

A brief history of the Highbury Aqueduct Reserve



The Aqueduct Channel

1968

Leonard and his wife Annie have six children. After his death their second son, Frank, takes over the running of the property.

1970s and 80s

Leonard's grandson John moves into the old homestead on the Promenade. He begins subdividing the land north of the aqueduct channel and takes over operations of the orchard south of the channel.

1990s

The remaining orchard area south of the channel is subdivided and both areas (north and south of the channel) are now known as Wicks Estate.

Highbury Aqueduct Project

1960s

An Engineering and Water Supply (EWS) lawyer named Sidney Maidment compulsorily acquires 200 yards of land on either side of the aqueduct channel as a buffer to urban development. A boundary fence was later installed by EWS to keep people and animals out for water quality and safety reasons.

2008

The aqueduct system is decommissioned and replaced with an underground pipeline along the River Torrens, leaving behind a 50 ha linear reserve behind a six-foot high chain mesh fence.

2009

The Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) purchased the land from SA Water through the Planning and Development Fund for \$2 million dollars. The reserve is now held under the care and control of the Minister for Planning

2011

The Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board enters agreement with DPTI to take responsibility for the day-to-day management of the reserve, including the development of the land for public use.

2013 – 15

A Master plan involving extensive community consultation is completed. It proposes that the reserve serve as a park for the local community and as an alternative to the River Torrens Linear Park. This plan estimates the cost to open up the full length of the reserve at around \$3.3m.

2018 - Current

Machinery of Government (MOG) changes have resulted in the Highbury Aqueduct Reserve continuing to be owned by the Minister for Planning but managed by Department for Environment and Water – National Parks and Wildlife Service under a works agreement.

Works completed to date include;

- making the site safe for public access, removing the boundary fence, building shared use and linkage trails, trail signs and seats
- ongoing maintenance of the site including weed control, fire management and amenity mowing
- restoration projects include restoring riparian zones, open bluegum communities and creating habitat for native wildlife.
- revegetation across the site includes in excess of 18,000 plants being planted and the spreading of native grass seed.
- stormwater management across multiple stormwater channels that intersect the reserve

Significant progress has been made thanks to the invaluable partnerships developed to support the restoration of the reserve. We would like to thank the Green Army, Aboriginal Learning on Country, The Carlisle group, Bush For Life, Pioneer Court Community Garden, Local Residents and Friends Group, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty and more recently the Green Adelaide Board.