



Desert Sky News



"It's All About The Experience – Yours and Ours "

Volume 14 Issue 2

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June 2012

Welcome to our June edition newsletter, and we are quickly approaching the half way mark of 2012 -(I believe the precise midpoint is 1stJuly at 12am!).

There has been some significant rainfall over many parts of the country of late and some places have received perhaps too much rain, but pastoralists in the Outback regions cannot hide the smiles as many of the station owners recorded their annual average rainfall over a month ago!

The result is more growth and feed for cattle and water in almost every dam, waterhole, and creek - and some more wildflowers!

Our Birdsville/Innaminka trip on July 14th is fully booked, however we do have 2 seats available on the Birdsville/Windorah departure on August 3rd. This is an interesting alternative, taking in a large section of south west Queensland.

Also, there is interest in our 4WD trip to Mount Samuel if the departure date is changed to 22nd October. (I have amended the itinerary details accordingly).

This trip offers some of the best scenery in the Flinders Ranges and is based on Alpana Station. A loop track takes us to Mount Samuel and into Mt Buggery Gorge!
(details from our last newsletter are included below).

If you are interested in either of these trips or would like further information, drop me a line!

On The blower!

An historic blower used for opal mining in Coober Pedy in South Australia has been donated to the National Road Transport Hall of Fame in Alice Springs.



The blower, valued at more than \$5500, was donated by the **Old Timers Mine** in Coober Pedy.

It is mounted on the back of a Bedford truck, and works by sucking out mining debris from mine shafts underground and bringing it to the surface where it is blown out of the machine. The resulting piles of rock and dust create the distinctive mullock heaps surrounding Coober Pedy that give the area its lunar like landscape.

This is an example of collaborative tourism, as the Old Timers Mine and Road Transport Hall of Fame will be promoting each other through the display that will be set up around the blower. There is also a National Road Transport Hall of Fame display at the Old Timers Mine.

On a Wing and a Prayer!

Getting a 747 jumbo jet airborne doesn't usually involve a crane, straps and a chain but a recent sinking has had airline staff and locals in **Longreach**, Queensland scrambling to save an iconic exhibition



The retired jumbo jet (**VH-EBQ**) is part of the Qantas Founders Museum and has been a key walk through attraction for visitors

But the 150 tonne aircraft had recently begun sinking into the soft dirt below making it unstable for visitors to walk through.

Chairman of the Museum, Rodney Seccombe, says it's been costly to not have the star attraction open to the public.

"It's quite significant and it's been out of action most of this season. It sounds a simple problem and we've got a simple solution to it but it took us a long time to get to that solution.

It's one of our big income earners... it's also a big disappointment to people who come here and can't go through it because of safety issues.

As soon as the concrete is set we can put it down and we can go back into tours," he said. (ABC Western Queensland)

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Lake Eyre - Kati Thanda

Native Title has been granted to the Arabunna People over 69,000 square kilometers of land between the outback towns of Oodnadatta, Coober Pedy and Marree, including Anna Creek station, which covers 24,000 square kilometres of scrub country.



It includes Lake Eyre - a site said to be sacred in local Aboriginal culture

The Arabunna People will be allowed unconditional access to the land for hunting, camping and fishing, or for traditional ceremonies.

A former mission at Finnis Springs will be restored as a tourism site however the deal is not all one way.

Aboriginal people will drop their claim to the land on which the outback town of Marree is built.

The Elders have previously said they want to end boating

on Lake Eyre. That's an unpopular stance with people like Bob Backway, the commodore of the Lake Eyre Yacht Club.

Bob said the Club had a common law right to sail on Lake Eyre, and he condemned the announcement as "a great travesty of the native title system". Already fined by South Australia's Environment Department for sailing without a permit, he has refused to pay the fine. "I told them I was prepared to go to jail over it," he said.

The Arabunna People say Lake Eyre is "like Uluru" to their people who believe that their ancestral spirit, Warrina, lives in the lake and is disturbed by boats.

A spokeswoman for the South Australian Attorney-General, John Rau, said: "Native title has been a difficult and complex issue for both the state and the claimant groups and I am pleased that, in this instance, such complexities have now been worked through in a spirit of co-operation and agreement."

Following the granting of Native Title, Arabunna chairman Aaron Stuart said he will begin a process to change the lake's name back to its traditional indigenous name, Kati Thanda. "For the Arabana people, it's part of a healing process which takes time, but it gives them more identity.

The South Australian Government says there is a range of options including dual-naming rights, but the decision lies with the Geographical Names Board.

Interestingly there is another Arabunna name for the Lake - "**Bundoo Bunta**" and a Sunshine Book titled "Discovering Australia - Dreamtime and Beyond" has a lovely story about Bundoo Bunta.

