Protecting Ngarrindjeri sites in the Coorong National Park, South Australia.

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Executive Summary

The aim of this report is to develop an active management strategy to care for the Old People’s places in the Coorong National Park (CNP); as such, this report will explore a number of issues relating to these places\(^1\). This report will investigate not only the nature of burial sites throughout the CNP, but their cultural significance to the Ngarrindjeri community. Additionally, the report will explore, with the assistance from the CNP ranges and Ngarrindjeri community members, the potential threats to these sites. Finally, suggested strategies, negotiated with the CPN and Ngarrindjeri community, to protect such sites will be formed with a review of current state legislation regarding such sites and protection strategies for other burial sites in Australia. To be presented with this report, an A4 pamphlet and poster will also be constructed to educate visitors to the CNP on the significance of burial sites to the Ngarrindjeri, legislative aspects to these sites and the processes visitors to the park should follow if they come across a burial site.

During the construction of this report, it was found that the protection of any cultural site extends further than the immediate methods practiced or recommended at a specific site. As with many issues, prevention is the best answer; therefore, this report also discusses the need for visitors to avoid restricted areas of the CNP causing further damage to sited containing Old People. Further, it discusses the need to set out guidelines, constructed with the aid of the industry partners discussed below, for visitors to the National Park that do find such sites.

\(^1\) The term Old People, for the purpose of this report, refers to skeletal remains of Ngarrindjeri people. Other terms such as burial site, human and skeletal remains will also be used.
The industry partner(s) for this report is the Ngarrindjeri Heritage Committee (NHC). The Chair of the NHC, Uncle George Trevorrow and Vice Chair, Uncle Tom Trevorrow will be the primary contacts along with Luke Trevorrow who, as a future leader of the Ngarrindjeri community, have much information to contribute. Tim Hartman of the Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) and other Ngarrindjeri Parks Rangers and community members are also seen as industry partners for this report.
Introduction:

The study area for this report (as seen in map 1), The Coorong National Park, has an area of approximately 468 square kilometres stretching south from the Murray Mouth for 130 Kilometres. The CNP is unique due to its diverse areas of significance (Anon, 1995:6) including environmental, cultural and historical places of importance. Declared a national park in 1966, this distinct landscape contains lagoons, wetlands and coastal vegetation as well as a variety of fish, birds and animals either permanently living in, or seasonally migrating to, the area (Anon, March 2008). It was the recognition of the importance of such migratory wildlife that led the CNP to be included into the *Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat* in 1975 by IUCN (Anon, 1995:3). Such birds have also prompted agreements between the Commonwealth Government, the Government of Japan and the Government of the Peoples Republic of China in the form of the *Protection of migratory Birds and birds in Danger of Extinction and their Environment, 1998* and the Japan-Australian Migratory Birds Agreement (JAMBA) (Anon, 1995:4). In 1985, the CNP was also declared of great ecological significance. It is not protected under what has come to be known as *The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands* (Phillips and Muller, 5: 2006)

CNP is also culturally significant as it contains a large amount of burial, shell midden and fish trap sites. These sites are protected under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act, 1988*. Section 20 of the Act clearly outlines the correct procedures when discovering Indigenous remains. This report will outline not only the correct procedures according to the coroners’ office, but those expressed by National Parks and the Ngarrindjeri community.
During this report a number of people have contributed time, information and resources. Uncle George Trevorrow, Uncle Tom Trevorrow and Luke Trevorrow who, as stated above, are the industry partners consulted during the production of this report. Tim Hartman and the staff from the Department for Environment and Heritage supervised access to specific places where cultural remains were beginning to surface, and the development of management plans are becoming a necessity. Richie Walker and the Roukkin community were also a helpful source of information and took me to a number of sites near the town of Roukkin. It was through meetings like this that the diversity Old People sites, and the way in which they need to be managed, became apparent.

**The importance of Old People sites to the Ngarrindjeri:**

In order to construct a report on the protection of Old People in CNP it is important to understand why such places are of importance to the Ngarrindjeri people. It is also important to reflect upon how burial remains have been treated in the past, and why sites now are in need of protection.

