

PHOTOWORDS GUIDE TO
ARKAROOLA
Northern Flinders Ranges



Grant Da Costa

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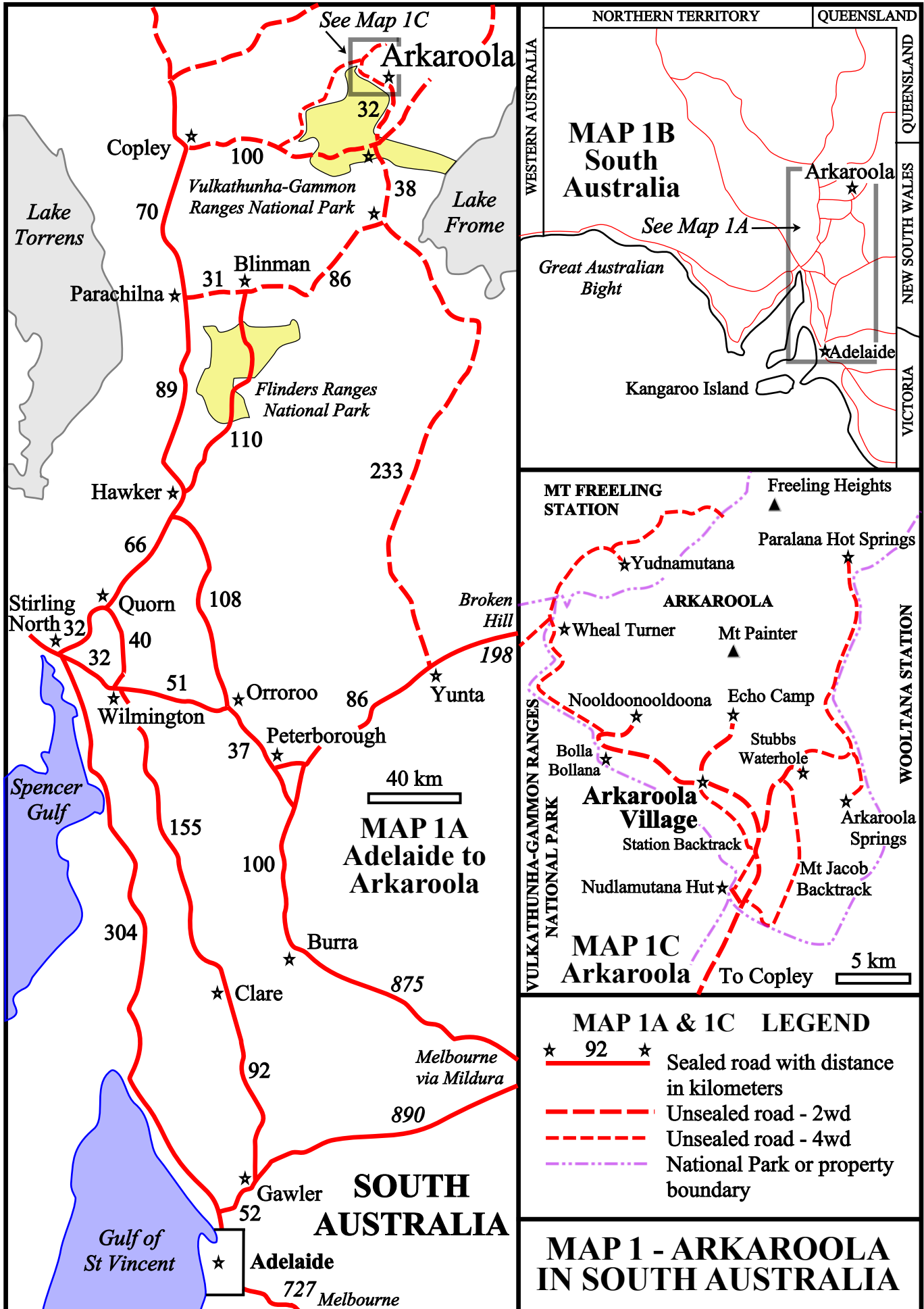
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Part One – Key Maps, Activity List and Legend



List of Locations, Drives and Walks

Abbreviations

Activity: L = Location; D = Drive; W = Walk
Walk & Drive Grades: E = Easy; M = Medium; H = Hard
Walk Grade: T = On Track; NT = No Track;
Drive Grade: 2 = 2WD; 4 = 4WD; 4-HC = 4WD High Clearance
Time: HD = Half day; FD = Full day
Features: S = Scenery; H = Historic; G = Geological; A = Aboriginal
 Distances are in kilometres. Page number follows the Activity name.

