

Department for Environment and Heritage

Para Wirra Recreation Park

Hisey Loop Hike



*Healthy Parks
Healthy People*



Government
of South Australia



www.environment.sa.gov.au

"This brochure is an introduction to an ecological interpretation of the Hissey Loop Hike. The hike is named after the Hissey family, who farmed the land prior to it becoming a park and still form in the district. Take this opportunity to discover the natural environment of Para Wirra Recreation Park.

Please enjoy your visit to the park."

The Hissey Loop Hike has been developed to enable visitors with prams, and those requiring an even walking surface, a chance to explore some of Para Wirra's woodland. There are however 2 flights of 13 steps to negotiate.

Taking an easy 1 hour walk, it traverses a varied terrain. Commencing with views of the distant hills, it travels down the gully along the creek bed, past the lake then up the west facing hillside back to the car park, passing through an interesting cross-section of vegetation.

The walk starts in open woodland that was partially cleared for grazing and is now grazed by western grey kangaroos.

Stop 1

Looking north-west as we leave the car park we see the hills in the distance. Past the first seat and over the drain pipe we find a eucalypt heavily parasitised by two species of mistletoe. The mistletoe is spread by the mistletoe bird. The red breasted male is often observed along the path. The red fruit is eaten by the bird and the sticky coated seed is passed

out, adheres to the branch, germinates, then taps into the tree for its food.

The possum also feeds on mistletoe. However, wide scale tree clearance has reduced possum numbers resulting in a marked increase in the mistletoe population.

Stop 2

Further down the walk is evidence of bush regeneration. The short lived, quick growing pioneer plants - the golden wattles (*Acacia pycnantha*) - are very prevalent. They bring the bush alive with their yellow ball-like flowers in the late winter and early spring. The blackened dead trunks are a result of oxidised gum rather than evidence of fire. The golden wattle (Australia's floral emblem) has been an important source of food - from the flowers, seed and gum. The plant also supplied materials for shelter, hunting and firewood.

Stop 3

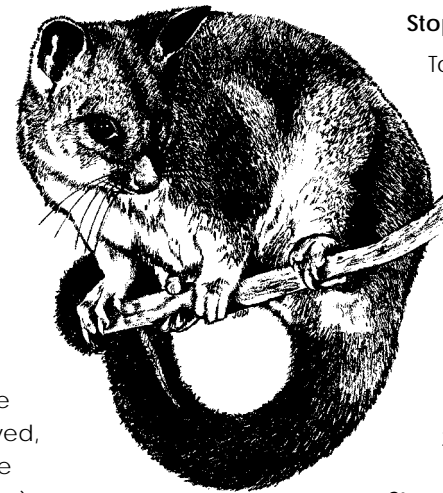
Looking across the gully to rocky outcrops an occasional native pine survives amongst the shiny green of the hop bush (*Dodonaea viscosa*) and the grey-green of the guinea flower (*Hibbertia spp.*).

Stop 4

Crossing the bridge the canopy gets higher, sheoaks (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) begin to dominate, and the regrowth gets thicker. If walkers have not made too much noise, kangaroos can often be seen moving through the woodland using the shadows and heavier bush for camouflage.

Stop 5

Crossing the fire track the walk now follows the creek bed. During the winter months many different species of fungi can be found.



Bushtailed Possum

Stop 6

To the left note the old native pine (*Callitris preissii*) dying back and the many younger ones regenerating around it. Some quiet time spent along here looking westward is often rewarded with bird activity.

The trail now approached the dam, those with energy or needing a toilet turn right over the dam wall. The walk around the dam can be added to the walk. Other wise straight ahead to the East car park where the trail climbs 2 flights of steps.

Stop 7

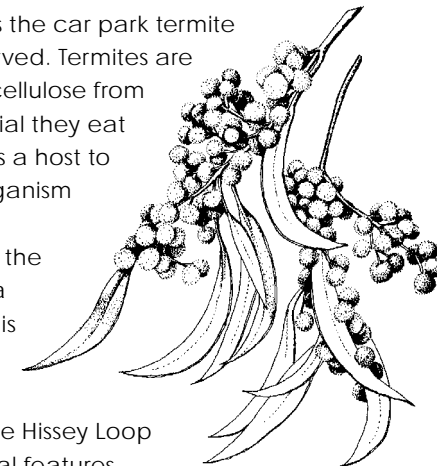
Once past the lake the vegetation changes dramatically as you pass through yacca (*Xanthorrhoea semiplana*) groves. Here, during spring the bush is alive with the colour of many different wild flowers that are protected by the yaccas.

