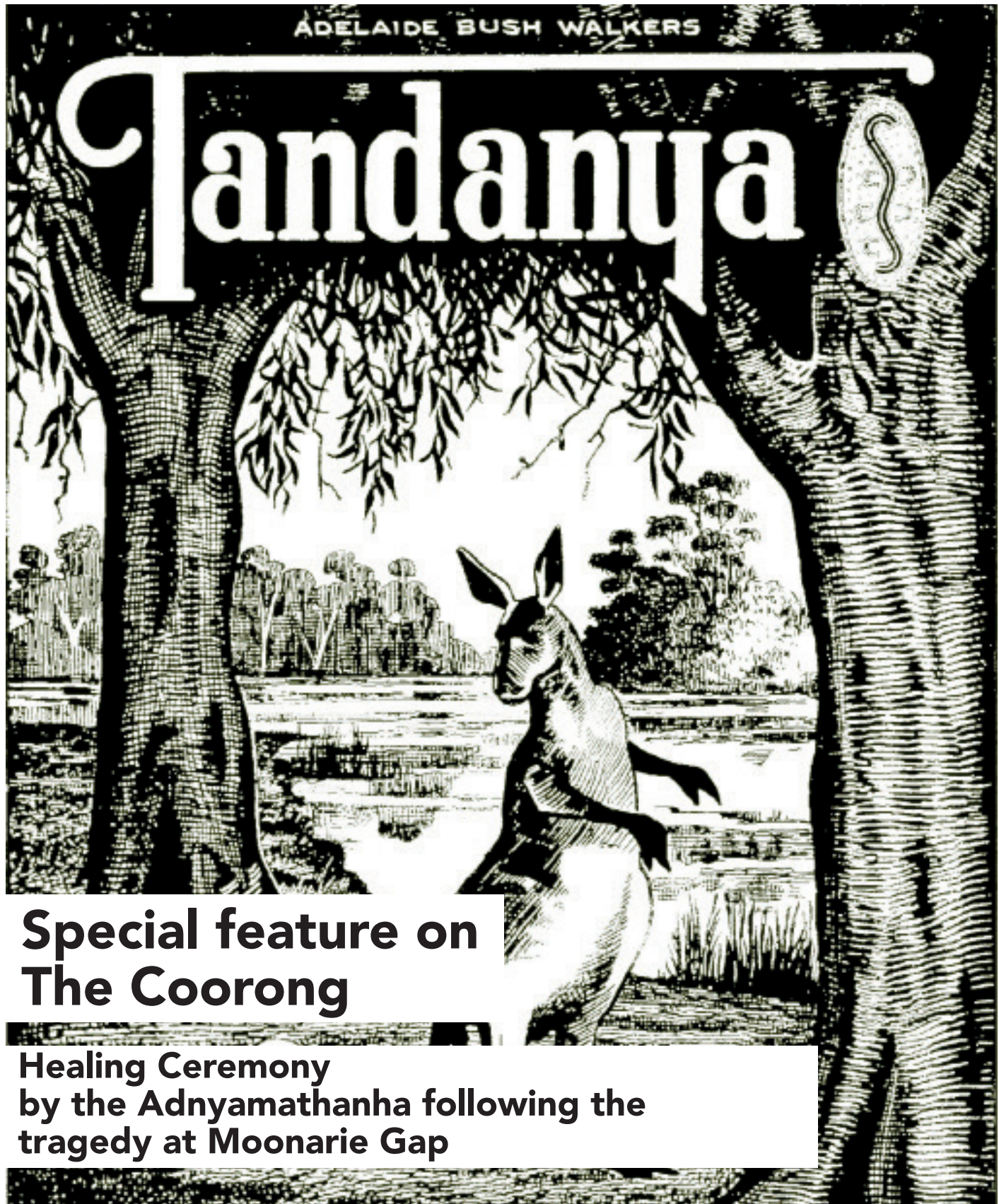


tandanya

Adelaide Bushwalkers Magazine

Volume 49 Number 4 Summer 2019



Special feature on The Coorong

**Healing Ceremony
by the Adnyamathanha following the
tragedy at Moonarie Gap**

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*"Common sense and a sense of humor are the same thing, moving at different speeds.
A sense of humor is just common sense, dancing."
— Clive James*

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The incredibly tough but ultimately vulnerable South Coorong Lagoon

— Bruce Marquis



The Coorong recovered from the exceptionally high salinities of the latter part of the Millennium Drought, and much of the biota recovered, but not the plants because the water levels in spring are still an issue. However, they are now being threatened by the opposite – a push to freshen the southern Coorong that favours the algae – and all done so that the state can claim an SDLAM* (a volume of water added into the southern Coorong) than can be taken off the volume that has to be returned via the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

We all, I am sure, love the Coorong and many of us have enjoyed spending time canoeing and fishing there or perhaps just camping and walking along the shores admiring the semi-wilderness, quality of the landscape and the abundant birdlife. We have all also heard about the difficulties the region has been facing for many years with fresh water inflows from the Murray. State and Federal Governments are working hard to ameliorate the problem, but the author of our main article on the Coorong, David Paton, who has studied the region for many years, considers the actions to improve the quality of the lower Coorong are misguided and are in fact causing more harm.

The Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert wetland is one of Australia's most important wetland areas. Australia designated the site, covering approximately 140,500 ha in South Australia, as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 1985.

Because the Coorong is not an open wetland but has a 'dead end' at the southern margin, the Coorong gets gradually saltier as it runs more than 100 kilometres from the North Lagoon down to the South Lagoon, and as that happens the biodiversity changes resulting in just three key species underpinning the ecology. However, this bare-bones foundation is capable of supporting a huge number of birds.

The Magnificent Three

There is one fish that can tolerate the elevated salinity of the lower lagoon, the Smallmouth Hardyhead. *Atherinosoma microstoma*. This is a small silvery-coloured fish that is common in shallow coastal habitats of southern Australian waters and is commonly called white bait. Smallmouth hardyhead are an important food source for piscivorous birds in the Coorong. (Birds that eat fish (pisces = fish, vorous = eating)). They were once widespread and very abundant in the South Lagoon in the mid 1980s.

There is one prominent invertebrate or insect, a chironomid (a midge) *Tanytarsus barbitarsis*. In the South Lagoon, larvae of *Tanytarsus barbitarsis* are an important component of the mudflat macroinvertebrate community and an important food source for waders and fish. Chironomid larvae live on the surface of submerged sediments and graze on surface algae. Since the 1980s *T.barbitarsis* has been the dominant littoral and benthic macro-invertebrate in the South Lagoon and generally occurred throughout the lagoon.

However, salinities much greater than 120 g/L that were experienced in South Lagoon during the Millennium drought, led to a corresponding decline of *T.barbitarsis* in this lagoon. Like hardyhead fish *T.barbitarsis* was present in the North Lagoon during this malevolent period. As soon as the salinities reset to under 120 g/L, chironomids recolonised the southern Coorong.

There is finally one key aquatic plant, *Ruppia tuberosa*. This is essentially an annual plant that exploits the ephemeral mudflats around the shores of the southern Coorong. These ephemeral areas were typically covered with water from late autumn through spring and into summer before flows to the Murray Mouth and (in turn the Coorong) were reduced because of upstream extraction of water for human use. Now, because of reduced flows, these ephemeral mudflats are often dry from late spring through autumn with dire consequences for these plants. For this annual plant to successfully produce seeds and turions it needs to be covered by water though spring. This rarely happens now.

The seeds and turions of *Ruppia tuberosa* are a food resource for small and large-bodied waterbirds in the South Lagoon and the plants are also important in supporting other food resources for the birds, like hardyheads and chironomids. With these food resources now largely absent from the South Lagoon there have been dramatic declines in the abundance of birds such as the Curlew Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Red-capped Plover and Red-necked Avocet.