1. From the Village

01-W	Sitting Bull 24	T	Easy	4 km	1.5 hr	S G
02-W	The Pinnacles and Sitting Bull 25	T	Easy	3.8 km	1.5 hr	S G
03-W	Mawson – Spriggina Circuit 26	T	Easy	8 km	3 hr	S G
04-W	Acacia Ridge Trail 27	T	Easy	5.8 km	3 hr	S G
05-W	Griselda Hill 29	T(90%)	Med	1 km	1 hr	S

2. The Echo Camp Road

06-L	Echo Camp 30					S G H
07-D	Arkaroola Waterhole and Echo Camp 30	4WD	Easy	18.8 km	2+ hr	S G H
		2WD		15.4 km	1+ hr	S G H
08-W	Arkaroola Waterhole Gorge 32	NT	Easy	2 km	1 hr	S
09-W	Echo Camp Waterhole 33	NT	Easy	2 km	1.5 hr	S
10-W	American Gap 33	NT	Easy	3.5 km	2 hr	S
11-W	Radium Creek and Coulthard Lookout 34	NT(60%)	Med	10.5 km	4.5 hr	S
12-W	Mt Painter 35	NT	Med	14.5 km	7 hr	S

3. The Umberatana Road

13-L	Bolla Bollana Copper Smelter 36					G H
14-D	Bolla Bollana and Nooldoonooldoona 37	2WD		27.4 km	HD	S G H
15-W	Bolla Bollana Waterholes and Gorge 39	NT	Easy	1.5 km	1 hr	S
16-W	Nooldoonooldoona Waterhole etc 39	NT	Easy	1.5 km	1 hr	S
17-L	Wheal Turner Copper Mine 40					G H
18-D	Wheal Turner Copper Mine 41	4WD	Easy	41.0 km	HD	S G H
19-W	Wheal Turner Range 42	NT	Easy	750 m	45 min	S G H
20-W	Blue Mine Creek Lookout 42	NT	Easy	3 km	1 hr	S
21-D	Wheal Turner and North Well Loop 44	4-HC	Easy	14.1 km	45 min	S H

4. The Arkaroola Road

22-D	Arkaroola to Nudlamutana 45	4WD	Easy	24.9 km	HD	S G H
		2WD		27.2 km	HD	S G H
23-W	Kingsmill Falls 48	NT	Easy	750 m	30 min	S H
24-W	Oppaminda-Nudlamutana 48	T	Med	15.2 km	7 hr	S G H
25-D	Station Backtrack 49	4-HC	Med	13.7 km	1 hr	S

5. The Paralana Road

26-D	The Paralana Road to Stubbs Waterhole 50	2WD		24.8 km	HD	S G H A
27-W	Bararranna Waterholes 51	T	Easy	2 km	1 hr	S G
28-W	Bararranna Gorge 52	NT	Easy	4 km	2.5 hr	S G
29-W	Bararranna Gorge Circuit 53	NT	Med	7 km	5 hr	S G
30-W	Bararranna Walking Trail 55	T	Easy	7 km	3 hr	S G H
		T(75%)	Med	9 km	4 hr	S G H
31-W	Kingsmill Creek and Tillite Gorge 56	NT	Med	10.5 km	4 hr	S G
32-W	Stubbs Waterhole and Arkaroola Creek 57	NT	Easy	2.5 km	1.5 hr	S G
33-W	Arkaroola Creek and Tillite Gorge 58	NT	Med	11.5 km	4.5 hr	S G

34-L	Paralana Hot Springs 59						S G
35-D	Paralana Road to the Hot Springs 59	4WD	Easy	75 km	FD		S G
36-W	East Painter Lookout 61	NT	Easy	4 km	2 hr		S
37-W	Paralana Gorge 62	NT	Easy	1.5 km	45 min		S
38-D	Mt Jacob Backtrack 62	4-HC	Med	36.3 km	HD		S G