As with many Indigenous communities throughout Australia, indeed the same could be said for Australians of all heritage, the Ngarrindjeri Nation see their ancestral remains of great importance. It is a general community belief that Old People be laid to rest and left in peace as to prevent their spirits “wandering around” (Rigney, 2005: 3; Trevorrow, 2005: web accessed). Therefore, what happens after the burial process is of upmost importance to the spirit of the Old Person and the community as a whole (Anon, 2004). However, it should be noted that while the protection of such sites is
paramount, they are not the only places in the CNP that are under threat and need protecting; as will be further discussed in this report, the protection of the Old People specifically relies on the protection of the National Park as a whole.

These places and remains are of such importance that for many years now the Ngarrindjeri have been actively fighting for the return of their Old People, and other artefacts associated with them, from museums around the world. In April, 2003, one of the largest collections of Old People, some 300 in total, was returned to the Coorong from the Smith collection held at institutions such as the Australian Museum in Sydney and the Royal College of Surgeons in London (Portus, 2003). Likewise, in 2004, the remains of 74 Old people were repatriated from the Museum Victoria. As was apparent with the Smith collection, the process of obtaining the Old People was neither swift nor straightforward. With the Museum Victoria case, it took approximately six months of formal and informal negotiations regarding cost and the identification of the Old People (Wilson 2005:60-62).

**Potential threats to sites throughout the CNP:**

There are a number of threats that the sites of Old People face other than those inflicted by researchers and ‘collectors’ in the past. Although such threats may still be very real, below are some examples of how sites may be damaged in the CNP and other places around Australia and how such sites are being protected by different organisations and legislations.
Tourism and four wheel drives:

(Figure 1: Beach Driving CNP) (Figure 2: Revegetated area)

It is no surprise that the Coorong National Park is promoted as one of Australia’s great tourist destinations. It is only hours away from Adelaide, its natural fauna and flora is abundant; it boasts water sports, eco-tours and is visited by many people travelling to and from Melbourne and Adelaide; not to mention the CNP gaining celebrity status by appearing in films such as Storm Boy. As such, appropriate interpretation and measures have been taken to not only protect Old People sites, but also the natural environment.

Perhaps one of the biggest threats to the CNP, including its natural and cultural sites, is the introduction of recreational four wheel driving. While there are a number of designated four wheel drive tracks and tours available there is little to be done regarding the more adventurous drivers creating their own tracks in the protected sand dunes. Although such areas are protected under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972, recreational visitors to the CNP are too often breaking free of designated tracks
and creating their paths through protected areas, thus destroying not only significant cultural sites but natural, protected native vegetation. During a visit with Tim Hartman and Luke Trevorrow to the CNP, Hartman explained that although interpretation regarding the need to stay within the designated areas for recreational activities (figure 1 and 2) is clear and fences are in place, breaks in the sand dunes or the destruction of fencing with bolt cutters allows easy access to protected land. It should also be noted that while there is ample signage regarding the responsible use of recreational vehicles, there is little mention of cultural sites, none of which appears on the specific *Beach Driving* sign.

(Figure 3: site near 32 Mile Crossing CNP)

One such place is located on the coast near 32 Mile Crossing; here, there are a number of shell middens, all within the same site location, spanning several kilometres just behind the first sand dune off the coast (figure 3). As Harman and Trevorrow guided Lynley Wallis and I over the area, it became apparent that if there were Old People at this site there would be very little to protect them from vehicle activity. Immediately upon crossing into the protected area, four wheel drive tracks could be seen running parallel with the coast; their origin, a naturally weathered gap in the dune. The best to
be done at this stage would be the immediate fencing of the area from the coastal track, and placing more interpretation at the gap in the sand dune regarding revegetation as can be found where we entered the site. This would not only keep drivers out of the area, but give them a good reason to comply with National Parks protocol without drawing attention to the cultural materials found in the area.

Similar interpretation as seen above could be used throughout the CNP to protect places of significance including those of Old People. However, as stated above, any direct signage regarding the location of such sensitive sites may only lead to their further degradation and ultimate destruction.

**Government Ignorance and disrespect for Old People:**

(Figure 5, Poltalloch Station, destroyed Burial Site)

As illogical as it may seem, one of the threats to burial sites in the CNP are developers. Although Indigenous sites, including those of Old People, are protected under the pertained Acts, it would seem that some would argue that progress is more important than Indigenous Heritage. One recent example of this is the new shortcut on
Alexandrina Drive near Poltallock station, 15 kilometres east of Nurrung (Figure 5). It was here that a known, identified burial site was destroyed by Transport SA.

To the Ngarrindjeri community this desiccation of Old People is not only devastating on a spiritual level, as explained above, but also it could be seen as an insult to their culture. Further, as in the case of the Smith collection, also mentioned above, there will be a cost in identifying, transporting, keeping and eventually reburying the Old People from this site.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time this has occurred in Australia. The Wattle Point wind farm case, on the Yorke Peninsula, is one example of how an area can be deemed, by the Minister, a significant indigenous site and protected under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988* yet still be destroyed. It took the Minister only one month in 2004 to overturn the South Australian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Terry Roberts, statement and give the go-ahead for 55 wind turbine generators to be built (Agius, 2004: WEB accessed; Anon, no date specified: WEB accessed).

Unfortunately, with the Minister having the final say on what they feel is important enough to protect or destroy in the name of progress and profit; there is little that can be done to protect such sites. Other communities, such as the Adjahdura in South Australia utilise the press and internet to educate people of their cause but, as stated above, it is unfortunately up to the Minister to make the ethical decision on such issues.
Although the Poltalloch site is not strictly within the boundaries of the CNP, it is still important that the issue of government ignorance and disrespect still be discussed; as stated above, and seen with the Adjahdura community, legislation and Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) are not enough to ensure the protection of such sites.

**Natural environment and River System degradation:**

(Figure 6, example of a blow-out, Long Point)

The Coorong National Park is recognised as a high wind area and as such contains many ‘blown out’ midden sites. These occur when a shell midden is blown out by wind and a crater is left, leaving heavier materials such as bone and stone artefacts behind (figure 6). As skeletal remains surface from the protection of the sandy soil, they become very fragile and immediately begin to degrade at a rapid rate. The burial site near the town of Roukkin, mentioned above, is a perfect example of how quickly a site can degrade potentially destroying the remains of Old People. It is here that salvage techniques will need to be implemented; this will be discussed later in the report. Similarly, with severe drought and water shortages, Old People sites may be discovered closer to water systems. It is here that sandbagging methods, as discussed below, is most appropriate.
Animal Impacts:

It is no surprise that feral animals, mainly rabbits and fox, have had a negative impact on the environment in CNP, and as such are a threat to shell midden and Old People sites. Although little has been written regarding the direct impact on Old People sites in the CNP, in relation to rabbit and fox populations, research has been conducted on their impact on the natural vegetation. This destruction on native flora has an impact on such sites as the lack of root systems ultimately leads to the exposure of human remains. After their introduction to Australia in 1859, the European Rabbit population has multiplied and spread over most of Australia. Fortunately, with the introduction of myxomatosis and the calicivirus, population numbers have dropped significantly within CNP; so much so that flora such as sheoaks, Allocasuarina verticilliata, and native fauna, including kangaroo, numbers have dramatically increased since the decline in rabbit numbers (Hinds, Cooke, Robertson and Williams, 1996: web accessed). However, the damage of middens and burial sites in CNP by rabbits and their introduced predator, the fox, can still be found. At a site visited, approximately four kilometers, east of Roukkin, there is evidence of rabbit burrows being claimed by fox, causing further damage to an already degraded midden/ burial site (figure 4). With the exposure of Old People at this site, Dr Lynley Wallis recommends a salvage attempt at the site which will be discussed later in this report.
As for the prevention of such damage occurring in the future, with the aid of biological control, rabbit numbers, as stated above, have already declined significantly and by following management plans such as *Review of existing Red Fox, Feral Cat, Feral Rabbit, Feral Pig and Feral Goat control in Australia. II. Information Gaps* (Reddiex & Forsyth, 2004: web accessed), degradation of cultural sites may be decreased.
Methodology:

Archival Research:

The first stage of gathering information for this report was an analysis of legislation and other research including literary reading found in the library and various archaeological journals relevant to the sites and concepts in this report.