Bird Numbers in Decline

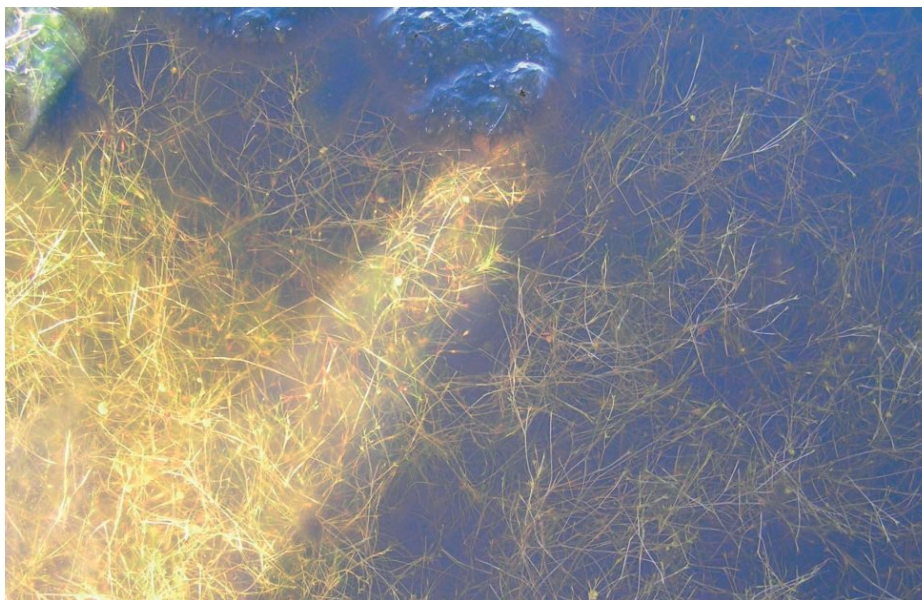
Substantially fewer waterbirds were using the Coorong and Lower Lakes in January-February 2017, for example, compared to the previous year. In January 2017, 76,207 waterbirds (46 species) were counted in the Coorong, compared with 185,000 waterbirds (57 species) in the previous January. Similarly, the numbers of waterbirds using the Lower Lakes in 2017 had dropped to a little over 61,000 birds (44 species), about 70% of the numbers counted in the previous year.

In addition, thirteen species of shorebirds were present in numbers below their recent long-term (2000-2015) median numbers, including various stilts, sandpipers, and plovers. Three of these species, the Banded Stilt, Red-necked Stint and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were present in numbers that were the lowest on record, and a further three species (Black-winged Stilt, Curlew Sandpiper and Red-capped Plover) were at their second lowest abundances reported over the past 18 years. For Banded Stilt and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, the populations in the Coorong in 2017 were equivalent to just 1% of their long-term medians, while Red-necked Stilts were at 22% of their long-term average.

With the inflows from the SE Flows Restoration Project the Lower Coorong is unlikely to deteriorate to the status of a briny wasteland. However, as David Paton points out in the following article just restoring desired quantities of water is not enough, the water must be of a suitable quality also. This is vital if we are to meet our obligations to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. 📌

https://data.environment.sa.gov.au/Content/Publications/CLLMM_601_Coorong%20Pumping%20Ecological%20Justification_2010.pdf

*Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment mechanism



Top: *Ruppia Tuberosa*
<http://www.finterest.com.au/blog/environmental-water-fish-plants-birds-2017-2018/>

Bottom: Canoeing on the Coorong
<https://www.adelaidebushwalkers.org/blog/adelaide-canoe-club/>

Construction update: South East Flows Restoration Project

Press Release — 8 December 2017

Minister Hunter said the project includes 13 kilometres of new drainage channel, upgrading 81 kilometres of existing channel, and installation of new regulators, road crossings, and fishways.

Construction continues to progress on the \$60 million South East Flows Restoration Project (SEFRP) to reduce salinity in the Coorong, improve water flows to upper South East wetlands and reduce drainage outfall at Kingston.

Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Anne Ruston and SA Minister for Water and the River Murray, Ian Hunter said that South Australia's Leed Engineering and Construction were making great progress on the 94 kilometre flow path that will connect flows from the Blackford Drain near Kingston to the Coorong South Lagoon at Salt Creek.

"The Australian Government is contributing up to \$123.3 million for 23 management actions to support the restoration and ongoing resilience of the internationally important Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth site," Minister Ruston said.

"The Australian Government is providing up to \$54 million of that funding for the South East Flows Restoration Project to assist in management of salinity levels in the Coorong lagoons."

"The Australian Government is proud to be supporting this project which will strengthen the resilience of the Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Wetland Ramsar site."

"I am very pleased to see construction progressing and the economic benefits this project is bringing to the region with over 55 new jobs created onsite."

Minister Hunter said the project includes 13 kilometres of new drainage channel, upgrading 81 kilometres of existing channel, and installation of new regulators, road crossings, and fishways.

"The project has been 10 years in the planning and will deliver a median of 26.5 gigalitres per year of additional water to the Coorong South Lagoon to assist in managing salinity and support the environment during periods of low flows," Minister Hunter said.

"The project will divert water to wetlands along the entire alignment including the Murrabinna Flat and Taratap Wetlands, and most significantly Tilley Swamp.

"Tilley Swamp will be restored to form a wetland complex covering 6100 hectares with a volume of 42 gigalitres.


"The large storage capacity will allow flexibility to store water in Tilley Swamp when flows are high and deliver it to the Coorong South Lagoon during low flows."

"Filling these wetlands will provide great ecological benefits to the region. As water is re-introduced, wetland vegetation will again flourish and the previous ecosystem of birds, fish, and aquatic vegetation will be restored."

"The SA Government continues to consult with landholders, local indigenous groups and the local community throughout the project."

Member for Barker, Tony Pasin MP, who represented Minister Ruston at the Blackford construction site said he was pleased with the final alignment with the drainage channel.

"I am pleased that the views of the community regarding the alignment of the drainage channel to enable storage of water in the Tilley Swamp water course have been facilitated in this project", Mr Pasin said.

The project is funded by the Australian and the South Australian governments and is being delivered by the SA Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources. Construction is being managed by the SA Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure. Works started in March 2017 and were expected to be completed by mid-2018. 

— Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources

— Tony Pasin MP Member for Barker

— Ian Hunter MLC Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Water and the River Murray and Climate Change

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Problems With New Fresh Water Inflows Into the Lower Coorong

— David Paton

This article was originally a submission to the Murray Darling Basin Authority who sought feedback on the proposed Sustainable Diversion Limit (SDL) Adjustment Mechanism: Draft Determination Report (MDBA, 2017a), specifically relating to the South East Flows Restoration Project (SEFRP).

The SEFRP, which aims to release water from the South East of South Australia in to the Coorong South Lagoon (CSL), should not be part of any SDL Adjustment for the Murray-Darling Basin Plan (MDBP). There are multiple reasons for this:

1 Prior to any drainage works, freshwater entered the Coorong rarely at Salt Creek, with intermittent flows depending on greater than average rainfall, possibly for two or more consecutive years (Jensen et al. 1984). George French Angas in the 1840s described the water as salty and hence the name Salt Creek was borne (Jensen et al. 1984).

2 The Coorong is a Wetland of International Importance and Australia is obliged to maintain its Ecological Character under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999, where the international obligations under the Ramsar Convention and international migratory bird agreements (CAMBA, JAMBA and ROKAMBA) are listed. Releases of freshwater at Salt Creek are already damaging the unique ecological character of the southern Coorong (as discussed below), which is contrary to these international and national obligations.

3 As stated in the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism: Draft Determination Report, “Projects cannot have unmitigated third party risks, including salinity and water quality impacts.” and “SDL supply projects will either enhance or are not likely to have a significant impact on the hydrological regime and therefore the ecological character of Ramsar wetlands.” (MDBA, 2017a). In 2016, the South Australian government undertook a detailed assessment of the potential impacts to

identified matters of National Environmental Significance of the release of up to 26.5 GL per year (on average) of additional water to the CSL (DEWNR, 2016). The South Australian government concluded that the SEFRP was unlikely to result in any significant adverse impacts, including to the ecological character of the Ramsar site (DEWNR, 2016). However, there is already significant ecological damage to the southern Coorong following recent releases of freshwater at Salt Creek and further releases risk even greater damage (as detailed below).

4 The upper south east drainage scheme has released an average 12.5 GL per year at Salt Creek for the last 17 years, with this annual volume exceeding 40 GL/yr only once in 2013 (A. Rumbelow (DEWNR) pers. comm). This large release in 2013 coincides with a substantial change in the ecological character of the southern Coorong (as discussed below). This alone should have triggered the cessation of further releases under the Precautionary Principle (a stated key element of the EPBC Act 1999), as noted in federal ministerial approvals for releases into the Coorong.



‘The South East Flows Restoration Project (SEFRP) is a \$60m investment made by the South Australian Government and the Australian Government to assist salinity management in the Coorong South Lagoon, enhance flows to wetlands in the Upper South East and reduce drainage outflow at Kingston South East. The SEFRP involves constructing a new flowpath to connect existing elements of the South East Drainage Network providing capacity to deliver a median volume of up to 26.5 gigalitres (GL) per year directly into the Coorong South Lagoon, with annual volumes between 5-45.3GL per year (1GL = 1 billion litres). It will have capacity to

deliver water to local wetlands en route of the flow path, where landholder approval is granted. The project area extends 93.4 kilometers from the existing Blackford Drain to the Salt Creek outlet into the Coorong South Lagoon...’

<https://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/southeast/projects/se-flows>



SE Flows Restoration Project
<http://www.leed.net.au>

Filamentous green algae near Parnka Point in the southern Coorong (34km North of Salt Creek) in December 2016.

