

Chambers Pillar Historical Reserve



Fact Sheet

The main feature of this 340 hectare Reserve is the pillar of sandstone which towers 50 metres above the surrounding plain. Sandstone deposits were laid down in the area 350 million years ago. Since then, wind and rain have eroded away the softer material, leaving this solitary sandstone column.

John MacDouall Stuart first recorded the pillar in April 1860 whilst travelling north on his first attempt to cross Australia. He named it after James Chambers, one of his South Australian sponsors.

Until the coming of the railway in the 1920s, the Pillar was a landmark in the desert on the long overland journey from Adelaide to Alice Springs. Many of those early travellers have left a record of their visit in the soft, white sandstone including John Ross and Alfred Giles both in 1870. More recently, visitors have added their names or graffitied the rock face. This is illegal and lessens the historical significance of the Reserve.

Access

Chambers Pillar Historical Reserve lies 160 km south of Alice Springs, along the Old South Road on a turnoff to the west of Maryvale Station (see map over-leaf). The road is unsealed and may be closed after rain. After the Maryvale turnoff, a 4WD is required to negotiate the deep sand drifts and steep jump ups. Use extreme caution when driving over single lane sand dunes. It is

advisable to have someone check for oncoming traffic or to attach a flag to warn other motorists of your approach.

Site of Aboriginal Significance

In the Dreamtime it is said the Gecko ancestor Itirkawara (pronounced it-turk-kar-wara) left the Finke River and journeyed north-eastward. As he travelled he grew into a huge and powerfully built man of super human strength and extreme violence of temper. On the way home to his birth place he successfully challenged and killed a number of unfortunate ancestors with his stone knife.

Flushed with the ease of his successes he then disregarded the strict marriage code and took a wife from the wrong skin group. His enraged relatives promptly banished him and the girl.

The two retreated into the desert, Itirkawara raging in fury, the girl shrinking from him in deep shame. Among the dunes they rested and turned into prominent rocky formations - Itirkawara into the Pillar, the girl, still turning her face away from him in shame, into Castle Rock to the northeast, about 500 metres away.

What to do



Camping - Please camp only in the camping area provided between Chambers Pillar and Castle Rock. Camping fees are payable. Please use the gas BBQs provided.



Walking - Walking tracks explore the prominent

Safety and Comfort

- Observe park safety signs.
- Carry and drink plenty of water.
- Wear a shady hat, sunscreen, insect repellent suitable clothing and footwear.
- Avoid strenuous activity during the heat of the day.
- Consider your health and fitness when choosing a walk.

Please Remember

- Keep to designated roads and tracks.
- All historic, cultural items and wildlife are protected.
- Firewood collection is not permitted in the reserve.
- Fires are only permitted in designated firepits.
- Bins are not provided, please take your rubbish with you.
- Pets are not permitted in this park.
- Generators are not permitted.

features of Chambers Pillar and the surrounding area. At sunrise and sunset, the Pillar glows like a burning ember as the rays of the sun strike its walls. The viewing platform at the base of the Pillar is to protect the fragile sandstone from erosion.



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