Stop 8

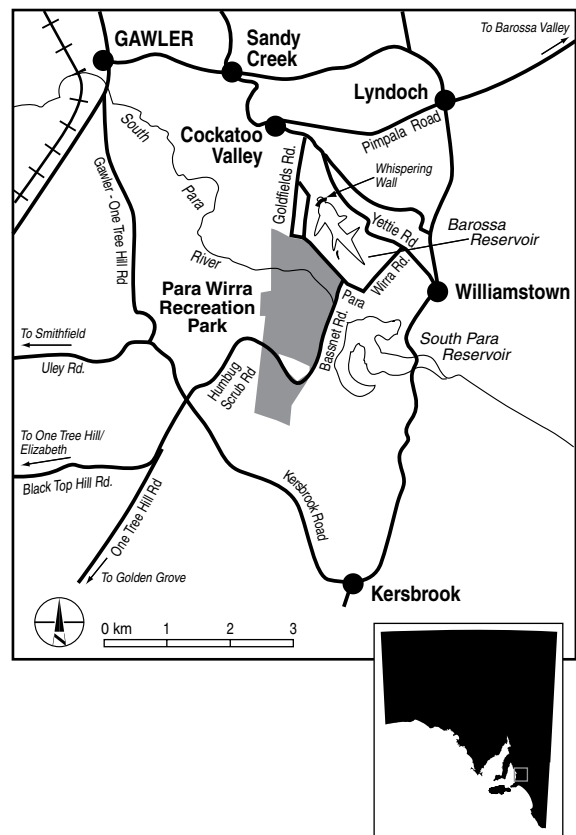
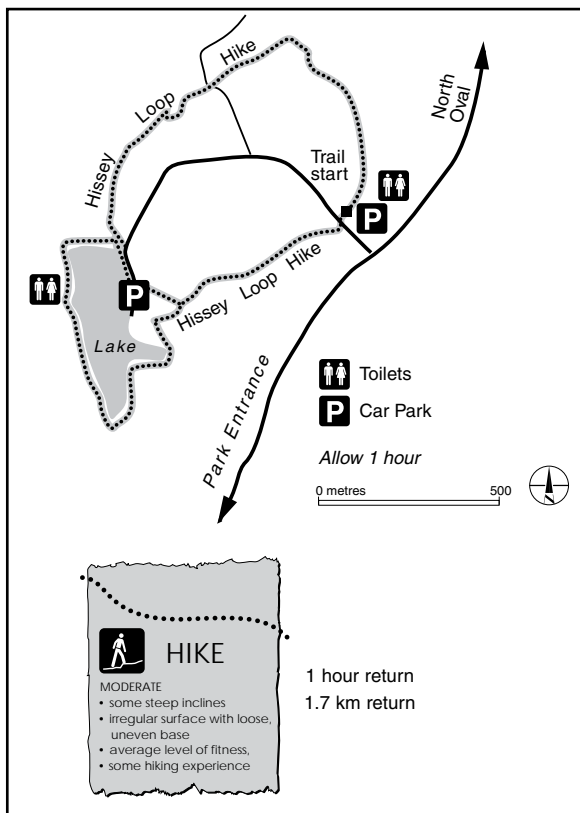
Walking back towards the car park termite mounds can be observed. Termites are unable to digest the cellulose from the dead plant material they eat so they need to act as a host to an intestinal micro-organism that can break down cellulose. Evidence of the short-beaked echidna may be seen along this last section of the walk.

Every season along the Hissey Loop Hike has its own special features, colour and feel. There is always something flowering or coming to maturity.

The Hissey Loop Hike starts at the car park off the eastern lake road. For those wanting a shorter walk but still taking in woodland, you may arrange to be picked up in the car Eastern park at the lake.



Golden wattle



The Friends of Para Wirra are continuing their excellent work in:

- historical research and building stabilization
- growing of endemic plants for the park and district.
- habitat protection and weeding programs
- installation and maintenance of facilities
- the general maintenance and involvement in the park

For further information contact:

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