

# Friends of Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park

## NEWSLETTER No. 7 - JUNE 2018



This newsletter brings Friends and Supporters of the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park up to date with some developments which have occurred since the last newsletter was published in February, 2018.

### **April 2018 park visits**

**10-14 April:** twelve members travelled to the Park for further work on the Weetootla Gorge environmental monitoring project. Conditions were hot and dry but this was mitigated by the fact that the shearers quarters at Balcanoona are now air conditioned! The trip was productive and a full report of it is available on the website. The report can be read by going to the “projects” page on the website and selecting “reports”. Then scroll down to the April 2018 report.

During this trip part of the group spent half a day with Arthur Coulthard having a close look at Balcanoona facilities and visiting sites of cultural and environmental interest nearby. There is considerable scope for projects based at Balcanoona and these nearby sites that might suit member interests better than the environmental monitoring and Oocaboolina projects. Some possibilities are outlined in the report referred to above. On future environmental monitoring trips there is likely to be a mix of activities with some people involved mostly in monitoring and others working at Balcanoona and nearby.

An unpleasant feature of the trip was the large number of dead kangaroos and wallabies seen (and smelled) adjacent to the springs. They had died of starvation and not lack of water. Conditions have been so dry, and the number of both native animals and goats so high, that all the plant material on which the native animals rely has been eaten out. No dead goats were seen and the live ones seemed in good condition.

Arthur has allocated a lockable shed for the Friends group to store gear in and this will save us carting gear to and fro between the Park and Adelaide. As time goes by and the group becomes involved in more activities this is going to make it easier for us to operate on site in the Park.

The next visit to Balcanoona is scheduled for 23-27 August.

**16-22 April:** five members based themselves at Oocaboolina outstation, camping near the building and working mainly on its external features. A water tank was installed, roof gutters cleared, gutter guard installed, fencing restored and Athel pines cut down and killed with herbicide. The photograph below was taken just before the working group packed up for their return to Adelaide.



A full account of the work done is posted on the website and it can be read by going to the “projects” page on the website and selecting “reports”. Then scroll down to the Oocaboolina 2018 report.

The next planned working bee will be from 14<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> July and already many members have indicated their willingness to attend. The July visit will include sanding down, repair and or replace interior door jambs, prepare all interior walls surfaces ready for painting, build a new toilet seat, replace toilet door jambs and make a door

### **Membership**

Financial membership of Friends of Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park has increased from 27 in June 2017 to 63 currently. This substantial increase augurs well for the development of a Friends group that is consistently active in the Park. It seems likely that the increase in membership is a result of two projects underway and the adoption of a constitution for the group.

Consideration is being given at the Committee for a change in the group's financial year from the current July-June year to a January-December year. This will align the group's financial year with its annual program of activities in the Park. Avoidance of hot weather makes it sensible for activities to be programmed mainly April to September with the other months of the year being relatively quiet months as far as work on site in the Park goes.

### Documentary film



Early this year committee member Graeme was alerted that the University of SA Magill Campus (UNISA) School of Creative Industries – Media Arts were offering to non-profit groups an opportunity to have a 6-8 minute documentary video made of their group as part of the student's curriculum. The theme of the video will be promoting the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park (the Park) and volunteering in the park.

Graeme presented a Power Point presentation to the students in late April and was successful in gaining one of the 7 positions available. Graeme met with students Hao Zheng and Claire Cai prior to taking them on a 4 day trip to the Park in May.



From comfortable accommodation at the Park headquarters at Balcanoona we explored the shores of Lake Frome, Weetootla Springs, Grindell's, Oocaboolina and Idninha Huts as well as the built heritage of Balcanoona. Hao & Claire efficiently went about filming the various out buildings of Balcanoona and the huts, whilst taking countless minutes of the varied scenery from lakes, open grasslands, rugged mountain ranges, natural springs, kangaroos, wallabies and emus in the Park.



In June Hao and Claire will present their video to the lecturer and make available a copy to us to use as promotional material.

**Stonemasonry course**

We have been notified of an intention to offer training in stonemasonry at Balcanoona later this year, probably in July. Any member interested in participating should contact Ray Hickman by e-mail at [raywen@bigpond.net.au](mailto:raywen@bigpond.net.au)