

Department for Environment and Heritage

Para Wirra Recreation Park

Devils Nose Hike



*Healthy Parks
Healthy People*



Government
of South Australia



www.environment.sa.gov.au

The Devils Nose

Protrudes on slippery rocks

Steep track behind

The wonders of a bushland walk

With hidden treasures

A scratch from an echidna

An orchid's spidery red feelers

Sheoak branches

Diamonds in the mist

Stately emus with greedy beaks

Blue wrens chattering

In springtime frenzy

Kangaroos in the shade

Here we few with snips

and spades

Keep weeds at bay

And pathways safe

With well placed seats

A family friendly park

And it belongs to you

Joan Sutcliffe

The Devils Nose Hike

....a moment in time

This is a very popular walk which winds along a ridge on the western boundary of Para Wirra Recreation Park with excellent views to the north-west and east. Allow 90 minutes for the trip to Devils Nose and back.

The first half of the hike is easy walking, but there are rocky sections near the Nose where you will need to take care.

There are numbered posts along the hike corresponding to the information in this brochure, and seats for you to rest and enjoy the views.

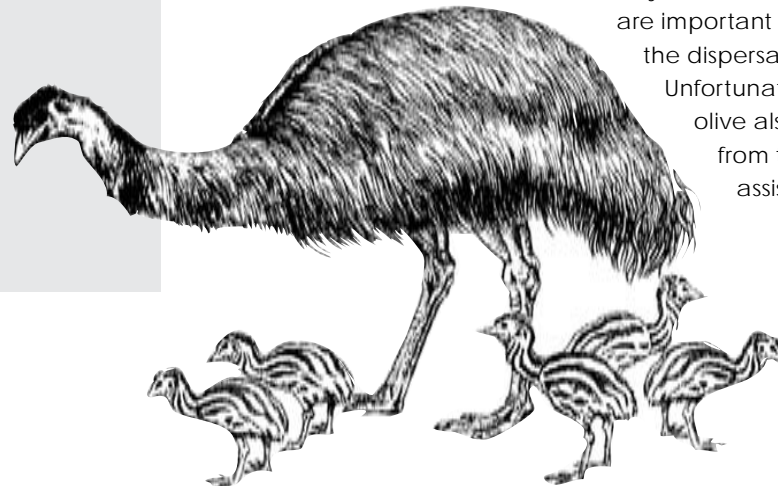
As you walk along the hike you may like to reflect on the great age of the landscape around you.

The last hundred years is just a moment in time, but it has brought great change. What will the Devils Nose look like in another hundred years?

1. Have you seen an emu today?

Or have you seen where an emu's been? There are lots of emus in Para Wirra. Just start up one of the barbecues and there will be several around in no time. They were not always so common in the park. Emus were re-introduced into Para Wirra in 1965 and have thrived since then. Their diet is varied and mainly consists of insects, herbs and fruits and at times, barbecue scraps. Emus pizza-like droppings

liberally laced with seeds, are important agents for the dispersal of plants. Unfortunately the feral olive also gains from this assistance.



2. What makes a mallee?

One of the main characteristic features of mallee is the multiple stems that grow from a lignotuber at the base of the tree. The lignotuber stores energy that enables the tree to resprout after fire or drought. The mallee seen along this hike is the blue leafed mallee, *Eucalyptus polybractea*. This species is widespread in the eastern States, but in South Australia it is rare, occurring only on the Devils Nose Hike.

Many of the other trees growing in Para Wirra look like mallees because of the way they have grown. Just off the hike are old piles of stumps that were partly burnt when this area was cleared for grazing. The bulldozers and chains snapped trees off at ground level and as a result they have grown several trunks.