6. Yudnamutana and Beyond

39-L	Yudnamutana Copper Mine & Smelters 63						G H
40-D	Yudnamutana Mine and Smelters 64	4WD	Easy	67.6 km	FD		S G H
41-W	Freeling Heights 66	NT	Med	9 km	6 hr		S

List of Maps 4 to 13

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04	Arkaroola Village	33
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Legend for Maps 4 to 13

LEGEND FOR MAPS 4 TO 13	
★ 92 ★	Sealed road, distance in kilometres
---	Unsealed road - 2wd
---	Unsealed road - 4wd
----	National Park or property boundary
~~~~~	Creek
.....	Walking track or marked route
.....	Walking route - no track or markers
▲	Peak
•	Waterhole or other feature
⬠ 13 ⬠ 25 ⬠ 24	Location 13; Drive 25; Walk 24
⬠ 24 ➔ ⬠ 24 ←	24 starts here; 24 turns back here
⬠ 24 ⬠ 24 ➔	24 ends here; 24 starts and ends here
⬠ 24 — ⬠ 24 —	24 direction of travel; 24 up and back



Another widespread plant so characteristic of the ranges is Porcupine Grass *Triodia irritans*. Walkers soon discover the appropriateness of the name because the razor-sharp tips of this grass break off on contact and remain lodged under the skin. Yet the pincushion-like clumps of this grass are wonderfully photogenic and a rocky red hillside dotted with bright yellow tufts is a sight to behold.

*Right: Porcupine Grass *Triodia irritans* in the headwaters of Yudnamutana Creek (Drive 40).*

One of the most photogenic plants of them all, and quintessentially Australian, is the bizarre-looking Grass Tree *Xanthorrhoea quadrangulata*. Its dark, stumpy trunk with crown of stiff, grass-like leaves and perhaps a tall flower spike, adorns some of the mountain tops and ridges, growing in the rockiest, driest, hottest and most exposed spots to be found. The presence of a few of these can turn a good photo into a great one.



*Above: Grass Trees *Xanthorrhoea quadrangulata* flowering on the summit of Griselda Hill (Walk 5). The Gammon Ranges lie in the background of the image at right.*

Another plant that walkers will become all-too-familiar with is White Tea-tree *Melaleuca glomerata*. It grows in the usually-dry creek beds and in places forms dense thickets that are a hindrance to progress.

The most spectacular of all the flowers is the Sturt's Desert Pea *Swainsona formosa* which flowers following heavy rain. The best place to see it is on the eastern plains of Arkaroola, often growing beside the road in the most inhospitable country imaginable.

*Right: Sturt's Desert Pea *Swainsona formosa*, East Painter (Drive 35).*







*Sunset on Griselda Hill, & moonrise, from the caravan park.*



