



President's Message

This special newsletter has been prompted by two very sad events – the passing of our highly respected Friends of Mound Springs Patron, Lynn Brake and of our very good friend from the Arabana community, Uncle Dean Stuart. Tributes to Lynn and Uncle Dean are the centre-piece of this newsletter.

Lynn was a champion for the conservation and appropriate management of water resources for over thirty years, with particular involvement in the Great Artesian Basin and its springs and in the surface water resources of the Lake Eyre Basin. Most recently, and fittingly, Lynn led and coordinated a project to develop an Adaptive Management Plan for GAB springs – a project that should set the scene for ongoing good management of springs across the GAB and provide a lasting legacy for Lynn's decades of effort.

FOMS got to know Uncle Dean Stuart in 2015. Subsequently, Uncle Dean provided support

and guidance for FOMS in a range of projects and was a key link with the Directors' Group of the Arabana Aboriginal Corporation. Many members will particularly recall Uncle Dean joining us for the FOMS trip in June 2017 and being very generous in sharing his stories and showing us important features in Arabana culture.

We have also taken the opportunity with this newsletter to report on the recently initiated Arabana Ranger Program – an exciting initiative which should result in some very productive collaboration between FOMS and the Arabana Rangers. In addition, we report on the Adaptive Management Plan developed through the leadership of Lynn Brake and flag the proposed field program for FOMS for 2020.

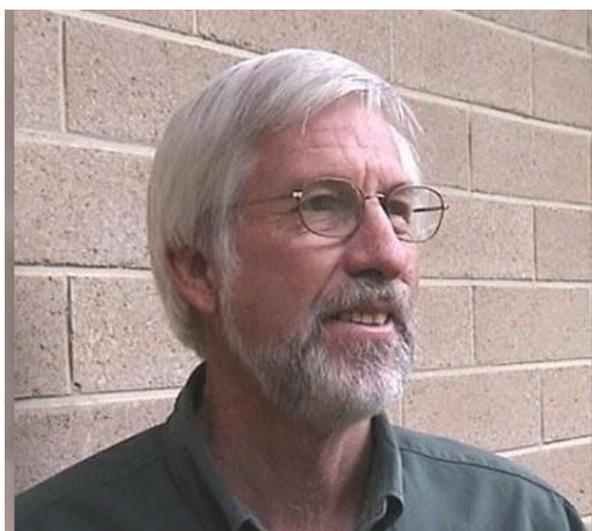
May I take this opportunity to wish you all a happy, healthy and fulfilling 2020.

Colin Harris
President, Friends of Mound Springs

Passing of FOMS Patron Lynn Brake

We are very sad to report the passing of our esteemed FOMS Patron, Lynn Brake, on 21 December 2019, at the age of 76.

Lynn was an eloquent spokesman for the springs of the Great Artesian Basin (GAB) and the surface waters of the Lake Eyre Basin at a state and national level for over thirty years. Lynn was a Senior Research Fellow at the University of South Australia, an affiliation with the University which dated back to the early 1970s.



Lynn's passion was for the sustainable management of the water resources of inland Australia and, to that end, he worked closely and tirelessly with state and federal governments, regional natural resources bodies, industry groups, communities and land managers. As a leader in water resources management, Lynn held a number of key roles including:

- Founding Member of the GAB Coordinating Committee
- Chairperson of the Arid Areas Water Resources Committee
- Inaugural Presiding Member of the Arid Areas Catchment Water Management Board
- Chairperson of the Water Advisory Committee (South Australian Arid Lands NRM Board).

In his participation on the GAB Coordinating Committee, Lynn had a strong role in the development of the first GAB Strategic Management Plan in 2000. Adoption of this plan led to the development and implementation of the GAB Sustainability Initiative (GABSI) for the restoration and repair of the uncontrolled bores and bore drains. At the conclusion of the GABSI program in

2017, it was estimated that water savings exceeding 250 gegalitres per year had been achieved through the program.

At the regional level, Lynn led the preparation and adoption of the *Water Allocation Plan for the Far North Prescribed Wells Area* in 2009, covering water extraction from the GAB in South Australia. Maintaining water in the GAB to sustain mound springs was a central objective in this Plan.

Lynn had been undergoing treatment for cancer for a long time – many years. Despite this, he devoted an enormous amount of time and energy over the last eighteen months or so to a project to provide a sound ongoing basis for the management of GAB springs – the development of an Adaptive Management Plan for GAB Springs. FOMS members, along with university and Environment Department personnel, were involved on a project team to develop this Plan – but Lynn was the instigator, inspiration and primary driving force for the project. Lynn's health deteriorated rapidly over the final few weeks of 2019, but he did get to see a copy of the completed project report.

Lynn accepted the role of FOMS Patron in early 2016 – having been a supporter of FOMS activities since the group's inauguration in 2006. Lynn was always generous with his time and knowledge and his reports on GAB activities and developments at the national and state level were a regular feature of FOMS meetings. With his countless commitments, Lynn found it hard to find time to join in FOMS' field trips but at last, in June 2018, Lynn and his partner Kate were able to join us in a trip to the springs adjacent to Lake Eyre.

Lynn championed GAB springs at a national and state level for many years and there is no doubt that he made a difference and achieved significant advances in helping to conserve springs. Just before Lynn's passing, the Commonwealth Government announced it will establish the Lynn Brake PhD Scholarship in his honour to support the development of future scientists and to help foster links between academia, the wider community and governments.

Lynn Brake will be greatly missed – but he leaves a strong legacy in the form of the Adaptive Management Plan and countless other achievements. We have conveyed FOMS' condolences to Lynn's wife Kate and family.

Farewell Uncle Dean Stuart

It is with much sadness that we report the recent passing of Uncle Dean Stuart, an Arabana Elder and good friend to the Friends of Mound Springs.

Uncle Dean was born in 1945 and was brought up at the Finnis Springs Mission just south of Lake Eyre South. At the age of 14, Uncle Dean started work as a stockman at Stuart Creek station where his main job was tending the station horses. In his late teenage years, Uncle Dean had a brief stint with the Australian National Railways, before returning to stockman work at Stuart Creek.

We first met Uncle Dean through the Directors' Group of the Arabana Aboriginal Corporation in 2015. Subsequently, Uncle Dean became a primary point of contact for FOMS and participated in a number of FOMS' field trips. With his unfailing good humour and calm, friendly approach, Uncle Dean was instrumental in helping to steer two major mound spring projects towards successful outcomes.

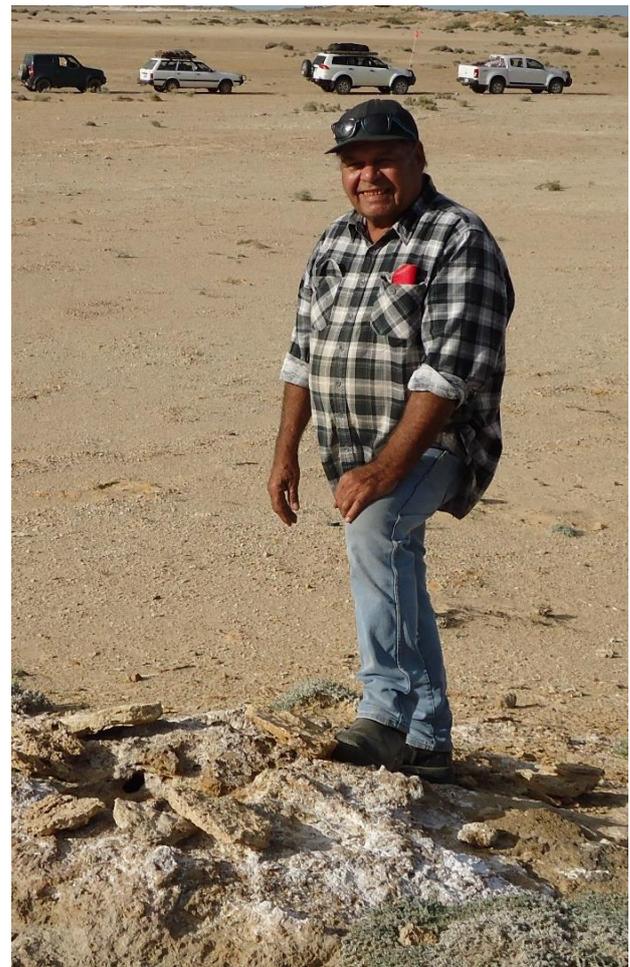
The first of these projects was the implementation of burning trials at three springs on Finnis Springs – undertaken to provide more information about reed management in mound springs as part of the Department for Environment and Water's *Desert Jewels* project. The preparation for these burning trials involved a considerable amount of work and negotiation and Uncle Dean's contribution on behalf of the Arabana was pivotal.

