker siltstones.

Enorama Shale Age: 680 million years
Rock types: Shale

The Enorama Shale has an extensive distribution much like the Tapley Hill Formation and so it likely represents an increase in water depth from the Etina Formation. Shallow limestones here have disappeared, making way for slow settling-out of very fine-grained material. The wide flat plain in between the Bunkers and Little Bunkers Ranges is made up of the heavily eroded Enorama Shale.

Trezona Formation Age: up to 635 million years
Rock types: Siltstones and microbial carbonates

The Trezona Formation forms the Little Bunkers Range that run parallel to the main range, through the reserve, on the eastern side. The Formation is made up of a lower siltstone unit and an upper unit of over 100m of stacked microbe and stromatolite carbonates and was deposited in a very shallow environment where microbes are able to thrive and grow layer by layer over thousands of years. The Trezona Formation (and its Yaltipena Member) is the last interval before the deposits of the Elatina Formation, which disappears below modern sediments on the Eastern side of the Little Bunkers range. The Elatina Formation is a glacial deposit and has been argued to be the result of the most severe glacial period in Earth's history often called the 'Snowball Earth'. Soon after this glacial deposit, complex life appears to explode in the geological record and the over 100m thick intervals of microbe carbonates like that seen in the Trezona Formation all but disappear. Interestingly, the Trezona Formation also hosts examples of what may be the earliest large fossils ever recorded. (For a clearer understanding of the layers see the diagram over page)'.

Shane Fantinel (Vice President)

AGE & LAYERS OF THE BUNKERS CONSERVATION RESERVE

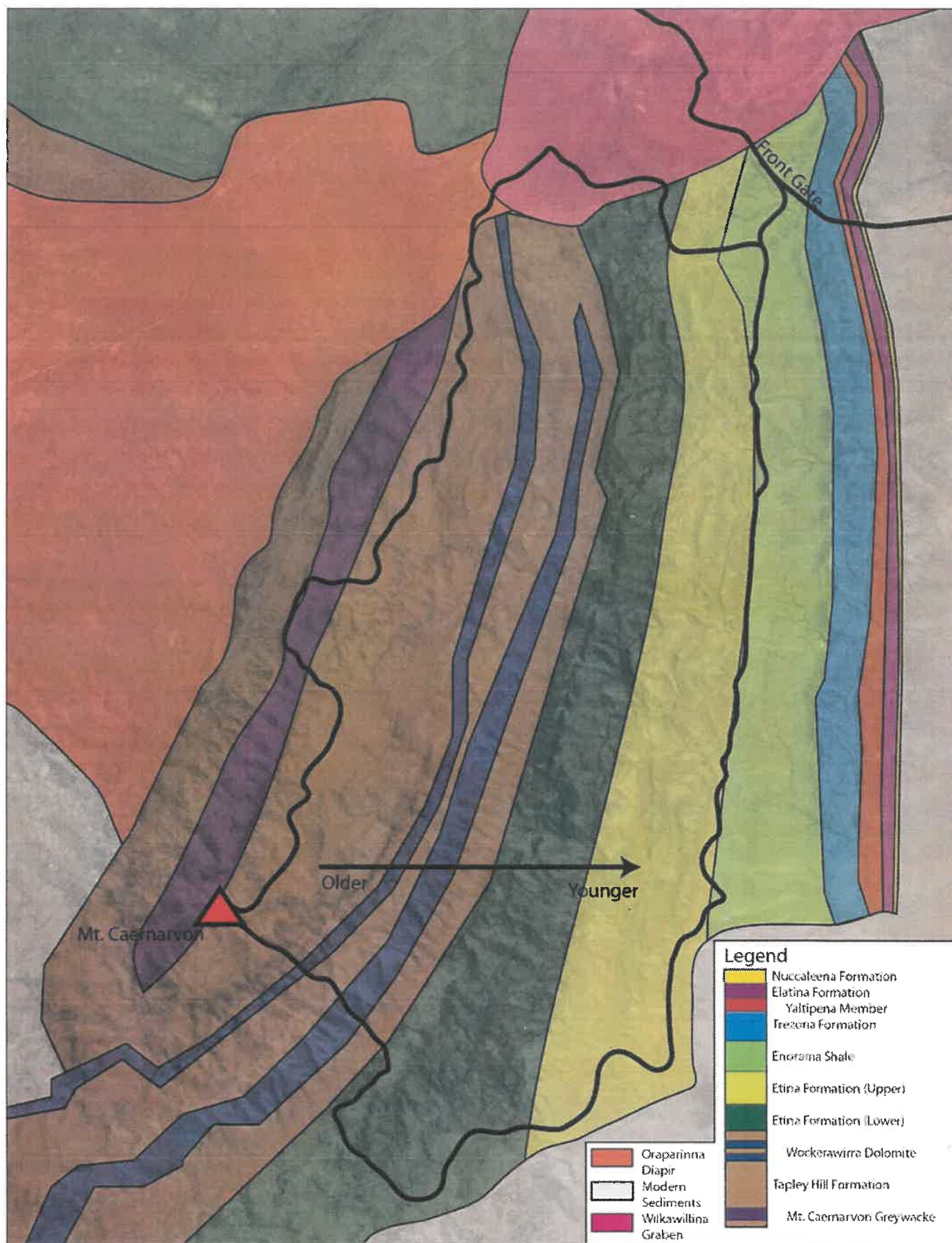


Diagram 1 – illustration of the age and levels of the BCR

Conservation

The Felixer in action



Photograph 13 – the Felixer as employed to assist in the removal feral cats.

