



Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby Preservation Association Inc

History with a Future

PO Box 376, Campbelltown, South Australia 5074

NEWSLETTER October 2023 (Year 22 Vol 35)

Editorial

As members and friends of YFRWPA glance through the photographs included in this edition of our newsletter, one can only be impressed with a number of items happening on the Bunkers Conservation Reserve (BCR).

In general, the resurgence of vegetation growth across the reserve is quite remarkable. Recent years of excellent rainfall have had quite an impact. In addition, commendation must go out to those dedicated people who work tirelessly to not only report on the condition of our flora and fauna but improve the environment within the reserve.



Fine ground level recovery of plant life.

Those of us who ventured up to the reserve in the early years will recall how spartan conditions were for camping out. A trip now, to Davey Hut and the camp ground leaves one in absolute awe of the outstanding facilities in place. One of my daughters, Kate, who has travelled round the US once remarked to me that the facilities at Davey Hut and the camp ground far exceeds what is on offer at the Grand Canyon site!

Kym's Vice President report outlines the continued work that has been carried out with respect to the storage shed. His commendation and thanks to those members and friends who have put in the time and volunteer hours, at their own expense, is truly deserved.

Finally, with the onset of the warmer months ahead I wish all visitors and campers to the BCR a happy visit. Please be mindful of certain knowledge and skills required when camping out in a remote, bushland area during the summer period.

Shane Fantinel

Administration

Notice is given of our Annual General Meeting.

Venue

**Gaza Sports and Community Club
232 North East Road, Klemzig SA 5087**

Date

16 November 2023

Time

7.30pm

Please put this information into your diary. Your attendance assists with attaining a quorum.

Jim Keneally

Vice President's Report

Old Barytes Mine site update

I had an on-site meeting with representatives from DEW, Mines Dept, Sebilco and the Mine

site, rehabilitation Consultants on the 28/09/2023. This was a positive meeting with some minor redundant equipment removals highlighted. These will be done in the coming weeks.

Once this work is completed there will be one more final inspection before a possible, final hand-over of the mine site back to DEW. This will be the whole of the mine site. Whilst there are two entry tracks into the mine site on the BCR, there will still be a no-go zone in place. Further information will be put in place once the hand-over has taken place.

Maintenance and Construction

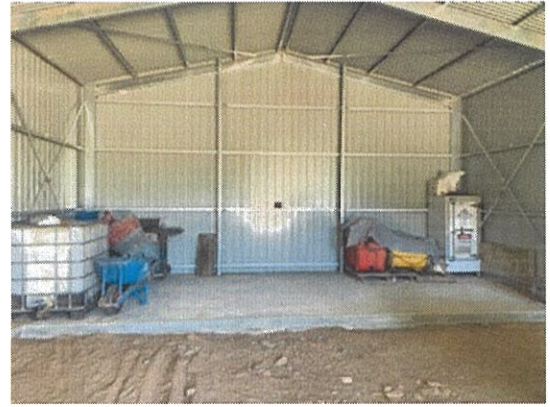
Once again a small group of volunteers gathered at the Bunkers (average age 68) to complete the concreting of the shed over three different weekends in the last couple of months. Thank you to Grant D, Randy R, Rob P, Dom G, Bob T, Fred S, and Jim K for helping complete this work at a considerable cost to themselves for fuel, that is, towing trailers (up to the BCR) loaded with equipment and materials to enable the work to be done.



Gathering up the fine rubble for the shed floor.

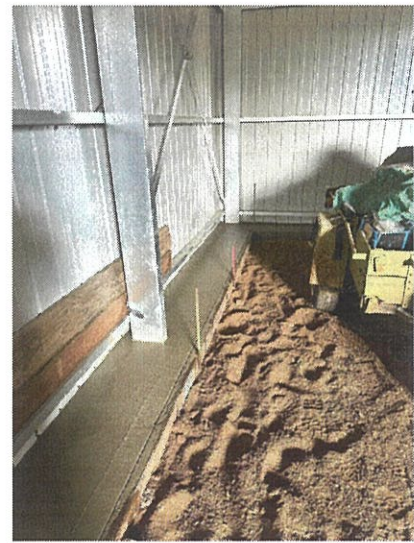


The shed - coming together after lots of hard work from volunteers.



Concrete block for storage cupboards.

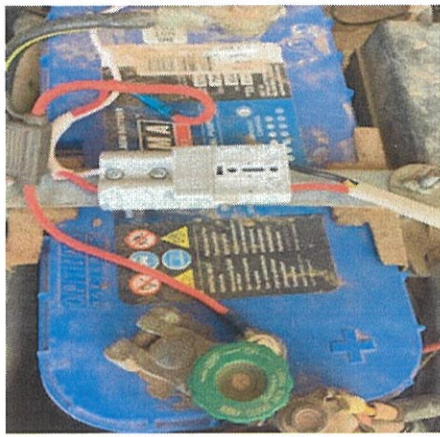
The final stage of work on the shed will be completed in the second week of October. This will entail back filling of the front section of the shed floor and earth works around the shed and campground.



