

**At the heart of our country lies Munga-Thirri/Simpson Desert—
one of the most pristine ecosystems on Earth.**

It could be protected forever—or torn apart by fossil fuel exploration

**Please donate \$40 to stop the fossil fuel industry from breaking
Australia's heart.**

Dear Friend,

Eleven years ago, I was part of a team that travelled into Munga-Thirri/Simpson Desert to document its wilderness values.

We were lucky to be there after a big rain. Every once in a while, rain transforms the 'swales' or hollows between the sand dunes into temporary lakes. Thousands of birds flock here from across Australia to feed and breed.

Then native flowers burst into colour across the burnt orange sand. It's a beautiful garden that seems to stretch into infinity.

This remarkable landscape reaches for millions of hectares across the heart of Australia. It protects unbroken sand ridges and ecologically-vital wetlands like Kati Thanda/Lake Eyre.

It's a sanctuary for unique plants and animals. And it's Country for First Nations people, who've been here for thousands of years.

There are few places in the world where nature is so undisturbed. Yet it could soon be torn apart by gas exploration.

Will you please send your gift of \$40 to help keep the fossil fuel industry out of Australia's heartland?

For over a decade, the Wilderness Society has been working alongside passionate people like you to protect this globally important ecosystem.

After our first expedition, we negotiated with the former South Australian government to have the Simpson recognised as high quality wilderness.

But just before the area could be officially proclaimed under the *SA Wilderness Protection Act, 1992*, mining exploration leases were issued across the region.

With tireless advocacy and your help, Wilderness Society was able to push back the first two companies who bought the leases. We made it clear the community would not stand for mining in one of the most intact desert ecosystems the world has left.

But the fossil fuel industry doesn't give up easily.

A few years ago, a multinational named Tri-Star Energy Company took up the leases in the Simpson. Then last year—when the country was in lockdown—they announced their plans for exploration.

The South Australian government has just proposed that Munga-Thirri/Simpson Desert become the largest national park in the country's history, covering an area of 3.6 million hectares.

This is a grand initiative, on a scale Wilderness Society has been advocating for from the start. It could create a huge north-south corridor in the heart of Australia, allowing endangered animals and plants to move and adapt to a rapidly changing climate.

But that can't happen if Tri-Star gets the green light. Its mining leases are still valid, so this national park will be 'jointly proclaimed' for conservation and mining. What a tragic oxymoron.

There will be no conservation if bulldozers are able to rip through the shifting sand dunes and drill into fragile groundwater tables.

They'll disrupt the desert's cycle of water and life, erode vital habitat, and destroy this pristine wilderness forever.

It's with the help of determined supporters like you that we've already been able to push two fossil fuel companies out of the Simpson Desert. These successes take a lot of campaigning, and lot of funding—which is why your kind gifts are so needed. Thank you so much.

Today, will you send a gift of \$40 to help protect the heart of Australia?

Your gift will help tell the Australian public about Tri-Star's irresponsible plan.

And you'll amplify the voices of people like Barry Barber. He's president of a community conservation group called 'Friends of the Simpson Desert'.

Barry has been travelling into the Simpson Desert on conservation 'working bees' for the past five years. He told me how he first fell in love with the landscape:

"What astounded me on my first visit was how vegetated the desert is. I'd pictured the Sahara Desert. But it's quite lush, even though it's a true desert that receives very little rainfall. And the solitude is something else."

Barry and his team of volunteers come from all walks of life. There are farmers, gardeners, bird watchers and tradies. What they share is a love for nature, and a passion for protecting it.

They travel for days from Adelaide to Dalhousie Springs to do conservation work, including revegetating areas impacted by modern vehicles.

Barry's group also wants to take in researchers, who can chart habitat for threatened species like the thorny devil and wedge-tailed eagle.

As someone who cares deeply about this landscape, you can imagine how alarmed Barry was when he received a registered letter from Tri-Star last year.

"They said 'we want to apply to do some seismic testing in the Simpson Desert.' So I started digging around. I wrote an application opposing them. Then I joined a robust meeting with them about the merits of coal seam gas mining in the Simpson."

I was in that meeting with Barry and none of us held back from expressing our serious concerns to Tri-Star's proposal.

Fossil fuel companies try to pitch 'exploration' as a gentler phase than production. In fact, it can be even more destructive.

To find gas, companies often bulldoze grid patterns across massive areas.

How do you bulldoze the Simpson's sand dunes without messing up its delicate ecology? It could fundamentally change the flow of water that brings wetlands like Lake Eyre to life.

Tri-Star may build roads and could sink wells into precious groundwater tables like the Great Artesian Basin—which supply large areas of the continent with water.

It would be disastrous to allow the climate wrecking fossil fuel industry to expand into the heart of Australia. But the good news is, this is a disaster you can help prevent.

The best time to stop dangerous projects is before they even start. Now is the time your support can make a huge difference. Your gift:

- of \$40 could go towards a campaign exposing the fossil fuel industry's outrageous plans—including exploration in Australia's special places.
- of \$80 could help fund credible reports that demonstrate the global importance of wilderness areas like the Simpson Desert.
- of \$120 could support local communities to speak up for the Simpson and other magnificent wilderness areas.

The campaign to save the Simpson could be a good news story. And with supporters like you behind us, I have every hope it will be.

We have on our side a lot of community concern. And this time, we have a state government that intends to protect the region.

I commend the South Australian government's vision for Australia's largest national park, stretching from the Northern Territory to above Lake Eyre and beyond.

But that's not enough while companies like Tri-star can continue their push to mine here. We must make sure Tri-Star can never move a single piece of machinery in.

If Tri-Star do find fossil fuels, it won't be left in the ground.



This could lead to a huge gas pipeline through the desert, so more carbon can be burned at the other end. At a time when we need to do everything possible to keep our climate livable, it's unconscionable.

Fossil fuel companies don't just threaten the Australian nature we love. They pose a direct threat to life as we know it on this planet.

As Barry said:

"The world's moved on since the 1960s, when most people didn't have a clue fossil fuels were dangerous to the planet. Now, there's enough science to say we're warming the climate up and we have to stop."

Enough is enough. Fossil fuel companies have decimated enough nature, wiped out enough species, and wreaked enough damage to our climate.

Will you please join with Wilderness Society to keep them out of one of the last great desert wilderness areas we have left?

Please donate \$40 to help stop the fossil fuel industry from breaking Australia's heart.

Thank you so much for your wonderful support. You're caring for the life that supports us, and I don't think anything is more important.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Owen." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Peter Owen
Director, South Australia
Wilderness Society

PS. The leases Tri-Star own are due to expire in 2025. If we can keep them out of Munga-Thirri/Simpson Desert until then, we can keep the climate wrecking fossil fuel industry out of this remarkable desert wilderness for good.

Will you please send your gift of \$40, \$80 or \$120 to help protect Australia's heart?

A heart-shaped formation at the edge of the Simpson Desert, N.T. © fotofritz16

All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

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