



Good news on grants

Balcanoona re-vegetation project: an application made to Friends of Parks for grant support of this project has been successful and the group will receive the full amount applied for - \$4,724. This success allowed work to commence at Balcanoona during the recent May visit. Good progress has been made. To see a set of photos showing members in action click [here](#).

Oocaboolina refurbishment: an application made to the Lions Club of Blackwood for support of this project has also been successful and the group has received \$1000 from that source. Once again this money contributed to work done on the May trip.

The group's status as an incorporated body has allowed it to receive these funds directly.

May 2019 visits

Balcanoona/Weetootla visit May 5-10

This was an enjoyable and productive working trip to the Park. Twelve members participated. Two variations on previous trips were:

- use of Oraparinna shearing quarters to break the drive to Balcanoona: this was arranged through Arthur Coulthard and one member made use of the stopover. Things went smoothly and this will be a possibility for future trips as long as Oraparinna is not booked.
- dining out at Arkaroola: on the night before departure the Group drove to Arkaroola for a meal in the dining room there. This was an enjoyable way to finish off the trip.

Reporting on this trip is in the form of

- A trip leader's report which is devoted mainly to practical matters associated with safe travelling to and from the park as well as member welfare while engaged in the on-site activities.

- Notes on different aspects of environmental monitoring at Weetootla and Nepouie Springs.
- An outline of the re-vegetation and irrigation work around Balcanoona

To read more click on the links below

- [Trip leader's report](#)
- [Water quality measurements](#) This information is in the form of an Excel spreadsheet. You will have to have the necessary software on your computer to open it.
- [Fish and aquatic invertebrate monitoring](#)
- [Native flora and fauna](#)
- [Weed containment in Weetootla Gorge](#)
- [Balcanoona re-vegetation and irrigation](#)

Oocaboolina visit May 17-24

Eight members attended a working bee at the Oocaboolina outstation - the major improvement was the replacement of the western entry with a low wall of locally sourced rocks, two recycled steel framed windows and recycled aluminium security screens. Other works included cleaning and painting of walls in two rooms, replacing the eastern door with recycled solid panel door and security screen, removal of the fireplace from the kitchen for future storage cabinet, moved fire ring and cleaned up areas around same, installed a table made and supplied by Ranger Sian Johnson near the new fire/conversation pit and the grounds generally cleaned of debris.

We removed athel pine regrowth and poisoned several times, pruned and or removed dead trees/shrubs, general tidy up of surrounds - removing 2 trailer loads of fencing wire, bricks, glass, the old west door and east doors etc. to the Nepabunna dump and repainted front gate posts with sump oil.

There is a set of photos of work done on the next page and greater detail about the work completed in May can be read by clicking [here](#).

The group wish to acknowledge and thank the Nepabunna Community for making their hot showers available to us at no cost.

Online trip planning page

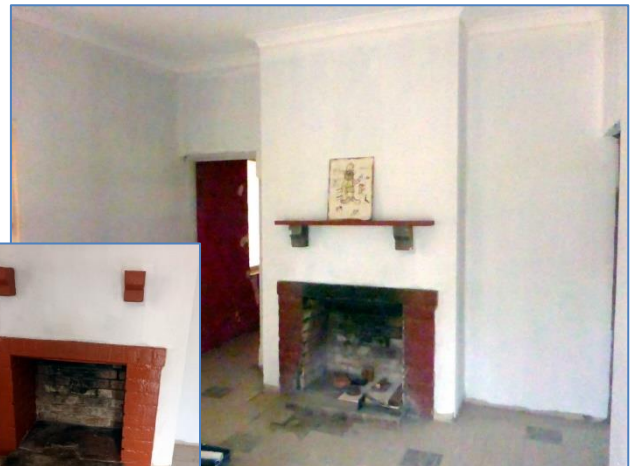
Visits to Balcanoona have been led by Roger Mathers and Ray Hickman while all visits to Oocaboolina have been led by Graeme Oats. In the longer term there is going to be a need for additional people to lead trips. What has been learned over the last couple of years about the requirements for safe and productive trips is now available as a page on the website. It can be opened by clicking [here](#).

OOCABOOLINA WORKING BEE – MAY 2019

New western entry – removed the GI doors and replaced with local river rocks, recycled windows and screens.



Below – the lounge before and after – insert - fire surrounded repainted



Left – the new Conversation pit with table, centre & right – the long drop makeover.



Group Badges and clothing

The committee recently approved a design for our logo and badge prepared by member Hannah Jones – see top of the Newsletter. Thanks Hannah for your creative work. Thanks also to Alun Thomas, of the Scientific Expedition Group who assisted to get the logo in a form that allowed us to make full use of it.

The group have had cloth badges made and these are available to members for \$12.00 – they can be sewn on to a garment or hat. Shirts (green or blue) with the logo embroidered can be purchased for \$55.00. Please contact Graeme Oats if you would like either a badge or shirt.

August visits to the Park

Balcanoona/Weetootla: this visit will take place from 24-31 August. Members interested in participating should let either Roger Mathers (roger_mathers@yahoo.com) or Ray Hickman (raywen@bigpond.net.au) know. Also let them know if you would like them to check the availability of stopping overnight at Oraparinna on the drive up or back.

We have accommodation at Balcanoona for 7 nights and 6 days for activities. However, it is not necessary for people to spend the whole six days engaged in activities and they can spend some of the time doing private things, arrive after 24 August, or depart before 31 August.

Work to be done

Environmental monitoring: the usual water quality measurements, fish observations, and weed work will be carried out. A first attempt will be made at compiling an index of riparian spring condition for both the Weetootla and Nepouie springs. The aim is to allow comparison with other Flinders Ranges springs.

Balcanoona re-vegetation work: Building on the experience gained during the May trip (Area 1), we will roll out the new irrigation system in Area 2 (opposite side of entry road), plant about 50 new seedlings, install guards, and link irrigation to support both new and existing plantings. Further seed collection is expected as well as more detailed planning for the re-veg project over the next 3 years.

Oocaboolina: A six day period from and including 7 -16th August. Anyone interested in participating please contact Graeme Oats (gdoats@bigpond.net.au) advising him the dates best suited to them. The work will involve painting of timbers (primer & top coats), cleaning of walls and painting (with rollers), painting door frames, cleaning of the front bedroom floor, shift all the equipment from that room to the "laundry" - so, generally not stuff that requires some trade skill. You will need to supply your own accommodation and food –

good shaded camp site available near the hut. Water available and newly installed and painted long drop toilet is operational.

Conditions in the Park

These remain severe. On the May 2019 visit dead animals were seen frequently and the living not often. 2018 was the second driest year in the 80 years that rainfall records have been kept at Arkaroola. The first 5 months of 2019 have seen total falls of 19 mm. The long term average for these months is 134 mm.

The three springs we are monitoring continue to flow strongly but the lack of rain means insufficient food is available away from the water. All that which was close by, and edible, has been grazed back to nothing.