5 Influxes of nutrients was flagged as a key factor that could alter the ecological character of the Coorong during the 1990s, when the upper south east drainage scheme was being considered. While filamentous green algae was rarely detected in the southern Coorong prior to the last decade, over the last decade, filamentous green algae have been slowly increasing in presence, and has been flagged as an issue of growing concern in numerous reports (Paton and Bailey 2013, Paton et al. 2015a,b, 2016a,b,c, 2017a,b,c), presented to both State and Federal Government agencies responsible for the management of the Coorong. Following the large releases of water via Salt Creek in 2013, the ecological character of the southern Coorong changed dramatically for the first time, with extensive outbreaks of filamentous green algae (*Ulva* spp) throughout the southern Coorong. Filamentous green algae is a sign of eutrophication – a clear indication that nutrient levels are too high.



6 The widespread presence of filamentous green algae jeopardises the recovery of *Ruppia tuberosa*, a key aquatic angiosperm (flowering plant) in the southern Coorong (e.g., Paton et al., 2017a).

7 Filamentous green algae also disrupts migratory shorebirds as it prevents access to mudflats covered in shallow water because these are now covered with algae (Paton et al., 2017b) and other waterbirds, such as Fairy Terns and waterfowl, because it covers the water surface and so disrupts their foraging too.

8 Despite concerns of the detrimental impacts of filamentous green algae on the ecology of the southern Coorong being flagged annually in reports since 2013 (Paton and Bailey 2013, Paton et al. 2015a,b, 2016a,b,c, 2017a,b,c) presented to both State and Federal Government agencies responsible for the management of the Coorong, water continues to be released at Salt Creek, with this water carrying nutrients sufficient to support filamentous green algae.

9 The aim of the proposed SEFR SDL adjustment project is to improve salinity

in the CSL by reducing the frequency of periods where salinity exceeds 100 grams per litre (g/L) (MDBA 2017b). However, the proposed operating rules for releases of water into the CSL are that if salinities exceed 60 g/L in the previous year, water will be released (MDBA 2017b). Lower salinities, even those of around 60 g/L, will favour filamentous green algae, based on field observations. Therefore, water should not be released into the southern Coorong except to prevent extreme salinities that affect salinity-sensitive biota, namely those exceeding 120 g/L. The salinity of the southern Coorong varies seasonally, being lower in late winter and early spring and higher in late summer and early autumn. Based on performances of *Ruppia tuberosa* in winter, salinities in the range of 60-80 g/L are ideal but, as spring progresses, salinities may need to exceed at least 80 g/L to reduce the growth of filamentous green algae (Paton et al., 2017a,b). By late summer, salinities of up to 120 g/L will not affect *Ruppia tuberosa*, nor chironomids and hardyhead fish (at least for a short while). So, as far as the environmental outcome of the Coorong is concerned, the SEFRP provides a safety net in that if the salinities become too high, there is the opportunity to release water from the SEFRP,

but only provided the nutrients have been stripped from the water before release.

10 The only chance of preventing filamentous green algal outbreaks, which damage the ecological character of the Coorong, is to keep salinities well above 60 g/L and probably on or above 80 g/L in spring and into summer (Paton et al., 2017a,b) – that the governments have decided to opt for 60 g/L suggests the intention has always been to release substantial volumes into CSL and to include this in the SDL adjustment calculations, without due consideration of the southern Coorong and its listing as a Wetland of International Importance.

11 As stated in the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism: Draft Determination Report, "Supply projects must deliver equivalent or better environmental outcomes compared to those achieved under current Basin Plan settings..." (MDBA, 2017a). However, there is no ecological equivalence for the southern Coorong by delivery of water through the SEFRP. One of the important contributions of flows over the barrages (and hence down the Murray–Darling system), is its capacity to raise water levels in the southern Coorong

through spring and into summer (provided flows are adequate). The flows from the SEFRP are not a substitute for this – they are unable to lift the water levels because there is a water level gradient draining toward the Murray mouth. As flagged in numerous recent reports (e.g., Paton et al. 2016a,b,c,d, 2017a,b,c), presented to the State and Federal Government agencies responsible for managing the Coorong, the key to the recovery and maintenance of the ecological character of the southern Coorong is the maintenance of suitable water levels through spring and into summer, and not just salinities.

- 12 The maintenance of the ecological character of the Coorong is a key deliverable under the MDBP and required, as this is a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. The Coorong is also an extremely important area for a suite of migratory shorebirds with whom Australia has international migratory bird agreements. These agreements require Australia to manage important habitats like the Coorong for these birds. However, the State Government has defined the limit of acceptable change (LAC) for these birds as not occurring until the numbers have dropped to 20% (i.e., one fifth) of their long-term median abundances (as measured over the last 15 or so years) (O'Connor 2015). By stating this, the MDBP can claim effective delivery of a healthy system, with the ecological condition of the Coorong unchanged, despite substantial reductions in numbers of these birds. This is entirely contrary to the international migratory bird agreements and the purpose of the Ramsar Convention and Australia's EPBC Act 1999. What is even more alarming is that the Federal Government (MDBA) has asked for the LAC for birds to be reviewed, potentially with the intent to further reduce the LACs for waterbirds.
- 13 Finally, when I asked DEWNR for the business case for the SEFFP and how releases of water were to be justified, I was told that this was a commercial-in-confidence

agreement between the State and Federal Government. This lack of transparency, given the ecological significance of the Coorong and the likely ongoing damage of releases of water into the southern Coorong, is of utmost concern. The Coorong is a Wetland of International Importance and the Australian public has a right to information underpinning management decisions that affect its ecological character.

Given these points, I conclude that there is no assurance that either equivalent or better environmental outcomes can be achieved for the southern Coorong through the SEFR SDL adjustment mechanism project. Rather, it is much more likely to damage the southern Coorong's unique ecological character. Therefore, it should not be included in the SDL Adjustment Mechanism for the MDBP.

Associate Professor David C Paton AM The University of Adelaide

The full submission with images and details for the references can be obtained from the editor.

1



Red Necked Stint
Birds SA



Water, with filamentous green algae present, being released at Salt Creek in October 2017.
Photo: David Paton

Glow in the Dark Mushrooms

— Roxanne Crooke

There are magic mushrooms and then there are really magic mushrooms, which glow in the dark.

Ghost Mushrooms, officially called “*Omphalotus nidiformis*” grow on rotting wood & tree stumps.

The largest known colony of these mushrooms in South Australia is at Ghost Mushroom Lane, near Mount Gambier.

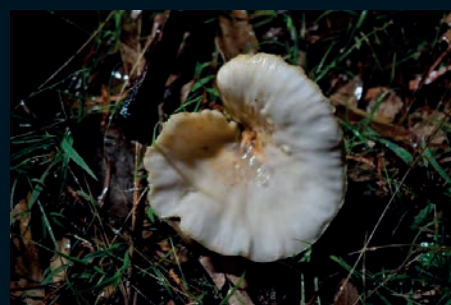
I would love to visit Ghost Mushroom Lane one day, but it is five hours drive from Adelaide. When I mentioned this on a walk, a man said to me “You know they grow everywhere, not just at Mount Gambier.”

This was exciting news! So we began a quest this winter of inspecting every mushroom we came across on our walks and comparing them to photos of ghost mushrooms online in the hope that we may discover a magic glow in the dark mushroom.

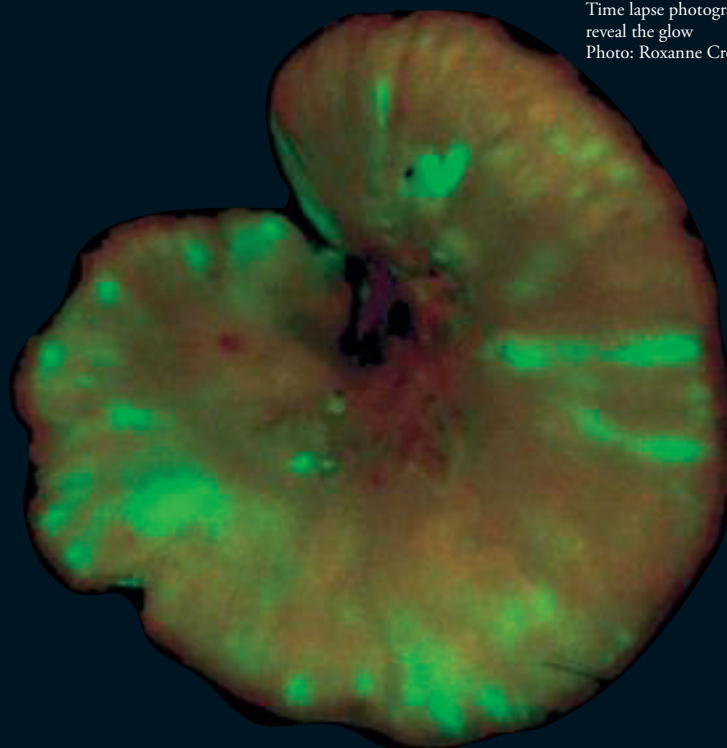
Finally, in July we came across some mushrooms in Montacute, that sort of looked like the pictures we had seen of Ghost Mushrooms. We returned at night time and they did glow, but only if we put our heads on the ground next to the mushroom and covered both our head & the mushroom with a rain jacket to block out the light. This was on a full moon, which is the worst possible time to go looking for ghost mushrooms.

