



# Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage Area

## Executive Officers Report



Emma, Olive & Dan Rosendahl

2015 was a massive year for the Willandra Lakes and Mungo NP. It has been a year of major changes and forging of partnerships. Mungo Man, under the direction of the OEH Heritage Division has

moved from the ANU to the National Museum of Australia's Keeping Place, the first step on his journey home. The 3TTGs have formed an Aboriginal Advisory Group through an open election process and a replica of the famous fossil trackways now leads visitors into the new entrance of the Australian Museum in Sydney.

The tone of the year was set early with the Science and Repatriation forum jointly organised by NPWS Heritage Section and Heritage Division in February. The forum saw the coming together of some 70 scientists, Traditional Owners and NPWS Staff to discuss the future of research in the Willandra and the return of Mungo Man and his kin. This meeting enabled all parties to express their passion for what makes the Willandra significant on the global and national stage, and it highlighted that everyone was ready to reconstitute the advisory bodies. The overwhelming response from the forum was to reform a 3TTG advisory group and reconstitute a new World Heritage Advisory Committee.

This was a big task and we succeeded in establishing formal Aboriginal representation for the Willandra in November. Numerous meetings and forums were held to ensure that as many people as possible could have a voice in setting up this group. The outcome was an open, community election in November which resulted in the first elected 9 members of the WLRWHA Aboriginal Advisory Group. Congratulation to Ernest (Narkie)

Mitchell, Ivan Johnson, Trish Johnson, Dawn Smith, Joan Slade, Keith Hampton, Mary Pappin, Patsy Winch and Barry Pearce. A mix of new and old faces in the Advisory Body who had a successful first meeting in December to form their Terms of Reference and identify clear goals and a group vision stating '*We respect one another, we're the role models for the young ones following in our footsteps*'.



WLRWHA Aboriginal Advisory Committee  
Back L to R Keith Hampton, Ivan Johnson, Barry Pearce, Ernest Mitchell, Front L to R Dawn Smith, Mary Pappin, Joan Slade, Patsy Winch & Trish Johnson

A personal highlight was the inaugural Willandra Wisdom Walk in partnership with Arts Mildura. The Walk involved 14 international artists including our very own Daryl Pappin and local Aboriginal artist Ricky Mitchell. They commenced a three World Heritage Site walk in remote areas of the Willandra Lakes, including some 20km on Top Hut Station and Mungo National Park. The walkers then went onto Japan to walk the Kumano Kodo pilgrim trail and Valcamonica Rock-art Site in Italy. Daryl describes the beauty of the experience in further detail later in the newsletter.

More big news goes to Michael Ockwell OA, former Chair of TSAC, and Martin Westbrooke MOA, former TSAC member, for being awarded the Order of Australia and Medal of Australia respectively. They were named in the Queen's Birthday Honours list for their long standing contribution and dedication to the Willandra Lakes. I take this opportunity to congratulate them both on behalf of NPWS Heritage Section and Willandra Team. Thank you both for your dedication.

Research blossomed in 2015 with Dr Nicola (Nikki) Stern, La Trobe University, being successful in obtaining a hugely competitive ARC discovery grant to conduct survey and excavation within the southern Mungo Lunette. Nikki will elaborate in the 'Field Journal' in this newsletter. Also, Aaron Fogel, a PhD candidate at Griffith University commenced preliminary surveys on outer Arumpo and Lake Garnpang. Aaron is supervised by Michael Westaway and his research will work both in Mungo National Park as well as Top Hut Station. In summary it will identify the best combination of geophysical instruments to identify a range of site types common in the Willandra.

Without strong partnerships with the WHA landholders and their support for our various programs, we would not be able to conduct various research projects or programs like the Willandra Wisdom Walk. I extend my gratitude to all the WHA Landholders and look forward to developing new, exciting programs with them in 2016.

Thank you to everyone who gave their time, support and commitment to the WLRWHA over 2015. My first year as Executive Officer was brilliant due to your efforts. None of what was achieved would have been possible without your unwavering support and commitment. I look forward to working with as many of you as possible in 2016.

Dan Rosendahl, Executive Officer

## *NPWS Area Managers Report*



Jo Gorman

2016 is underway and will bring new opportunities and challenges. In this report I will reflect on some key achievements and milestones for Mungo National

Park (MNP) in 2015.

