

# Vulkathunha - Gammon Ranges National Park



*Healthy Parks  
Healthy People*



Government  
of South Australia



## Vulkathunha - Gammon Ranges National Park

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Vulkathunha - Gammon Ranges National Park is a rugged and remote park in the North Flinders Ranges providing a range of adventure based recreation opportunities.

The park consists of approximately 128 000 hectares of deep gorges and chasms, towering mountains, tree-lined creeks and freshwater springs. Together these landforms provide a haven for many rare and endangered plant and animal species.

The unique geology and landforms play an important role in the past and present lives of the Adnyamathanha people, the traditional custodians of the area.

### Getting to the park

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The park lies approximately 660 km north of Adelaide, 100 km east of Leigh Creek and approximately 430 km south of Innamincka.

All main access roads to the park are gravel and are suitable for 2WD vehicles.

Please check road conditions before departing. Closures may apply during and after wet weather.

For 24 hour information on road conditions please phone the Transport SA Road Condition Report on 1300 361 033.

### Park fees

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Camping permits are required in Vulkathunha -Gammon Ranges National Park. Permits are available from Balcanoona park headquarters or self-registration stations on the way in to most camping areas.

Fees collected are used for conservation and to maintain and improve park facilities for your ongoing enjoyment.

## Protecting our flora and fauna

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Plants and animals in the park are protected for everyone to enjoy. Significant species include the yellow-footed rock-wallaby (*Andu*), the colourful painted dragon (*Irti varanappa*), the endemic species of fish, Flinders Ranges purple-spotted gudgeon and the rare Balcanoona wattle *Acacia araneosa*.

Biodiversity programs are conducted across the Flinders Ranges to work towards the restoration of ecosystems to protect and allow the reintroduction of locally extinct plant and animal species.

Temporary park closures may occur throughout the year for feral goat control. Baits of 1080 poison are used across the park and on surrounding properties to control foxes and feral dogs.

## Geology

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Where the ranges are today, was an inland sea 1000-500 million years ago. The sea slowly filled with marine, glacial and river deposits of sand, mud and rock. During the following millions of years, massive forces from deep within the earth's crust raised and buckled this area to form the Flinders Ranges.

Today the ranges are going through a long period of erosion. Quartzite, which is resistant to this erosion, can be seen as rocky outcrops on the hills and mountain tops. Evidence of the ancient marine and glacial deposits can be found in the rock faces and watercourses throughout the park.

## Cultural Use Zone

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This zone is located within the 'Plains Block' leading out to the edge of Lake Frome. It is legally available for visitation between the hours of 5 am and 3 pm each day. Outside of those times access is not permitted as the zone is used for cultural hunting purposes and, to ensure public safety, visitors are not permitted to enter or stay within the zone between 3 pm and 5 am.

## Touring

There are a number of touring options for both two- and four-wheel drive vehicles within the park and in neighbouring Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary and surrounding areas. Please check road and track conditions before heading off.

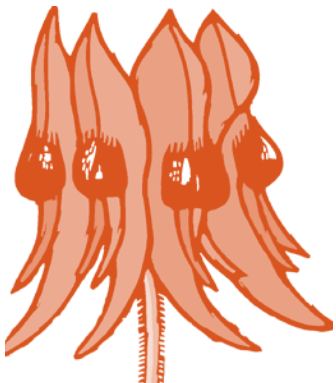
### 4WD tracks

The Wortupa Loop Track is an 80 kilometre return journey from Balcanoona and takes approximately four to five hours to complete. The drive provides opportunities to explore the rich Aboriginal and European heritage and the park's varied flora and fauna. Animals such as euros, red kangaroos, emus and wedge-tailed eagles may be seen, while plants, such as Sturts desert-pea *Clianthus formosus* and Sturts desert-rose *Gossypium sturtianum* var. *sturtianum* may be found flowering in sandy creek lines. Views of Mount McKinlay, The Wall, Mount John Roberts, and the chasms of Blue Range are a highlight along the one-way section of track between Gammon Yards and Lochness Well.

Four-wheel drive vehicles can drive to Lake Frome. There are also some 4WD public access tracks on surrounding pastoral properties.