The following week there were much better results. It needs to be dark for the mushrooms to glow, so not a full moon and everyone must turn their torches off and put their phones away. Dan’s Thursday night walks at Mount Lofty were good training for walking around in the dark without a headlamp. Once everyone turns their torches off you have to wait a few minutes & then the mushrooms magically start to glow a faint green colour.

No-one knows why the mushrooms glow, but it is a pretty amazing sight to see. Ghost mushrooms have also been found at Scott Creek and Para Wirra. Unfortunately, the ghost mushroom season is quite short, so if you want to see a glow in the dark mushroom you will have to wait until next year.



Daylight photograph taken at Montacute conservation Park
Photo: Roxanne Crooke



Time lapse photograph to reveal the glow
Photo: Roxanne Crooke

Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges Home to Wirti Udla Varri

— Ray Hickman

In the March 2017 issue of *Tandanya* there was an article outlining a program of environmental monitoring about to get underway in the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park (V-GRNP).

The monitoring was to be carried out by members of Friends of V-GRNP and be centred on Weetootla Spring which is remarkable for two reasons. Firstly, it is home to the nationally endangered fish species *Mogurnda clivicola*. This has the common name Flinders Ranges Purple-spotted Gudgeon and is called Wirti Udla Varri by the local Adnyamathana people. Secondly, the spring is continuing to run strongly after the driest two-year period since rainfall records began to be kept at nearby Arkaroola in 1938. It has been emerging from the ground at the same well-defined point, which is shown in the photograph above, with a flow rate of several thousand litres per day, throughout this dry period.



Top: Springhead
Photo: Ray Hickman

Bottom: Purple Spotted
Gudgeon
Photo: Ray Hickman

The elevation of the spring head suggests it is too high for the source of the water to be the great artesian basin and it is more likely to be rain that has fallen locally in the past and is still draining from the extensive high ground around the spring head where it is emerging through a rock fracture.

Wirti Udla Varri is also present in pools fed by the Yuwanhinya spring which is about 2 km away from Weetootla and separated from it by more than a kilometre of usually dry creek bed. Movement of fish between the two springs could only occur after heavy rain and would involve swimming upstream. A third location for the fish is Nepouie spring on the nearby Wooltana pastoral lease that is a private property and not accessible to the general public. The flow from Nepouie never connects with flows from the other two springs. The existence of these three, physically separate, populations raises the question of whether they are actually separate populations or are all derived from the one source which is likely to be Weetootla.

If Weetootla is the source of the Nepouie population it must have been established by someone moving fish from Weetootla. Wirti Udla Varri is not known to exist anywhere else in South Australia.

The monitoring program has seen Friends of V-GRNP make four visits to the Park over the last two years. Water quality measurements have been made on each visit along with observations on fish sizes and numbers.

Monitoring fish sizes and numbers is a way of checking that there is always more than one generation of fish present. If the size distribution is seen to change this might be an early indicator of the population being at risk. Determining fish size involves careful capture with a hand held net and transfer to a shallow dish of water where each fish can be clearly seen and its length accurately measured before it is returned to its pool.

The value in measuring water quality over time is two-fold. Firstly, it is another way of recognising a developing risk to the fish populations. Secondly, the measurements will assist in deciding whether additional populations of Wirti Udla Varri could be established at other permanent springs in the Northern Flinders Ranges should the relevant authorities decide that an attempt will be made to do this.

On the most recent Park visit in August 2019 the monitoring was extended to include an assessment of the state of the wetlands associated with the three springs. This assessment involved some additional water quality measurements and scoring the condition of the creek banks and of the associated vegetation. These measurements and scores were combined to obtain a 'riparian spring index' for several locations. The index values indicated that every location was in 'good' or 'very good' condition and they will be compared with the index values for other sites that might be considered as additional homes for Wirti Udla Varri. **1**

Anyone interested in finding out more about this monitoring work can go the Friends of V-GRNP website at www.rayh.id.au or contact the writer at raywen@bigpond.net.au



Purple Spotted Gudgeon
Photo: Robert Brandle

This is a description of the Moonarie Gap climbing area on The Crag, a rockclimbing website.

Description

Moonarie is one of Australia's most spectacular crags, situated as it is on the rim of Wilpena Pound, surrounded by sweeping deserts views. It is easily South Australia's premier crag, with superb rock and loads of fantastic quality routes. Isolated as it is, it is very much an adventure destination, and a worthy stop on the Australian rock climbing tour.

Moonarie offers a varied trad climbing experience, with a good range of intermediate to hard routes. There is very little in the way of sport routes, but the trad climbing is fantastic, the quality of the rock makes it ideal for placing gear. The rock has a similar feel to Arapiles, with the same mixture of natural gear and the occasional bolt. Although there are some easy routes, Moonarie is not a beginners crag. Moonarie is really an intermediate to advanced climbers cliff. The climbing starts in the low teens and stretches up into the high 20's. *The climbing varies from single pitch excursions to long multipitch routes, that wind their way up to the rim of the pound.

One of the most striking features of Moonarie is the famed Great Wall, a spectacular stretch of rich red vertical rock 50 metres high, that offers some of the best climbing on the crag."

**Climbs have grading numbers, anything in the high 20's is very difficult.*

theCrag.com is a free guide for rock climbing areas all over the world, collaboratively edited by keen rock climbers, boulderers and other nice folks.

The accident happened at the beginning of the ascent, not while they were on main rock face.

— Ed



Rob Baker on Downwind
Of Angles
Photo: Craig Ingram

Tragedy, Sadness and Healing

— Jim McLean, *WalkingSA*

Tragedy In The North

The news that two climbers had died at Moonarie Gap came out of nowhere. Immediate thoughts were with the families and friends of the two young men. We learnt that the cliff at Moonarie is a renowned climbing destination so thoughts included the local and international climbing communities. But the effect on the traditional custodians of the land was something that most of the walking community may not have thought of before.

The reaction of the Adnyamathanha, the indigenous nation of the northern Flinders Ranges, was unexpected. It was immediately evident that impact on climbing and walking in, around and beyond the Wilpena Pound was a distinct possibility. I am a back packing walker of the northern Flinders Ranges going back to the 1960s and a Heysen Trail end-to-end but this was new to me. What should I think? What should we think? How should we react if at all?

I wrestled considerably with my thoughts, and the thoughts of others, until I came to three words: Respect, Listen, Learn. This story is about the follow-up of users of this wonderful country, in recent times and over thousands of years.

Their Country Our Privilege

We take of lot of things for granted in our largely egocentric lives. Representatives of SA climbers and walkers received a clear message when they met representatives of the Adnyamathanha at Oraparinna.

A five person delegation travelled to the Northern Flinders to present to the Co-Management Board of the Ikara-Flinders National Park. The two climbers and three bushwalkers had deep concern at the reported reaction of the traditional owners to the sad deaths of the two climbers who fell while attempting to scale the cliff face at Moonarie.

Enjoying a clear blue sky and familiar array of colours of earth and vegetation we apprehensively arrived one by one. Attendees greeted us individually and very warmly. The Board listened respectfully as we presented slides of our organisations, our members, extent of activity, and precautions of safety and care. We had finished. Then as Terrence Coulthard spoke the other indigenous representatives nodded in approval.

The Board was nearing the end of its two-day quarterly meeting. In attendance were officers of the Department of Environment and Water, traditional owners, and indigenous DEW rangers in National Park uniform. By now we were on a first name basis with all.

Terrence spoke firmly but not overbearingly. He explained that the tragic loss had effected all of the Adnyamathanha people. Any loss on their country is sad and taken personally. John Marshall had informed us that Moonarie was very popular. It attracted international climbers. But Terrence continued to explain that the first option, as was quoted in the media at the time of the accident, was to close Moonarie altogether. "Think for a moment" he continued, "how those of us with Christian belief might feel if people were climbing all over our cathedrals."

We feel the need for a way through this. We would like to have a Healing Ceremony. We would like to invite as many to attend as would like to come. It would be for the families and friends of the climbers, and for our country. We are looking for a way forward rather than a closure of Moonarie.

There was quick discussion of dates and scrambling for diaries, until the third week of October Saturday 19th or Sunday 20th was settled. Its a long way to the Northern Flinders from Adelaide, but I for one was keen to attend.

