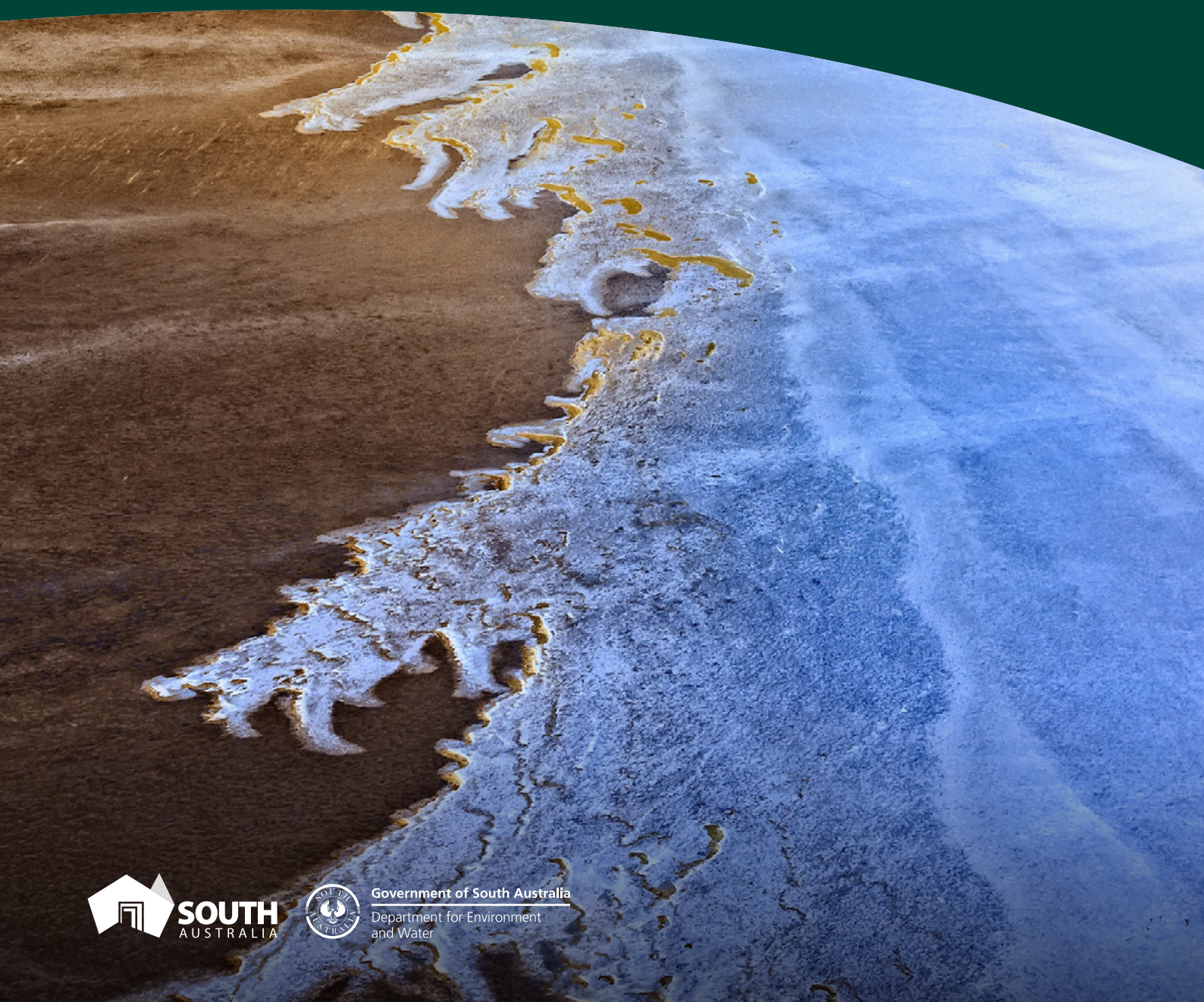




Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park

Management Plan 2024

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park
Elliot Price Conservation Park



Government of South Australia
Department for Environment
and Water

Minister's foreword

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park and Elliot Price Conservation Park protect a vast expanse of natural environment that is of profound significance to Arabana and Dieri people. The protection of these exceptional parks, set within a modified pastoral landscape, is critical for the sustainability of the Lake Eyre Basin, one of the world's largest internally draining arid-zone river systems.

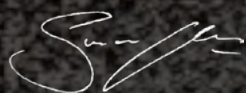
Travellers who venture to this remote arid landscape are rewarded with the stunning views of Lake Eyre/ Kati Thanda - the largest salt lake in Australia and one of its most iconic sites. A night under the stars at the lake's edge or a scenic flight to witness the lake in flood are truly exceptional experiences that remain on the bucket list of many.

Now more than ever it is critical that we protect these special places and respect the deep cultural and spiritual connections that have endured over tens of thousands of years and remain strong today.

Visiting and connecting to our national parks is important for all South Australians. It is vital that these places continue to be appreciated safely and respectfully for generations to come.

I acknowledge and thank all who contributed to the development of this plan. I particularly commend the Arabana community for their collaboration and strength of conviction in working with Government to protect their most significant cultural site and welcome visitors to appreciate their Country.

I am proud to adopt the management plan for Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park and Elliot Price Conservation Park.



Hon Susan Close MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Climate, Environment and Water

“You are welcome here. Please, respect this Country and look after it, just as we have for thousands of years”

Cultural Sensitivity Warning

Aboriginal people are warned that this publication may contain culturally sensitive material.

Developing this plan

The Arabana people were formally recognised as the native title holders over land including Elliot Price Conservation Park and most of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park in 2012. In the same year the Dieri people were recognised as native title holders over the eastern portion of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park.

The Arabana Parks Advisory Committee was established to progress the cooperative management of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park, Elliot Price Conservation Park and Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park by the Arabana people, and the South Australian Government. The advisory committee and the Arabana Aboriginal Corporation have had a lead role in developing this draft plan. The Dieri Aboriginal Corporation have been consulted and updated during the development of this plan.

In 2014, the Arabana Aboriginal Corporation released the *Arabana Wadlhu Ngurrku-Ku (For Healthy Country) Plan*. The Healthy Country Plan was developed to sustain the health and wellbeing of Arabana People and their Country. The ideas in the Healthy Country Plan have been used to shape this park management plan.