### 2WD tracks

Touring options for two-wheel drive vehicles include Weetoola and Italowie gorges, Arkaroola, Stubbs and Nooldoonooldoona waterholes and the old copper smelters at Bolla Bollana in the northern section of the park.



## The Adnyamathanha People

The Adnyamathanha People live throughout the Flinders Ranges and beyond. The Adnyamathanha community is made up of four clans; the Wailpi, Kuyani, Yadhiauda and Piladappa. In the Adnyamathanha language Adnya means rock and mathanha means people.

The ranges exert a strong personal and traditional influence on the people. Geology, topography, flora, fauna and climate all feature in traditional Dreaming stories. The ranges are crisscrossed by *Yura Muda* (Aboriginal Dreaming) and song lines which explain how the land, animals and plants were formed. The stories also lay down the rules or laws relating to organisation and behaviour of the people.

Places which feature in The Dreaming are proof of the power of Adnyamathanha belief and are of great significance.

Local Adnyamathanha people take guided interpretive tours to carving and painting sites in the area. Sites should only be visited as part of a tour or with permission from the Adnyamathanha community.

The Adnyamathanha community manages Nantawarrina Indigenous Protected Area, which adjoins the park's southern boundary. Access into Nantawarrina requires a permit from the community. For further information phone (08) 8648 3764.

Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges Traditional Owners co-manage the park with DENR. Members of the Adnyamathanha community make up 50% of the Co-management Board which oversees the strategic direction of the park.



## Bush camping

The park provides opportunities for self-reliant bush camping at a number of locations. There are pit toilets at Grindells Hut and Weetootla campgrounds; however other camping areas have no facilities. Toilet and shower facilities are available at Balcanoona.

Camping permits and visitor information can be obtained from the park headquarters or from self-registration stations at Balcanoona and on the way into most camping areas.

Fire restrictions apply, usually from 1 November to 30 April. Check CFS hotline 1300 362 361. Gas appliances may be used during fire restrictions.

No fires, gas appliances or fuel stoves are permitted on days of Total Fire Ban.

At other times, camp fires are permitted but please bring your own firewood to help preserve the natural habitat that wildlife depends on for food and shelter. Collection of firewood from within the park is prohibited. Please ensure that fires are extinguished before leaving the site.

Never camp or leave your vehicle in a creek bed or floodway, as these areas are prone to flash floods that may occur at any time of the year. All camping areas may become isolated for up to several days after heavy rain. Campers should be prepared to stay until creek levels have dropped and tracks have dried out enough to proceed safely.

All rubbish should be carried out from the park.

### **Grindells Hut (4WD with camper trailers)**

The camping area is approximately an hours drive west of Balcanoona via Wortupa Loop Track. Access is 10 km up Arkaroola Road then 17 km via the signposted 4WD track.

Camp sites are located along the creek below Grindells Hut. Please camp in designated sites with a fire pit/barbecue only.

The Weetootla and Italowie Gorge hikes can be accessed from the Grindells Hut camping area.

### **Mainwater Well (4WD with camper trailers)**

The Mainwater Well camping area is approximately 2 hours drive north-west of Balcanoona via Wortupa Loop Track. A small camping area is located next to the old well alongside the tea-tree lined Mainwater Creek. This camp provides a great base from which to explore the northern areas of the park and for hikers to explore Mainwater Creek.

### **Arcoona (recommended 4WD or high clearance 2WD)**

Arcoona camping area is located on the western side of the ranges approximately one and a half hours drive from Balcanoona via the Copley-Balcanoona and Umberatana roads. Camp sites are located near and around the end of the track just above the river red gums and native pines of Arcoona Creek. This camp provides a great stop for people travelling through the park and as a base for hikers wishing to explore Arcoona Bluff and the Gammon Plateau.

### **Lochness Well (4WD with camper trailers)**

Five kilometres beyond Grindells Hut is the Lochness Well camping area. A small number of sites are set on the southern bank of Balcanoona Creek amongst native pines and river red gums. This is a popular spot for bushwalkers to begin hikes into the wilderness of the gorges and chasms of Mount John Roberts and Blue Range.