*Never camp in creek beds.*

Note that there are no dump facilities. The nearest is at Leigh Creek which is 5 km south of Copley (see Map 1A) and 135 km to the west of Arkaroola, so dump before you come. Emptying of toilets into the septic system is strictly prohibited as it destroys the bacteria needed for processing the waste, so please use the toilets in the ablution block.

In addition to powered and unpowered camping sites within the caravan park, there are over 200 unpowered sites scattered along Wywhyana Creek in approximately 300 ha of bush. Do not camp directly under tree branches (alive or dead) as Eucalypts

are prone to dropping branches even in still conditions. These sites also use the ablution block in the caravan park, a short walk away up the bank of the creek.

There are a couple of factors to take into account when choosing whether to camp along the creek or in the caravan park. The caravan park has little shade so in hot weather the creek is probably the better choice. In winter the creek can be a frost hollow whereas the caravan park gets the early morning sun so is probably the better choice.

Never camp in creek beds, no matter how tempting. Flash floods do occur, even when not raining much locally. Vehicles have been lost.

Powered/unpowered prices per vehicle are: \$29/\$22 per night for 2 persons; extra adult \$11/\$11 per night; extra child \$5/\$5 per night. Single adult: \$18/\$14 per night.

You can check the rates here (or confirm them with Reception by email or phone):  
[www.arkaroola.com.au/rates.php](http://www.arkaroola.com.au/rates.php)

## Camp Fires

*The Fire Danger Season in the Flinders Ranges generally runs from 15 October to 30 April.*

Fires are permitted only in the caravan park and camping area. They are totally prohibited during fire ban periods and fire ban days. Enquire at Reception for details. Please use the fire rings provided and extinguish all fires before departing your site, even if returning later.

## Reception, Hours of Business and Service Details

### ...Reception and Tour Booking Desk

Reception hours are 7 am to 5:30 pm seven days a week. Any queries after this time can be made at the bar. Motel check-in is after 2 pm. Checkout no later than 10 am. Guests departing prior to 7 am are asked to settle accounts before 5:30 pm on the previous day. Credit cards are accepted.

### ...Restaurant and Bar

The Native Pine Restaurant is open for breakfast (7 am to 9 am), lunch (12 am to 2 pm) and dinner (6 pm to 8 pm). Bookings for dinner are essential and must be made at Reception prior to 5 pm. The Pick and Shovel Bar is open from 11 am daily (the coffee is great, too). Take-away purchases are available.