This plan has been in development for several years. People were first encouraged to provide input into the early development of a draft plan through the display of information in outback communities, a photography competition and the distribution of a discussion paper to stakeholders. These activities resulted in numerous written submissions, meetings, workshops and conversations with interested people and organisations. Formal public comment on the proposed draft plan was held between April and July 2024. All feedback received throughout this process has greatly assisted in the development of this plan.

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Directions for management

The Arabana Aboriginal Corporation provide advice to South Australia's Minister for Climate, Environment and Water on the management of their Country within the park through the Arabana Parks Advisory Committee. This co-management agreement acknowledges that Arabana people hold cultural authority to speak for their Country. It also lays the foundation for Arabana people to continue to have a leading role in the management of the parks on their Country.

In 2012, the Federal Court of Australia determined that the Arabana people were the Native Title holders of a large area of land encompassing Elliot Price Conservation Park and the lake portion of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park (Figure 1). This extensive legal process recognised in Australian law what Arabana people had always known - that they had always been connected this Country, and that their connection had remained unbroken since the arrival of Europeans.

The significance of this determination is that it gives Arabana people certainty, and a major influence on what happens on their land. Native title rights enable Arabana people to hunt and camp on their lands. They also have the right to negotiate with companies regarding any mining activities on their Country. It gives legal acknowledgement of what they have always known: this is Arabana Country.

Following the Native Title determination, the South Australian Government changed the name of Lake Eyre to Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda, and changed the name of Lake Eyre National Park to Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park. Kati Thanda relates to Arabana dreaming and is the name of the lake that was used by the Elders. The adoption of this Arabana name seeks to recognise, respect and celebrate the deep bond between Arabana people, their culture and their Country.

The Dieri people are the native title holders over the eastern portion of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park and hold cultural authority to speak for this Country. Management issues associated with Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda are the major focus of this plan. For this reason, the management of Dieri Country within Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park is not a major focus for this plan. The rights and aspirations of the Dieri people are recognised and will be respected during all management activities affecting their Country.

This draft plan sets directions for management and has been developed with advice from Arabana people. Its development is an important milestone for the Committee, and re-iterates the strong bond between Arabana people and their Country. This park management plan will help to achieve the vision that Arabana people have for their Country which is set out in the Arabana Wadlhu Ngurrku-Ku (For Healthy Country) Plan.

Dieri are currently working towards the development of a Healthy Country plan which will include the Dieri portion of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park. Any future park management activities on Dieri Country will be undertaken in consultation with Dieri and will align with their Healthy Country plan.

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park and Elliot Price Conservation Park are proclaimed under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. The Act ensures that the parks are highly protected and requires that they are managed to achieve the long-term conservation of natural and cultural values. It also enables the appropriate use, appreciation and enjoyment of parks. In addition, the nationally significant plants, animals and ecosystems within the parks are highly protected through the provisions of the Australian Government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The management of the nationally and internationally significant values of Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda is subject to the provisions set out in the *Lake Eyre Basin Intergovernmental Agreement Act 2001*.

Aboriginal cultural sites and features within the parks are protected through the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*. Protection extends to sites and features that are significant to Aboriginal tradition, archaeology, anthropology or history. It encompasses objects and sites that are registered, unregistered or not yet recorded.

Other heritage sites, such as fossil sites, are located in the parks. These are protected under the *Heritage Places Act 1993*, when designated as a State Heritage Place under that Act.

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park is subject to joint proclamation under section 43 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. As a result, Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park will continue to be managed primarily for conservation purposes while also allowing for approved activities associated with the exploration and extraction of mineral

and petroleum resources. These activities are subject to regulations set out in the *Mining Act 1971*, the *Petroleum and Geothermal Act 2000* and the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*. Mineral and petroleum development activities are not allowed in Elliot Price Conservation Park.

This draft plan seeks to provide a succinct overview of management arrangements, identify high level management objectives and outline key priorities for management. It is not intended to address every issue confronting the park or specify all strategies that will be undertaken. Rather, it seeks to be concise and engaging, supporting a flexible approach to management that maintains its relevance in the long term.

This is the first draft management plan for Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park and Elliot Price Conservation Park. Once adopted, the Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park Management Plan will meet the requirement for the development of a management plan for these parks, as specified under section 38 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. The plan's implementation will be led by the Arabana Parks Advisory Committee, relying on continued cooperation with the Arabana Aboriginal Corporation, the Dieri Aboriginal Corporation, the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board, the Queensland, Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments, park neighbours and volunteer groups. This approach will ensure that management of the parks is effective and complimentary to the management of the surrounding landscape and Lake Eyre Basin.

Vision for our Country and people

We are the Arabana knowledge keepers and protectors of country, language, culture and story working together.

Children are the future with care and control, loved by the parents, grannies and old. Their true potential is in our land, the excitement of new beginnings connect them to our sands.

Learning and acquiring respect by acknowledging the knowledge of our ancestors and their teachings, their understanding of our rich culture as explained to us by our Elders and striving to keep that culture strong.

This also means to keep our land healthy and language strong. All Arabana have the right to realise their full potential through country to achieve personal development where greatness can follow.

Arabana Wadlhu Ngurrku-Ku (For Healthy Country) Plan

Park significance and purpose

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park and Elliot Price Conservation Park are situated within one of Australia's most stunning and evocative landscapes. Rainfall events over the Australian interior are variable, and major rainfall events can transform the lake from a shimmering expanse of white salt to a massive wetland booming with life. This beautiful landscape and its spectacular transition often draws international attention, however the lake itself is just one element of a complex system with many layers.

A network of creeks, waterholes, rock outcrops, valleys and ranges extend north into the Simpson Desert and east into the Strzelecki Desert. These landscapes and features have profound significance to the Aboriginal nations of central Australia. Landscape features such as the sand dunes, gidgee trees, salt bush and grasslands have always been a central thread of song lines which tie Arabana people to their Country.

Kati Thanda Creation Story

Wilkuda was young male hunter who hunted a kangaroo. Wilkuda was told to take the skin back to the east and, east of Anna Creek, he threw the skin down. The skin then changed, becoming Kati Thanda. Wilkuda can still be seen as a boulder on the shore of the lake he made.