Mount Samuel 4WD Adventure - Alpana Station

We originally planned this 4WD trip on the Oratunga Track on Angorichina Station.

Di Fargher, who with her husband Ian own Angorichina Station advised the track to Mount Lucius was damaged recently by weather and they have now decided to close it permanently.

An alternative is the Mount Samuel Track which is on David and Sally Henery's property -Alpana Station.



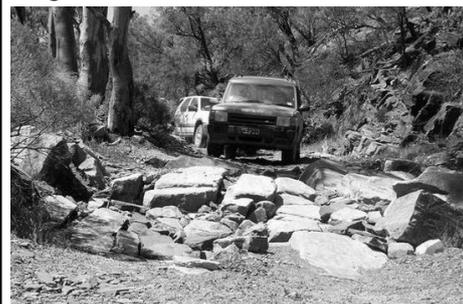
This Track offers some stunning views of the Flinders Ranges - culminating in a panoramic view of Lake Torrens, the Heysen and ABC Ranges and Patawarta Hill from the summit of a steep foothill.

The journey begins by travelling through sheep grazing country before the challenge of driving along mountain ridges where you feel you could just about touch the two magnificent Mount Samuel. (there is a story as to why there are two "Mount Samuels"!)

The steep descent to the creek in Mount Buggery Valley will take your breath away!

Once in the awe-inspiring valley we drive along Mount Buggery Creek - a challenge matched only by the views of the cliffs and the mountain tops of the ranges above. The scenery from the Green Well Valley as we traverse the ABC Range and the Heysen Range is absolutely breathtaking.

The movement of the sun across the sky accentuates the ever changing colours of the rocks in the valley and in the ranges.....



The advertised departure for this trip is 25th August, however other dates may be available.

Let me know if you are interested and any preferred dates!

Head of Bight

I have a personalised trip departing late September to Eyre Peninsula and Head of Bight.

The 8 day itinerary will travel to Tumbly Bay and Port Lincoln (via Sea SA ferry from Wallaroo), then drive up the coast to attractions including Murphy's Haystacks, the sea lions at Point Labatt, and on to Streaky Bay, Ceduna and Yalata to Head of Bight and the Bunda Cliffs.



We have an overnight stop at Nullarbor before returning along the Eyre Highway to Wudinna and the Gawler Ranges then to Adelaide via the Flinders Ranges and Clare Valley.

This trip takes in many of the attractions of the west coast, plus some great scenery and I will look to making it a regular itinerary. If you have an interest let me know!



Bunda Cliffs stretch for 200 kilometres along the Great Australian Bight between the Head of the Bight and the border with Western Australia.

They bare the southern edge of the limestone slab forming the Nullarbor Plain which extends far inland. The light coloured base is Wilson Bluff Limestone, this is white, chalky material formed as part of an ancient seabed when Australia began to separate from Antarctica 65 million years ago. This Wilson Limestone is up to 300 metres thick but only the upper portion is visible in Bunda Cliffs. The cliffs are capped by a hardened layer of windblown sand laid down between 1.6 million and 100,000 years ago.

Upcoming Itineraries 2012 !!



Birdsville & Innamincka
(9 days)
\$3300 pp

Saturday July 14

Clare Valley, Leigh Creek, Marree, Mungerannie, Birdsville, Innamincka, Cameron Corner, Sturt National Park, Tibooburra, Broken Hill, Old Pastoral Route to Burra, Adelaide



Birdsville & Windorah
(7 days)
\$3300 pp

Friday August 3

Clare Valley, Leigh Creek, Marree, Mungerannie, Birdsville, Betoota, Windorah, Quilpie, Toompine, Thargomindah, Cunnamulla, Bourke, Cobar, Broken Hill, Old Pastoral Route to Burra, Adelaide.



Lake Eyre
(3 days)
\$995 pp
Includes Plane flight

Wednesday June 26

Clare Valley, Leigh Creek, Marree, One and a half hour plane flight over Lake Eyre, Farina Ruins, Ochre Cliffs, Hawker, Orroroo, Terowie, Burra.



Tumbly Bay & Eyre Peninsula
(5 days)
\$1525 pp

Saturday October 13

Port Germein, Arno Bay, Port Neill, Trinity Haven Scenic Drive, Poonindie, Port Lincoln, Sleaford Bay, Tod Reservoir, Cummins, Mt Hope, Point Drummond, Greenly Beach, Dutton Bay, Coffin Bay National Park to Golden Island and Price Island.

We explore Whalers Way and visit the Koppio Museum. Also....enjoy a Clydesdale Horse and trolley ride!

Return is via Kimba, Iron Knob, Port Augusta and Horrocks' Pass to the Flinders Ranges, Orroroo and Burra.