Concreting inside the shed.

Lights inside and out the front of the shed were installed by myself. These lights run off of its own Solar Battery System. An Anderson Plug connection will provide power to charge the associations utility when it is stored in the shed.





The committee has decided to remove the old amenity buildings. These have already been decommissioned with water and power having been disconnected. The sewer connection (for the old amenity block) will be disconnected in the second week of October. If time permits, the two buildings will be demolished and removed off site. The area where the block was located will be rehabilitated.

Future work around the shed will involve outside storage for required materials so that this equipment will be out of site. Finally, a rain water tank will be installed at the rear of the shed to supplement our existing rain water supply.

Kym Groves

Conservation

Horehound control on the Bunkers Conservation Reserve

Under the Landscape South Australia Act 2019, horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) is a declared weed throughout South Australia.

In Australia, horehound grows into larger plants with higher seed production than in its native range. Plants can produce up to 10,000 seeds annually per square metre. Seeds can remain viable for up to 7 years. Sheep, rabbits, goats, kangaroos and emus spread the burrs, which also adhere to vehicles.

Photos courtesy of Peter and Judy Knapp



Picture 1: Mature horehound plant growing at the BCR.

Horehound grows on very poor soils and is often a pioneer species on disturbed or eroded areas where it can prevent native plants recolonising. Infestations often begin on road verges, sheep camps and rabbit warrens.

The first incursions noticed occurred along the Caernarvon Track between Tommy Gunnyah and Mount Caernarvon.



Picture 2: Horehound growing along the Tommy Gunnyah track in 2016

It then spread into waterways. Minitinni Creek was severely infested by 2018, with sensitive sites like the springs and petroglyphs surrounded by large plants. Alex McDonald, who was leading the Environmental Portfolio at the time, recommended that we prevent further spread along the Caernarvon Track and then consider tackling other major infestations. He was supported in his endeavours by several members and volunteers. These included Peter and Judy Knapp and Kaz Herbst, who have been staunch and ongoing contributors to the control program. Alex was fortunate in receiving grant funds from the Department of Environment and Water to purchase a weed spraying unit. Without this it would have been impossible to even

contemplate any useful control along the Caernarvon Track.



Picture 3: After repeated control efforts, same spot along the Tommy Gunnyah track in 2023. Horehound has been replaced by native plants.

Thanks also need to go to Steve Lieschke, who when no work utility was available, hired a utility at his own cost on several occasions to fit the weed spraying unit so work could continue without interruption.

Since 2016, a twice-yearly program has been underway. The initial aim is to control horehound within 5 metres of the Caernarvon Track to prevent vehicles carrying seed further around the Track. In 2019 Minitinni Creek was added to the control program to reduce the infestations there. This was to reduce the risk of horehound spreading along the waterway and prevent seed being carried by animals into Pristine Gorge.

Future plans include expanding the program to reduce infestations further south along the Caernarvon Track, clearing horehound from major creeks and washaways in the Minitinni catchment area and tackling a major infestation at Turley Lode.



Picture 4: Turley Lode area (photo Kaz)

Given mature plants can produce up to 10,000 seed per square metre and knowing seed can remain viable for 7 years, horehound weed control is a long-term project.

Those volunteers who regularly devote their time to weed spraying activities in April and September are seeing gains. It is through their efforts that we are now at a point where we can think about expanding the program to include Turley Lode. It is a joy to see areas along creeks and Tracks blooming with in native vegetation instead of horehound covered in seed heads. Anyone interested in participating in the weed spraying activities can contact Jeanine Baker (jeaninebake323@gmail.com).

Jeanine Baker

BCR Recovery 2023

While carrying out baiting, weed control and fence checking, spectacular signs of ongoing recovery, aided by rainfall figures of some **82mm** in 2020, **401mm** in 2021, **300mm** in 2022, and **90+mm** (so far) in 2023 calendar years - have been noted.

I have attached photos of the northern re-vegetation Area. Members and friends of the BCR will note there are two such re-vegetation enclosures. As this particular enclosure is close to, or part of, the Fifteen Mile stockyards area, it was the more degraded. Now, however, it shows the best cover of a variety of grasses cover. Please note the re-appearance of the Sturt Desert Pea. I do not have the "before" and "after" photos; these are probably available from the Photo point system.



I have also attached a photo of the Re-vegetation Area sheep/rabbit/kangaroo herbivore exclusion fence to show its effectiveness. This illustrates the importance of controlling the grazing pressure over the whole of the BCR, which may result in some financial impost on the YFRWPA if "good neighbour" policy is adopted to our stock carrying neighbours.