Terrence turned for a moment to bushwalking. "We're walkers. We're with you. The Adelaide Bushwalking Club has been walking here since 1947. We have been walking here thousands of years." Terrence has a pastoral lease near Mount Searle. He invites people to walk his property and the lands between Lake Torrens and Lake Frome. He will conduct guided tours and a shuffle service if required.

And on the matter of sacred places significant sites or aboriginal rock art, Terrence was asked if we should be careful about anything when wandering through. He was quick to reply that we should take care everywhere. It is all sacred. The land is as important to us as the Bible is to Christians.

Later Beverly Paterson told me a poignant story. She said don't take stones. A long while ago a school group took a large stone and put it on display in the classroom. Thirty five years on when some of us knew better the stone was returned. The Adnyamathanha were able to locate exactly where it had come from, and restore it in its rightful spot, thus restoring their loss. Beverly and I looked at each other and recited the bushwalkers' motto in unison - "Take nothing but photos. Leave nothing but footprints."

For me it's respect and appreciation. It's their country and our privilege.

Healing Ceremony

Arkaroo Rock - Sat 9th Nov 2019: Today fifty people gathered near Moonarie Gap to remember the recent sad deaths of the two climbers who fell from the Moonarie cliff face. The ceremony, conducted by Vince Coulthard and Terrence Coulthard of the Adnyamathanha (Rock-People), was deeply spiritual and touching.

Protecting wild places in Flinders Chase National Park 100 years on the fight continues

— *Bev and Colin Wilson contributors of*
f *Public Parks NOT Private Playgrounds*

The Spring edition of Tandanya highlighted the concerns felt by many people about the Australian Walking Company's plans to build two private accommodation villages associated with the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail in untouched, wild coastal headlands in Flinders Chase National Park.

Opposition is based on the location and size of the villages away from the Trail, and the substantial clearance of native plants and disturbance to bird and animal life caused by the additional spur trails and roads. The developments seem to be contrary to what is allowed under the binding Park Management Plan.

Opponents to the development formed the Public Parks NOT Private Playgrounds (PPNPP) group, an umbrella organisation of Kangaroo Island's three Friends of Parks groups, Kangaroo Island Eco-Action and other supporters.

The strength of opposition to the development has led to KI Eco-Action's legal action against State Government agencies and the developers. The case will be held before the full bench of the Supreme Court for three days starting 3 February 2020.

The legal challenge has been funded through fundraising including donations from hundreds of people anxious to see the conservation role of National Parks and the integrity of Park Management Plans upheld. It is seen as a very important test case and reflects the growing unease across Australia at the downgrading of the protection and conservation of National Parks and reserves. Bushwalkers have been in the forefront of efforts to defend Australia's wild places with challenges to inappropriate development taking place at Ben Boyd National Park, Hinchinbrook Island and Lake Malbena.

October 16 was the 100th anniversary of the South Australian government's establishment of a 'Reserve on Kangaroo Island' to protect the wild landscape of western Kangaroo Island and its plants and animals. It was a 27 year journey overcoming apathy and opposition to get the proposal finally approved. On October 10 2019 hundreds of people gathered on the steps of Parliament House to recognise this significant event and demonstrate their concern that this protection is being undermined. A week later on October 16 a smaller group gathered at Remarkable Rocks Kangaroo Island in a moving tribute to these environmental pioneers.

We were welcomed in Adnyamathanha and English and moved, with a sharing of experience and culture. The phrase that "we were all one" was used a number of times. Traditional owners are deeply effected by tragedy that occurs on their lands. The ceremony was a chance for us all to share our grief. The Adnyamathanha are sad that people climbing their rock are no longer with us but understand that we like them respect the rock country and that two people left us doing what they loved in a location that they loved.

We were treated to an exposé of flags: the Aboriginal, the Torres Strait Islander, Australian and the Adnyamathanha. The two Adnyamathanha peoples, the Blue Rock people and the Brown Rock people, are represented by the blue and brown backgrounds. The devouring, by the evil serpent, of seven beautiful sisters brought a great flooding of tears that gave rise to creation, the male and the female represented on the flag by the respective white star formations. The country gives rise to life and we respectfully acknowledge the spirituality of country and life.

The ceremony concluded with the ignition of the smoking fire enclosed by the culturally representative circles of yellow and white, and the filing past of attendees who each added a leafy twig of feeling and respect.

Words of acknowledgement and thanks to the Adnyamathanha came from Parks Management (DEW), and the climbing and walking communities. New friends were made, cultural boundaries were broached, and ethereal understandings reached.

N.B. The delegation consisted of two climbers and three walkers - two from the climbing Club of SA, two from WalkingSA and one from the Adelaide Bushwalkers. The Board consisted of four officers from the Department of Environment and Water, four Traditional Owners and four National Park Rangers. Arrangements were managed by DEW. **1**



Top: Symbolism in the Torres Strait Islander and Adnyamathanha flags being explained by Vince and Terrence Coulthard with Brenton Gear of DEW looking on.
 Photo: John Marshall

Middle: Vince Coulthard making introductory and explanatory remarks. The circles of ochre around the healing fire represent connection with the spirits of ancestors and the two climbers (white), connection with mother earth (red/brown) and a new beginning (yellow).
 Photo: John Marshall

Bottom: Park Ranger Arthur joined the other guests in fuelling the healing fire with the Vartiwaka plant. The smoke from the Vartiwaka is the Adnyamathanha way of communicating with the spirits.
 Photo: John Marshall

Palmer Hills Gorges 2019

— Paul Falkenberg

It took a few million years, but we had all arrived there together, in, on, and over the marvel of the Palmer Hills Gorges, each having followed our own threads of evolutionary tale.

There were the granite boulders, cracked from a continental crust, smoothed and rounded in the age-old jostle of stone and current;
Reflective rock pools too perfect to touch, bar for the lips & beaks of parched visitors;
Frogs giving their positions away, with courting croaks of Darwinian savvy selection;
River red-gum giants, trunks torrent scared, yet rich in shady girth and photosynthesis green;
A feather freefalling from above, now spare to an aviator’s aerodynamic purity;
Silvery Sheoak trees standing fifty summers tall; the gnarly bark veterans of drought resistance;
Long lurching sheep, confident in the grass on their side of the hill being consumingly greener;
Appetite webs spun from twig to frond, in primal deception of the excursionary small;
Log-jam hordes of past floods; dead, dry, heaped, and now steadfastly primed for carbon dating;
Soft granitic sand beds, having been washed and swept by millenniums of doting winters;
Bubbling water, calling by once again to carve, cool, fill, and reflect, all whom might gather there;
And we, the skin clad variants of human lineage, having minds to commune, feet to explore and hearts to want for mechanism in the randomness of affairs.

We human variants were ten in number, namely,

- Mike R: Walk leading tutor, of creek bed catchments and bearded face taming.
- Sami L: Five-pm red wine mentor, eloquent in Mohican lingo: “Adirondack”.
- Rebecca D: Photologist and swag sleeping practitioner.
- Jason Q: Liverpoolian stalwart when surrounded by Englishers.
- Stellar S: Warm Milo host and wind sure curly locks exponent.
- David C: Communal breakfast chef and bush hewn hammocker.
- Mick W: Trail trekking summationer and combi-van excelsior.
- Garry T: Rolling back the years on rock climbing and migmatitic foot holds.
- Michelle T: Keen eye for curved rock-strata and post-walk pub coffee.
- Paul F: Scribe.

Thankyou Mike for showing us such an extraordinary Adelaide Hills trove. 📷

Four photos of Palmer Hills Gorges taken by;
1. Mike Wood
2, 3, 4. Jason Quinn



ABW History

— Bruce Marquis Ed.

Lake Tahune Hut

— Arthur Ward

I refer to the Tandanya report of the ABW members' January 1957 entry in Tassie's Lake Tahune Hut logbook. Ron Wightman and Ian Hancox were on the ABW Committee at the time and Drew Peters joined them later that year. Ian went on to serve in probably our most ever (5) different Committee roles culminating in his second term as President in 1963. He was later elected Hon Life Member.

Contrary to reports that the present new (2018) hut replaced the "original that was built in 1971", David Sisson's June 2018 article at <https://www.australianmountains.com/tashuts> shows that the 1957 entry was in a hut built in 1947. In December 1962 our ABW party of seven led by Peter Beer stayed in that hut (which was destroyed by fire in 1966 and not replaced until 1971).

We had arrived at Mt Field NP via train to the nearby National Park station. However, there were no trains the day we left – Christmas Day – and we walked many miles towards Ouse without being able to hitch a ride. From Ouse the next day the seven of us rode via Tarraleah to Derwent Bridge on the back of the bottled milk delivery truck. After the Cynthia Bay cabins overnight, we caught a morning bus from Derwent Bridge to the Frenchman's Cap track and camped on the sodden Loddons. A long day on the 28th brought us to Lake Tahune from where we climbed Frenchman's on the 29th.

