

ARKAROOLA WILDERNESS SANCTUARY



From the ARK Update 18/08/11

‘OUR POSITION REMAINS FIRM’

Reg and Griselda Sprigg shared a deep respect for Andy and Wally Coulthard. For almost three decades, photographs of both men have hung in the dining area at Arkaroola Village alongside images of Sir Douglas Mawson and Sir Mark Oliphant, as Arkaroola’s most revered ‘elders’. Today, the daughters and son of Andy and Wally Coulthard are campaigning to ensure that a decision to protect the land with which their fathers were intimately connected, a landscape of profound cultural and spiritual significance for Adnyamathanha people, is upheld.

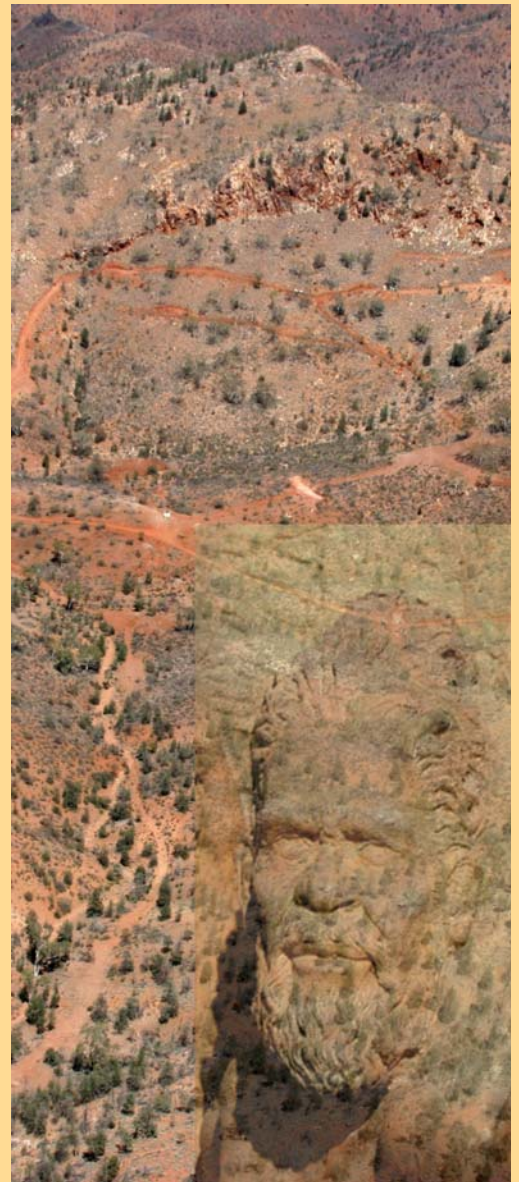
Senior Elders Enice Marsh, Geraldine Anderson, Rene Mahommed and Vera Austin, daughters of Andy and Wally Coulthard, and Gilbert Coulthard, son of Wally Coulthard, support the South Australian Government’s decision to ban mining within the Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary. In a media release on August 16, spokesperson for the Anggumathanha (Camp Law) Adnyamathanha Elders, Mrs Enice Marsh, stated unambiguously, *“We fully support the ban on mining in this area, on the grounds of our cultural knowledge as Traditional Owners, and as responsible South Australians. Our position remains firm...”* For several years the group has actively campaigned for the protection of Arkaroola from mineral exploration and mining.

The Camp Law Elders are concerned that the Adnyamathanha Traditional Lands Association (ATLA) has taken a pro-mining stance that does not reflect the views of all Traditional Owners. In a recent media release ATLA’s Chairman and pro-mining advocate Vincent Coulthard stated that the old people, who had fought so hard for a successful Native Title outcome in the Flinders Ranges, had been completely overlooked by the South Australian Government’s determination on Arkaroola. However, Camp Law Elders have spoken directly with Minister Paul Caica and Allan Holmes, Chief Executive for the Department for Environment and Natural Resources. They have written to the Premier expressing their concerns about exploration activity at Arkaroola, and have met the Chairman of Marathon Resources, Peter Williams, on site at Mount Gee on more than one occasion. The voices of the Camp Law Elders have indeed been heard and are reflected in the Government’s decision.

In statements to the ASX and the media, uranium explorer Marathon Resources has repeatedly claimed that the company has the support of Traditional Owners for continued exploration and future mining at Mount Gee. Not surprisingly, Marathon has aligned itself with pro-mining Traditional Owners and has largely ignored the views of other senior people from within the Adnyamathanha community.

The Camp Law Elders have taken a courageous stand. *“We need to feel safe in meetings and we deserve to have our views respected as Elders,”* Mrs Marsh stated this week. The Anggumathanha Adnyamathanha Elders have our full support and our deepest respect. They honour our fathers, black and white.

Mary and Doug Sprigg



NORTHERN FLINDERS RANGES

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIA