

At the Beverley Mine airstrip, just about to hop on a flight across the Gammon Ranges to Leigh Creek, then via road to Witchelina. Left to right: Jacqui Lang (Heathgate Resources), Caroline Nefiodovas and Alex Nankivell (Nature Foundation SA); at the rear Paul Templer (CEG Training) and Jacqui Dealtry (Heathgate Resources, ASMP Program Leader).



By **Caroline Nefiodovas**, NFSA's SEB Business Development Manager

ABORIGINAL SCHOOL MENTORING PROGRAM

ABORIGINAL SCHOOL MENTORING PROGRAM (ASMP) WINS PREMIER'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN SOCIAL INCLUSION AT THE SACOME ANNUAL DINNER

Since 2012 Nature Foundation SA has been delivering Significant Environmental Benefit (SEB) offsets by improving native vegetation on Witchelina Nature Reserve for Heathgate Resources' Beverley Mine operations. Following NFSA's inaugural SEB Restoration Ecology Forum in September 2014, Heathgate and NFSA were keen to explore further opportunities to work together with the Adnyamathanha people, the traditional owners of the lands at Witchelina and the Beverley Mine. From this, the ASMP was born.

The ASMP, backed by Heathgate Resources and with partners Nature Foundation SA, CEG Training and Port Augusta Secondary School (PASS), aims to provide students with a greater understanding of conservation land management and the resources industry.

This dynamic educational program, developed by Heathgate's Senior HR Advisor Jacqui Dealtry, is designed to give young Aboriginal school students the skills, opportunities, belief and confidence to finish school. We were thrilled last month when Heathgate's ASMP won the SA Premier's Community Excellence Award in Mining and Energy for Excellence in Social Inclusion.

NFSA's Conservation Programs Manager, Alex Nankivell, and I went along with Heathgate, CEG, and PASS to visit Witchelina this year. We showed them the accommodation facilities and surrounds that would be utilised in a series of work experience camps.

In a first for both Alex and me, we were up and back to Witchelina in a day courtesy of Heathgate's company plane. It was fascinating seeing the country from the air, and the sheer scale of it. The trip home was quite an experience with thunderstorm activity all around, and a very short bumpy flight from Leigh Creek to Beverley Mine over the Gammon Ranges. We were all grateful to be back on solid ground afterwards!

Alex will lead three work experience camps at Witchelina each year, delivering a unique learning experience that ensures students have an enjoyable time and also gain important life skills such as living away from home in a remote location. The first camp for year 8/9 students starts on 7 June and will involve activities such as flora and fauna identification, map reading and GPS skills.

All involved want to inspire them so the same students come back next year and learn even more. In subsequent years, activities and skills gained at Witchelina can be counted towards certification in conservation land management and may provide pathways to further education offered by the ASMP, or employment.

NFSA and Heathgate are very excited to be working with the traditional owners of Witchelina on this innovative and forward-looking project. Watch out for updates!

“**T**he work experience camps at Witchelina are a fantastic opportunity for students to work on their traditional lands whilst gaining skills for the future. We are very pleased to have found a common cause in working with NFSA in this ground-breaking social inclusion program.”
Craig Bartels President of Heathgate Resources