### **Weetootla Gorge, Wiriti Urdla (2WD with small caravans)**

Weetootla Gorge camping area is located to the west of Balcanoona at the end of Weetootla Gorge. Camp sites are located along Balcanoona Creek among mallee, native pines and bullock bush. The camping area is approximately 20 minutes from Balcanoona, 2 km towards Arkaroola then 5 km along the signposted track.

The campground is located approximately 4 km from the self-registration station. Designated camp sites are set out adjacent to the toilets and also 1 km further on, near the Weetootla Gorge trailhead.

### **Italowie Gap, Ithala Awi (2WD with caravans)**

The Italowie Gap camping areas are located approximately 20 minutes from Balcanoona on the Copley-Balcanoona road. There are two camping areas. The first area is on the south-western side of the gap via a small access track. This area is set amongst river red gums below a small cliff face and is a shady spot for summer. The second area is located on the north-eastern side of the gap, off the access track behind the self-registration station. These sites are set amongst wattles and river red gums near the start of the Italowie Gorge Hike.

## **Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary**

Arkaroola is a privately owned wilderness sanctuary, of similar size to Vulkathunha - Gammon Ranges National Park and adjoins the park's north-eastern boundary. A wide range of visitor services and facilities, such as fuel, water, basic supplies, tours, scenic flights and a variety of camping and accommodation options are available.

For further information phone (08) 8648 4848 or toll-free on 1800 676 042.

## **Bushwalking**

There are a number of walking trails that provide opportunities for visitors to see and experience the rugged and unique landscape of Vulkathunha - Gammon Ranges National Park and Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary. All walking trails are classified as hikes. A moderate hike includes some moderate inclines, an irregular surface and requires an average level of fitness. A hard hike requires some hiking experience and a reasonable fitness level, as some sections can be quite steep and uneven. Remember you can always walk as far as you like and return the same way. This will allow you to explore areas at your own pace.

Weetootla Gorge Hike is one of the more popular trails with its towering cliffs, freshwater springs and yellow-footed rock-wallaby (*Andu*) colonies. Other trails within the park include the Italowie Gorge and Oppaminda-Nudlamutana hikes. On Arkaroola, trails include Acacia Ridge Hike, Bararranna Hike and Mawson-Spriggina Hike. Most of these hikes have

brochures available that can be picked up at the beginning and end of the trails. The brochures can also be obtained from the Park Headquarters at Balcanoona and at Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary.

More experienced and adventurous bushwalkers may choose to trek deeper into the park away from the marked trails. While trekking can be challenging and very rewarding, it demands a high level of fitness and experience. Trekkers must carry relevant topographic maps (1:50 000), compass, and adequate supplies of food and water. Prior to commencing a trek, bushwalkers must advise a friend or relative of their trip intentions to raise the alarm if they have not reported in at a designated time. We recommend they discuss their route with a ranger before arriving.

