

## Update from the Chair – Mary Lou Simpson OAM, December 2023

### Continuing Developments at the Nilpena Ediacara National Park

We're pleased to announce the appointment of a new Ranger in Charge for the Nilpena Ediacara National Park, Kym Geue. Kym attended a recent Foundation Board Meeting, where we learned of his long passion and love of the Flinders Ranges, where he recalled visits as a teenager on scouting and walking expeditions. He has since stayed well connected, having worked at Arkaroola with Doug Sprigg and later at Rawnsley Park. We look forward to working with Kym, who will be the uniformed public face for the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) at the park, leading NPWS tours in 2024.

And how about this for a stellar international debut? Nilpena Ediacara National Park has scored a spot on the influential *US Travel + Leisure* magazine's *Top 50 Best Places to Travel in 2024*. We trust that some among its claimed 4.8 million readers will be planning a discovery trip.

Have you visited the Park yet? Tour numbers built steadily after the Park's official opening in late April. The Park is closed over the summer months and reopens for tours in mid-March.

For more information do visit our website [click here to view](#)

### The Work of the Foundation

Since the last Update in June, our fundraising campaign to finance critical work on fossil bed stabilisation, restoration of the historic Nilpena Woolshed and educational resources support continues to be successful.

#### Fossil Bed Stabilisation

Through contributions, ten of the 40 excavated beds have attracted funding for critical stabilisation works, ensuring they are protected from the elements, preserved for future generations and accessible for lead researchers as active "in situ" research sites. Work is now complete on five of these fossil beds and will continue in 2024 thanks to your generous support.

Support from donors has also permitted the preparation of a continuing Conservation Management Plan, which will allow park Rangers to work alongside palaeontologists to support on-site maintenance.

#### Restoration of the historic Nilpena Woolshed

Centrally located in the visitor precinct, the Nilpena Woolshed's iconic stone walls and corrugated iron roof give insight into the Park's past as a sheep station. When it was built in the late 1890s, this would have been a busy workplace, with 20 shearing stands to accommodate thousands of sheep from surrounding stations.

The woolshed also played an important part in the Ediacaran fossil discovery story, given that the wool bale loading bay in front of the building is made of ripple rocks quarried nearby. These formed the ancient seabed from which Ediacaran life arose.

In the 1980s, a visitor to the Nilpena station remarked on these distinctive flagstones, prompting a further journey of fossil discovery at Nilpena.

Work to restore the Woolshed has so far included installation of a new roof and guttering, and the repair of internal bracing timbers. A stonemason has completed works to stabilise the foundation of the woolshed, and has commenced initial work to restore the iconic stone walls, ensuring that the woolshed is fully restored to its former glory and accessible to park visitors. This is a unique woolshed in the context of the northern Flinders Ranges and helps provide a tangible link to the region's pastoral heritage.

However, more needs to be done, and restoring the building is imperative to ensuring safe visitor access and enhancing the overall visitor experience.

## **Education/learning/Outreach Projects**

### **Ediacaran electronic resource booklet for Year 4**

The Foundation's close working relationship with the South Australian Science Teachers Association (SASTA) continues to produce results for teachers and their students. A Year 8 electronic resource booklet, given vital financial support by the Foundation, has been adopted by a number of schools across Australia.

For 2024, Seymour College will once again team up with a curriculum writer of the Department for Education and UniSA to produce an Ediacara electronic resource booklet for Year 4 students.

At long last the Foundation is achieving one of its principal aims – that of having the Ediacaran story taught in our schools. We are also working with the Department for Education and SASTA on ways to assist disadvantaged students to visit the Park.

### **Ediacaran video for 5 – 7 year olds**

The Foundation is keenly supporting the production of an educational video on Ediacaran fossils of the Flinders Ranges, Fossil Rock by teacher/performer Lucy Rasheed and video producer, Kylie Claude.

Through live footage from the site, animation, song and storytelling, the team plans to bring the Ediacaran story to life. It's a wonderful way to educate children about this incredible geological wonder in South Australia and to inspire a love of science and discovery. The video will feature guest appearances from Ross Fargher, Professor Mary Droser and her team and Parachilna/ Orroroo singer, John O'Dea.

## **How can you contribute to the work of the Foundation?**

We invite you to make a tax-deductible gift of any amount via our website [click here to donate](#) for the following ongoing projects -

### **Education/Learning/Outreach – target this financial year is \$20,000**

Take this special opportunity to contribute to the production of a valuable ongoing educational resource; the *Fossil Rock* video for 5 – 7 year olds.

### **Restoration of the historic Nilpena Woolshed - target this financial year is \$50,000**

Visitors need a better understanding of the region's pastoral heritage and the story of fossil discovery in the park. Long term, the woolshed will be used for events such as school workshops, dinners, and performances.

Priorities are to reinforce the historic stone walls and to update internal electrical work. The external original loading dock also requires refurbishment.

### **Fossil Bed Stabilisation**

Nowhere else on the planet is there a special opportunity to support the long-term future of these iconic fossil beds. Each bed has specific \$ amounts for stabilisation.

For more information [Click here to view support us brochures](#)

**You can follow happenings at the Park via Facebook**

**<https://www.facebook.com/FREFAustralia>**