This land has always been cared for by Arabana and Dieri people. Knowledge of land management practices that maintain the health of Country is passed on through generations, ensuring the land can continue to flourish. The physical and spiritual landscapes of these parks remain interconnected, and inseparable from the physical and spiritual health of the traditional owners. Despite the devastating impacts of European settlement, Arabana and Dieri people have maintained their connection to this Country. They continue to assert their traditional responsibilities and progress their aspirations for their Country through these parks, and through the management of the wider landscape.

On site, there is no physical boundary or any obvious features to delineate these parks. They have the same purpose, similar values and are generally managed as one integrated protected area. Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park (1,349,126 ha) is South Australia's second largest national park. It is situated adjacent to the Oodnadatta Track, approximately 700 km north of Adelaide and 50 km north of Marree (Figure 1).

Elliot Price Conservation Park (63,451 ha) is situated on the southern edge of Lake Eyre (north) / Kati Thanda and is largely surrounded by Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park (Figure 1). The land that now comprises Elliot Price

Conservation Park was donated to the people of South Australia by Elliot Price of Muloorina Station in 1967, in order to provide long term protection of the land.

Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda (950,000 ha) is Australia's largest salt lake. With catchment spanning Queensland, the Northern Territory, South Australia and New South Wales, the lake lies at the heart of the Lake Eyre Basin. The Lake Eyre Basin is one of the largest internally draining systems in the world, covering 1.2 million square kilometres. At 15.2 metres below sea level it is also the lowest point of the Australian landmass.

In this arid environment, life depends on fresh water. From time to time, desert rains transform the desolate white expanse of the dry lake bed into a wetland thriving with life. These events ensure the wellbeing of Arabana people and their Country.

'Like blood in your body it keeps you alive, you need water in your country to keep it alive'

Uncle Syd, Arabana Elder.

During major flood events, the network of creeks and lakes come to life, stimulating large scale breeding events for fish, invertebrates and waterbirds. All species, some of which are rare or threatened, rely on these events. The arrival of floodwaters not only sustains the land – it is also one of the world's most impressive natural events and attracts visitors from all over the world.

'Water is life for everyone and must be preserved, we all have a responsibility for land and water management'

Uncle Dean Stuart, Arabana Elder.

The subsurface waters of the Great Artesian Basin are also key feature of this area. There are a number of mound springs within the parks which provide fresh water, supporting wildlife and a large number of endemic and relict species. The mound springs, and water more generally, is of deep cultural significance to Arabana people. Many Arabana dreaming stories are associated with the Great Artesian Basin, mound springs, Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda and the waterways that weave throughout this Country.

The parks are an integral component of Australia's desert landscape. The parks, together with Queensland's Munga Thirri National Park, and South Australia's Munga-Thirri–Simpson Desert National Park, Kalamurina Wildlife Sanctuary and Finnis Springs Station, form a large network of protected areas. Collectively, these areas support a broad range of habitats and vegetation types that provide scope for the broad scale movement of species. Conservation at this scale may assist species to adapt to a changing climate.

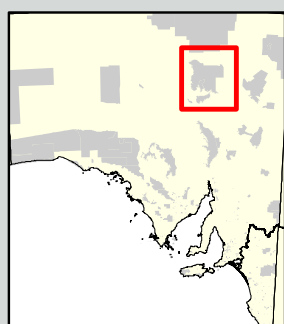
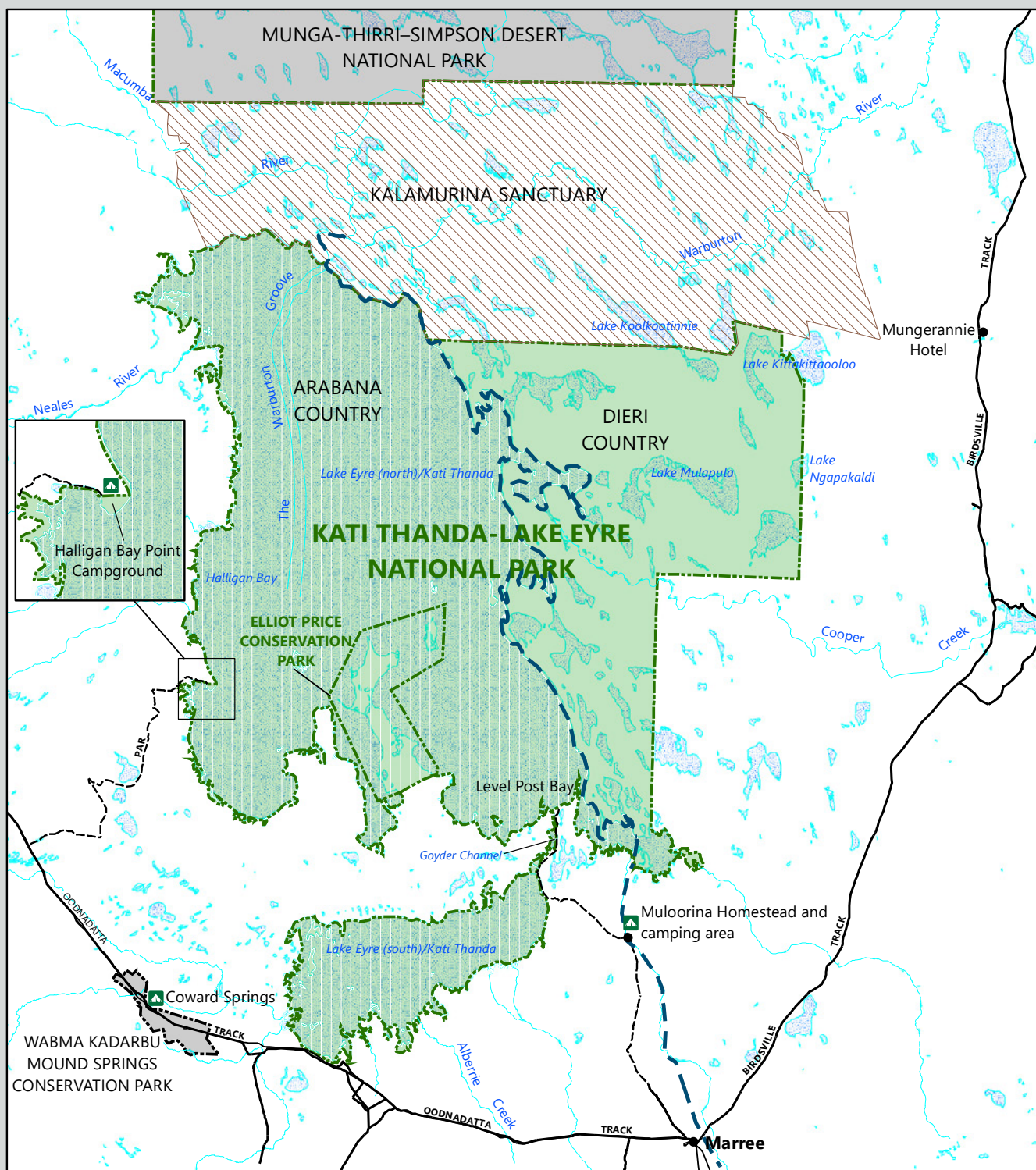
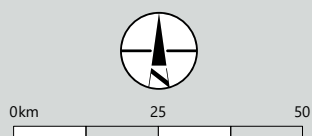