on the walk – it describes the interesting geology and vegetation as you go, and can be obtained from Reception or downloaded off the Internet here:

**[http://www.arkaroola.com.au/documents/mawson_spriggina.pdf](http://www.arkaroola.com.au/documents/mawson_spriggina.pdf)**

A more up-to-date version with a better map can be downloaded off the Internet here:

**<http://www.walkingtrailssupportgroup.org.au/flindersindex.htm>**

## Features

The walk ambles up the gently-rising Mawson Valley, alongside a pretty tributary of Wywhyana Creek. In a year of good rain and with the strange-looking Curly Mallees flowering, the valley is alive with birdsong. Cliff-topped ranges line the first part of the walk while later on there are good views back down the valley from the higher ground approaching Sitting Bull.

Sitting Bull was named by geologist Douglas Mawson (later Sir Douglas, of Antarctica fame) in 1945. It consists of pale-coloured quartz and feldspar and is in fact a much eroded remnant plug of molten granitic rock which was forced up from below through many thousands of metres of overlying sediments around 450 million years ago. Okay, but it's also photogenic and makes a good destination for this short, easy walk.



*The walk ambles up the gently-rising Mawson Valley, above a pretty tributary of Wywhyana Creek.*

## Access

The walk starts at Arkaroola Village Reception.

## Walk notes

Note that the track markers show the distance remaining to go on the full Mawson-Spriggina circuit (03-Walk), of which this walk is only a section. The markers start at 8.0 km.

From Reception, walk west along the sealed road towards the motel units. The foot track begins at the end of the road and is signposted *Mawson Valley Walking Trail*. The track is nicely constructed and well graded. It winds north-west along the slopes above a tributary of Wywhyana Creek.

At the 6.4 km mark the track crosses the creek and ascends a spur from which there is a good view of Sitting Bull ahead. Sitting Bull is reached at the 6.0 km mark. It is worth continuing a bit further to a second outcrop, at which point you are high enough to look back through the rocks and down Mawson Valley as far as Griselda Hill.

Retrace your steps to the start of the walk.

*The track ascends a spur from which there is a good view of Sitting Bull ahead.*

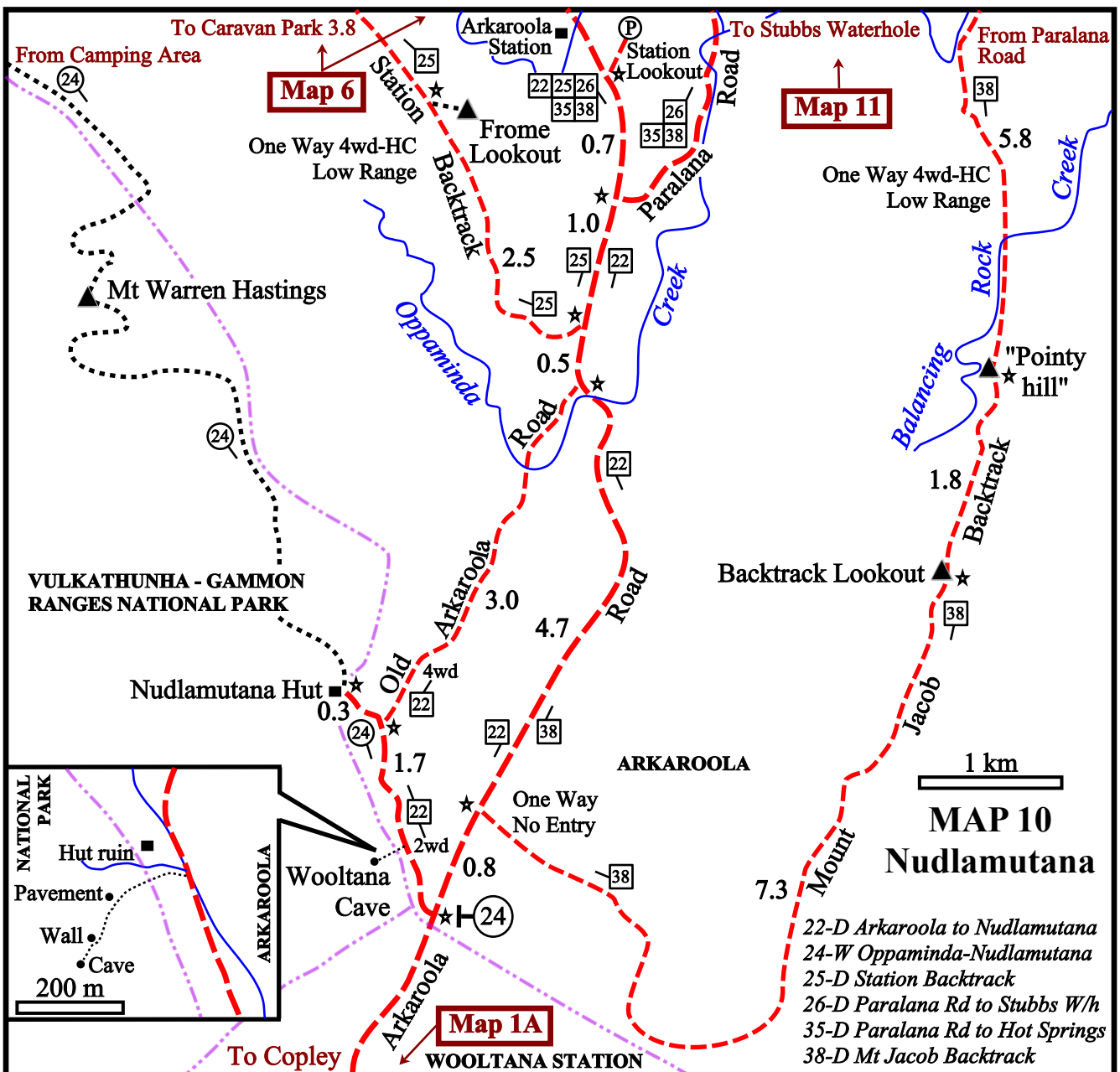


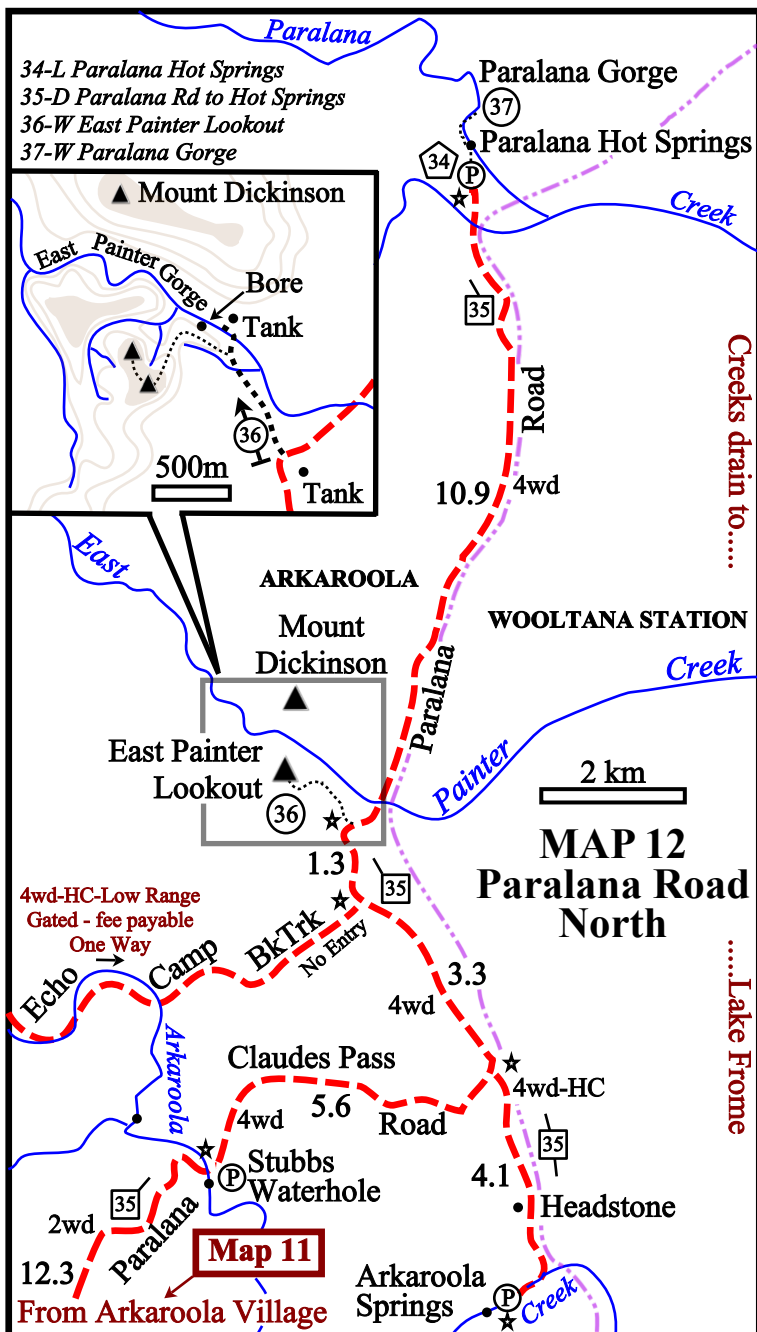