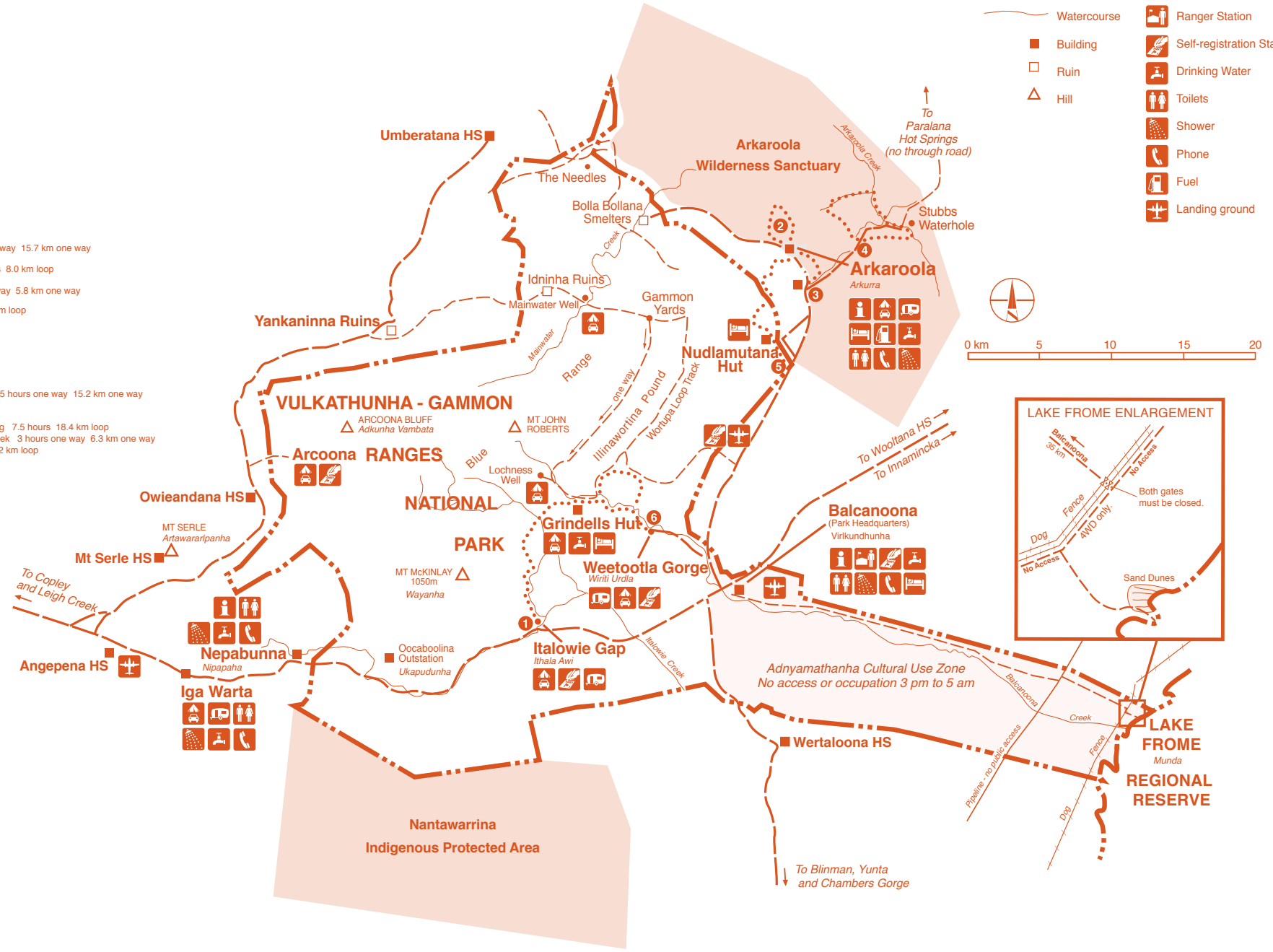
**HIKE**  
MODERATE

- 1 Italowie Gorge Hike 8 hours one way 15.7 km one way
- 2 Mawson-Springgina Hike 4 hours 8.0 km loop
- 3 Acacia Ridge Hike 3 hours one way 5.8 km one way
- 4 Bararranna Hike 3.5 hours 6.8 km loop

**HIKE**  
HARD

- 5 Oppaminda-Nudlamutana Hike 7.5 hours one way 15.2 km one way
- 6 Weetootla Gorge Hikes
  - Grindells Hut via Weetootla Spring 7.5 hours 18.4 km loop
  - Grindells Hut via Balcanoona Creek 3 hours one way 6.3 km one way
  - Weetootla Spring 6.5 hours 13.2 km loop

	Park Boundary		Information
	2WD Track		Camping area
	4WD Track		Caravans
	Walking Trail		Accommodation
	Watercourse		Ranger Station
	Building		Self-registration Station
	Ruin		Drinking Water
	Hill		Toilets
			Shower
			Phone
			Fuel
			Landing ground



The inset map shows the Lake Frome Enlargement area, including Balcanoona (35 km), Sand Dunes, and a fence. It notes that both gates must be closed and that access is for 4WD only. A dog is also shown near the fence.

Adnyamathanha Cultural Use Zone  
No access or occupation 3 pm to 5 am



## Accommodation

If bush camping is not your scene, Grindells Hut or the Balcanoona Shearers Quarters provide opportunities for basic self-contained accommodation. These shearers quarters or hut allow visitors to experience the park from a comfortable home base in all seasons. Bookings are required.

