



WALKING TRAIL GUIDE

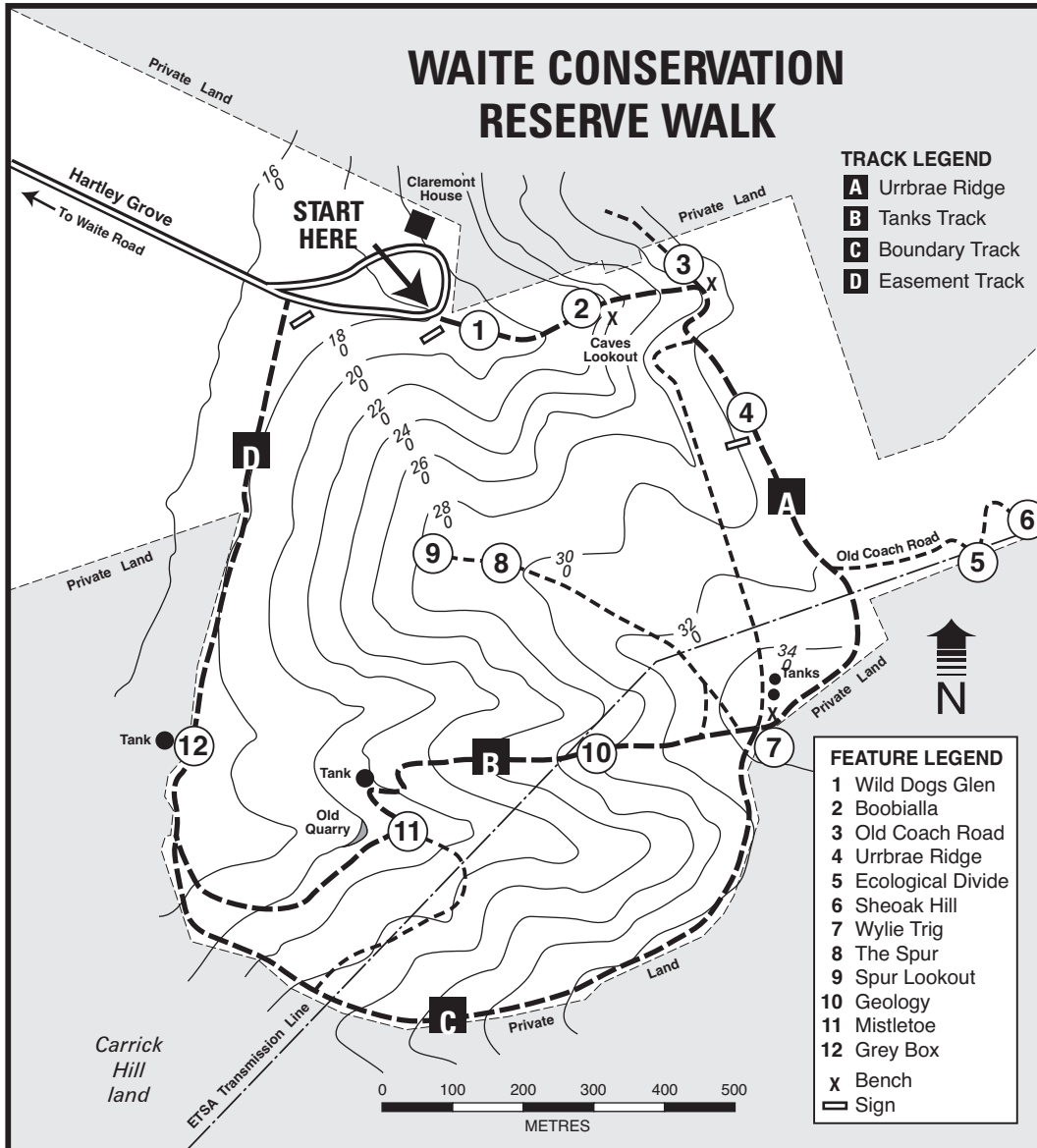
Our logo is the striking Blue devil *Eryngium rostratum* a spiny herb in the family Umbelliferae.
It occurs in the Reserve and has conservation status.

Please keep to the paths and treat the Reserve with respect.

The trails are a testimony to the efforts of the Friends of Waite Conservation Reserve.

Allow 2 - 3 hours for the walk.

WAITE CONSERVATION RESERVE WALK



INTRODUCTION

This magnificent hills face area was dedicated to the protection of nature and the furtherance of scientific knowledge in 1992. The western part of the land, originally purchased by Peter Waite, was bequeathed to the University of Adelaide in 1914. The University subsequently bought the additional land to the east. Despite intermittent grazing over most of the 20th century the Reserve remains the best surviving example of Grey Box Woodland. Home to several hundred species of plants as well as kangaroos, koalas and echidnas, it is a valuable asset to the University and the people of South Australia.

