



the Arkaroola Village from the air

Some places are just too precious to mine Arkaroola must be preserved forever

to find out more

Savearkaroola.com - <http://www.savearkaroola.com.au/>

Mark Parnell campaign page - <http://markparnell.org.au/campaign.php?campaignn=19>

TWS campaign page -

unknownSA blogspot - <http://unknownsa.blogspot.com/>

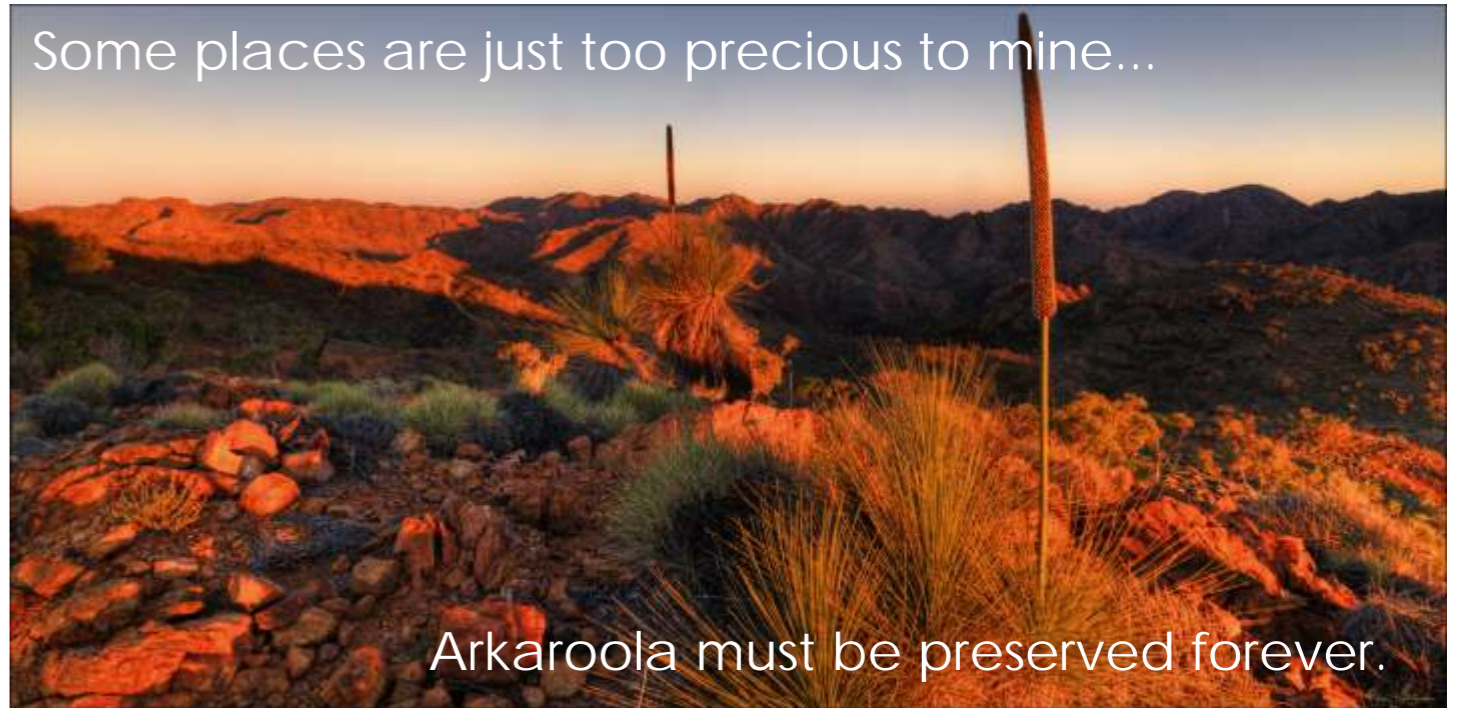
Seeking a Balance submissions -

http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/minerals/public_notices/northern_flinders_ranges_project/seeking_a_balance_submissions

Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary - <http://www.arkaroola.com.au/>

You may freely use any of the photos available here -
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/liamjon-d/sets/72157624130433976/>
or contact Bill Doyle - unknownsa@picknowl.com.au

sunrise over Siller's Lookout and the eastern ranges - all this country would be open to the mining industry under 'Seeking a Balance'



sunrise looking west from Siller's Lookout

Arkaroola must be preserved forever.

