

Profile of Dean Ah Chee

Dean Ah Chee, Wati, Traditional Man, Senior Cultural Ranger for Irrwanyere Aboriginal Corporation, (IAC), Ranger for the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, of South Australia, I was born in Alice Springs under a tree near some old Railway Cottages, but on my birth certificate it states, 349 Railway Cottage. I now work in Witjira National Park, S A, where I am a Traditional Owner and a Native Title Claimant

I am a Yankunytjatjara Pitjantjatjara man, Lower Southern Arrentre man, and Wankanguru man, through my Grandfathers and Grandmothers Traditional Cultural Lore/Law and Customs. I am an Executive Member of Irrwanyere Aboriginal Corporation who is in Co-Management partnership with the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, of South Australia. I was selected by the Senior Elders to be the Aboriginal Cultural Ranger for Irrwanyere Aboriginal Corporation. I was also selected by the one of the National Parks and Wildlife, Regional Conservators to be their Aboriginal Ranger.

I am one of the Directors of the Walka Wani Aboriginal Corporation, and I have Traditional connections to the Anangu Yankatjatjara/Pitjantjatjara people in the APY Lands, and the Wankanguru people in the Simpson Desert., I am a Traditional Elder- Chilpie, I also have relations living in most parts of Australia.

I have been involved with the negotiations and meetings for Witjira National Park since 1975 and have sign off on the Agreements, I am a Warden for DEWNR, an Aboriginal Heritage Inspector, I am also tied up in the middle of two Lores/Laws, I carry out my duty according to my Traditional Lores/Laws and the Co –Management Plan of Witjira National Park.



Witjira National Park
South Australia

Witjira National Park is located in the Southern Central area of Australia, on the Western edge of the Simpson Desert, see centre of map. Witjira National Park covers 7770 square kilometres, and the area is covered in Aboriginal material from over thousand and thousands of years old.

As one of my Elders said to me, Mr Bingy Lowe ,”We are in the middle of Kwatye, (water), it is all around us , and we have to look after this place”.

Witjira National Park is the home of the Lower Southern Arentre People and have shared this part of the land with other neighbouring tribal groups.

The Water or Healing Springs provides us with many spiritual connections to the land, it is our liveblood which we need to survive.



Irrwanyere Springs
Dalhousie Springs

The name of this Spring is Irrwanyere, in Lower Southern Arrentre Aboriginal language it means HEALING WATERS.

This is the only main Spring where visitors can only swim in. The Irrwanyere Aboriginal Corporation and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources of South Australia, don't want any more damage done to the rest of the other Springs in this Fragile Area. This Spring is part of the Aboriginal Dreamtime Stories that criss-cross in Witjira National Park.



The Rainbow Serpent Spring

This Spring is situated 300 meters West of Irrwanyere Spring. We have a walking trail for visitors to follow with signage and Interpretation Information are on the signs.

This is part of controlling visitors of further damage to these Aboriginal Sites. This Spring is part of the Aboriginal Deamtime Stories that criss-cross Witjira National Park.



Inudtjura Springs

Agkartja, Old Man, Spring The Rainmaker

**Removal of Date Palms from this
Aboriginal Site, Aboriginal people lived in
this area for thousands of years as
evidence shows around this Spring,
Agkartja**

**There have been Surveys and Recordings
done by Travis Gotch, Travis is the GAB
Springs Officer for the South Australian
Arid Lands Resource Management Board,**



Mother Spring
Kuntji

The Mother Spring is part of the Rain Makers Cycle, Tulkupa, and this Dreamtime Story starts from Dalhousie Springs in Witjira National Park South Australia. This Spring is one of the main stories for the Lower Southern Arrentre people, and other surrounding tribal groups who are connected to this story. The Kwatye, (water) is very precious to the Aboriginal people and has been with them since the beginning of the Deamtime.



Inudtjura Springs

This Spring is the Katja Spring, No. 1 Boy Spring, meaning son, is part of the Rain Makers Cycle, Tulkapa. He travelled from Inudtjura area the Rainmakers site across the Simpson Desert towards Birdsville in Queensland. He met other Rain Makers on this journey. This story starts from Dalhousie Springs complex where there are over 80 springs. At this site there are thousands of stone chippings, which is evidence of Aboriginal occupation before white settlement. This is part of the Aboriginal Dreamtime Stories that criss-cross Witjira National Park.



Conclution Working Together

In Witjira National Park there are many Programs and Scientific Researches that are continuously happening.

The main aim is Caring and Protecting the Land and providing provisions for the visitors.

Through the Traditional Owners of both Native Title groups, who represent Irrwanyere Aboriginal Corporation, and the Department of Environment, Water, and Natural Resources, Witjira National Park is managed in Co- Management.

The Traditional Cultural Lore/Law and Customs are recognised, this also applies to the Agreement in the Co- Management Plan.

Picture of Mr Travis Gotch the Great Artesian Basin Springs Officer, and Dylan Keorner, ranger for DEWNR.

The protection / Management of Kwatye, water is most important for those who rely on it for their survival.

Thank you Dean Ah Chee Cultural Ranger