The second project was the recently completed fencing by FOMS volunteers of Levi Springs on the Peake Pastoral Lease. Negotiation of an agreed fence alignment with the Arabana Aboriginal Corporation involved detailed consultation and it was Uncle Dean's input and on-site guidance that facilitated a final agreed alignment.

However, for a broader cross-section of FOMS members, a lasting memory of Uncle Dean stems from the field trip of June 2017. This was a trip for FOMS members who were less familiar with springs' country and many of whom were participating in their first FOMS field visit.

Uncle Dean accompanied this group and showed us several rock-holes and other sites of importance to the Arabana people and explained their significance. A particular highlight was a visit to the Finnis Springs Mission where Uncle Dean had been brought up. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for most of us to see the old Mission and hear first-hand about its history.

The Friends of Mound Springs will miss Uncle Dean Stuart and we offer our sincere condolences to his family.



Uncle Dean Stuart at a small mound spring in Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park, June 2017

Arabana Ranger Program initiated by Federal Government.

Some good news – an Arabana Ranger Program has been initiated through funding support from the Federal Government. Five Arabana Rangers have been appointed, including Head Arabana Ranger Micheal Stuart – son of Uncle Dean (see above article). General support and coordination is provided through Conservation Management Director Alistair Dermer, who is based interstate. The Ranger group is operating out of Port Augusta and, at this stage, has funding to June 30, 2021.

The Arabana Ranger team and FOMS personnel have wasted no time in becoming acquainted, with a joint meeting held at Port Augusta on 22 January 2020 – FOMS representatives being Colin Harris, Bruce Gotch and Simon Lewis. Also attending were Tony Magor, National Parks and Wildlife Manager, Flinders and Outback, and Travis Gotch, newly appointed District Ranger, Outback. Arid Lands NRM Board staff Sarah Stevens and Cherie Gerlach also joined the group for a short time.

The meeting highlighted that the Arabana Ranger Program and FOMS have a number of objectives in common. Micheal Stuart noted that priority areas

for the Program are protecting and monitoring country, building and maintaining relationships and getting Arabana people on to country. FOMS representatives noted that FOMS has a particular interest in maintaining protective fencing around a number of important mound springs on pastoral lease land – seven fenced by the state Environment agency in the 1980s and Levi Springs, fenced by FOMS volunteers in 2019. Vegetation monitoring is also a priority at these springs.

It was agreed that the Arabana Rangers could take on a significant role with this fence maintenance and vegetation monitoring. As a next step, FOMS representatives and the Arabana Rangers will have a joint inspection of these sites – currently scheduled for May 2020.

This is a welcome initiative and FOMS looks forward to linking closely with the Arabana Ranger Program. It is to be hoped that funding for the Program will be extended well beyond June 2021.



Attendees at the Port Augusta meeting. Rear (L to R): Colin Harris, Bruce Gotch (both FOMS), Cherie Gerlach, Sarah Stevens (SA Arid Lands NRM Board staff), Travis Gotch, Tony Magor (both National Parks & Wildlife, DEW), Arabana Ranger Marshall Stuart, Arabana Head Ranger Micheal Stuart, Simon Lewis (FOMS), Arabana Ranger Garth Dodd, Paul Tanner. Seated at front: Arabana Rangers Braden Allen and Aamish Warren.