### Grindells Hut (4WD)

Built in the early 1950s, Grindells Hut is located in the heart of the park with spectacular 180 degree views of the ranges. The stone hut sleeps up to 8 people in 3 bedrooms. It has solar lighting, gas hot water, shower facilities, and a kitchen equipped with a fridge and cooking facilities.

### Balcanoona Shearers Quarters (2WD)

The shearers quarters provide accommodation for travellers and park visitors. Nine bedrooms are located around the verandah with a large communal lounge area and fully equipped kitchen. The quarters sleep up to 19 people. Individual rooms or the whole quarters may be booked.

### Nudlamutana Hut (2WD with care)

Nudlamutana Hut has been rebuilt after it burned down in 2008. It is located in a valley near the boundary between the park and Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary.

### For accommodation enquiries:

Contact the Wilpena Office  
Flinders Ranges National Park  
PMB 22 Via Hawker 5434  
Phone (08) 8648 0049

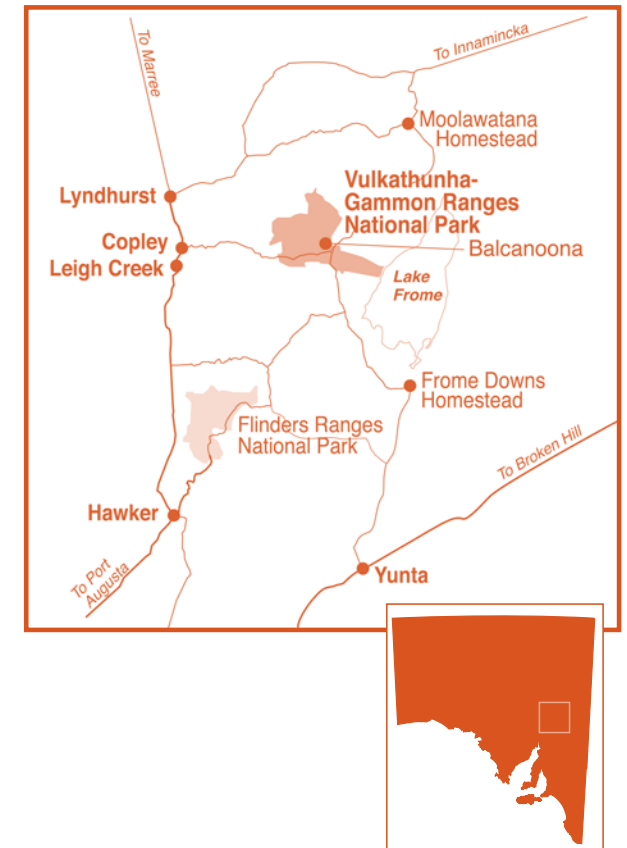
## The National Parks Code

Help protect your national parks by following these guidelines:

- Leave your pets at home.
- Take your rubbish with you.
- Observe fire restrictions usually 1 November to 31 March. Check CFS hotline 1300 362 361. The park is in the North East Pastoral Fire District.
- Conserve native habitat by using liquid fuel or gas stoves.
- Camp only in designated areas.
- Respect geological and heritage sites.
- Keep our wildlife wild. Do not feed or disturb animals, or remove native plants.
- Keep to defined vehicle tracks.
- Be considerate of other park users.
- Firearms are not permitted.
- Bury toilet waste away from watercourses.
- Never camp or leave your vehicle in a creek bed or floodway.
- Do not swim or paddle in waterholes or springs.

**Thank you for leaving the bush in its natural state for the enjoyment of others.**

## Location Map



## For further information contact:

### Vulkathunha - Gammon Ranges National Park

#### Balcanoona Office

PMB 13, via Copley SA 5732  
Phone (08) 8648 4829, Fax (08) 8648 4853

Phone Information Line (08) 8204 1910

Email: [denrinformation@sa.gov.au](mailto:denrinformation@sa.gov.au)

Website: [www.parks.sa.gov.au](http://www.parks.sa.gov.au)

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