On the 30th we climbed back to the saddle and headed down a wooded spur aiming for the HEC "flying fox" crossing of the Franklin. There was no sign of an old overgrown walking track and we decided that we should cross the shallow intervening gully to the preceding spur. I estimated from Mt Lofty and Flinders Ranges experience that it would take us five minutes – it took an hour to climb under/over/around many huge

fallen trees! Dusk threatened and I agreed to stay put with our weariest member whilst the others pushed on to the river.

The easiest way to catch up on the 31st was to wade down the gently graded Ness Creek to the Franklin where the others had camped near the (locked) flying fox. Fortunately, the river was low and we linked hands and waded across. A short track walk took us to the Crotty Road where by perfect fluke all seven of us got an immediate lift in a 1920s Chev tourer all the way to Queenstown.

New Year's Day 1963 gave us what was advertised as our last chance to ride the unique railway between Strahan and Queenstown before its closure. Wikipedia confirms that the restored railway was re-opened some forty years later.

Our adventures then continued from Derwent Bridge to Waldheim via Lake Petrarch, Pine Valley and the Overland Track, with many side trips and peaks climbed. All very memorable for a first-timer in Tassie.

The New Lake Tahune Hut
Photo: ABC



Bushwalkers Inception to 1949.

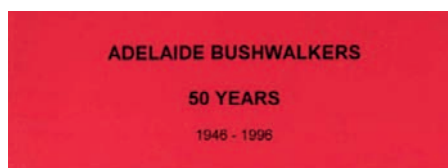
Extract from Adelaide Bushwalkers 50 years 1946 - 1996

In 1946, H.A. "Bill" Lindsay was instrumental in calling a public meeting to discuss the formation of a bushwalking club. This meeting took place on the seventeenth of October, a Thursday night, and was held at Girl Guide Headquarters, 138 Gawler Place, Adelaide, with Inspector J.W. Delderfield acting as a chairman. An interim committee was formed to draw up a constitution and do all things necessary to bring the Club into being.

No time was wasted in organising the first walk, it was held before the Inaugural Meeting!

On Saturday, the twenty sixth of October, a party of twenty nine people (fifteen males and fourteen females) led by H.A. "Bill" Lindsay, travelled by tram to the Mitcham terminus. After walking up the right hand branch of Brownhill Creek, they climbed the ridge and camped in the vicinity of a house near which timber had recently been felled. The trip report recommends that arrangements be made at the house to obtain eggs, milk and cream for breakfast next morning! On Sunday morning the party climbed to Sheoak Ridge and walked through the National Park past Red Gum Arbor to the Belair gate. An old road was followed north to an open grassy ridge where they then turned left onto a quarry track and then down through the Mitcham Cemetery. From here roads were followed back to the tram terminus. The walk covered an approximate distance of fifteen miles (twenty four kilometres).

The Inaugural Meeting of the Adelaide Bushwalkers was held on Thursday the thirty-first of October, at "Open House" YWCA, (Young Women's Christian Association), corner of Grenfell Street and Hindmarsh Square. This meeting was chaired by Dr. Fry. H.A. "Bill" Lindsay was elected President, Anne Behrndt Vice-President, Brian Watson, Secretary and Lionel Lever, Treasurer.



Cradle Mountain — John Bartlett



Peter Beer — Arthur Ward



Peter Beer joined ABW sixty years ago this year (in 1959). A prolific leader in ABW, Peter once again coordinated and led the ABW Cactus Control Project at Gum Creek Station in the Flinders Ranges this year. The Heysen Trail passes through the western side of Gum Creek Station.

Peter addressing an ABW group in advance of leading a day-walk in the Blue Mountains in 2010.

Sketch of Cradle Mountain by John Bartlett who joined in 1980, and was made a Life Member in 2003. John first climbed Cradle Mountain as a seventeen year old in 1951 with two friends, and the second time, 48 years later in 1999 on an ABW trip led by Frank Hall.

H.A.Lindsay was one of the founding members of Adelaide Bushwalkers

H. A. Lindsay was an Australian writer for children who was born in Hyde Park, South Australia. He travelled widely in Australia before working as a commercial bee-keeper and farmer leading up to the Second World War. Wikipedia

Born: 13 November 1900, Hyde Park
Died: 4 December 1969, Highgate

Notable award: Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year: Older Readers
Books: *The Bushman's Handbook: A Practical Guide for Finding Water, Snaring Game, Catching Fish, Direction Finding, Camping, Survival in an Emergency and General Bushcraft*,

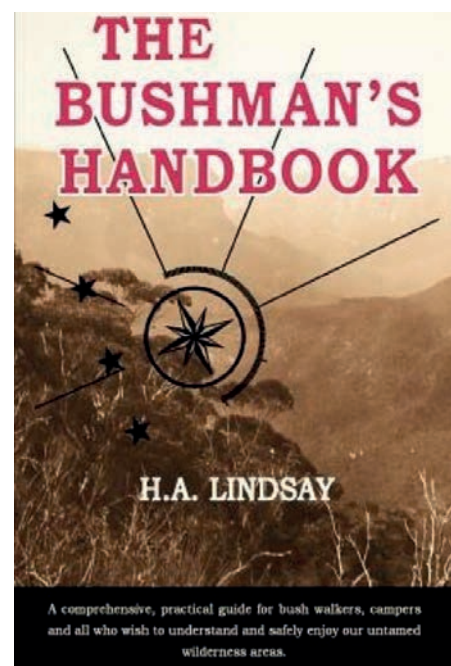
Book by H. A. Lindsay

Here's what the Literary Editor of Adelaide's Advertiser newspaper had to say about *The Bushman's Handbook* in late 1948: "If an ordinary city dweller were to be dumped down in the arid central regions of Australia it is fairly certain that if the season was cold he would perhaps survive a few days, but it's also certain that in the heat of summer he would be dead within 48 hours. But the aborigine would be quite at home in such circumstances, which would not be dire straits to him at all. He would know how to find water where apparently none existed, and would unearth sufficient food to enable him to travel safely to better country.

The author of "The Bushman's Handbook," who is an expert bushman and descendant of bushmen, and who instructed thousands of Australian and American troops in bushcraft during WWII, here tells exactly how to survive in inhospitable terrain. As to your thirst, he describes how moisture may be obtained from the stems of plants and the limbs of trees - and he shows by illustrations just how the parched outback traveler should proceed. Food can be obtained from all sorts of unlikely sources - for instance, the bilious-looking but tasty and nutritious "witjuti" grubs can be gouged out from the bark of trees.

For larger foods the reader is carefully instructed how to make simple but effective snares - to the undoing of rabbits, hares, squirrels and similar game. If you are near streams or pools you have no need to hunger if you follow the Author's instructions and diagrams which will enable you to catch the various kinds of fish without rod, reel or hook. There are also interesting and instructive talks about fire lighting (without matches); the art of camping out; direction finding if you happen to be lost; or how to cord and thatch a shelter for yourself; and on the various special plants and roots which it is safe to eat if driven to extremities. Lastly, the Author gives valuable advice on how to maintain health in the bush, and stresses the value of bushcraft, and the hardiness and self-reliance which it brings, in both peace and war. In all, an admirable and comprehensive bushman's text-book."

<https://www.booktopia.com.au/the-bushman-s-handbook-h-a-lindsay/book/9781484837290.html> ①



2021: ABW's 75th anniversary planning

1. BEYOND THE HEYSEN WALK:

Lee Marling and Ray Hickman are organising a walk north of Parachilna to visit the club's water tanks.

2. UPDATING THE HISTORY OF ABW:

Volunteers required to assist with updating the club's history, by recording the history of the last 25 years, from 1996 to today.

3. SOCIAL PARTY/ BUSHDANCE OCTOBER 2021:

Help needed to organise a party to celebrate our anniversary.

4. PEAK BAGGING COMPETITION:

Similar to the 50th and 60th anniversary, a competition where points are awarded for peaks climbed on ABW walks throughout the year.

5. RE-ENACTMENT OF THE FIRST ABW WALK, OCTOBER 2021:

A 24km overnight walk from the Mitcham train station, through Brownhill Creek and Belair, returning through Randell Park and the Mitcham Cemetery. We are looking for a walk leader(s) to lead this walk.

6. TRIP TO MT WOODROFFE, HIGHEST PEAK IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA:

Help with planning, organising transport, accommodation, permission from landowners etc,

7. COMMEMORATIVE MEMORABILIA:

Arranging to have commemorative merchandise made, such as a badge or a cap



Top: Summit of Mt Woodroffe
Photo: Arthur Ward

Bottom: The Very First ABW Walk

We can't do it without you.

