

# Desert Parks Bulletin

No. 651 – 28 September 2020

## **ALERT: COVID-19 travel and border restrictions easing**

Travel within South Australia is now largely unrestricted. People are free to visit most regional areas, and travel within South Australia is a great way to support our regional communities and economies.

A pre-approval process is now in place for travellers wishing to enter South Australia. The Cross Border Travel Registration should speed up the border crossing process and provide certainty for people who want to enter SA. Check SA COVID-19 restrictions at <https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/restrictions-and-responsibilities/travel-restrictions> before you travel. If you are travelling from interstate, check the COVID-19 travel restrictions at <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/covid19-restriction-checker/domestic-travel>.

Campsites and accommodation within South Australia's national parks are open. Bookings are now available [online](#) and through our [booking agents](#).

Visitors are reminded that social distancing rules still apply in SA, and park visitors must consider these restrictions when making bookings.

- Do not visit if you are unwell
- Maintain social distance of 1.5 metres from each other where possible
- Do not exceed 1 person per 2 square metres (indoors and outdoors)

It is important that campers and other park visitors are self-sufficient, and carry their own cooking, cleaning and personal hygiene products with them.

Visitors must continue to follow [SA Health directives](#) on social distancing and comply with relevant [limits on gatherings](#).

Please respect other campers and park visitors by keeping a safe distance and practicing good hygiene.

For more about visiting parks during COVID-19 go to [www.parks.sa.gov.au/know-before-you-go/covid-19-faqs](http://www.parks.sa.gov.au/know-before-you-go/covid-19-faqs)

More information about COVID-19: [www.sa.gov.au/COVID-19](http://www.sa.gov.au/COVID-19)

South Australian COVID-19 Information line: 1800 253 787

You can also download the official government "Coronavirus Australia" app in the Apple App Store or Google Play, or join the WhatsApp channel on iOS or Android.

## **Safety in the Outback**

Outback daytime temperatures are hovering around the low to high 20°Cs, and night time can be sub zero. If you still have essential in the Outback, you should bring appropriate clothing, ensure your vehicles are properly prepared and equipped for outback travel and any emergencies or delays. Take extra water, food and fuel supplies. Ensure good communications equipment, either HF Radio or Satellite Phone and an EPIRB. Ensure you notify a responsible person, such as a family member, of your plans prior to travelling into remote areas, and seek local advice.

If you attempt driving in sandy conditions and get bogged, do not attempt to get the vehicle out without ensuring 4WD and hubs are engaged, tyre pressures are decreased and sand is removed from the path of the tyres. If you become stuck, do not leave your vehicles to walk for assistance as this can have fatal consequences.

## **Speed limits**

**Check road and weather bulletins and local conditions before travelling into the Outback.** Speed limits of 40km per hour apply within all parks. For up to date public road information outside of National Parks, please call the Transport SA Road Condition Hotline on 1300 361 033 or visit the Transport SA web site on <http://www.dpti.sa.gov.au/OutbackRoads>

## **Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park**

**ALERT:** It is important that campers and other park visitors are self-sufficient, and carry their own cooking, cleaning and personal hygiene products with them.

**Halligan Bay Point Public Access Route – Open to 4WD.** It is a bush track, not a road. Drive with caution along the entire track as the landscape is fragile and the track will deteriorate with the number of vehicles using it. Please drive to track conditions. Driving on the Lake surface is an offence and dangerous. **Trailers and caravans are not recommended.**  
**Level Post Bay Public Access Route – closed due to public safety.**

**Muloorina Station is closed due to flooding.**

## Tallaringa Conservation Park

Online park bookings or a Desert Parks Pass is required, as well as a tourist access permit to access this area from the Department of Defence. Details can be found at <http://www.defence.gov.au/woomera/permit-tourist.htm>

## Innamincka Regional Reserve and Malkumba-Coongie Lakes National Park

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**ALERT:** Innamincka Regional Reserve has had two large flood events so far this year resulting in significant damage to tracks and campgrounds. Where tracks are open please observe caution at washouts, creek crossings and where water is ponded on the track. Please remain on tracks at all times.

Please note that chainsaws and fire wood collection is prohibited in Innamincka Regional Reserve and Malkumba-Coongie Lakes National Park, with no wood fires permitted at Malkumba-Coongie Lakes National Park. Bring firewood with you and take your waste material home or deposit it at the Innamincka township refuse site.

**Coongie Track to Malkumba-Coongie Lakes National Park – Closed due to rain**

**15 Mile Track– Closed due to rain**

**Cullyamurra Waterhole – Open to 4WD – Drive to conditions**

**Burke’s Grave – Open to 4WD – Drive to conditions**

**Queerbidie – Open to 4WD – Drive to conditions**

**Policemans – Closed due to rain**

**Kings Marker – Closed due to rain**

**Ski Beach Campground – Closed due to rain**

**Wills Grave – Closed due to rain**

**Minke Waterhole Campground – Closed due to rain**

**Old Strzelecki Track (on Innamincka Regional Reserve only) – Closed due to rain**

**Bore Track North – Closed due to rain**

**Bore Track South – Closed until further notice**

**Walker Crossing Public Access Route – Closed due to rain.**

## Witjira National Park and the Munga-Thirri–Simpson Desert Reserves

**ALERT:** It is important that campers and other park visitors are self-sufficient, and carry their own cooking, cleaning and personal hygiene products with them.

