



## TRIP REPORT

### Arkaroola, SA – 30 Aug to 6 Sep 2025

#### **Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> August – Day 1**

I left home about 8am ready for the trip, made my way to TWO WELLS, arrived about 9.30 am and met Brett about the same time. We made our way to the bakery and had pies and coffee for breakfast. A little later the rest of the crew arrived, Ian, Vanessa, Judy, Maggsy, and Kevin. We were getting ready to leave and then Brett said "Oh no I've left my clothes behind", so he went back home to retrieve said clothes. Afterwards we made our way to Jamestown for lunch, but on the way to Jamestown a certain toy kangaroo named Qantas left Maggs' car, flew a little way, and landed in the dirt. It was picked up and no damage thank goodness. After lunch we made our way to Yunta where we fueled up and aired down. Brett caught up with us at Yunta as well. Then we made our way to Waukaringa. We arrived at about 3.30pm, set up camp. I had a lazy tea pre-made by lovely Linda. We soon had a fire going as it was quite cold and windy. I had a cup of tea and went to bed to keep warm. Yours in 4wd,

***Chris***

#### **Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> August – Day 2**

Broke camp approx. 1000hrs. A short drive to the Victoria & Alma gold mine ruins, offering us great views of the previous night's camp site, the Waukaringa Hotel Ruins, 35kms north of Yunta, and abandoned in the 1950's. The mines had some interesting sites, like using a car body to shore up the wall to stabilise it and beautifully constructed sandstone walls and the old stone chimney.

Driving onwards we travelled on mainly good dirt roads with some corrugations, there were 2 stretches of bitumen trialling which offered some welcomed relief from the dust and bumps.

Lunch was had at a small roadside clearing before travelling on to Chambers Gorge where we secured a largish campsite almost adjacent from the dry river bed trek entrance to see Aboriginal rock art work. The towering escarpment made a wonderful backdrop to our campsite. We also found a fossilised rock close by.

***Judy***

#### **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September – Day 3**

With only 100km to travel today to reach Arkaroola, we had a lazy morning going for a walk up Chambers Gorge to see the Aboriginal rock art, about 1km walk. The walk was easy to moderate, the scenery very pleasant as we walked mainly along the dry river bed until we came upon a lot of rock art and the place where meetings and ceremonies were had in the past by the First Nations people. We returned back to the campsite, had an early lunch and then headed back on the dirt roads, kicking up plenty of dust (convoy stretched for 3.5km for 6 cars!) arriving in Arkaroola by mid-afternoon. Once we had paid, we headed down to the bush camping area and secured a great spot not too far from some flushing toilets. We all set up camp and then had nibbles and a campfire, followed by dinner and finished the evening around the campfire.



## TRIP REPORT

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#### **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September – Day 4**

A big day out today, heading initially west. We checked out the Pinnacles, stopping to take photos and appreciate the view. Then on to Bollabollana Spring where we found the parking spot but then had to walk along the creek bed to find the Spring itself. There was quite a bit of water and a couple of emus!

A turn off took us into Vulkathunha / Gawler Ranges NP, where we drove past some smelter ruins, and then Idninha, an outstation that was being done up for accommodation. We passed the Mainwater Well Campsite and availed ourselves of the use of their long drop before continuing on to the Oodnaminta Yards and then on to the Wurturpa Loop Track, leading us to Grindell's Hut for a late lunch. The terrain varied from winding creek beds to open areas to hilly and rocky areas. The track varied too with a couple of rough sections but mostly it was in good condition.

After exploring Grindell's hut and reading the story, we headed back up the Wurturpa Track before turning onto the Mount McTaggart Track and eventually onto the road into Arkaroola.

The day was finished by all of us enjoying the evening "Explore the Cosmos" experience where we viewed on a large screen whilst sitting in a comfortable lounge, various constellations in the universe via \$1.5m worth of telescopic equipment and software programs.

#### **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September - Day 5**

A quiet morning was had by most except Kevin who ventured on the 2 hour Mawson Spriggina Walk. Ian and I ventured up to the Arkaroola Village and had a very nice lunch there.

When the other 4 left for their various tours, Chris, Ian and I drove out and did the Station Back Track, a 5 km, 1 hour trip which had some more technical 4wding and included a rough steep track to the Telstra Tower giving superb 360 degree views.

When we got back to camp, Chris started the campfire for the evening and I baked a batch of scones to welcome back the afternoon travellers on their various adventures as detailed next.

#### ***Vanessa***

#### ***Ridgetop Tour Arkaroola Sanctuary***

Brett, Maggs and Kevin decided to go on the ridgetop tour they offer at Arkaroola.