Figure 1

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park and Elliott Price Conservation Park



LEGEND

- Lake and watercourse
- Unsealed Road
- Public Access Route
- Campground
- Park boundary
- Other Protected Area
- Kalamurina Sanctuary (privately owned)
- Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda Restricted Access Zone
- Boundary between the Dieri Native Title area and the Arabana Native Title area



What are we looking after?

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park and Elliot Price Conservation Park protect:

- Arabana Country and Dieri Country, including objects, features and places where Arabana People and Dieri People are continuing their culture.
- Totemic species such as the Perentie. Bush tucker and traditional medicines, such as Thungka (bush tomato), Yalka (wild onion) and Ardikula mulga (apple). Bush meat such as Warrukathi (emu), Kadni (bearded dragon), Kungarra (kangaroo), Kapiirri (goanna) and Kalta (sleepy lizards).
- Landscape features that are central to Arabana culture including kutha ngarrawa (mound springs). The creeks, floodways, wetlands and lakes are also a central element of the Lake Eyre Basin and its ecology.
- An iconic nature-based tourism destination that provides people with opportunity to experience Arabana culture and enjoy magnificent scenery.
- Opportunities for Arabana people to develop new tourism ventures.
- South Australia's second largest national park which is largely free of any development. As such, it is particularly important for the conservation of natural values and the maintenance of broad scale ecological process.
- Kutha ngarrawa (mound springs) which are culturally, geologically and ecologically significant features of the region. There is a community of native species which is dependent on natural discharge from the Great Artesian Basin. This community depends on Kutha ngarrawa, and is listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.
- Needle wattle (*Acacia carneorum*) which is listed as vulnerable under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* as well as vulnerable in South Australia under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. The yellow burr-daisy (*Calotis lappulacea*), twiggie emubush (*Eremophila polyclada*) and hybrid twinleaf (*Zygophyllum hybridum*) are also listed as rare under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*.
- The Woma (*Aspidites ramsayi*), black-breasted buzzard (*Hamirostra melanosternon*), and yellow-bellied sheath-tailed bat (*Saccolaimus flaviventris*) which are listed as rare under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. The banded stilt (*Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*) and plains mouse (*Pseudomys australis*) which are also listed as vulnerable under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*.
- The endemic Lake Eyre dragon (*Ctenophorus maculosus*), as well as a suite of other lake endemic invertebrates.
- Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda has been designated as an 'Important Bird Area' by BirdLife International. It supports major breeding events for a large number of species. It is also an important feeding and stopover site for large numbers of migratory species protected under international treaties between Australia, Japan, China and Korea including the red-necked avocet (*Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*).
- The Lakes Kanunka, Pitikanta and Ngapakaldi (Tertiary Vertebrate Fossil Sites) state heritage place of palaeontological significance.



What are the challenges and opportunities?

Key challenges and opportunities in the protection and management of the parks are:

- Protecting sites and objects of significance for Arabana and Dieri people, many of which are unrecorded and in extremely remote locations.
- Preventing the loss of Arabana and Dieri traditional knowledge and the leadership that is offered by the Elders.
- Ensuring that the utilisation of meat, fish, bush tucker, bush medicine and solid fuel by traditional owners is enabled in a sustainable way.
- Facilitating opportunities for Arabana people to spend time, work, and develop sustainable business opportunities on Country.
- Ensuring that information and interpretation for visitors is engaging, up to date and reflective of the iconic status of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park.
- Enabling visitors to learn about the special landscape, animals, plants and Arabana and Dieri peoples' history and culture so they gain a greater appreciation of and respect for the Arabana and Dieri people.
- Providing a safe, sustainable and culturally appropriate experience for visitors while protecting cultural sites and the fragile environment. This can be particularly challenging during times of flood when visitation usually increases significantly.
- Understanding management actions required to maintain the health and natural function of creeks, floodways, wetlands and kutha ngarrawa (mound springs).
- Ensuring that park management programs such as pest animal management are strategic and extend beyond park boundaries where necessary.
- Understanding the effects of climate change and facilitating ecosystem resilience.
- Managing pest plants (particularly buffel grass) and pest animals (particularly cats, foxes, and large feral herbivores such as camels, donkeys and horses) across a large and inaccessible area.
- Protecting significant places and facilitating opportunities for research to contribute to scientific knowledge of species, communities and places within the parks.



Theme 1: Maintaining connection to Country

Arabana and Dieri people have always cared for this Country, and in return it has supported these people and nourished their complex cultures. The connection of Arabana and Dieri people to their Country has always been deeply spiritual and inseparable from their wellbeing. Maintaining and strengthening this connection to Country will continue to be critically important for the wellbeing of Aboriginal people and their Country.

Wellbeing has a broad and holistic meaning to Arabana people. It encompasses a healthy environment, healthy people, good education, strong family relationships and the continuation of cultural ceremonies on Country.

'For Aboriginal People, health does not just entail the freedom of the individual from sickness but requires support for healthy independent relationships between families, communities, land, water and spirit. The focus must be on spiritual, cultural, emotional and social wellbeing, as well as physical health'

Uncle Dean Stuart, Arabana Elder.

Maintaining family connections and relationships is an important element of Arabana wellbeing. Family relationships are fostered through working on local collaborations, meeting for community gatherings, and spending time on Country. Community leaders and Elders need appropriate opportunities to spend time with the community, and young people in particular. This is essential for sharing knowledge, maintaining traditional customs and practices, and teaching Arabana language.