Thanks to the hard work of our treasurer, Di Farrell, the Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby Preservation Association was provided with funds (from the Friends of Parks and Nature 2025-26 grant round) to lease a Felixer Grooming Trap for 12 months. The aim is to use the Felixer technology to help protect the endangered species, Short Tailed Grass Wren, from feral cats.

Felixers are more targeted than traditional baits and less labour-intensive than trapping or shooting. They are used for controlling feral cats in targeted areas. Along with opportunistic control of feral cats, this is precisely the tool we need to help us control feral cats that predate on vulnerable wildlife.

Targeted feral cats that pass within range of the unit are sprayed with a lethal dose (8 mg) of 1080 toxic gel. Cats instinctively and fastidiously groom themselves, so a feral cat that has been hit with a dose of toxic gel will inevitably clean this toxin from its fur. The result is very effective.

The Felixer takes a photograph every time the detection beam is crossed. We can use these photos to determine the effectiveness of the unit in targeting feral cats and any potential risk to off-target animals.

We deployed a Felixer at the Bunkers Conservation Reserve (BCR) in April 2026 at a

site already identified from Trail Camera monitoring as supporting several cats.

The results were quite spectacular. Over 2 months, 4 different feral cats were targeted and sprayed with a lethal dose of 1080 toxic gel (see attached photos). Over the same time-period kangaroos, rabbits and possums were detected but not targeted. Following the targeting, the cats that had been sprayed were not detected again. This shows that the Felixer is target specific and effective.

Since April, the BCR has experienced 2 massive rain events. The Felixer was undamaged in the first event. Sadly, the second event resulted in water getting into the cameras. Consequently, the Felixer was returned to the manufacturer in September for a full service before again being deployed in the field in October 2026.

With luck, and deploying the Felixer where Trail Cameras show us we have feral cats present, we can further decrease the number of animals that could predate on Short Tailed Grass Wrens and other species present on the BCR.



Photograph 14 – Cat seen on 25/05/2026



Photograph 15 – Cat seen on 5/06/2026



Photograph 16 – cat seen on 6/6/2026



Photograph 17 – cat seen on 12/6/2026

Silver Daisy – Call from the Environmental Portfolio

The silver daisy plant(s) identified on the BCR are of high conservation status.



Photograph 18 – Silver Daisy (Olearia pannosa)

They have been recognized as South Australia's most northern known colony. Apart from ongoing work to propagate new plants we need to prevent herbivore grazing.

We now have 80 panels to fence the population near the Mount Caernarvon track. This will stop kangaroos, sheep, goats or rabbits from eating our single identified colony into extinction.

It is now too late in the season to contemplate fencing in a remote area but I am hoping a few of you will help us early in autumn 2027.

I will try and identify suitable dates in April or May, when the weather is suitable.

If you can spare a weekend, please let me know, we can use your participation to get the fence up.

Contact me on jeaninebaker323@gmail.com.

**Jeanine Baker
Conservation Group**

History - From the Pastoral to the Conservation Reserve



Photograph 19 –If only these bricks and timbers could talk! (Shepherd's hut on the road into the BCR).

The Beginning

In 1856, Joseph Wills ventured north to take up a pastoral lease on what was then known as the Appealinna station. He constructed his house and yards at a location which is south of the current T-junction of the Blinman and Wirrealpa Roads (remains can still be seen today). Appealinna took in the Caernarvon and Little Bunker Hills paddock.

Under the Control of Wilpena Station

For some time, after Joseph Wills ceased occupation at Appealinna, the pastoral area came under the control of Wilpena station.

The Coming of the Reynolds Family

In 1924 two brothers, Steven and Thomas Reynolds road up from their home, near Hawker, to look over a section known as the Upalinna block. This particular block had recently been subdivided from Wilpena station.

After spending the next few days riding round the Upalinna block, Steven and Thomas Reynolds decided to apply to the Pastoral Board for a lease. The lease was granted. And so began the settlement of the Reynolds family in the Northern Flinders Ranges.

Reynolds Family takes up the Willow Springs Lease

In 1952, the Willow Springs block came up for lease. The Reynolds family applied and were successful in obtaining this pastoral section.

Initial Involvement of Future Members of the YFRWPA

In 1993, as part of the NP&W SA Bounceback Program, volunteer members of the SSAA Hunting and Conservation Association Inc. (SSAA H&C) undertook activities to remove feral goats from the Willow Springs landscape. Feral goats were considered to be the main herbivorous competitors, in the Caernarvon and Little Bunker Hills, to the threatened Yellow-footed Rock Wallabies.

Birth of the YFRWPA

Early participants from the SSAA H&C branch were people who held conservation very close to their hearts. As a result of the plight faced by the various colonies of Yellow-footed Rock Wallabies in the Caernarvon and Little Bunker Hills, in 1997 a group of these conservationists founded the Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby Preservation Association Inc. Its primary brief was to carry out projects to foster the re-establishment of the colonies in the Bunkers area.

YFRWPA Conservationists take on Custodial Management of the BCR

In 1999, the YFRWPA applied for a grant, under the Natural Heritage Trust. The aim was to purchase 142 sq. kms. of the Bunkers. Consideration over the application, by the Federal government, took some time. Then, in 2001, came the announcement that the YFRWPA's application had been successful. It must be noted that the grant amount, on its own, was insufficient to purchase the Bunkers. 100 YFRWPA members took up shares worth \$1000 each to make up the remaining funds required to purchase the Bunkers.

On 4th October 2001, at the site of the current Davy hut campground, then President Gill Hartwig proudly accepted the establishment plaque from Federal Minister for the Environment, Hon Robert Hill. The Bunkers Conservation Reserve was officially announced to the world. Our custodial management, for the next 99 years, had commenced.