







### Mark Bonnin Walking Trail

#### Welcome to Hiltaba Nature Reserve

This Walking Trail commemorates Dr Mark Bonnin AM, one of the founders of Nature Foundation SA

- the "green" trail  a 2.7km, (1.35 km each way) return walk with easy grade to two waterfalls.
- the "blue"  9.2 km loop including a rocky gorge.
- a longer rougher 9.7 km "red"  loop including the gorge and climbing to the Lookout.

The different trails are identified by the colour markers on the sign posts. The distance markers show distance to the carpark if completing the  loop trail.

The  and  trails contain rough and steep terrain. All walkers should wear weather-protective clothing and strong footwear, carry an adequate supply of water (min. 2 litres per person), as well as an adequate supply of food. It is recommended to not walk alone. UHF Duplex ch6 can be used in an emergency.

#### ❖ Before you set off ...

Inform a responsible person of your proposed route and expected time of return.

**Getting started.** The Walking Trail commences 17 km from the Hiltaba Homestead. It can be reached by 2 WD in dry conditions following the directions below.

On the main road heading South from the Homestead, turn left (East) at the junction, onto the Iron Knob road. After 16.4 km, turn right on Lookout Track. The key obtained from the Manager will unlock the chain over the track. Please lock this as you pass through. One km further on, leave your car at the Car Park for the Mark Bonnin Walking Trail.



**7.3 km** After the second waterfall, the trail follows along the side of the hills on loose alluvial scree made up of angular lava fragments. Erosion has removed much of the topsoil, and exposed the volcanic rocks to weathering and erosion, and the rocky surfaces are difficult to traverse.



The thinner soils are covered with Spinifex (*Triodia*) species, while on slightly deeper soils one finds Bullock Bush (*Alectryon oleifolius*) with its leaves resembling those of the European olive and Black Oak (*Casuarina pauper*).

**7 km** Views across the valley towards Barry Bore and Warner Bore can be seen, with taller Eucalypts in the creek lines. In the SW, towards the township of Wirulla, the line of salt lakes along the edge of the Gawler Ranges originate from an ancient river which once flowed down this large valley called the Corabinnie depression. It also contains mobile (moving) linear sand dune fields which reflect the most recent prevailing wind direction.

**6 km** The trail continues in Black Oak (*Casuarina*) woodland

**5.5 km** One can see a large Western Myall tree (*Acacia papyrocarpa*) to the south of the trail. Myall are extremely long-lived trees and it is likely that this one is many hundreds of years old, but still in the prime of its life. This Myall, like most Acacia species, has phyllodes rather than true leaves. These are greyish green in colour and give the silky appearance to the foliage.



**5 km** A Native Apricot tree (*Pittosporum angustifolium*) is growing to the left of the trail. The fruit of this tree (also known as Gumbi Gumbi, Bitter Bush or Native Willow) changes from green to orange and when ripe, splits open, with sticky red seeds. An infusion of the seeds, fruit and leaves was a remedy for pain relief and cramps while a concentrate of the fruits was a bush medicine for colds, cramps and itches.





**4 km** The trail turns to the north following a rocky gorge. No path is cleared in this gorge, and walkers should take care.

The gorge provides various shady hollows where water remains long after rain. Evidence of visits by kangaroos, euros, wallabies and wild goats can be found.

**3.5 – 2.5 km** As the trail leaves the gully, deeper soils allow a greater variety of vegetation: as well as the Spinifex one can find Mallee, Acacia, Senna, Dodonea, Eremophila, Saltbush (Chenopods) and Oleria species.

**2 km Junction of Red and Blue Trails.** After the 2 km marker, the blue and red trails separate. The blue trail continues for 1.8 km on a cleared trail directly to the car park, while the red trail climbs on a rough route to the Lookout. (2.3 km to Car Park)

If returning by the  trail, one could always walk up the rough vehicle track to the Lookout, or drive if using a 4 wheel drive vehicle.

**2 km  Trail** The ascent to the Lookout Hill proceeds through scrubby vegetation of Native Hops (*Dodonea*), Grevillea and Acacia, through rocky terrain, with large rocks with columnar joints cutting into the volcanic rhyolite rocks at right angles to the slope.


These types of columnar joints (like organ pipes) are typical of slowly cooled thick lava flows and are seen in many other locations in the Gawler Ranges, and are especially well formed in the creek behind the Hiltaba homestead.



Grevillea



Acacia

**1.5 km  Trail** The 1.5 sign is just prior to the Lookout. From the Lookout you have a magnificent view over large areas of the Hiltaba Nature Reserve. Looking south-westwards, and then slowly turning clockwise, you can see: claypans and salt lakes, Waroona Bluff, Mt Friday and Barber Hill.

The Lookout Hill is made up of very uniform Eucarro Rhyolite which is part of an enormously thick silica-rich lava flow which erupted from a super-volcano here nearly 1.6 billion years ago.

The trail descends 1 km to the car park along the 4 w.d. track.

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**Please return the key to the Hiltaba Manager to claim your deposit.**

These notes (text & photos) are provided by Nature Foundation SA volunteers: P. James, S. Herzberg, M. Nicholls & J. Whitford.

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