Legislation and Management Plans:

The primary pieces of legislation used for this report include the *Aboriginal Heritage Act* 1988, which outlines correct protocols and legislation regarding Indigenous sites including burials. *The Coroners act 2003*, which states the correct procedures to follow when someone does find human remains was also analysed. As stated in this report, it was important to know exactly how state legislation states how this should be dealt with and how that correlates with the needs of the Ngarrindjeri community and the DEH. Other Acts were also looked at in order to better understand the context in which Old People sites are in and how to better protect them; these included the *Environment Protection Act 1993*, the *Fisheries Management Act 2003*, the, *Aboriginal Lands Trust Act 1966*, and the *Native Title (South Australia) Act, 2003*.

A number of relevant Management plans where also analysed to gain a better understanding of how the DEH monitors such sites and the environment, and how that may differ to other management plans and profiles. Such plans included *Ngarrindjeri Nation Yarluwar-Ruwe Plan: Caring for Ngarrindjeri Country and Culture* (2007), the *Coorong National Park Management Plan* (1995), the Environmental Protection...
Consultation and site visitation:

My first meeting with industry partners was on 02 April, 2008. It was the first opportunity to meet with Uncle George Trevorrow, Uncle Tom Trevorrow and Luke Trevorrow to discuss what it was they wanted to achieve. The opportunity was also made to meet Tim Hartman; it was then that further issues such as salvage attempts and different protection methods for burial sites were discussed such as sand bagging, replanting of native vegetation.

During the 2008 archaeology field methods field school in the Coorong National Park, I was given the opportunity to visit a number of sites with both Tim Hartman and Luke Trevorrow (24.04.2008) and separate sites with Roukkin community member Richie Walker (25.04.2008).

Hartman and Trevorrow began by visiting a number of smaller vegetated sites near 42 Mile Crossing and 32 Mile Crossing; such sites where simply marked with a low fence. It was stated by Hartman, on this visit, that large interpretation at such sites would not help in their protection, but might possibly be seen as an invitation for people to have a closer look. Similar approaches to the conservation of the natural environment have also been adopted throughout the CNP. Approximately 10km South East of Meningie, on the un-sealed road to 42 Mile Crossing, I was shown a Mally Fowl nest no more than 20 meters form the road. Although no signage is visible from
the road, a few meters inland a small bench and adequate information is given for those who want to view this amazing bird tend to its nest. We continued to 32 Mile Creek Crossing and looked at some of the interpretation displayed at the campsites. These signs are placed up at all campsites and recreation areas in CNP; they display the importance of responsible fishing, camping and four wheel driving, the native flora and fauna and general information about the National Park. However, there is no information regarding Indigenous cultural sites or burial sites in the CNP. We continued towards the coast and visited a site that was completely exposed and as vast as the previous site was contained. It was here that I began to understand the diversity of burial sites. Although no known burial sites were here, a number of issues arose from viewing such a site, as will be discussed below.

On the 25\textsuperscript{th} of April, 2008, I was fortunate to have Richie Walker from the Roukkin community take Dr Lynley Wallis and I a few kilometers outside of the town to view a site different again to the ones mentioned above. Approximately four kilometers west of Roukkin, through two cattle gates and past a bluff, lay the blowout of a sand dune which is quickly degrading. So much so that it is estimated approximately 30 cubed meters of sand has been lost in the last six months (Wallis 25.04.2008). Here, a number of human remains are under serious threat and emergency salvage techniques were discussed.

Later that day, Lynley Wallice took me to view a midden that contained human remains at Poltalloch Station. It is hear that a new issue of conservation was made apparent. It was no longer just environmental or recreational threats that would be discussed in this report; it seemed that perhaps one of the most important elements of
the protection of burial sites was the recognition of their importance from the government; such issues will be discussed below.
Discussion

Although there is a lot of literature regarding the history of the CNP, the ethical issues surrounding repatriation and reburial and on the benefits of working close to communities and decolonising archaeological practices I was unable to find a lot of information regarding the actual methods and reasons behind using those methods regarding the protection of burial sites. Indeed, most of the literature found about protection of burial sites, or any Indigenous site, was regarding Indigenous involvement and legislation regarding them, decolonising practices. Although such issues are of the upmost importance and by no means should be set aside, they are far too many and in depth to include in this report.

