

NEWSLETTER

Outback Communities Authority
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Old Ghan Heritage Trail Gets a Refresh

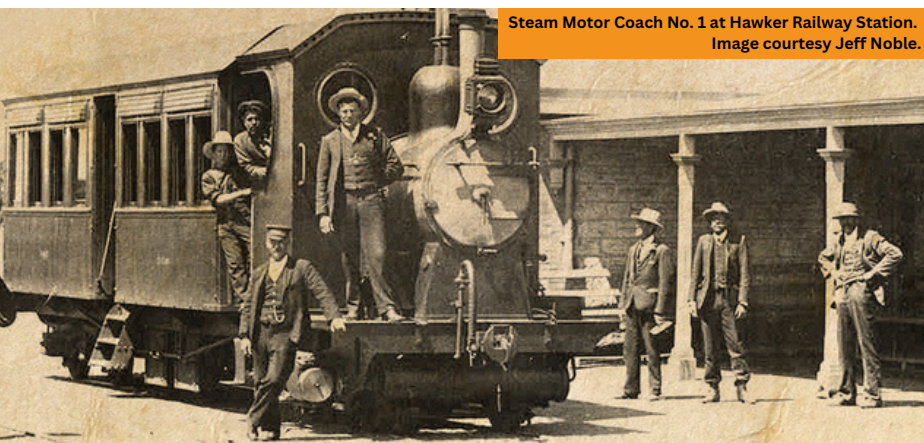
You might have spotted them in your own town or a nearby community – an old railway trolley with an A-frame sign, sharing the remarkable story of the Central Australia Railway, now known as the Old Ghan Railway. This interpretive signage narrates the extraordinary efforts to build and maintain the railway amidst wars, harsh climates, and unforgiving terrains.

Unfortunately many of the signs, installed in 2002, have deteriorated so badly that despite their historical significance they are no longer legible.

Over the past few months the OCA has been undertaking a large and complex project to revitalise these important reminders of the region's past. With the aid of Pichi Richi Railway Preservation Society volunteer Jeremy Browne and graphic designer Katrina Allen, the OCA has revised the text and imagery for every sign along the heritage trail that marks the route of the Old Ghan from Port Augusta to Alice Springs.

Simone Brock, Manager of Corporate and Strategic Projects, played a key role in this project and found it highly rewarding. "It's been fascinating to learn about the history of the Central Australia Railway and its significance in nurturing thriving outback communities during its heyday. I loved researching historic images and being transported to a time when the Railway was a lifeline for people living in the Outback."

An exciting partnership with the Toyota Landcruiser Club of South Australia will see the new signs installed in October along the trail up to Pedirka in the far north of the state. Keep an eye out for an upgraded sign in your local area soon!



Steam Motor Coach No. 1 at Hawker Railway Station.
Image courtesy Jeff Noble.

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Signs incorporate rich historical imagery alongside a map of the heritage trail, a timeline of the railway's development and historical details and stories.

Wonders of Outback SA From the Air



Light aircraft travel for the Strategic Blueprint consultations has afforded OCA Communications and Content Lead Grayson Cooke the opportunity to shoot aerial imagery of some of Outback SA's most unique and significant environments. Here are some highlights from the flight between Innamincka and Marla.

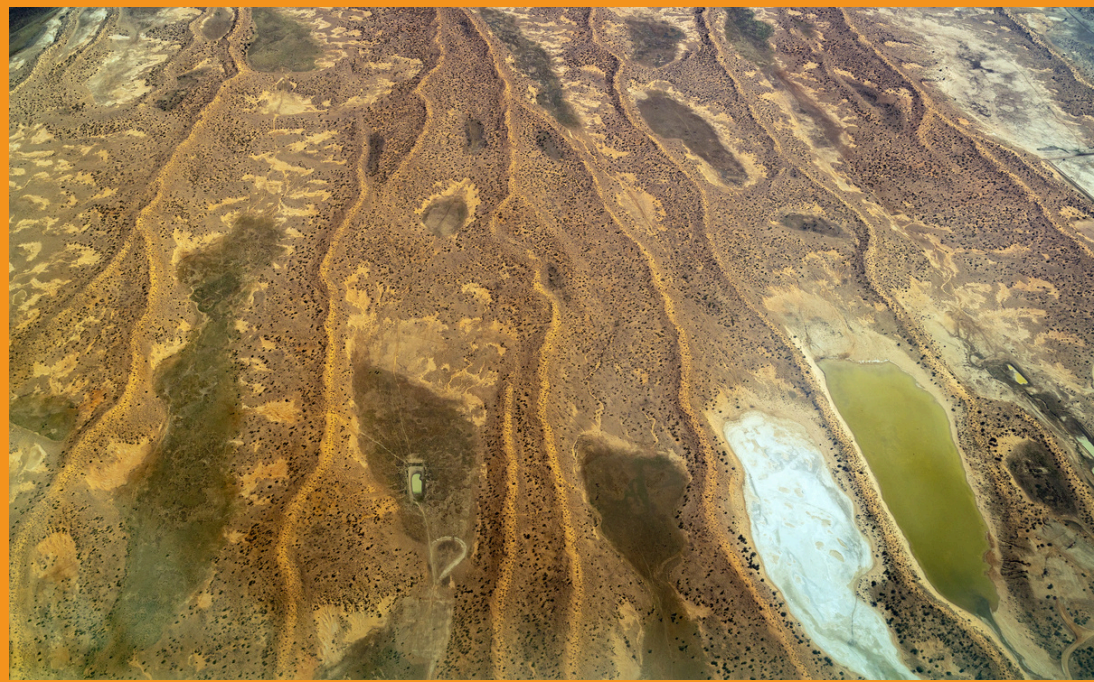
Cooper Creek

Known as Kinipapa to the Yandruwandha, it is the largest unregulated river system in Australia. With many permanent waterholes across the region, it is home to abundant birdlife, like these pelicans, spooked by the passing of the aircraft.