Why is Arkaroola so special?

Located 600km north of Adelaide and 130km east of Leigh Creek, in the more rugged and spectacular northern Flinders Ranges, this 610sq km multi award-winning Wilderness Sanctuary contains some of Australia's most spectacular mountain views and most important geological treasures.

The area's first inhabitants were and are the Adnyamathanha. One of their dreamtime or creation stories says that Arkaroo, a mythical monster, drank Lake Frome dry. He then crawled up into the mountains. When he urinated he created the waterholes that are a feature of the area. His movement over the land created Arkaroola Creek.

The importance of the area was recognised by Sir Douglas Mawson a century ago. He convinced his student, (Dr) Reg Sprigg to purchase Arkaroola if the opportunity arose. He described it as 'one great open-air museum of geological history'. Since that time, the Sprigg family has preserved this unique and wonderful part of our state.



The Armchair (left) from the Ridge-Top Track





View towards Yudnamutana Gorge from the Ridge Top Track - Seeking a Balance assigns this area to a mining access mosaic, including 'standard mining regulations only'

A potential pipeline or haulage route? The Yudnamutana Gorge where it meets the plains on the eastern edge of the ranges - as for the shot above, also part of the Seeking a Balance mining access mosaic - in this case, most of what you can see here is designated 'standard mining regulations only'.

A tourism mecca....

Arkaroola features rugged mountains, towering granite peaks, magnificent gorges and mysterious waterholes, the home to over 160 species of birds and the shy and endangered Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby.

The spectacular Advanced Ecotourism accredited rugged 4WD Ridgetop Tour is world famous; a journey to the depths of ancient seabeds and across razor-back ridges and peaks of the Flinders Ranges most rugged mountains to the magnificent climax at Sillers Lookout.

With Arkaroola's third successive S.A. Tourism Award win for Ecotourism it has entered the coveted Hall of Fame, and is undoubtedly South Australia's premier ecotourism destination.

A biodiversity hot-spot.....

Scientists have barely scratched the surface of Arkaroola's rich biodiversity. There are more Yellow Footed Rock Wallaby colonies concentrated along the Arkaroola Creek than anywhere else in the Flinders.

The region contains pockets of lizards, giant geckos and molluscs contained nowhere else on Earth. Recently, scientists have discovered unique groundwater fauna found only in single springs and waterholes. The area also contains the greatest number of species of native land snails found anywhere in the state.

The SA Museum has described the disturbance of these species through mining activity as 'disastrous'



Hodgkinsons, a target site of the mining industry, including most recently Marathon Resources.

This site is still eroding dramatically, despite claims of 'rehabilitation' made by both mining companies and Primary Industries and Resources SA. The notion is an inherent absurdity of the concept in this delicate, steeply rugged semi-arid wilderness.

At rear the Yudnamutana Gorge - one side of which merits protection while the other does not, according to *Seeking a Balance*. See if you can guess which one! And will what you can see in the foreground here be its future?

A geological and archeological wonderland....

The Sanctuary is a veritable Las Vegas for geologists that draws students and scientists from all round the world. The Geological Monuments of Mt Gee, Mt Painter and The Armchair are all rare geological peculiarities listed on the National Estate. According to the SA Museum the three dimensional exposure of rare crystalline rock formations in the Arkaroola landscape has no global parallel as a natural museum of geology.

To the east of Arkaroola Village is a recently discovered fossil 'fringing reef' built at the end of Snow-ball Earth approximately 700 million years ago. It is estimated to be 800m thick compared to the Great Barrier Reef (100m), and contains the calcified remains of organisms that probably represent the oldest animals on Earth. The reef complexes themselves are also of great importance as there have been no other comparable reefs of that age yet discovered anywhere on Earth.

The threat from mining

This extraordinary part of SA is under real and direct threat.