Native apricot



1. WILD DOGS GLEN

According to Alfred Hardy who was living at 'Claremont' in 1850, Wild Dogs Glen was so called by the Aborigines because of the numerous dingos. Once the site of massive olive infestation, the Glen is slowly being colonised by native grasses and shrubs. Olives *Olea europea* were introduced to the region in the 1870s by Sir Samuel Davenport who planted 14,000 trees of 27 varieties at Beaumont as a fruit and oil crop. Olives soon proved however, to be an aggressive weed of both pasture and bushland. Olives are notoriously difficult to eradicate as the stumps persistently reshoot. Without ongoing olive control, evident throughout the reserve, the native vegetation would quickly be smothered by this feral species.

As you walk, look up to your right at the base of the escarpment. You may be able to spot the graceful light green weeping form of *Pittosporum phylliraeoides*. Called native apricot because of its distinctive, bright orange woody capsules, this species was once common on the hills face. Rocky outcrops which were out of reach of sheep served as refugia for many native species and are a source of seed for regeneration.

2. BOOBIALLA

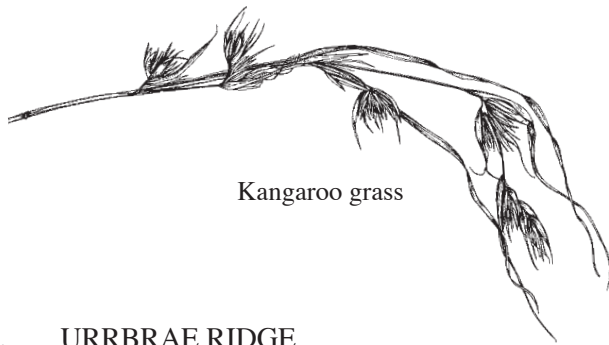
Continuing up the track notice the many regenerating bushes of sticky boobialla *Myoporum viscosum*. When the reserve was first delineated there were only two bushes at the top of Wild Dogs Glen. With the removal of olives and grazing pressure, cascades of boobialla seedlings appeared below the parent bushes. Since then regeneration of this and other native understorey species is remarkable.



Sticky boobialla

3. OLD COACH ROAD

You are now on the Old Coach Road which was built by Arthur Hardy in 1861 and was one of the first roads from Adelaide to Mt Barker. The road started opposite the Old Toll House and continued through Birksgate, up a steep incline, south along the ridge, then southeast towards Mt Barker. Later an alternative route was made to avoid the steep climb at the start. The intersection of these two roads can still be seen at the southern edge of the reserve (station 5).



4. URRBRAE RIDGE

Kangaroo grass *Themeda triandra* is one of the most robust native grass species. It also occurs throughout Asia and in many parts of Africa, and exhibits diverse morphologies across this geographical range. Unlike most introduced grass species, kangaroo grass grows prolifically during the summer months and flowers towards autumn. It is favoured over many understorey species by regular burning and tends to form a dense weed resistant sward. Wallaby grasses *Danthonia* spp. are also re-establishing in the reserve since the removal of sheep.

Despite its pine-like appearance, this native cherry *Exocarpos cupressiformis* (to the east of the track) has nothing in common with the conifers. It is in the family Santalaceae whose members are hemi-parasitic, usually on the roots of the surrounding plants. Around Christmas the fruiting stalklets enlarge to form sweet, succulent, edible 'cherries'.

5. ECOLOGICAL DIVIDE

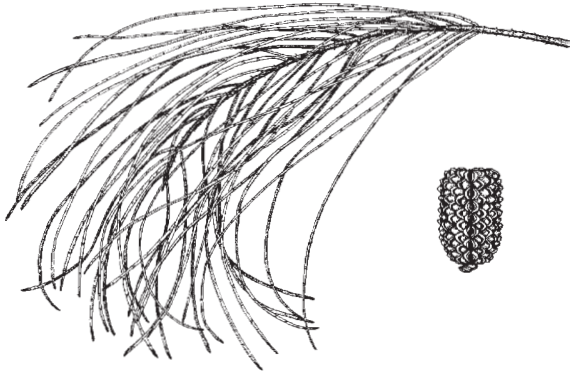
The vegetation in this part of the reserve is in excellent condition, with a diverse understorey dominated by native perennials and grasses. It has rarely been grazed in the last twenty years and has been cleared of most woody weeds. The neighbouring land has been continuously grazed for a least sixty years and as a consequence presents a stark contrast to the reserve. Sticky hop-bush *Dodonaea viscosa*, with its shiny leaves and papery capsules, flourishes along the track in this part of the reserve.



6. SHEOAK HILL

After the removal of a very dense infestation of olive trees, this gully remains a testimony to the threat that weeds pose to remnants of native vegetation. The steep hillside to the east displays a community type different from that found in other parts of the reserve. This community is characterised by a canopy of eucalypts, stands of drooping sheoak *Allocasuarina verticillata* and a dense herbaceous understorey. From here please retrace your steps and return to the ridge.