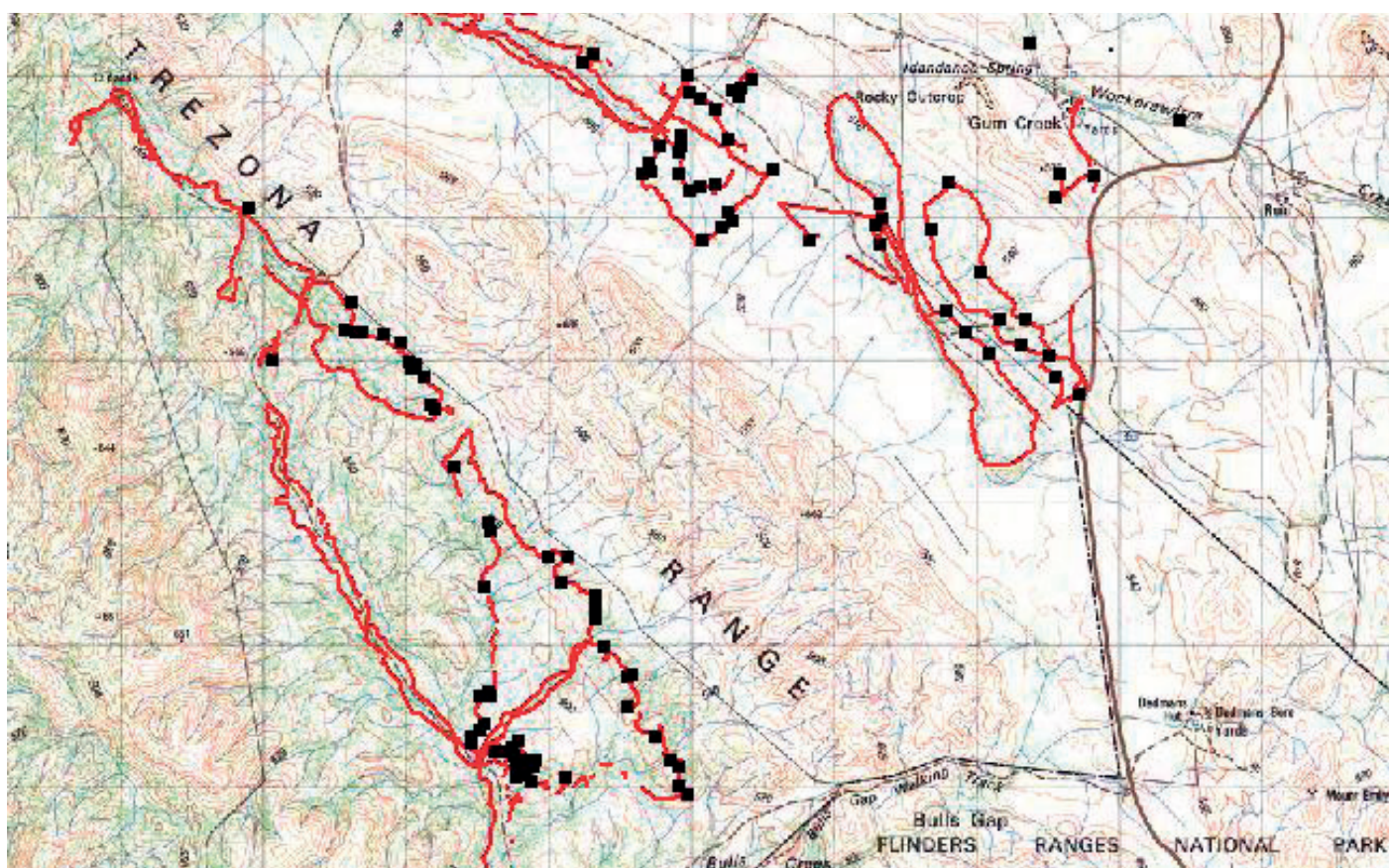
We are looking for volunteers to assist with the planned activities: If you are interested in helping out or have any questions about what is involved, please email gohiking@adelaidebushwalkers.org or speak to a committee member at the next general meeting.

Help us make ABW's 75th anniversary a year to remember.

Cactus Control Project on Gum Creek Station

— Peter Beer

2019 Search Routes and
Cacti Found



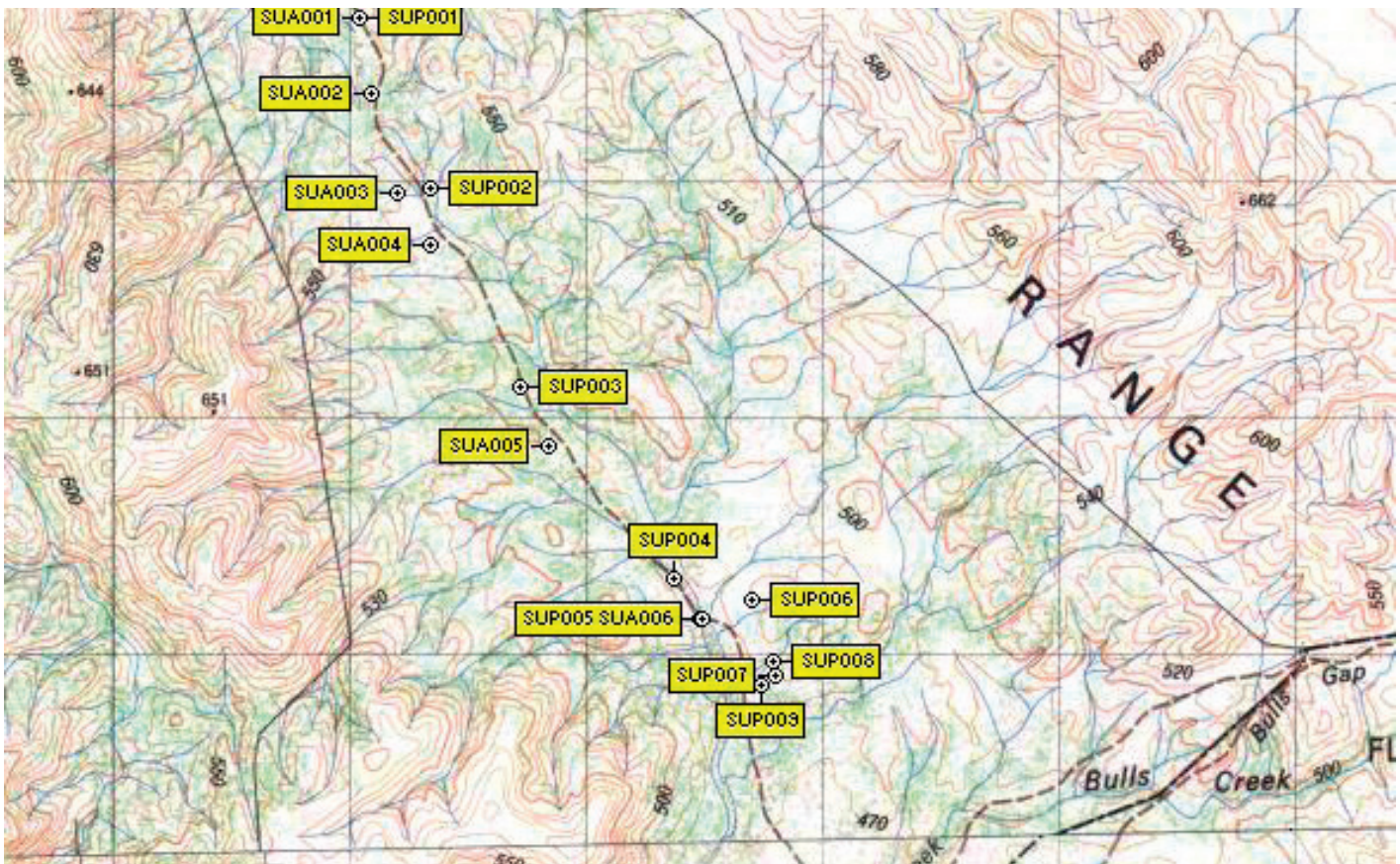
The party on this year's trip from 3rd August to 9th August consisted of Group (P) Peter Beer, Lorraine Billett, Bruce Marquis, David Markey and Peter Woodlands and Group (A) Arthur with Ann Ward, Roger Kempson, Tai Lim, Janet Callen and Dennis Harper. The weather was fine throughout. The property was unfortunately suffering the effects of several very dry years which resulted in very few young seedlings developing.

Our generous hosts Bill and Jane again welcomed us with a delicious welcome BBQ on Saturday night. After the BBQ, groups were organized, documentation and briefings attended to, and discussions held on current conditions and avenues of approach for the days ahead.