Respectful communication between generations and towards Elders in the community is a crucial element of wellbeing as it enables the sharing of ularaka (Arabana knowledge). Ularaka includes Arabana culture and heritage, language and customs – all things that make up Arabana identity. It has been passed down from generation to generation from murra murra, the founding ancestral figure. Murra murra gave shape, story, lore and action to Arabana Country and people.

‘Ularaka connects people to the “here and now”, to each other and to Country over which we hold rights and responsibilities because we are the living descendants of the murra murra who formed Country’,

Arabana Wadlhu Ngurrku-Ku (For Healthy Country) Plan.

Connection to ularaka, known as abalga, is the second pathway to rights and responsibilities for Country. It dictates things such as the way actions are undertaken in the community and the roles that people take during cultural ceremonies. Ularaka and abalga are the main channels along which Arabana receive rights and responsibilities for Country. Understanding ularaka and abalga are the two central ingredients needed to make sure that the expectations of the ancestors are honoured, Arabana Country is healthy and Arabana culture is sustained.

‘We believe that our ancestors and our old people still live in Country, they are in the features, the rocks, trees and springs and by keeping our culture and language strong we are looking after them’,

Arabana Wadlhu Ngurrku-Ku (For Healthy Country) Plan.

Arabana social organisation, culture and language have undergone many challenges as a result of European settlement. However, Arabana people remain strong, and have worked hard to retain their culture and continue the use of Arabana language - an integral component of ularaka.

‘Language is central to our cultural identity, it forms the basis of how we think and understand Arabana culture and worldview’,

Arabana Wadlhu Ngurrku-Ku (For Healthy Country) Plan.

Continuing to apply and pass on cultural knowledge through language, stories, working on Country, and the practice of traditions is necessary to sustain Arabana connection to Country. As a result of native title determination, the traditional rights of Arabana and Dieri people over their Country are now formally recognised. On their Country, the respective traditional owners have the right to undertake activities including ceremonies, hunting, utilising resources, visiting and maintaining sites, and camping.

An important aspect of maintaining connection to Country is the sustainable use of natural resources, such as traditional food, medicine, solid fuel, and hunting and fishing on the land and water. It is necessary to develop protocols for these activities to ensure that hunting and gathering practices have a minimal impact on the parks and do not threaten species at risk.

The lake and lake bed in particular is of profound cultural significance to Arabana people and under Arabana lore must not be accessed without cultural authority. There are also many other culturally significant features and sites within these parks, many of which have not been surveyed or recorded. While many sites are protected by virtue of their remote location, they are susceptible to damage from visitors who may be unaware of their significance. Visitors to the park must keep to designated camping areas, day visitor areas and vehicle tracks. This provides visitors with an enjoyable experience of the parks, while ensuring protection for the significant cultural values associated with the lake bed. This also ensures that the lake surface and fragile arid vegetation communities are not incrementally damaged through the movement of visitors, their vehicles and their equipment.

Revision of visitor information and on-park signage is needed to communicate the significance of Kati Thanda for Arabana people to visitors, promoting greater appreciation and respect for Arabana culture.

Whilst there is no public access to the Dieri Country on Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park, their connection to Country remains just as strong. Dieri people aspire to develop Working on Country programs and work more closely with the National Parks and Wildlife Service on cultural heritage surveys and conservation initiatives such as pest plant and animal control. These goals and priorities will be further articulated through Dieri’s Healthy Country planning process.

Objectives and strategies

Ensure that the parks contribute to sustaining the health and wellbeing of Arabana people and their Country.

Recognise, protect, promote and build community respect for Arabana people as the traditional owners and custodians of Country.

- Pursue opportunities to establish and support Working on Country programs and commercial enterprises in the parks that generate employment for Arabana and Dieri people.
- Survey, identify and record priority Arabana cultural sites and objects of significance. Develop and implement strategies for the protection of sites under threat.
- Progressively revise signs and visitor information to welcome visitors to Country. Ensure this information utilises Arabana language, promotes a greater appreciation of Arabana culture, and celebrates the role of Arabana people in park management.
- Ensure that park management aligns with Healthy Country plans developed for Arabana and Dieri Country.



Theme 2: Looking after the land and water

Aboriginal people have always survived and flourished in Australia's arid interior because they understand and respect the power of the Country, the weather and the seasons. Looking after Country is a responsibility bestowed upon Arabana people and Dieri people by their ancestors. Through the passing of knowledge between generations, Arabana people and Dieri people have developed and sustained a deep understanding of their Country and their place in it.

Continuing this land management philosophy will ensure that Country is protected forever. The Arabana Parks Advisory Committee will advise the South Australian Government on the management of Elliot Price Conservation Park and the Arabana Country covered by Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park. The committee will respect past land management approaches and adopt a long term vision for sustainability. Traditional knowledge about water, bush tucker, medicines and the seasons will assist in decision making for the management of these parks along with contemporary science. Arabana members of the committee acknowledge that they speak for Arabana Country and Dieri speak for Dieri Country. Any park management issues associated with Dieri Country will be

referred to the Dieri Aboriginal Corporation for advice. Using traditional knowledge as well as scientific knowledge will result in wise decisions. In doing so, the intellectual property rights of Arabana people and Dieri people will be respected.

The parks are the central part of the Lake Eyre Basin, which stretches across large parts of South Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland, as well as a small part of western New South Wales. The Lake Eyre Basin overlays the larger Great Artesian Basin – one of the world's most extensive underground water aquifers.

Some of the islands within Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda are kutha ngarrawa (mound springs). Kutha ngarrawa are natural outlets for the waters of the Great Artesian Basin, where artesian pressure forces water to the surface. Some springs bubble up from the lake bed, causing deep soaks and a very boggy surface. Kutha (spring waters) and the often endemic invertebrate and fish species which occur within them are protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The *Recovery Plan for the community of native species dependent on natural discharge of groundwater from the Great Artesian Basin* (Fensham et al. 2010) has been developed to assist in their management and protection.

The groundwater of the Lake Eyre Basin is essential to the survival of the plants, animals, and ecosystems of South Australia's far north. Groundwater extraction is also an essential requirement for tourism, grazing enterprises, and economically important resource development activities across the Great Artesian Basin. Water extraction within the Lake Eyre Basin has the potential to influence Kutha, however further research is needed to better understand these impacts. Additionally, projected climate change scenarios predict that the far north of South Australia will experience a decline in average annual rainfall and an increase in average annual maximum and minimum temperatures. The reduced availability of water in the future may place further pressure on this finite resource unless properly managed.

The Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda landscape is a central theme in Arabana dreaming. Proposals to conduct earthworks, develop infrastructure or extract resources within the parks could impact on this landscape or damage other cultural values within the parks. The prevention or culturally sensitive management of impacts is of paramount importance. Notification protocols are in place to ensure that the Arabana Aboriginal Corporation and the Dieri Aboriginal Corporation are engaged prior to any future resource development activities. This ensures that Aboriginal cultural heritage values are identified and protected. Oil and gas exploration and production activities are subject to the provisions of the *Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Act 2000*. Mining activities are subject to the provisions of the *Mining Act 1971*. The provisions of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1998* apply in relation to activities that could damage, disturb or interfere with Aboriginal cultural heritage. The Advisory Committee will continue to cooperate with the Arabana Aboriginal Corporation, the Dieri Aboriginal Corporation, park neighbours, volunteers, visitors, tour operators, researchers and resource development companies within the Lake Eyre Basin in the event of any future licence applications.

Looking after Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park and Elliot Price Conservation Park requires a coordinated effort within South Australia, and across State and Territory borders. Many people and organisations across the Lake Eyre Basin need to be involved. A cooperative approach to land and water management is applied throughout the Lake Eyre Basin. At the national level, the coordination of activities is guided by the *Lake Eyre Basin Intergovernmental Agreement 2004* and the *Great Artesian Basin Strategic Management Plan* (Great Artesian Basin Consultative Council 2004).

The dune fields and sand plains within Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park are typical of the lower portion of the Cooper Creek system. Waterholes and riparian vegetation along the creek and its tributaries are particularly important for plants and animals. Six fauna species and two flora species of state or national conservation significance have been recorded within the parks (Appendix 1). The lake bed itself does not support vegetation, and much of the land areas of the park are inaccessible, so building knowledge

about flora and fauna has been difficult. It is likely that the inaccessible areas of the park support greater numbers of native flora and fauna than formal species records suggest.

As part of developing their Healthy Country plan, Dieri are interested in pursuing surveys to further understand the extent and condition of native flora and fauna on their Country.

Major vegetation communities within these areas include woodland, shrublands, and grasslands. Species include mulga (*Acacia anura*) with wild turnip (*Brassica tournefortii*), poached egg daisy (*Polycalymma stuartii*), buckbush (*Salosola tragus*), sandhill wattle (*Acacia ligulata*), narrow leaf hop bush (*Dodoneaea viscosa* spp.), spiny saltbush (*Rhagodia spinescens*), spinifex (*Triodia basedowii*), sandhill cane-grass (*Zygochloa pardox*), desert rattlepod (*Crotalaria eremaea*) and desert spinach (*Tetragonia eremaea*). In the wetter dune swales where water stands after rain are desert wetlands supporting swamp cane-grass (*Eragrostis australasica*) and saltbush (*Atriplex* spp.) Following significant rainfall, the sand dunes are transformed into a colourful wildflower garden with mass germination. Seed lying dormant during dry times explodes in a spectacular display of colour as the desert comes to life.

When full, the lakes become the linkage between watercourses to the north, south, east and west. Flood events are the only time the entire Lake Eyre Basin catchment connects, providing rare opportunities for native fish migration. Flood events can also trigger the establishment of unnaturally large populations of tyuwi tyuwi (silver gull) which predates upon the eggs and pre-fledgling chicks of the banded stilt. A management decision framework has been developed to guide the management of silver gull populations.

Floods may also trigger the spread of pest plants and animals such as feral pig (*Sus scrofa*), feral cat (*Felis catus*), domestic dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*), rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), camel (*Camelus dromedaries*), horse (*Equus caballus*), donkey (*Equus asinus*) and buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*). These pest species have the capacity to deteriorate environmental condition through competing for resources, predation, overgrazing, erosion and decreasing water quality. Land managers throughout the Lake Eyre Basin work together to detect the introduction of pests and to implement pest management plans. These plans seek to minimise the spread and impact of priority pests.

Madla yapa (dingo) (*Canis lupus dingo*), is an integral part of Arabana Ularaka and Dieri dreaming. The dog fence is situated to the south of the parks to prevent the southerly movement of wild dogs, where they are declared as a pest. Wild dog control is guided by the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* and *Landscape Regulations 2020*.

Many programs for the protection of Country from threatening processes are already in place. Within the park, land management activities are guided by this plan as well as the SA Arid Lands Regional Landscape Plan and the Arabana Wadlihu Ngurrku-ku Healthy Country Plan.



The development of a Dieri Healthy Country plan will help to guide any future park management activities on Dieri Country.

Monitoring of key cultural sites and rare or threatened species will be undertaken to ensure that management activities are effective and sustainable. Management activities will be adapted and refined as our understanding of threats and options to manage those threats improves.

Working on Country

The Arabana Ranger program was established in 2019. The National Parks and Wildlife Service and Arabana are working towards the development of a Memorandum of Understanding for working together on and off park in support of broad landscape scale management.

Dieri also aspire to establish a Working on Country ranger program. The National Parks and Wildlife Service will continue to communicate with Dieri as these aspirations progress in line with Healthy Country planning.

Objective and strategies

Ensure that the land and water within the parks are managed in a coordinated and sustainable way.

- Facilitate the continued participation of the Arabana people, Dieri people, State and Commonwealth government agencies, park neighbours, volunteers, visitors, tour operators, and researchers in park management activities.
- Continue to implement pest plant and animal management activities as a part of coordinated natural resource management and Working on Country programs across the broader landscape.
- Work in partnership with park neighbours to ensure that conservation, park management and natural resource management are undertaken in a coordinated way and with a strategic focus.
- Promote research and monitoring that improves understanding of the ecology of the parks, the Important Bird Area and rare or threatened species.
- Encourage the sharing of information that helps to develop an improved understanding of threats to the park and management activities required to achieve sustainability. Ensure that both traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge underpin wise decisions.