Kaz Herbst OAM

Feral animals and other unwanted species on the BCR

As custodians of a conservation reserve, we have a duty to manage the health and well-being of our native fauna and flora.

This duty is carried out, throughout each year, in a number of ways:

- Regular ground baiting by members and friends
- Regular aerial baiting by DEW and PIRSA
- Regular ground culling and spotlighting by members
- Regular aerial culling (once a year) by Bounceback
- Regular transects by members and friends
- Regular vegetation browse survey (undertaken in April)
- Regular maintenance of two, re-vegetation enclosures

Readers will notice that the key word in all of the above is 'regular'. If YFRWPA can lay claim to any badge of honour then it surely must be the dedication and hard work that members and friends put in to fulfil our commitment to the BCR.

In 2015, you might recall an initiative by DEW in Wilpena Pound. After acquiring approximately 40 quolls (*Dasyurus geoffroii*) from WA, these were released into the Pound area.



Dasyurus geoffroii, in Wilpena Pound

Active monitoring of the original, quoll population indicates that numbers have flourished. Indeed, a quolls have been sighted as far north-east as Wertaloonia Station and as far west as the Gawler Ranges. I have it on good authority that quolls may have reached the north-western corner of the BCR. Jeanine and her conservation group have motion activated cameras set up on the BCR. Hopefully, in the not too distant future, we can report on their existence on our reserve.

Livestock incursion, from neighbouring pastoral properties, and the condition of our boundary fences have long been an issue for YFRWPA since our inception.

Whilst members and friends, who drive round Caernarvon Track, bear witness to the presence of livestock on the BCR and small breaches in existing fences, it must be remembered that all properties that lay within a pastoral setting have leakages both into and out of paddocks from time to time. It is true, YFRWPA is not a commercial operator of a livestock business. And a great deal of work has taken place, indeed is still taking place, on keeping unwanted livestock off the BCR. In recent times, two neighbouring pastoral properties have gone to the expense of hiring helicopters and musters to remove sheep off the BCR. This has occurred on a number of occasions.

With regards to boundary fences, two items can be noted. First, an original understanding with our southern neighbour. This means that they look after maintenance of a portion of the southern and south-western, corner boundary fence. For its part, YFRWPA looks after a section from a point approximately 1km west from the boundary gate, into Moxom's Hut, to a corner point on the boundary fence with Martin's Well Station; this particular point is east from Pinnacle bore. Second, our northern neighbour is currently in the process of completely renewing the boundary fence.

Members and friends should feel assured that the issue of livestock and fencing is being constantly addressed. Like everyone, I know livestock eat the vegetation that is the domain of our native fauna. And yes, there is the potential of spreading unwanted organisms. A healthy relationship with our pastoral neighbours goes a long way to working the problem.

Shane Fantinel

Work Health and Safety

Since the May 2023 Newsletter, no Incident Reports were received. Only one Hazard Report came in. This dealt with an electrical power point at Davey Hut. Repairs on the unit were carried out quickly. Many thanks to our maintenance officer, Kym Groves, for his conscientious and professional work. With October upon us, we are reminded of the warm, summer months that lie ahead. Members and friends of the YFRWPA plus paying visitors are welcome to visit the BCR, however, all people on site need to be mindful of the prevalence of hot, dry weather. Simple actions can go a long way to keep you healthy and content during your visit:

- drink plenty of cool water;
- rest up in the shade (if you are active during day light hours);
- wear a broad-brimmed hat;
- cover up exposed skin but, if you are fond of wearing shorts and tee shirts then slip-slop-slap with the sunscreen.

In addition, with the dry conditions comes the possibility of bushfire. Emergency Services

have taken up the Australia-wide Fire Danger Rating system.

FIRE DANGER RATING	WHAT SHOULD I DO
CATASTROPHIC (Total Fire Ban)	FOR YOUR SURVIVAL LEAVE BUSHFIRE RISK AREAS
EXTREME (Total Fire Ban)	TAKE ACTION NOW TO PROTECT LIFE AND PROPERTY
HIGH	BE READY TO ACT
MODERATE	PLAN AND PREPARE

A copy of this is on the noticeboard at Davey Hut. Further, there are two documents that visitors should familiarise themselves with. One is entitled, 'Emergency Response Plan – Bunkers Conservation Reserve (adopted August 2022)'. The other is, 'Bushfire Readiness at Davey Hut and Camp Ground' (adopted August 2023). Both documents are on our web site; hard copies are available at Davey Hut.

In our May 2023 newsletter, mention was made of the 1000litre firefighting pump and trailer. Prior to the Fire Danger Season, Fire Water signs will be in place. These will direct people to fire water points.

FIRE WATER

Shane Fantinel