As such, I needed to focus on what communities where doing in relation to burial sites and what management plans they had in place. Further, as this report evolved, I became aware that most of my content was not necessarily regarding the protection of sites in an immediate sense. That is to say that this report is not all about fences and revegetation; rather it was regarding tourism and protecting further damage being done and taking the correct steps to educate visitors to the CNP in the identification and reporting of sites in order to protect them. Further, this report sets out to protect sites by promoting visitors to the CNP to take an active role in such reporting making them more culturally aware of the area. It is my belief, formed by researching for this report, that through awareness of key issues and examples of burial sites, not only in the CNP but in a national context, visitors of the CNP will be less incline to go into restricted areas and more incline to help in protecting sites containing Old People.
**How are sites managed currently?**

Old people at the CNP currently are being managed in a number of ways. It is dependant on how exposed or damaged a site is as to what steps may be taken to better protect them. Perhaps the most popular way of ensuring these sites protection is simply fencing off the area. This is done in a number of places throughout the CNP either by low wood fences or higher meshed boundaries. As stated above, the DEH feels that there is no need for interpretation at such sites as it will only promote the more curious visitors to take a closed look. As this has worked in the past, it could be argued that this is a successful method that, in similarly preserved sites, should be replicated. This technique is similar others practices within Australia. Batemans Bay Local Aboriginal Land Council, in 2005, received $34,620 from the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) to fence of a similar area at Nundera Point. To add to this, a re-vegetation programme was implemented to stabilise the surrounding landscape (Anon, 2007). The major difference between this project and any to be conducted by the Ngarrindjeri is the presence of a boardwalk and viewing platform at Nundera Point. This construction would not be recommended in the CNP as it is does not conform to the cultural needs of the Ngarrindjeri community. It could be argued that the promotion and viewing stations may in fact lead to sites degradation. An example of such damage by viewing platforms and seats can be seen in Mauao, New Zealand, where management plans are being initiated to remove such structures in order to protect archaeological sites (Anon, no date specified, 29)

Another technique for the protection of the Old People is sandbagging. This is a technique used to create a solid foundation to protect an area; this is particularly useful when remains are found, and need protection, near a sandbank or if an area is
susceptible to wind damage. One example of this in the CNP was conducted at Hacks point by Dr Lynley Wallis and Kate Dommet, where a site containing two Old People was discovered where after, permitted excavation and dating was conducted, reburial and protection was aided by this technique (Anon, 2005).

Revegetation is another way in which sites can be protected in the CNP. As discussed above, the revegetation of an area not only creates a physical barrier around a site, it helps to keep the ground intact and protects against wind damage.

During my time in the CNP, I had a number of casual discussions regarding the environment and revegetation in the area and found that the protection and rejuvenation of the natural environment is something that many members of the Ngarrindjeri Nation believe in very strongly in. As such, revegetation is a positive way to protect these sites. However, this must be done carefully. Whilst individual sapling planting may protect sites, mass germination may in fact destroy them. In some parts of the lower Murray, I was told that some communities are exploring such techniques. Such methods include the use of a large truck or trailer full of organic matter and fast germinating seedlings which are projected out of a hose to a general area. While such methods may be appropriate for areas that defiantly have no sites containing Old People, it could be argued that they may harm sites that do. With the new plants sprouting indiscriminately it is not implausible that one may land over a shallow site, causing it to surface and/or be destroyed. As Uncle George has stated that he does not like this method used, and that it may destroy Old People sites, it is recommended that such methods be used carefully and in places without the presence
of any archaeological or burial site. Similar methods which use mulch or woodchips
to cover such sites should also be executed with great care.