We travelled in their open top 4WD, you're not allowed to take your own vehicle to prevent introducing weeds and plants not native to the area into the sanctuary to preserve the unique fauna. The tour was 4.5 hours in total, including a tea and lamington break at Sillers lookout. Maggs managed to sit in the front cabin, highly recommend if you suffer motion sickness, Brett and Kevin were in the rear, and if you find



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yourself in the open top I recommend you position yourself with one hand firmly holding onto something solid because as Brett found out when the vehicle was bouncing downhill on the very steep tracks everyone slides down the bench and the person at the front gets squashed.

The views of the landscape are spectacular taking in Mount Painter, Mount McGee and Crystal mountain amongst others including remnants of geysers, geothermal pools and 1.6 billion year old granites that predate the rest of the Flinders Ranges by a billion years. There's also fauna only found in the sanctuary pointed out to you.

The tour guide was very well informed making the trip interesting and informative not to mention the breathtaking views from Sillers lookout with its sheer cliff face overlooking the 1000m deep Yudnamatana Gorge.

Reg Sprigg was instrumental in creating the sanctuary, even while under pressure from mining companies trying to find Uranium there, he was employed as a consultant for one of the mining companies who bulldozed the tracks you travel on now during the tour. Reg got wise to this and pointed the mining company to all the places he wanted tracks for tourism in the future. The future of the sanctuary is safe now after being protected by an Act of Parliament in 2012 from future mining.

Highly recommend all to do it if you find yourself at Arkaroola.

**Kevin**

#### ***4 Hour Flight***

An absolutely wonderful experience seeing the Ridge Top, Mawson Plateau to the Eastern part of Lake Eyre. We saw the Strzelecki and Tirari Deserts and where the water is covering the road then on to North Madigan Gulf, Hun Peninsula to Bert Bay, returning via Lake Eyre South, Oodnadatta Track and the Vulkathunha Gammon Ranges.

**Judy**

#### **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September – Day 6**

Another day exploring Arkaroola commenced by leaving the Village and heading towards Balcanoona, but turning off just after the Arkaroola Homestead. First point of call was Lively's Find, an old mine site that we could wander around. Back in the vehicles, we moved on to Jasper Twins where some took the 4WD track to the top of a hill whilst others drove through a creek bed. We passed the Welcome Mine and worked our way to Stubbs Waterhole – no water in it at present. We had morning tea and stretched our legs before heading through Claude's Pass and down to Arkaroola Waterhole for lunch. A few wandered down the creek and found a small amount of water. The creek is very picturesque, with almost cliffs on one side and flatter terrain on the other.

Back in the vehicles, we retraced our tracks for about 4km before heading on another track out to Paralana Hot Springs, the only nuclear heated spring water in the world. Signs suggest that we do not stay too long. We still had a good look around and met briefly the people in the three cars that we had followed along the track. Ian got out his temperature gun and checked the water!



## TRIP REPORT

### Arkaroola, SA – 30 Aug to 6 Sep 2025

As luck would have it, we left before they did and made our way back to Stubbs Waterhole before stopping again to stretch our legs and for an ice-cream (Ian and I were trying out our new freezer and it worked very well), a group photo and then we headed back to our campsite.

A short while later, one of the cars that was at Paralana and followed us out, popped by our campsite to see if we had lost a towing hitch. It turned out to be Judy's so she was very lucky that we left before they did, especially as Judy was Tail End Charlie for the day so none of us would have noticed the towing hitch disappearing.

#### **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September – Day 7**

With Arkaroola pretty well explored, we packed up camp and headed off by 10am, kicking up more dust to Balcanoona before heading to Nepabunna via the Italowie Gorge. Some beautiful scenery along this stretch of the road and only one emu shaking its tail feathers at us! We passed through Iga Warta then on to Copley where we aired up and a few of us spent a bit of money at the Bush Bakery. It was then on to Aroona Dam for lunch (with Judy and Maggsy making a brief return to Copley to successfully find a missing tyre dog for Judy's van) – a lovely spot with toilets and an eating area, although we just got out our camp chairs and found a shady spot.

On to Hawker for fuel and then the back road (dirt) to Cradock where we set up for the night in the generous area at the back of the pub. A lovely dinner was had by all of us and then we settled in to watch the footy on the big TV (Cats victorious over the Lions) as we all gradually headed back to the swag / tent / campers for the night.

#### **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September – Day 8**

After a reasonable night at the Cradock Hotel camp site (a front came through with some wind and rain), we packed up in the morning and said our goodbye's to Maggsy who headed off to visit a friend in Port Pirie. Next to leave was Chris who was heading straight home. The rest of us stayed in convoy stopping at the Jamestown Bakery for morning tea. Kevin and Judy left the convoy just short of Two Wells whilst Brett, Ian and I stopped at Two Wells to use the facilities before heading home.

All in all, it was a great trip, lovely scenery, great company and no significant mishaps!

***Vanessa***