Mount Samuel
4wd Alpana
StationTrack !!
(4 days)
\$1525 pp

Monday October 22

Splendid views which include Mt Samuel Mt Samuel Proper, Lake Torrens, Nilpena Sandhills, Mt Buggery, Mt Deception and Patawarta Hill!

Picnic lunch Green well Creek before continuing to Valley Bore where it is common to see kangaroos, emus, feral goats.

The Parachilna Gorge Road takes us past Angorichina Station and back to Blinman.



Flinders Ranges & Skytrek
(4 days)
\$1475 pp

Saturday September 1

Rawnsley Park, Wilpena Pound, Willow Springs Station, "Skytrek", Bunyeroo Valley, Brachina Gorge, Blinman, Parachilna Gorge, Moralana Scenic Drive, Melrose, The Bridle Track, Port Germein, Laura, Orroroo, Burra, Eudunda, Kapunda.



Flinders Ranges & Arkaroola
(5 days)
\$2025 pp

Sunday September 9
Tuesday September 18

Rawnsley Park, Wilpena Pound, Bunyeroo Valley, Brachina Gorge, Blinman, Arkaroola, Ridgetop Tour, Bolla Bollana, Arkaroola Waterhole, Gammon Ranges, Moralana Scenic Drive



The Gawler Ranges
(5 days)
\$1575 pp

Saturday October 6

Port Wakefield, Port Germein, Port Augusta, Iron Knob, Corunna, Siam, Nonning, Mt Ive, Lake Gairdner, Yardea, Hiltaba, Paney Station, The Organ Pipes, Pildappa Rock, Tcharkuldu Hill, Minnipa, Wudinna, Kimba, Wilmington, Melrose, Gladstone, The Clare Valley.

The Birdsville Track



FOR some time now there has been talk about upgrading or even

sealing sections of the Birdsville Track.

On one hand, the 4wd enthusiasts see the Track as a "challenge" into the remote outback. But for the Station properties it is a concern during wet weather when they cannot access the Adelaide markets due to road closure, and the Cooper Creek Ferry has limitations regarding stock transfers.

Sealing sections of the Track may deter some 4WD travellers, however it could also open up the experience to the "Grey Nomads" with caravans, who would not otherwise venture off a sealed road.

Diamantina Council representatives met with South Australian representatives in Birdsville on April 4, 2012 to discuss the importance of the Birdsville Track. Opportunities of collaboration were discussed and the Council has been requested to supply details of its road maintenance costs in order to progress discussions.

Council also advised that it is preparing a submission to the National Land Freight Strategy Discussion Paper released by the Australian Government February, 2011. The submission will focus on extension of the indicative land freight network to incorporate a route from Adelaide north along the Birdsville Track to Boulia, east to Winton and north east across to Hughenden and then onto Townsville to link in with the eastern seaboard highway network.

The submission will focus on the economic benefits of decreased route distance, market access, congestion and safety and will incorporate letters of support for recognition of this proposed inland route. Once complete, a copy of the Submission will be provided to South Australia in order that both may elevate the status of the link to the Australian Government.

Wilpena Pound Resort

THE iconic Wilpena Pound Resort in South Australia's Flinders Ranges has been bought by the area's traditional owners.



The Adnyamathanha Traditional Lands Association and Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) have formed a joint venture to buy the 60-room resort which is the only accommodation in the Flinders Ranges National Park.

Adnyamathanha chairman Vince Coulthard said the purchase would give his people the opportunity to share their culture and give visitors a chance to learn about the spirituality of the area.

"I can remember how excited the elders were when I came to work at national park at Wilpena as head ranger and many of them never thought the day would come when we would have co-management of the park and own the resort," Mr Coulthard said in a statement.

This is an historic day for the Adnyamathanha people and it was quite an emotional experience to sign the papers for this purchase to go ahead"

The price paid by the joint venture was not disclosed.

The Wilpena Pound is one of South Australia's top tourist destinations, "attracting 160,000 visitors each year



WILPENAPOUND
RESORT

Latest News !



◆ Surface coverage of Lake Eyre North is just over 20% and minor floodwaters are now over half way

down the Warburton Groove which will increase surface coverage slowly, but not to the levels of the past 3 years. Lake Eyre South has also dropped to 40%. There is also some minor water further up in the Cooper Creek but it is too early to determine if this may reach Lake Eyre. If it dies, it will not impact Lake Eyre significantly. The best way to see water in Lake Eyre is still from the air.

◆ Coongie Lakes remains closed and it is possible there will be no access for 2012. This will be the third consecutive year the Lakes have not been accessible

◆ The 9th Australian 4WD Gathering 2012 will be held at Mt Ive Station in the Gawler Ranges from September 28 to October 1. Over 300 people are expected to attend the long weekend event!

◆ Tastes Of The Outback" Event which has run for the past 10 years has found dwindling support and will not continue. Funds previously spent in staging this event will be redirected to another appropriate event in the Region.

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