Theme 3: Welcoming visitors to our Country

From time to time, major rainfall events in Central and Northern Australia trigger one of nature's great events. Water begins to fill a meandering network of channels and creeks across the Lake Eyre Basin, flowing down the Warburton River, Diamantina River, Cooper Creek, and numerous other watercourses. Over the months following a major rainfall event, this water recharges an extensive system of lakes, wetlands and waterholes, ultimately reaching Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda.

In most years, Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda is an immense, sun-blasted saltpan that covers approximately 9,500 km² of South Australia's arid north. While it is a striking landscape in dry years, the arrival of the first pulse of water transforms this white expanse into a myriad of changing colours and fuels a wetland brimming with life. This spectacle attracts people from all over the world.

The Arabana traditional owners welcome visitors to their Country and want them to have a safe and enjoyable experience. Arabana people ask that visitors respect their culture, their Dreaming stories and the lore of their Country. Visitors can enjoy Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park in a range of environmentally sustainable and culturally appropriate ways.

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park has a lookout at Level Post Bay and some basic facilities for day visitors and campers at Halligan Bay Point Campground (Figure 1). There are no facilities for visitors in Elliot Price Conservation Park. Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda can also be seen from a roadside information bay outside the national park on the Oodnadatta Track at Lake Eyre (South)/Kati Thanda. There are accommodation options near the parks at Muloorina Station, Marree, William Creek and Coward Springs.

Access to the two visitor sites in Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park requires four-wheel drive, and is via public access routes through pastoral stations (Figure 1). Track conditions can be variable, and the Arabana Parks Advisory Committee aims to work with pastoralists and stakeholders to improve access routes. Visitors travelling by four-wheel drive are expected to be appropriately skilled and equipped for outback travel, and are expected to access information about track conditions prior to their visit. Vehicles are not permitted outside of the designated track network (Figure 1). The Halligan Bay Point Public Access Route and Halligan Bay Point campground are closed annually from 1 December to 15 March for public safety during the summer months when temperatures are extreme and present a high risk to travellers.



Public Access Routes may also be closed after rain as they are not designed to withstand use after wet weather, for other public safety reasons, for essential management, or for rehabilitative works. Visitors must also be aware that the parks are remote and isolated, with minimal facilities, no drinking water, and subject to extreme weather conditions.

All commercial tours on the parks must operate under a commercial tour license issued by the Department for Environment and Water. License applications that seek to share Arabana and/or Dieri cultural information and knowledge are subject to a separate approvals process that includes seeking authorisation from the relevant Aboriginal Corporation.

Several businesses offer opportunities to experience this spectacular landscape from the air. Low flying aircraft can diminish the enjoyment of people seeking a remote experience, and can disturb nesting birds. Aircraft are not permitted to land within the parks. However, the airspace over parks is not controlled by the South Australian Government. A 'fly neighbourly' agreement has been established with tour operators to ensure that scenic flights do not detract from the experience that land based visitors are seeking, and to minimise the disturbance of wildlife.

Care for the welfare of visitors as they pass through Country is a responsibility that has been bestowed upon Arabana leaders by the Elders. Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda is a sacred place for Arabana people, and a central theme in Arabana dreaming. It is known in Arabana lore to be a highly dangerous place that should not be entered without appropriate cultural authority.

It is also a remote, vast and dangerous landscape, whether dry or in flood. Many people have died when they have

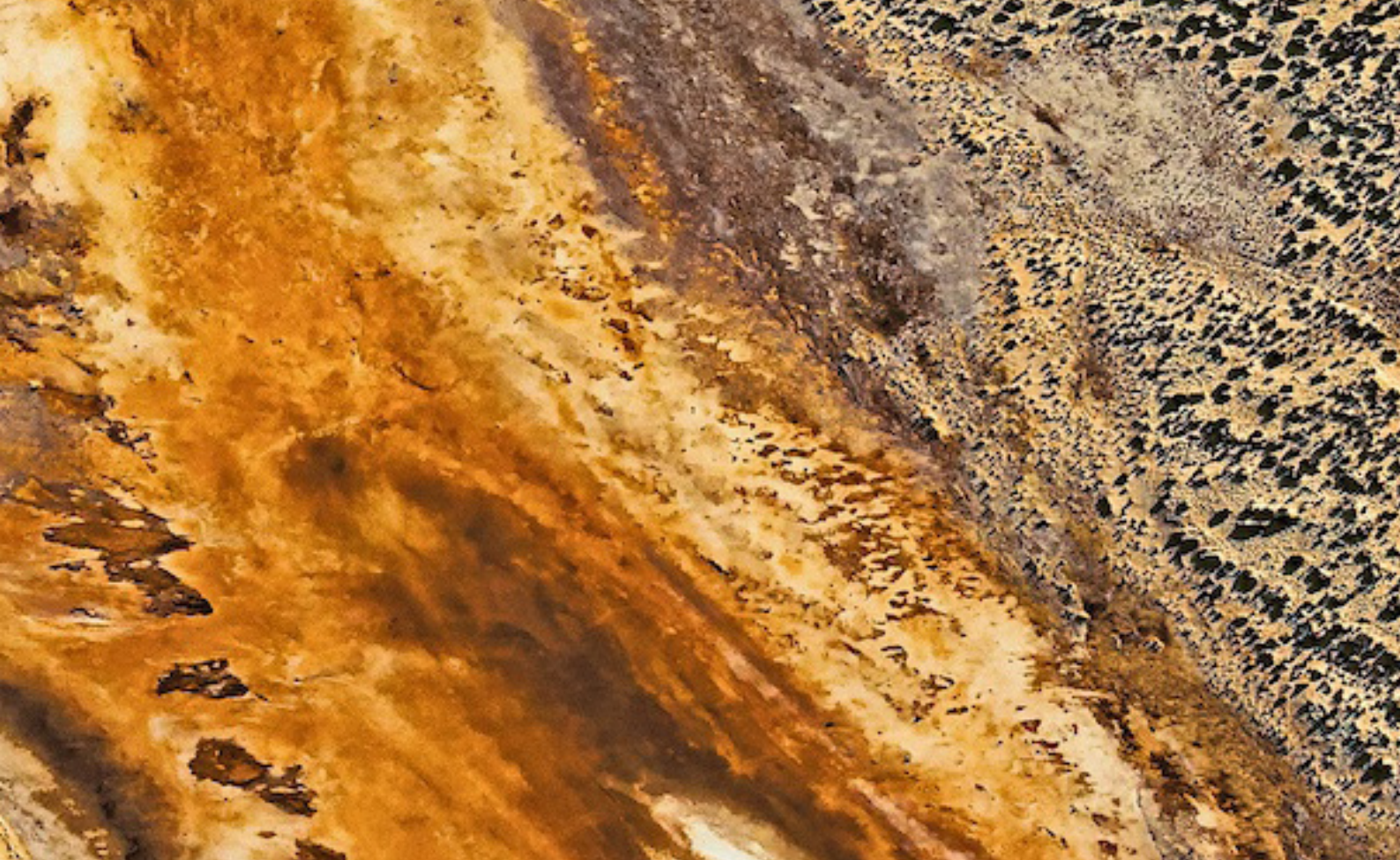
become lost or stranded in this landscape, which is hundreds of kilometers from medical services and largely without telephone range. It is also important to note that footprints and tyre tracks damage the fragile salt crust. This damage scars the landscape and remains visible for decades.