**Pedirka Public Access Route – Open to 4WD – Drive to track conditions**

**Witjira National Park – Open to 4WD – Extreme caution at ponded water, washouts and corrugations. The tracks were recently graded however some visitors have driven directly after rain and have chopped up the tracks. Please drive slowly over these rutted sections.**

**Rubbish tips are located 3 kilometres east and west of the Dalhousie campground or at Birdsville for disposal of rubbish.**

Check local conditions before travelling into this area. See the National Parks website at [www.parks.sa.gov.au](http://www.parks.sa.gov.au) for more information.

Wood fires are not permitted in Witjira, with the exception that wood fires are still permitted at Mt Dare. This does not apply to the Munga-Thirri–Simpson Desert reserves in South Australia and wood can be carried through Witjira to be used in the Munga-Thirri–Simpson Desert reserves.

**The Dalhousie airstrip is closed to public use.**

**Binns track is closed indefinitely between Mt Dare and Old Andado. The track has deteriorated due to extreme dry weather and high volume of traffic over the past two years leading to deep and dangerous rutting. Travellers wishing to access the Binns track from Mt Dare to Old Andado will need to detour via New Crown station.**

**Annual Grading: The 4WD tracks at Witjira and the PARs of the Oodnadatta Track are graded annually by an earth moving contractor in May and June of each year.**

**Pink Roadhouse (Ph: (61 8) 8670 7822) – Agent for the Desert Parks Pass. Provides diesel and unleaded fuel, accommodation, food and groceries, meals, minor repairs, tyres, travel supplies, and alcohol.**

**Mt Dare Hotel (Ph: (61 8) 8670 7835) – Agent for the Desert Parks Pass. Provides diesel and unleaded fuel, accommodation, meals, hot showers, minor repairs, camping, travel supplies, alcohol, and phone cards available for travellers. Satellite phones are available to hire from Mt Dare Hotel for trips across the Munga-Thirri–Simpson Desert**

**Munga-Thirri–Simpson Desert - Open to 4WD - Extreme caution at ponded water, washouts and corrugations.**

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**ALERT:** The Central Land Council has advised that the Colson, Madigan and Hay River Tracks are closed in the Northern Territory for the remainder of 2020.

Please ensure 4WD is engaged and that you reduce tyre pressures while in the desert to minimise cutting up the tracks. Carry extra fuel reserves as up to 50% more fuel may be used currently than a normal desert crossing.

**The use of trailers in the Simpson Desert is strongly discouraged. Caravans and motorhomes should not be used.** Serious damage can be caused to vehicles and the environment, and difficulties are likely to result.

**Warburton Crossing Public Access Route – Open to 4WD – Drive to road conditions**

**Colson Track – Northern Territory section closed until further notice.**

### Condition updates

As conditions change a further update bulletin will be issued. For further information on SA Desert Parks and Far Northern South Australian road and track access, please call Desert Parks on (61 8) 8648 5328 or the Transport SA Outback Roads hotline on 1300 361 033.

Alternatively contact local Police where applicable for condition updates. For travel communications, contact the Australian National 4WD Radio Network Inc on (61 8) 8287 6222.

### Fight the Bite - a health warning from SA Health

Mosquitoes can be active around waterbodies in northern South Australia.

Mosquitoes are not only a nuisance but some can spread serious disease such as Ross River virus (RRv) and Barmah Forest virus (BFv) when they bite (symptoms of RRv and BFv can include joint pains, rash, fever, fatigue or muscle pain).

There is NO CURE and NO VACCINE to protect against these mosquito borne diseases. The only known and effective way to reduce risk of mosquito borne disease is to prevent mosquito bites.

If you are a visitor, or if you live in northern South Australia, it is important that you protect yourself, your family and friends against mosquito borne disease by Fighting the Bite. Key strategies include:

- **Covering up** – wear long, light coloured, loose fitting clothing (mosquitoes can bite through tight clothes like jeans)
- **Apply personal insect repellent containing DEET or Picaridin** (avoid using on babies and toddlers and ALWAYS read and follow instructions on the label first).
- **Ensure insect screens cover openings** in holiday houses, boats, caravans or tents.
- Cover sleeping areas or beds with **mosquito nets** if necessary.

For additional strategies and information about how to **Fight the Bite** and protect against mosquito borne disease visit [www.health.sa.gov.au](http://www.health.sa.gov.au)

## On-line park entry and camping bookings

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**ALERT:** Limited mobile reception exists across the Outback. Please book prior to leaving where possible.

From 1 June 2017, entry for Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park, Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park, Innamincka Regional Reserve, Malkumba-Coongie Lakes National Park, Witjira National Park, Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre National Park and Tallaringa Conservation Park will need to be booked through the online booking system.

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*While every attempt has been made to provide up to date information in this bulletin, all travellers are responsible for ensuring that they obtain accurate and detailed information and are properly equipped and prepared for all emergencies prior to travelling into remote outback areas. Privacy, Disclaimer, Copyright*