Unfortunately, due to the quick degradation of human remains after they have
surfaced, salvage and reburial techniques are common. One such example of a salvage
which needs to occur is near the town of Roukkin. Here multiple Old People have
become exposed due to wind erosion and need to be moved if they are to be protected.
Through consulting with Ritchie Walker it was determined that the best practice for
this site is:

- A full total station recording of the site. This would give an accurate recording
  of the site and its artefacts within context.
- A careful excavation of the Old People would occur and, only with the
  permission of Traditional Owners, samples for analysis and dating will be
taken. This will not only tell us the age of the remains, but what age the Old
  People where when they passed away and what their health was like at the
time (similar to Wallis’ excavation at Hacks Point mentioned above). It will
  also give us an accurate number of Old People at the site.
- Another excavation, again with community consent, will also be
  recommended in order to determine what other materials are at the site; and to
cross reference dating samples.
- Dr Wallis then recommends that the Old People be placed in a protected box
  and reburied close to the site until the Community can determine whether they
  need to be relocated and a smoking ceremony can take place.
The identification of burial sites:

The identification of burial sites throughout the CNP is not something easily done. Although we can assume that potentially a site might be within a midden or in a general area, there are no physical signs left by the Ngarrindjeri to mark where the Old People are. The romantic imagery of skeletal remains in tree hollows or totems warding off intruders are fancies, and are perhaps one reason why visitors to the park may not realise the impact they have if the rules set out by the DEH are not followed. Indeed, on my visits to the CNP I was amazed that sites were so diverse; they ranged from small fenced off areas in the middle of dense vegetation, to blown-out middens to exposed, large dune systems. The best recommendation for visitors to the CNP regarding Old People is simple; don’t go into restricted zones looking for them. Apart from being illegal and the consequences involved, it is culturally insensitive and can be devastating for the community. If an Old Person is found in an open area, certain guidelines must be followed; these will be discussed below.
If an Old Person is found:

As stated above, one of the major threats to Burial sites in CNP is tourism. One way in which the NHC and the DEH wish to approach this issue is to set guidelines for people to follow in the event of finding an Old Person or People; this in turn, will lead to their being better protected. This thought is shared by other associations in Australia, such as the Environmental Protection Agency Queensland Plants and Wildlife Service (EPA) (Anon, 2007:2). A number of issues regarding the discovery of such a site, these include:

- Who to contact in the event of finding a burial site,
- What laws and repercussions surround such issues,
- What the community feels should happen in such an event,
- What information should be recorded initially,
- What long term strategies are involved and
- How does this information get communicated to visitors of CNP?

The Courts Administration Authority of South Australia states that in the event of finding skeletal remains in South Australia it is the finders’ responsibility to report it to the coroners office (Anon, 2008: web accessed) as stated under section 28 of the Coroners Act 2003. Section 20 of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 also states that any one who discovers such a site must as soon as possible report it to the minister or face fines and/or possible time in jail.
After speaking to Luke Trevorrow and Tim Hartman, it was established that it would be best practice if, and when, Old People were found in the CNP, they be reported to the DEH with a few specific details regarding the site that will be discussed later in this report. It is also important to send the message across to visitors of the CNP the need to respect such places. It is imperative that Old People not be disturbed or touched in any way. On my first visit to the CNP, Hartman told me that one concern is visitors finding remains and bringing back a “sample” for the DEH to view. Although it was correct to notify the DEH of such a finding, the removal of the remains has a two fold consequence. First, as stated above, it is spiritually devastating for the community and the Old Person for their remains to be taken away from their resting place. Second, it is an immediate breach of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988* under section 23.

Due to the CNP being a protected area with revegetation programmes in place and so many sensitive Indigenous sites, many of the places where Old People can be found are strictly off limits to the general public.

As stated above, these rules are often ignored which is a major concern, especially where burial sites are concerned. The problem therefore arises, if someone is in a restricted zone and discovers a burial site, why should they report it when they will face a fine for being where they are not supposed to be? It was recommended by Dr Wallace that perhaps an anonymous phone line or WEB page be set up in the event of such an occurrence. This would ensure the finder of the Old People site that they will not be punished if they report such a finding. This coupled with an A4 folded
pamphlet on the procedures involved when finding a burial site would arguably lead to the identification and protection of Old People in the CNP.

The information that is needed to be recorded by visitors to the CNP however should be simple yet accurate; it is not expected that the general public visiting the CNP will be archaeologists or other researchers used to filling out site recording cards.

The information should include:

- An honest\(^2\) description on how to get to the site.
- A sketch or ‘mud map’ of the area and where the site lies in its context.
- A description of the site. For example, is it intact or damaged? Are there more than one Old Person? What type of vegetation is in the area?
- A Global Positioning System (GPS) reading including the datum and type of GPS used.
- A photograph of the site and its context\(^3\).