In 2015 we welcomed Dan Rosendahl as Executive Officer for the World Heritage Area. Dan has shown a strong commitment to working collaboratively with the park's team and the many stakeholders for the Willandra Lakes. I look forward to continuing to work closely with Olwen, Carla, Dan and his team in 2016.

MNP was host to a number of special events including NAIDOC Day, Palimpsest – Wisdom Walk and

Opening, and the Western Branch Aboriginal Network meeting. Each of these events showcased MNP/ Willandra Lakes Region as a very special place. Elders from the Barkandji/Paakantji, Mutthi Mutthi and Ngiyampaa tribal groups joined together to provide a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony and clearly communicate the importance of MNP and the Willandra Lakes Region to a broad audience. The repatriation of Mungo Man has taken significant steps in 2015 with forums and meetings occurring off park. Repatriation will continue to be a key program for 2016 and is likely to see park management initiatives resulting.



Mary Pappin Jr & Audrina

In September I joined other staff, 3TTG Elders and younger family members as invited guests at the official opening of the new entrance and Crystal Hall at the Australian Museum in Sydney. The new entrance ramp to the Museum features engravings of the child's footprints from the 20,000 year old Mungo Trackway. The official party included the Premier and Deputy Premier – both were very responsive to

the speech by Mary Pappin Snr and the message she gave to all in attendance to get out of the noise and pollution of Sydney and visit Mungo National Park! The Museum is planning to continue to engage with the Elders and community members from the Willandra Lakes to develop new displays to tell more stories from this region.

If the Premier or other guests take up the opportunity to visit Mungo NP they will be able to experience and appreciate the new initiatives and maintenance works completed in 2015. Work on the historic Mungo Woolshed and precinct has continued. Skylights have been replaced and field staff have completed the reconstruction of the underground tank. The tank is adjacent to the new ramp which provides improved access to the shed. Interpretive signage has been installed in the woolshed. Signage at the 'Walls of China' has also been revamped. A new 40km walking/ cycling track has been well utilised since it was opened in September.

A lot of work at Mungo NP is behind the scenes and does not relate directly to visitors – fire management,



pest control, biodiversity surveys, cultural site protection and a range of asset maintenance have important outcomes and keep staff and contractors busy throughout the year.

The management of MNP and the Willandra Lakes involves a lot of people and each year brings some changes. In August we farewelled Colin Charles who resigned from his Mungo NP Field Officer position. Colin was a dedicated and long term employee at Mungo NP. Congratulations to Ernest Mitchell who has recently commenced his employment as a temporary field officer. Also we welcome back Discovery Co-ordinator Tanya Charles who returned to Mungo after an absence of 6 months following major surgery.

The passing of well-respected Barkandji Elder Uncle Ray Lawson has touched us all. Ray has been involved with Mungo and the World Heritage Area for many years. In March he joined the Elders to welcome the artists for the Wisdom Walk. That evening he played his guitar and sang around the fire at Mungo for the last time.

Finally, I'd like to congratulate Michael Ockwell AM and Emeritus Professor Martin Westbrooke OAM on their 2015 Australia Day medals. I'd also like to acknowledge and congratulate the newly formed Willandra Aboriginal Advisory Group and also the Barkandji Native Title claimant group on the successful determination.

Jo Gorman Area Manager, Lower Darling Area

## *Mungo Joint Management Executive Officers Report*



*Warren Clark*

In Late January I went to Toorale N P and was involved in a reburial project with Michael Westaway and Badger Bates. NITV and ABC Catalyst filmed the reburial and presented a story of Traditional Owners, Scientists and NPWS Staff working closely to recover some of

the lost stories from the past.

During May, we had the Regional Aboriginal Network meeting at Mungo NP. About 16 Aboriginal staff from this region attended. This year, the state Aboriginal Network meeting will be held at Depot Beach, South Coast from the 8th-10th March. Some 250 Aboriginal Staff are expected to attend.

Wednesday every year we celebrate NAIDOC at Mungo NP. The 2015 celebration was a big day with about 250 people attending including a bus load from Melbourne. We managed to feed the masses, Emu, Johnny Cakes, Kangaroo Tail Soup and Sausages. Daryl and I are now in the process of planning the 2016 event and will soon establish a steering committee to progress this further.