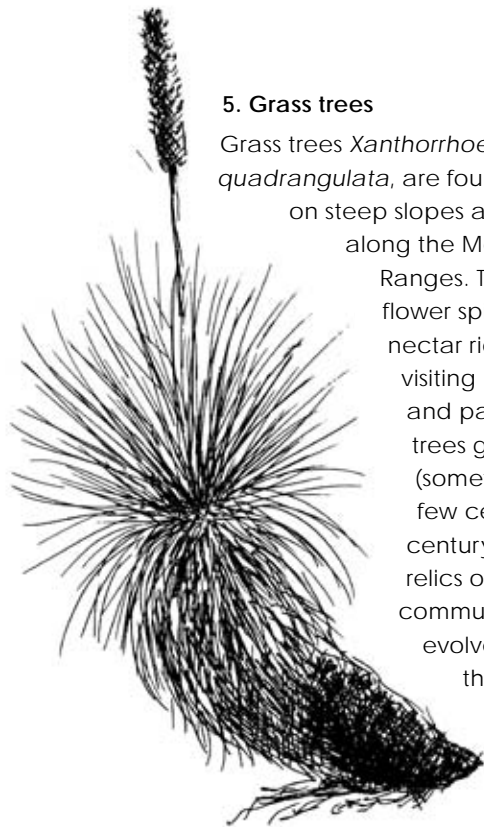
3. Mossy side up please!

Many rocks along the trail are covered in a greenish 'moss'. Most of this is lichen, associations of fungi and algae, which grow in sunlight on the surface of rocks. Lichens take many years to form a thick coating while they extract nutrients from the rock and nitrogen from the air. They are a fragile part of the ecosystem on a rocky ridge like this, so please tread carefully!

4. Which way from here?

If you look to the north-west on a clear day you can see the Hummocks, low hills, beyond Port Wakefield, where the majority of land has been cleared for farming. To the east you can see expanses of native bushland much like the scrub near Devils Nose.

This is just a fragment of what was here 200 years ago, and Para Wirra Recreation Park plays an important role in protecting this small remnant of vegetation.



5. Grass trees

Grass trees *Xanthorrhoea quadrangulata*, are found growing on steep slopes and ridge tops along the Mount Lofty Ranges. Their impressive flower spikes offer a nectar rich treat to visiting honeyeaters and parrots. Grass trees grow very slowly (sometimes only a few centimetres a century) and are relics of a vegetation community that evolved long before the arrival of humans, when Australia was home to the giant marsupials. They

adapted to fire, protecting their delicate growing points deep inside the stem.

The larger grass trees are so old they may have been visited by generations of the Kurna people who used the resin for attaching spear heads. How many generations of your family have come and gone since these plants were seedlings?

If you are walking on to the Knob lookout, you will pass through an impressive stand of grass trees. Be careful on the slippery slope but don't hold on to a grass tree. They are brittle and you could easily break off hundreds of years of growth.

6. Recent arrivals

Boneseed and cottonbush are weeds that have been growing near the Devils Nose Hike for a few

decades. They are both about the same size and shape but have very different effects on the natural environment.

The cottonbush, for instance, provides the only food source for the larvae of the beautiful wanderer butterfly. The butterfly begins its life as a caterpillar that feeds on the cottonbush until it reaches maturity. If you look closely you may see these boldly striped caterpillars.

On the other hand, very little feeds on the boneseed plant. It builds up dense colonies that prevent native plant seedlings from growing. Boneseed is spread by foxes and emus, and is difficult to control.