With this information, it will then be the DEHs responsibility to survey the site properly, alert the appropriate authorities of the finding of skeletal remains and take appropriate action, if the remains are Indigenous, to preserve and protect the Old People.

\(^2\) It should be noted that this description must be honest in order to relocate the site. Further, an accurate and honest description will help find broken fences and sand dunes that may have been used to access restricted areas.

\(^3\) However, it should be noted that the publication of such photos is culturally insensitive and not recommended by the DEH and the NHC.
It should also be noted, that with fewer than ten rangers working in the CNP, it is difficult for the DEH to locate and protect such burial sites, especially with such a large area to cover and visitors arriving each day. It may be argued that with regular help from members of the Ngarrindjeri community, and other volunteers, sites which otherwise may be destroyed can be protected.
Conclusion:

This report was written in order to determine ways in which to protect Ngarrindjeri sites in the Coorong National Park. With the aid of the NHC, the DEH and members of the Ngarrindjeri community, strategies to help protect such sites have been discussed.

Unfortunately, there is no one way in which to protect all of these sites. Some, as discussed above, require little more than a simple, low, wood fence to keep visitors from further disturbing the site. Others may need revegetation in order to maintain the soil structure surrounding the site, or to prevent further wind or other elemental damage occurring. In such cases, further care must be taken in deciding not only what plants to introduce but the way in which they are planted. While mature fauna may be able to protect a site in a shorter period of time from wind, it may in fact do more to damage surrounding soil upon its introduction. Further, the cost of mature plants is greater than that of seeds, or saplings. In retrospect, saplings for the short term give little protection at all; however, in the long term, they pose little threat to the surrounding soil. Mass spreading of grass seed may sound like a good solution; however, as it may cause destruction to sites, and is not endorsed by Traditional Owners, it is not recommended in this context. Other sites require more drastic measures; as seen in the cases above, near the town of Roukkin and Hacks Point, some Old People may need excavation and relocation in order to best protect them. This however brings up new issues of how to excavate and where to relocate. To add to this, there may be the need to perform ceremonies and the added stress on the community. Further, there is the issue that it must be decided where the Old Person/
People are to be kept between excavation and reburial and whether Old People should be placed near their original resting place, or stored at Camp Coorong in the Keeping Place.

Other methods may also be used such as sandbagging, where bags of sand are set up as a structure to protect a site, may also be used. This is recommended especially in places in sand dunes or near water. Used in conjunction with revegetation, it could arguably be a very successful method of protecting Old People.

As stated above, prevention is the best protection against damage to burial sites. If visitors to the park read and follow the interpretation erected in the CNP, it would arguably reduce the potential damage caused to such sites. However, as there is no way of knowing where sites may be found, either in restricted areas or not, plans need to be constructed the event of someone finding a burial site. With the aid of a poster and an A4 pamphlet designed in conjunction with this report, visitors to the CNP will be able to pass on relevant information to the DEH of any site found in the CNP further aiding their protection.

The issue of discovering burial sites in the CNP, by rangers, is also discussed. With limited resources and a large area, it would take far too long to ensure all, or even most, of the sites in the CNP are getting the protection they need. It is recommended that other community members or volunteers become involved on a regular basis to survey different parts of the CNP. This will not only aid in sites protection, but may be beneficial in protecting the natural environment.
It is recommended, that in the future, further monitoring of protected sites be done in order to determine best practice. As there is little literature on this, and each site is different, it is not possible to make any definitive conclusions at this stage. However, with the recommendations suggested above, coupled with the aid of visitors to the CNP in recording such sites, it is hoped that sites, especially those containing Old People will be better protected.

It is also recommended that it be made clear to visitors of the CNP that while going into restricted areas is not permitted, the reporting of found sites is advocated and may be done so anonymously. This, it is argued, may not only help to protect sites which otherwise would be unknown, but also lead to addressing broken fences, or the creating of them, in the gaps between sand dunes which may have given access to curious visitors. However, as stated, these are restricted areas and visitors to the CNP need to be aware of repercussions surrounding such places, thus it is also recommended that tourists be made aware of the relevant legislation regarding the CNP and Indigenous sites.
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