

# The Flynn Trail

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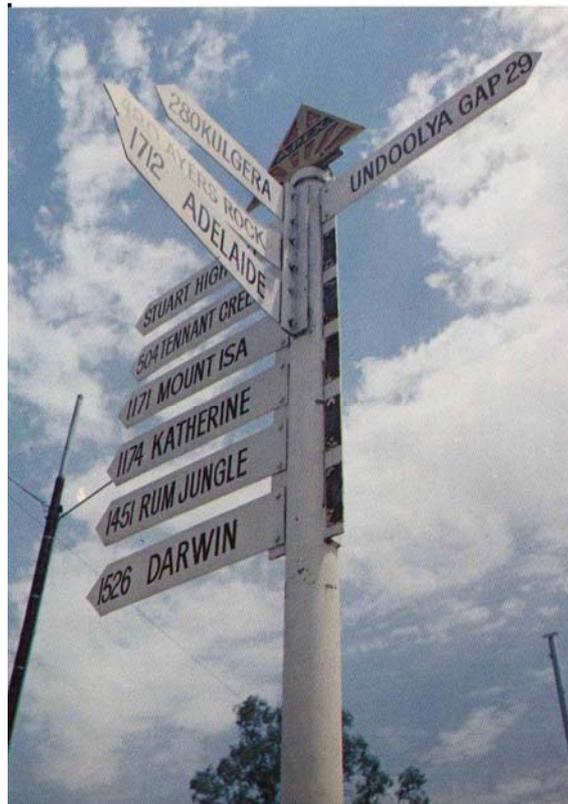
Some notes on the discovery activities for anyone who is 15 or older.

*Don't forget to look in all the other 'younger' PDF booklets for more things to do!*

## Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder

Explores changing attitudes to the Australian interior over time and compares the ideas of a contemporary Centralian scientist with ideas espoused by Flynn in the first half of the twentieth century.

*Please do not forget to look at the 5, 8 and 12 years and older sections of this web site for more Flynn Trail activities.*



Outback Signpost – Alice Springs circa 1963 – Cullen Collection



# Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder

What do you think when you hear the word desert?

Have you ever been to a desert?

If so, what was it like and how did it compare to what you think deserts are?

If not, would you like to go to a desert for a holiday? Why or why not?

Where do you your opinions about deserts come from?

What do you think when you hear the word beach?

Have you ever been to the beach?

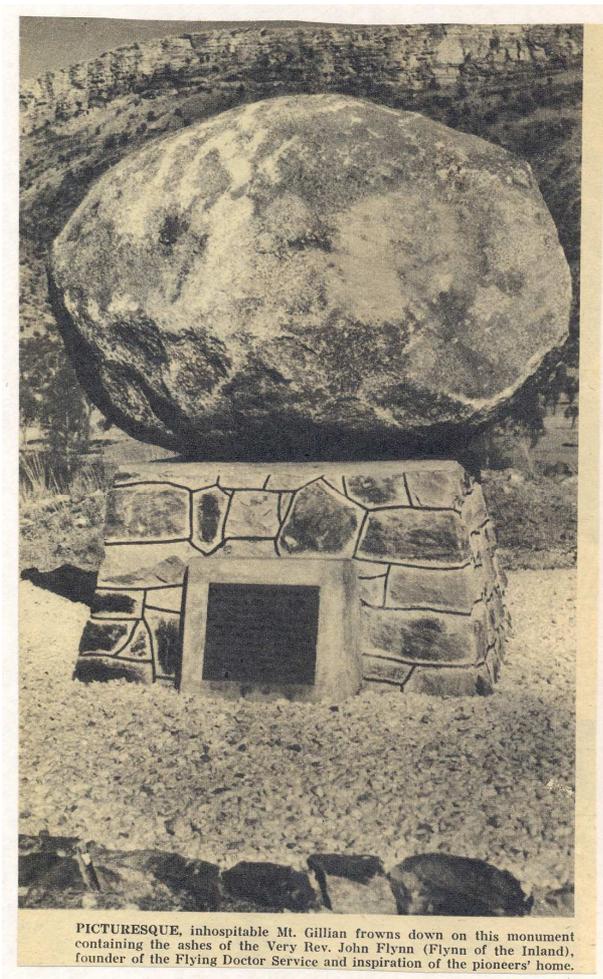
If so, what was it like and how did it compare to what you think beaches are?

If not, would you like to go to the beach for a holiday? Why or why not?

Where do you your opinions about beaches come from?

How do your ideas about beaches and your ideas about deserts compare?

Where do our attitudes to landscape come from?



This 1950s newspaper article describes Mount Gillen, as 'inhospitable'. Half a century later thousands of tourists a year visit Alice Springs and marvel at the beauty of her ranges.

Why have attitudes changed so dramatically?

Do our attitudes to landscape effect how we think about the people who live in them?



Look at the table below. Compare Flynn and Dr Marl Stafford-Smith's words. What do they have in common? How are they different? Discuss.

Do these ideas change you mind about deserts?

| Flynn  | Desert Knowledge Australia   |
|--|--|
| <p>Those living out there must be remembered always, and they must be made to feel always that they are remembered; otherwise there is grave danger of their personal efficiency being impaired, or of their retreating in disgust.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Flynn 1924</p>   | <p>Remote Australia is huge – 85% of the continent. But Remote Australia is often invisible. Few votes = little attention</p> <p style="text-align: right;">2008</p>   |
| <p>There is something vaster and finer than millions of tons of wheat, or shiploads of wool and cotton, however necessary and valuable these may be; something overlooked by those restless folk who never hear of wide open spaces of earth without itching to pour in more millions of human beings, until every mile of its area vibrates with the roar of traffic; viz., distinctive character in the Spirit of Man.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Flynn 'Desert and Destiny' 1924</p> | <p><i>Dry Times: Blueprint for a Red Land</i> argues that desert plants, animals and people have been surviving and thriving for thousands of years on scarce resources and uncertain climates – and they have the systems to cope with uncertainty which urban society lacks.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">2009</p>  |
| <p>Our "Desert" dominates Australia in a physical way, as surely as the furnace dominates a hothouse. Do men call the furnace bad names because mosses and orchids fail to thrive within its maw?</p>  | <p>Besides seeming hot, dry and empty, deserts are also enormously rich – but the richness is concentrated in certain places and at certain times, like when the rains come," Dr Stafford Smith says. "All living creatures, including us, obey certain rules to take advantage of this fact."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Desert Knowledge Australia Press release, 2009</p>  |
| <p>Is it possible that our "Desert" exerts influences far more subtle than the above? And is it probable that, in days to come these deeper influences will operate in far greater degree?</p> <p>We believe so.</p>   | <p>With the knowledge embodied in our deserts, Australians can reshape the human story. This is exactly the kind of wisdom the world needs to help survive the 21st century, a time of growing resource scarcity and unpredictable climates," Dr Stafford Smith says. "There are a lot of lessons from the Australian deserts which apply worldwide nowadays.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Desert Knowledge Australia Press Release, 2009</p> |

'remoteFOCUS: REVITALISING REMOTE AUSTRALIA' a case study @ [http://www.desertknowledge.com.au/dka/documents/remotefocus%20Propsectus%20%20additional%20information%20FINAL%20RELEASE%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.desertknowledge.com.au/dka/documents/remotefocus%20Propsectus%20%20additional%20information%20FINAL%20RELEASE%20(2).pdf)

In 1924 Flynn claimed that deserts 'provide the greater part of inspiration for mankind. Take a tally of your favourite writers; of the speakers whose words linger longest in your memory. Where did they find their faculties?'

Do your own research. Do your findings support or contradict Flynn's thesis?



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