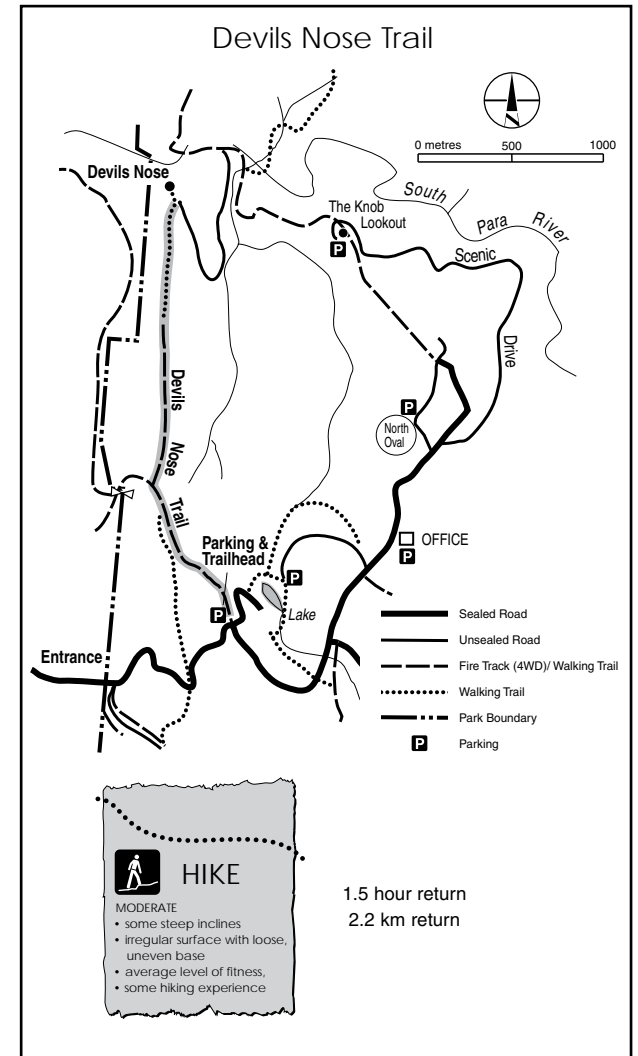
7. On the Nose

The rocks under your feet developed from marine sediments laid down about 800 million years ago when only the most primitive forms of life existed on earth. Following this, sediments piled up until these rocks were 10 km under the surface. Enormous pressures squeezed and folded them into hard sandstone.

Over the next million years most of the overlying layers gradually eroded away. Can you imagine 10 km of rock being washed away! Then 60 million years ago, the current Mount Lofty Ranges were pushed up by faulting. The hard sandstone along the Devils Nose ridge resisted the erosion that followed, resulting in curious rock formations including the 'nose' which is at the end of the ridge.

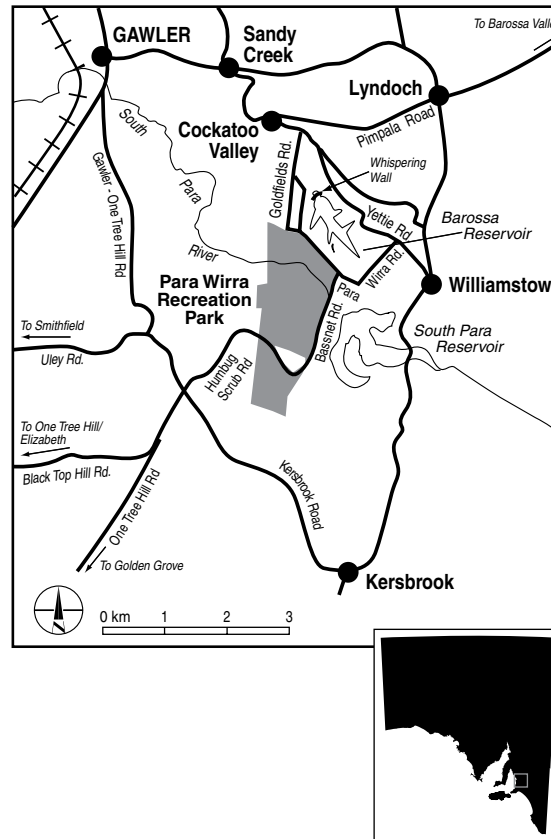
The land around you is still eroding and changing today but the process is so slow that if you had been here half a million years ago it would not have looked much different.

The time taken for Aboriginal people to develop their culture and knowledge or even for the grass trees to evolve is just a moment in time compared to the time it took for Devils Nose to become what it is today.



Friends of Para Wirra with the help of a Community Grant. Artwork by Doug Winsor, Howard Macbeth and Steve Taylor.





For further information contact:

Para Wirra Office
 Phone Information Line (08) 8280 7048
 Fax (08) 8280 7862
 or write to Para Wirra Recreation Park,
 RSD Humbug Scrub Road
 One Tree Hill SA 5114