*Below are photos from NAIDOC celebrations 2015*



I also assisted Field Staff with burial protection works at Euston National Park.

The new WLRWHA Aboriginal Advisory Group met in December and are enthusiastic to work towards Joint Management and have asked to have it on the Agenda at the next meeting. No doubt this will be a big year.

I'm also seeking NPWS /OEH people interested in playing cricket against the World Heritage Landholders in October/November...maybe. We hold the Shield!

Warren Clark, EO Mungo National Park



# Field Journal

During 2015, the Mungo Archaeology Project continued its investigation of the history of human settlement in the Willandra Lakes, extending its systematic documentation of archaeological traces and their geological context to the Joulni sector of the lunette. Daryl Pappin, the WLRWHA Community Projects Officer, accompanied researchers on a reconnaissance of the southern most part of the lunette during the Easter break.



*Picture 1*

This involved a meandering walk from Red Top tank to the tip of the lunette to inspect the sediments and archaeological traces exposed on the surface of the lunette and in the walls of the deep gullies that cut through the lunette's lake-ward edge. Baked sediment hearths with associated scatters of animal bones, termite heat-retainer hearths, clusters of stone artefacts and grindstones were recorded.



*Picture 2*

Later in the year, a mapping drone was flown across the lunette to obtain high- resolution digital images of the lunette surface. These images will be used as a basis for mapping the geology and archaeology found during systematic foot survey. They will also provide a baseline for monitoring the impact of erosion on the lunette over the next 4 years.

Foot survey work was postponed until the digital images have been prepared and a basic stratigraphic framework established for the northern part of the study area. This freed up time to develop new data

entry routines for documenting archaeological features, designed to run on touch screen tablets running android. Illustrated glossaries, to assist with data entry, are embedded within the modules.



*Picture 3*

Initial geological work focused on describing the sequence of sediments exposed in the walls of the deep gullies, in the vicinity of the Mungo/Joulni boundary fence. This is where the foot survey work will commence in 2016.



*Picture 4*

Nicola Stern, Department of Archaeology and History, La Trobe University.

Her colleagues in this research are Zenobia Jacobs and Colin Murray-Wallace from the University of Wollongong and Simon McClusky, Ian Williams and Tim Denham from the Australian National University, and Rainer Grun from Griffith University.

## Figure captions

*Picture 1.* Emily Dillon, a PhD student from ANU and Daryl Pappin, the WLRWHA Community Projects Officer, inspecting the geological layers exposed in a small residual during field reconnaissance in April 2015.

*Picture 2.* A dense scatter of flaking debris exposed on the surface of the Mungo lunette.

*Picture 3.* In the northern part of the Joulni area, gullies provide good exposure through the sequence of geological layers.

*Picture 4.* Deep gully studied during fieldwork in the winter of 2015.



# Mildura Palimpsest Biennale



In April 2015 I participated in an international journey with Curator, Jonathan Kimberley and Logistics Manager Danielle Hanifin from Arts Mildura involving

Australian local artists and international artists from Europe and Japan visiting three UNESCO World Heritage sites. The Journey began at Mungo NP and then on to Japan to walk the Kumono Kodo UNESCO world Heritage Trail, and Valcamonica Rock Art site in Northern Italy. We finished the Italy part of the journey in Venice attending the three day Venice Biennale.

The bush symposium at Mungo National Park and Artists installations at Mildura Palimpsest Biennale #10 was a great way to finish this part of the journey.

Starting the journey with the inaugural Willandra Wisdom Walk at Mungo with the traditional owners, Mutthi Mutthi, Barkindji/Paakantji and Ngyiampaa was a special and moving experience for many of the artists. This project has great potential to become an iconic long-term program for WLRWHA and Mungo NP. the Walk, enabled people from all over the world to experience Mungo in a totally different way and engaged them with Traditional Owners to talk about country and how to look after and protect country. A priceless experience. The great support and input from National Parks and world Heritage staff was incredible and greatly appreciated and also the Australian Government Working on Country Program for supporting me.

(Many Pictures are courteous of Mildura Palimpsest Biennale #10.)

Daryl Pappin, Community Projects Coordinator