For these reasons, recreational walking, swimming, driving and boating on Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda are not permitted. Visitors will be encouraged to respect the wishes of Arabana people by viewing the lake from the designated visitor nodes, or from the air.

Arabana people and the National Parks and Wildlife Service acknowledge the need for walking, driving or boating access to Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda for essential management or emergency response activities. Applications to access Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda for commercial filming and photography, scientific research, and commercial tours will be considered on a case-by-case basis. A permit may be granted for activities that have been determined to be culturally appropriate by the Arabana Aboriginal Corporation.

Due to the remoteness and size of Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda, ranger patrols will be combined with public education to achieve compliance with access restrictions. Education will focus on raising awareness of Arabana culture, promoting culturally appropriate ways to experience Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda, and sharing the reasoning behind these access restrictions.

Some sites within and adjacent to the parks contain information about park access and the cultural and ecological significance of the parks, however this requires updating. Through improvements to onsite interpretation



there is an opportunity to build a better understanding of Arabana culture, promote the role of Arabana people in park management, achieve voluntary compliance with access restrictions, and promote the environmental significance of these parks. The establishment of new tourism experiences that celebrate Arabana culture, such as guided tours, can create jobs for Arabana people, build respect for Arabana culture, and provide visitors with a more enriching experience.

Whilst there is no public access to the north-eastern portion of Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park, Dieri people also aspire to educate people on the cultural and environmental significance of their Country. Opportunities to share information through off-park interpretive material and in partnership with fly-over tour operators will also be supported for both Arabana and Dieri people.

Objectives and strategies

Promote a deeper appreciation of the parks and Arabana culture.

Provide opportunities for safe, sustainable and culturally appropriate visitor experiences.

- Develop and implement a strategy to communicate the cultural significance of Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda and the rationale for access restrictions that apply to walking, driving and boating on Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda.
- Establish Halligan Bay Point as an iconic destination through the development of improved facilities and interpretation that engages visitors in all aspects of the park. This will include an emphasis on Arabana culture, the natural values and ecology of the parks, and the environmental issues affecting the Lake Eyre basin.

- Support the establishment of cultural tourism and nature-based tourism enterprises by Arabana people.
- Through the established 'fly neighbourly' agreements, continue to ensure that scenic flights are compatible with cultural access restrictions and protocols, environmental values, and the remote and natural experience enjoyed by visitors.
- Pursue opportunities to further share and celebrate the significance of Arabana and Dieri Country via educational material on and off park.
- Work with existing tour operators, the South Australian Tourism Commission and the Tourism Industry Council of SA to ensure that tourism opportunities around Lake Eyre/Kati Thanda are culturally appropriate and continue to thrive.



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Appendix

Fauna and flora species of conservation significance

Fauna and Flora Species	Common Name	Conservation Status	
		EPBC Act (Cwlth)	NPWA (SA)
FAUNA			
Aspidites ramsayi	Woma		Rare
Calidris ferruginea	Curlew sandpiper	Critically endangered	
Cladorhynchus leucocephalus	Banded stilt		Vulnerable
Hamirostra melanosternon	Black-breasted buzzard		Rare
Pseudomys australis	Plains mouse	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Saccolaimus flaviventris	Yellow-bellied sheath-tailed bat	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
FLORA			
Acacia carneorum	Needle wattle	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Roepera hybrida			Rare

Arabana language guide

Arabana language	English translation	Pronunciation guide
Arabana	Traditional Owners of Country	u-roo-bunna as in 'up'
Arru urkari	Hello everyone	
Kadni	Bearded Dragon	
Kalta	Sleepy Lizard	
Kapirri	Sand Goanna	'cup-arri'
Kararra	Wedge-tailed Eagle	'rr' as in 'trill' or a rolled 'r'
Katarunka	Corella	
Kidlangkilda	Galah	
Kudlawaa	Nitre Bush	
Kungarra	Kangaroo	'ng' as in sing
Kutha	Water	'Koo-tha'
Kutha Ngarrawa	Mound spring	'Koo-tha' and 'u- rr -awa' role the 'rrs' and 'u' as in 'up'
Kuti	Black Swan	'i' as in 'bit'
Madlayapa	Dingo	'ay' as in 'play'
Marangkarra	Spider	'ng' as in 'sing'
Marirri	Duck	'm' as in 'many'
Pirdali-nha	The Bubbler	'pur-dali-na'
Thari-Thari-nha	Little Bubbler	'th' tongue tucked behind top front teeth
Thidna	Foot	tongue at front of mouth 'td' sound.
Thidna mara	Frog	
Thirrka	Blanche Cup	
Thuka	Mother	
Thunti thunti	Willie Wagtail	
Ularaka	All that is Arabana	
Wabma	Snake	'a' as in 'above'
Wabma Kadarbu	Snake head (Mount Hamilton)	
Wadlhu Ngurrku-ku	Healthy Country	
Wakarla	Crow	
Warrukathi	Emu	'u' as in 'put' or 'oo'
Wudicari	Magpie	
Yatyaparra	Zebra Finch	'y' as in 'yell'

For further information please contact:

Department for Environment and Water. Phone Information Line (08) 8204 1910, or see SA White Pages for your local Department for Environment and Water office.

Recognition of Aboriginal Culture:

Aboriginal Australians have rights to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions. Please contact the Arabana Aboriginal Corporation to understand these rights in relation to the Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park Management Plan 2024.

Photography

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