Parallel Sand Dunes

One of the most remarkable features of Australia's deserts are the vast fields of parallel sand dunes, permanent heapings of sand held together by vegetation and often running for hundreds of kilometres.

These dunes to the right lie west of Innamincka between the Strzelecki and Sturt Stony Deserts, and are surrounded by the floodplains and wetlands of Cooper Creek. They are oriented roughly north-south, running parallel to the prevailing winds.



Lake Perra Mudla Yeppa

Lake Perra Mudla Yeppa is an ephemeral lake in the Kalamurina Sanctuary, a nature reserve that encompasses a large part of the northern catchment for Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre, at the southern end of the Simpson Desert.

The lake is filled periodically by water from the Warburton River, and is an example of what is called "crevasse development", where rivers break their natural levee banks and fill adjacent shallow basins.

Innamincka's Town Square Welcomes New Plantings and Facilities

Visiting Innamincka recently for Strategic Blueprint consultations provided an opportunity to investigate new infrastructure and developments in and around the “town square”, the carpark and welcome area at the centre of town.

The OCA have funded a range of facilities in Innamincka over the years, including an information bay, an expansive toilet and shower block, a water station, and most recently, a dump point installed in June 2024.

In a less institutional vein, tree plantings at the entrance to the town have beautified the township and will reduce wind, dust and erosion. The plantings provide a fitting backdrop to the striking iron sculptures at the town's entrance, and have been a labour of love for the community and Progress Association over the past few years. New fencing, irrigation and the purchase of the plants were funded through a Commonwealth Government Queen's Jubilee Grant.

The town square itself is designed to provide a functional and inviting space for visitors, with all services located adjacent to one another. Innamincka is home to only 8 permanent adults and 2 children but experiences influxes of up to a few hundred people a day during the April-September tourist season, so attractive and functional amenities are a must for this vibrant and active community.



HAVE YOUR SAY
about the Future of Outback SA

Online Consultations for Strategic Blueprint - 10 & 15 October

There are **two final opportunities** to have your say about the future of Outback SA! We are holding online consultations about the Strategic Blueprint on **Thursday 10 October** at 9:30-11am and **Tuesday 15 October** at 6-7:30pm. Further info and registration is available here:

<https://www.oca.sa.gov.au/get-involved/strategic-blueprint>

Sponsorships Funding Announcements

Round 1 of the 2024-25 Small Projects and Sponsorships funding rounds closed recently. Successful applicants for Small Projects grants will be advised shortly, and successful Sponsorships projects are listed below. Sponsorships are awarded to activities and events that promote social inclusion, vibrancy and opportunities in communities. Congratulations to all the successful applicants!

- ➔ **Andamooka Progress and Opal Miners Association: \$1,000**
To cover costs of materials for the Andamooka Colour Run during October long weekend.
- ➔ **Andamooka Progress and Opal Miners Association: \$3,000**
Purchase of equipment for Andamooka Lapidary Club Jewellery Making Workshops.
- ➔ **Aroona Aboriginal Council: \$1,000**
Support for a Christmas lunch for the elderly and youth in the community.
- ➔ **Gawler Ranges Progress Association: \$2,000**
Funds for catering and equipment hire for the annual Gawler Ranges Outback Ball.
- ➔ **Oodnadatta Progress Association: \$4,000**
Catering and winners' medals for community football and cricket matches.
- ➔ **SA Isolated Children's Parents' Association: \$3,000**
Running costs for the 2025 ICPA Federal Conference to be held in South Australia.
- ➔ **The Sammy D Foundation: \$1,290**
Support to deliver Violence Prevention youth education programs in the region.
- ➔ **Terrica Strudwick / Beltana Progress Association: \$1,000**
Support for attendance at a festival in Victoria and presenting workshops in Beltana.

Outback Roads Consultative Forum Update

The second meeting of the South Australian Outback Roads Consultative Forum was held recently in Port Augusta. OCA Presiding Member Jan Ferguson OAM chairs this important forum, which is a Government-led initiative bringing key stakeholders together to develop long-term policies and strategies to improve road infrastructure in Outback SA.

The Forum is proving to be an effective means of relaying community roads concerns to decision-makers in the Department for Infrastructure and Transport. Speed limits through towns are a common issue for Outback communities; following community requests, at the latest meeting the Department advised that an area speed limit of 40km/h in Marree and Oodnadatta is supported.

The conditions of roads and speed with which issues are addressed is another common topic of discussion. **The Department relies on community members providing feedback** on road conditions, and are keen to receive road condition reports from the public, which can be provided by emailing DIT.north@sa.gov.au. To stay up to date with outcomes from the forum, subscribe to the OCA's quarterly communique [on the OCA website](#).