- +1.1 **14.1 Junction. Proceed straight ahead** (the road on the right is the Old Arkaroola Road, signposted *Arkaroola Village* – it is the return route for 4WD).
- +0.3 **14.4 Turning circle** and end of the road at **Nudlamutana Hut**. The hut is in the National Park and is used for holiday rental so is not open to the casual visitor. Drive back to the previous intersection.
- +0.4 **14.8 Turn left** (4WD) along Old Arkaroola Road towards *Arkaroola Village*.
- +3.0 **17.8 Turn left** onto Arkaroola Road to return to the Village.
- +0.5 **18.3 Station Backtrack (25-Drive) starts here** and can be taken to return to the Village. The signpost is hidden by bushes and easily missed. It says *Very steep and rough and rocky. Low range essential*. Otherwise, **proceed straight ahead** to return to the Village.
- +6.6 **24.9 End** of the drive back at **Reception**.

#### Drive notes for 2WD

- 0.0 Reception.** Drive back out along the Arkaroola Road (Map 6).
- +4.2 **4.2 Park** on the side of the road and wander across to read the plaque on the **monument to the Paterson family** (Griselda Sprigg's parents) acknowledging their contribution to the upgrading and re-routing of Arkaroola's critical access road. The low knoll provides pleasant views of Paterson Pass and the old Camel Yards.
- +0.1 **4.3 Turn left** into a parking area just past the **Greenwood Camel Yards. 23-Walk begins here**. Have a look around the rustic yards which were restored in memory of Bentley Greenwood





- +3.0 **15.3 Gate.**
- +2.6 **17.9 Turn right** (4WD-HC only) (Map 12) along the road signposted Arkaroola Springs 4 km.
- +1.8 **19.7 Headstone** on the right.



Martin Pudney visited Arkaroola in the summer of 2005, arriving on 13 January. His abandoned vehicle was found on the Echo Camp Backtrack (see Map 12) by another visitor later the same day. The police were notified, commencing a search the next day. Pudney's mummified body was found the day after that (15 January) by an Arkaroola employee searching on a motorbike. His body was 6 km away from his vehicle, which was not broken down and was stocked with water and camping gear. Nor was there any sign of foul play, trauma or disease. Tests showed he died on or around 14 January from exposure to hot and dry temperatures of 40 degrees. He was found on the surface of sand and rock which would have acted like a form of oven. Low humidity, high temperature, strong sunlight and the effects from the heated sand would have resulted in the slow cooking of the body⁽⁵⁾.

Arkaroola Springs.