Management Plan for GAB Springs taking shape

As noted above in our tribute to Lynn Brake, an Adaptive Management Plan for Great Artesian Basin springs has been developed over the last eighteen months or so. Lynn Brake was the primary driver for this project, securing a \$50,000 grant from the Commonwealth Government for the work, convening a project team and undertaking a vast amount of consultation with local and interstate colleagues to gather information for the planning process. The core project team comprised Lynn, Professor Megan Lewis (Adelaide University) and Colin Harris and Simon Lewis (FOMS), with significant input also from Mark Keppel, Travis Gotch and David Leek (Department for Environment and Water) and Professor Andy Love of Flinders University. Dr Anne Jensen was contracted as Project Officer and undertook the bulk of the information collection and plan drafting.

The development of the Adaptive Management Plan has followed the generally accepted scientific approach for natural resources management planning, tailored with specific information reflecting the characteristics of GAB springs. The Plan and associated management planning template focus on two major steps. The first step is a situational analysis, taking in the characteristics, values and condition of GAB springs and identifying threatening processes that are impacting, or potentially could impact, upon the springs. The second component comprises the management response where significant threats have been identified. Aspects covered here are strategies to address threats, actions needed to implement the strategies (including funding and maintenance), monitoring, evaluation and reporting and the all-important step of reviewing outcomes to see if the strategies and actions are on-track or require adaptation.

The Adaptive Management Plan has now been completed and submitted to the Commonwealth funding body for consideration. While the document focuses on South Australian springs, it does include information on GAB springs in Queensland and NSW and its content and principles are broadly applicable to springs across the GAB. The challenge will now be to ensure that the Plan becomes a central point of reference for those involved in the management of GAB springs – and a lasting legacy to the efforts of Lynn Brake. FOMS will be doing what it can to ensure that this occurs.



Uncontrolled flows from artesian bores (above) and stock grazing impacts (below): two of the main issues threatening the values of GAB springs



FOMS' Field Program for 2020 taking shape

Planning is well under way for FOMS' field program for 2020, with two trips planned over the cooler months.

As reported above, some FOMS personnel will be involved in a joint trip with the Arabana Rangers group in May 2020. This will include tasks that have been routine for FOMS over the last few years – maintaining walking trails at Strangways and the Peake Overland Telegraph sites, checking and maintaining fencing at several fenced springs on the Peake, Nilpinna and Allandale Pastoral Leases and undertaking vegetation monitoring at these fenced springs. The Arabana Rangers are keen to be involved in this field work and may take on a lead role with at least some of these tasks in future years. FOMS' representation on this trip will, of necessity, be limited to the small group of members who have

been directly involved in discussions with the Arabana.

FOMS' general trip open to all members is in its very early stages of planning for July 2020. As some members will recall, we have been talking for some time about a visit to some of the springs out to the east of Marree towards Lake Callabonna. There are some particularly interesting springs in that country, including Public House and Twelve Springs with their recorded occurrences of salt pipewort, *Eriocaulon carsonii*. Subject to successful negotiations with the relevant pastoral lessees and other associated arrangements falling into place, this interesting trip will be our main FOMS outing for 2020. More information will be circulated well in advance of the trip.

FOMS' AGM Approaching

Since the inception of the group in 2006, the Friends of Mound Springs have held their Annual General Meeting in October / November of each year. However, at our most recent AGM in October 2019, it was agreed that we would shift the FOMS AGM to

the first half of the calendar year. Our AGM for 2020 will be held on Thursday 23 April, commencing 5.30pm at our usual venue on Waite Road, Urrbrae. More information will be circulated a little closer to the event.

Joining Friends of Mound Springs

If you wish to become a member of Friends of Mound Springs, please contact Treasurer Elaine Smyth – see contact details below. The membership subscription is \$20 per household per calendar year.

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