

PRESS RELEASE

Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary an Aspiring Geopark Project

Marg and Doug Sprigg, Directors of Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary, are pleased to announce the following:

“The inaugural meeting of the Australian Geoparks Network was held in Warrnambool on 9 -10 July 2010. Kanawinka Global Geopark, currently Australia’s only Geopark, hosted the meeting. Delegates from five states and a representative from the Hong Kong Urban Geopark attended. Professor Ross Dowling of Edith Cowan University in WA will head up the Australian Geoparks Network.

The Australian Geoparks Network unanimously endorsed Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary becoming an Aspiring Geopark Project. The outstanding and internationally significant geological heritage of the 600 sq km property in the Northern Flinders Ranges of South Australia makes this area an important contender for Geopark Project status.

Arkaroola contains a number of significant geological monuments and diverse geological features, such as fossil and modern geothermal springs, an ancient biologically constructed barrier reef, the world’s thickest sequence of ancient glacial rocks, great diversity of rock types and several endemic minerals.

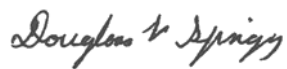
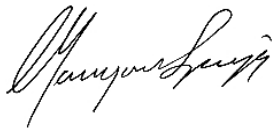
The internationally acclaimed landscape was first recognised, a century ago, as ‘the world’s greatest outdoor geological museum’, by Professor Sir Douglas Mawson. Mawson’s former student, Dr Reg Sprigg, purchased the property in 1967 for conservation funded by tourism.

Currently, State and Federal Governments in Australia do not support the Global Geoparks Program. However, the program is rapidly expanding throughout Asia, with Geoparks in Africa, the Middle East and Canada soon to be proclaimed. Geoparks are generating millions of dollars of income in China, creating new economic opportunities for rural and urban communities.

The Australian Geoparks Network believes that Australian governments will support the Global Geopark program in the future. Citing the recent *Tourism Futures Conference* in Brisbane 5 – 7 July 2010, Professor Ross Dowling told delegates that Asian markets are projected to dominate international tourism in Australia, within a decade. UNESCO's Global Geotourism Program provided an invaluable opportunity for the Australian tourism industry to develop new products, with a globally recognised brand.

Representatives from the Hong Kong Urban Geopark will provide mentoring for the Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary as it prepares its submission for consideration as a Global Geopark.”

Please don't hesitate to contact Marg Sprigg on telephone (08) 8648 4848 or email admin@arkaroola.com.au for further information.



Marg & Doug Sprigg,
Arkaroola

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