- +1.3 **21.0 Turn right** on reaching the banks of Arkaroola Creek, signposted Arkaroola Spring 1.2 km.

- +1.0 **22.0 End** of the road under shady Red Gums, with high mountains ahead. Arkaroola Springs is an easy 200 m walk up the gravelly creek bed. It is set at the base of a sheer cliff. There are lots of Tillite boulders made up of glacial rock that looks like fruit pudding. Walk back along the creek bank under a fine grove of Red Gums for a different perspective of the area.

**Drive back to Paralana Road.**

- +4.1 **26.1 Back** on the Paralana Road.



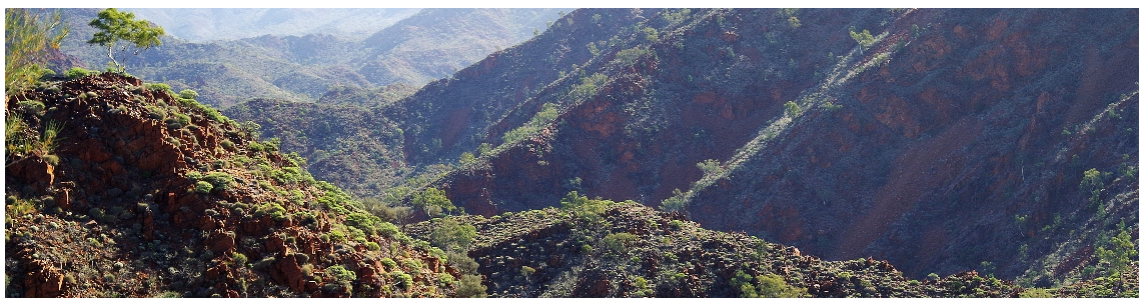




Above: Mt Dickinson & headwaters of East Painter Creek.  
Below: East Painter Creek empties onto Frome Plains.  
Below that: Emu Bush (*Eremophila* sp.).



Camel Poison. It is listed as a vulnerable species nationally and endangered in South Australia. The species is not at all like a desert plant – it grows very fast and has extremely soft wood.



East  
Painter  
Gorge

### Access

The walk starts at the junction of the Paralana Road and the East Painter Bore track. To get there, follow 35-Drive to the 30.7 km mark.

### Walk notes

Start by walking NNW up the old East Painter Bore track, as it heads towards East Painter Creek. After 700m the track descends and crosses a creek gully then ascends steeply for 100 m to a high point at GR 478 519 (from there it descends towards the bed of East Painter Creek). Leave the track at this point and head up the spur to the left (north-west).

The first of the two summits, a rocky peak with a scree slope, can be seen to the south-west.

The spur quickly becomes well-defined. Favour the right hand (north) side to ensure you see the lovely views into East Painter Gorge as you ascend.

The spur levels out in a small saddle (GR 476 520) with a low, rocky knoll on the right. It then swings away from the gorge and heads south-west. The ascent to the first summit (at GR 474 516) is up shattered rock, with great views over the ranges and plains along the way.

After soaking up the scenery from the top, walk north down to a saddle then up onto the slightly lower second summit (GR 473 519). There are a few eucalypts about, real survivors and very photogenic. If you keep going for a bit beyond this summit, to where the terrain steepens, you can get a great view into the deep, shattered gully to the west of the peak.

Between the two summits are some weird-looking skinny trees that appear totally out of place. They are lumbered with the equally weird botanical name of *Codonocarpus pyramidalis*, otherwise known as the Slender Bell Fruit or