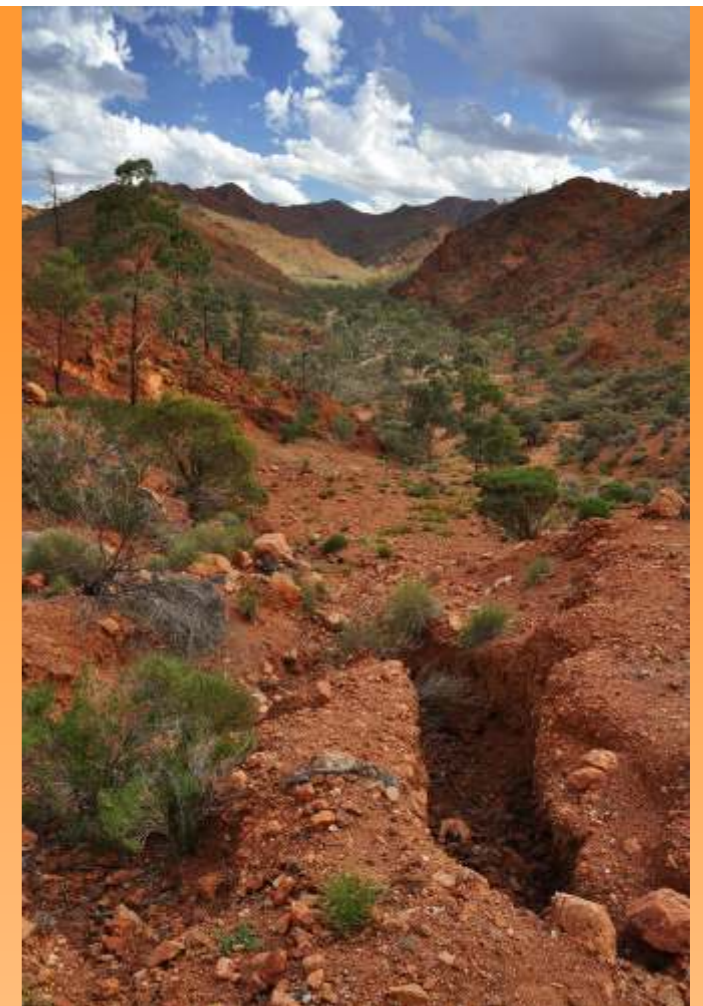
Marathon Resources currently holds an exploration licence over much of the crucial central Arkaroola zone. Ground disturbing activities, including drilling, are currently suspended, but the SA Government can let them back in at any time.

While the real value of Marathon's resource is open to debate, what is not is the impact mineral exploration - old and new - has already had; scars are visible even after decades, let alone after Marathon's recent activities.

According to online investment gurus 'Fat Prophets' in 2009, describing Marathon's plans, "*the mining concept for Mount Gee will include a mixture of open pits and underground mines targeting high-grade zones.*"

This is despite the fact that Mineral Minister Paul Holloway has told Parliament "*there would be absolutely no chance of getting any sort of open-cut mining or anything like that in the area*".

Given the very low concentration of ore - 0.06% - and the very high costs of building a tunnel from the surrounding plains to access it at Mount Gee (former CEO Stuart Hall publicly stated the price as \$500 million) we must assume there will be enormous pressures to allow open cut operations should mining be allowed.



Why Marathon Resources should never be allowed back in

In early 2008, Marathon Resources was caught breaching 22 separate exploration licence conditions.

In a systematic and calculated disregard by Marathon of their surroundings, 22 800 bags, many containing radioactive drill cores, were dumped in 2 pits 35 metres long and 2.7m deep in the middle of the Wilderness Sanctuary.

A separate rubbish dump was also discovered in another part of the Sanctuary, at Hodgkinsons, an established target of the mining industry in the stunning Yudnamutana Gorge. (See photo above for the state of this supposedly 'rehabilitated' area.)

In addition, Marathon Resources admitted one of their employees used a large back hoe to hack into the Mount Gee geological monument itself to remove an extremely rare and valuable Fluorite outcrop. This stolen geological treasure has never been accounted for, nor recovered.