Drooping sheoak



7. WYLIE TRIG (356 m)

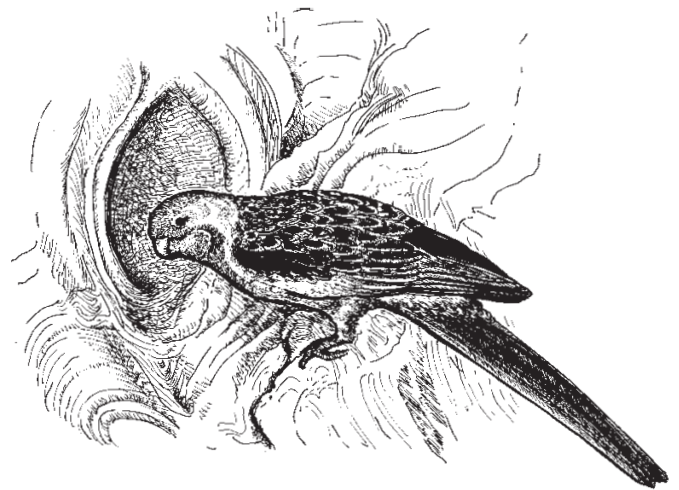
From the highest point on the Waite Campus it is possible to see Mt Lofty to the east, both Belair Conservation Park and the Willunga Scarp to the south and Brown Hill Trig (312 m) to the south west. There are four species of eucalypts in this area: red gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, blue gum *E. leucoxylon*, grey box *E. microcarpa* and ribbon gum *E. viminalis*. Koalas can often be seen on the reserve and their sharp powerful claws have deeply scratched many of the nearby trunks. Echidnas, western grey kangaroos and brush-tail and ring-tail possums are also resident and many species of butterflies have been recorded, including some which are rare or vulnerable.



Echidna

8. THE SPUR

This stand of grand old gum trees provides hundreds of nesting hollows. In spring the sound of parrots rearing hungry chicks is very noisy. Birds commonly seen in the reserve include: Wedge-tailed eagle, Brown falcon, Kookaburra, Grey fantail, Willie wagtail, Adelaide and Eastern rosellas, Sulphur-crested and Yellow-tailed black cockatoos, Galah, Yellow-tailed and Buff-tailed thornbills, Spotted and Striated pardalotes, Red wattle-bird, Yellow-faced and White-plumed honeyeaters, Black-faced cuckoo-shrike, Grey currawong, Magpie, Scarlet robin, Golden whistler, Little raven and Blue wrens. The young trees in this area have germinated naturally since the removal of sheep in 1993.



Adelaide rosella

9. THE SPUR LOOKOUT

Enjoy the splendid sweeping views of Adelaide from here. Common among the rocky outcrops are the handsome Tawny rock dragon *Amphibolurus decresii*, the colourful Painted dragon *A. pictus* and a variety of skinks. There are also fine stands of drooping sheoak here.



Tawny dragon

10. GEOLOGY

The rocks exposed on the Waite Hills Face belong to the Belair Subgroup, representing several thousand metres of sediments. These were deposited under shallow marine conditions in the Late Proterozoic (about 750 million years B.P.), just prior to the onset of a major period of glaciation. They comprise mostly siltstone and shale with sandstone which have been folded and weakly metamorphosed to phyllite and fine to coarse-grained quartzite during a period of mountain-building some 500 million years ago. Here you can see a disturbed outcrop with fine examples of wavy bedding and truncated crossbeds on the joint face. Closer inspection reveals veins of quartz formed by recrystallisation along the cleavage direction.

11. MISTLETOE

The clumps of pendulous yellow-green leaves growing on the eucalypts are box mistletoes *Amyema miquelli*. Mistletoe is an aerial hemi-parasite. It relies on its host for water and minerals but photosynthesises its own food. Usually it does not kill its host unless the tree is under stress. The fruits have a viscous, sugary layer rich in nutrients and seeds are dispersed by the dainty Mistletoe-bird which has evolved an unusual behaviour. Instead of perching crossways to defecate like most birds, it sits lengthways, pasting the seed along the branch, thus ensuring that they will germinate in a suitable place. The narrower leaved harlequin mistletoe *Lysiana exocarpi* can be seen growing on the box mistletoe which is growing on the grey box. Harlequin mistletoe is also native and grows on a variety of hosts, but not directly on eucalypts.



Box mistletoe



Grey box

12. GREY BOX

This magnificent grey box is included on the National Trust Register of Significant Trees. It is an outstanding specimen of remnant vegetation and probably predates white settlement. Grey box was once common on the better soils with trees up to 25 m providing a hard, durable, close-grained timber which was soon cleared from the more accessible sites. The virgin communities which survive on exposed rocky soils on the western foothills of the Mt Lofty Ranges have conservation status. The boxes are distinguished from other eucalypts by their rough, hard bark over the whole trunk, smallish leaves, numerous buds and small, cup-shaped fruits.

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