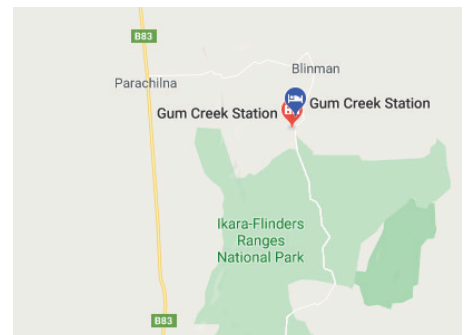
Bill reported that he had observed a heartening decrease in the number of cacti in our area which determined the first day's activity on the Sunday which was to conduct two transects (above) along the central track to note and assess actions for the remainder of the week. No treatment or recording was conducted on this day. The two reports included over the page summarize the results, the main finding being that Bill was correct in the massive decline in numbers, the widespread dispersion of the cochineal to new hosts and the resultant dead and dying cacti observed. New supplies of cochineal infected wheels were collected to be used on subsequent days. Needless to say we were

tremendously encouraged to see that our work over the previous 10 years was now paying off. The search lines for the week are shown above in red.

Sunday's Survey Points



Data Summary For Cacti Recorded		
Record	Number	Notes
Total Plants Recorded	189	No recordings taken on survey day 4/8/2019
Plants Poisoned	109	All plants outside our normal zone of activity to NE of Trezona Range poisoned. Includes several individual plants on hill tops.
Cochineal Attached by H	72	
Naturally Infected Cacti	12	Does not include the many seen on 4/8/2019



General Comments

Other than cacti mentioned above there were very few other cacti. Almost no small cacti were found, no doubt due to the series of dry seasons. The high number of infected cacti seen was very encouraging.

As noted above the density of cacti was considerably less than previous years due, we believe, to the effectiveness of the cochineal and the series of dry years. In discussion with Bill McIntosh it was decided to check and treat areas not covered in previous years to complete a relatively uniform coverage of cochineal over our area of activity. Thus the next two days were spent covering hilltops and valleys in the section bordering the SE side of the Trezona Range.

Supplemented by extra supplies of cochineal taken from a clump of infected cacti near waypoint SUP008 on previous page, cacti were either poisoned or had cochineal attached depending on the density of plants in the area. Mostly the cacti were well spread out, either on hill tops or creek lines. We also noted that many cacti showed evidence of being chewed by animals in a desperate attempt to find moisture.

Unfortunately the supplies of suitable infected cacti for spreading were limited, due to the success of the cochineal in wiping out the cacti in previously highly infected areas. On Wednesday and Thursday we worked in the area NE of the Trezona Range where Bill had noted several largish cacti during an inspection of his property. As will be seen from left hand map on previous page we were able to cover quite a large area due to the open nature of the country and the size of cacti present. Due to the dispersed nature of the cacti found, it was felt that poisoning was the best option for eradication. On Thursday winds of up to 90km/hr and cold temperatures made progress very difficult and time spent in the field was reduced as a consequence.

Piece of cacti infected with Cochineal tied to a newly discovered cacti



Heavily infected dying cacti



The photos above (taken by Roger Kempson) show the work done with Cochineal and its effects on controlling the spread of cacti, and are testament to the effectiveness of Cochineal in an area like ours with a fairly dense population often in places hard to access by vehicles such as bushland.

Data summary for cacti recorded.

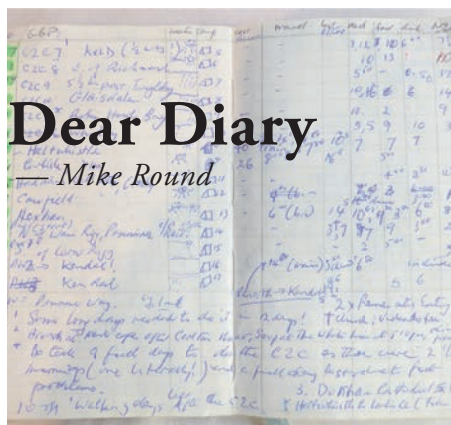
Cactus Valley is now cacti free. Members of the ABW crew pose behind the remnants of a cacti killed by the Cochineal bug.

Final conclusions

The observations made have demonstrated an encouraging outlook for the future of the control methods used in our 20 square kilometres of bushland. We believe that Cochineal has proved to be an effective agent in controlling the spread of cacti in an area such as ours. All present and past members of our Adelaide Bushwalkers teams should feel proud of their efforts over the past 12 years, often in trying circumstances such as when coping with steep hills, thick scrub, hot and cold temperatures.

The Future

Much thought and discussion took place during our stay and there was a general feeling that unless there was a sudden change in conditions leading to major cacti explosions there would be little point in organizing a full team for the year 2020. There may be a role for a smaller survey team in future to monitor progress, and to suggest further action. At this stage a date for 2020 has not been set and future activity would depend on discussions with Bill and Jane. ①



For many years I've been keeping a diary on multiday bushwalks and while it's probably not for everyone, I'm glad I do it. Diaries are good because they let you record things that cameras can't; things like impressions and feelings and maybe even the odd snatch of conversation. It's just something that I like to do. I started diary-writing many years ago during the time that I spent travelling and walking in Europe for the better part of a year. Without the diary, many smaller details in particular would probably be eventually forgotten or lost in a blur. Since then, I've used a variety of books as diaries, everything from small exercise books to my favourite, the compact and rugged 'Moleskine' books with rounded corners and close line-spacing.

A small diary means that you sometimes have to be economical with words but it's amazing how, with a bit of system, you can record a lot of detail. For example, I used two small books on a recent five month walking and woofing trip in Europe and apart from the written story with no set length of each day's account, every day is summarized in a single line in a table that records location of overnight stay, money spent on accommodation, meals, food, drinks (aka beer), hours spent walking (when on a walk) plus a pictorial summary of the weather and overnight sleeping arrangement – a hollow or filled diagram indicating free or paid-for accommodation in my tent or under bricks and mortar. That record is in the little green book (in the other photo) which is 140 x 90 x 11mm and weighs 120g.)

Closer to home, I have separate diaries for the Flinders, Tassie, WA etc. but even so, it means of course that each time you go walking, you can be carrying more weight of pages than you need but I don't mind. Unfortunately, I did lose a diary a few years ago at Launceston Airport with its record of several trips over four years, despite a big effort to try and recover it. (It didn't have my contact details but I still hoped that I would be contacted through friends whose details were in the book.) I have occasionally used the back of a photocopied topo. map as the diary to save weight but unless weight really is a critical factor, I don't believe that the weight saving is worth it.

I have got into the habit of writing in the diary each night (or next morning if too tired) during walks and I sometimes seem to write more when on solo walks than in a party with others. This perhaps reflects the amount of walking or more likely because there are less distractions when you're camping alone. Just occasionally, my diary recalls instances of pain (from blisters, minor accidents or whatever) or great weariness that can affect a walk. I think that such instances are worth recording because such instances and actual suffering you experience can be soon forgotten. It seems that the mind has evolved a way of greatly dulling the memory of such things.

When it comes to the writing, I just write whatever pleases me; some days are long on words while others can be short depending on how I feel. It surprised me therefore to discover that the diary of a NZ trip a few years ago contained little more than where I was each day plus the travel details and costs. On that trip, the ink only flowed on two occasions and each apparently inspired by the campsite's beautiful setting. A decade ago now I helped a friend sail his 8 m yacht from Hobart to Adelaide and before we even left home, I imagined writing a daily diary in the manner of a latter day Joshua Slocum. Maybe it was the roughness of much of the passage, the gradually lessening nausea or maybe just the sheer sameness of each day, but I didn't write a single word apart from recording our location several times a day. The days just seemed to meld into one another and I don't need a diary to remind me of the unending and inescapable shriek of the wind in the shrouds.

Apart from hopefully being a good read and a way to perhaps one day relive trips done years ago, a diary may sometimes be useful for reference if for example, you plan to walk in an area walked in years earlier. Apart from the diary, I also now take an additional small note-book (under the biro in the photo) on trips in the northern Flinders to hold details of springs and waterholes so that this information doesn't clutter the diary.

Recording bits of conversation? It's rare for me to do this but I recall Wild magazine once encouraging its contributors to try and include bits of conversation in their stories to help enliven the text (and I'm sure with a policy of keeping it succinct and amusing!). Think how the amusing exchanges in Bryson's books really make them come alive. I think that the spoken word in print will seem as alive if read today or in a hundred years hence and will help to remind the reader that 'Yes! These people really were once alive just like I am now!' Who's to know what some future reader might think or find most interesting in an old diary? Without assuming too much, perhaps someone one day reading my diary might think '2019? Why didn't that chump use 'social media' instead of leaving this unreadable scrawl on mouldering pages'. Many travellers and adventurers nowadays seem to post regular blogs of their travels to family and friends and anyone else interested but I've still got to catch up to that, if ever.

I'll finish with a joke that I heard at a campsite on a club trip along the south coast of Tasmania a few years ago. What helped to make it especially memorable was that it was told by Lorenzo from Italy and he told it with some pride because he knew that it demonstrated that he 'got' the pun. We couldn't all help but laugh and I even wrote it in my diary!

What did the ocean say to the beach?
It didn't say anything. It just waved! 🌊



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