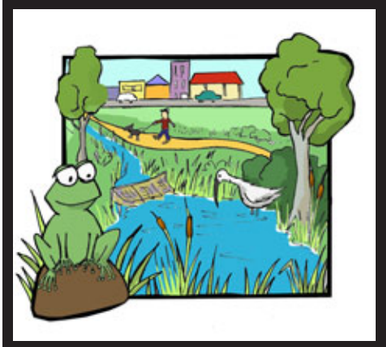
Visiting The Wetlands



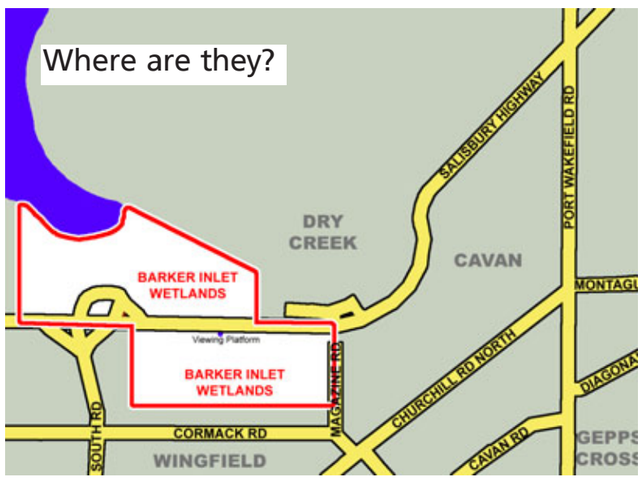
Barker Inlet Wetlands are managed by the City of Port Adelaide Enfield.

Currently, the area is not open to the general public, however viewing platforms and interpretive signs are installed on either side of Salisbury Highway.

Fast Facts

- The Barker Inlet Wetlands form part of a series of constructed wetlands including Greenfields and Connector Wetlands at Salisbury plus the Range and Magazine Creek Wetlands at Gillman
- The combined area of these wetlands is 337 hectares, making them the largest constructed wetlands in Australia
- The freshwater ponds vary in depth up to 2.5m -having a variety of depths and shoreline conditions enables a wide diversity of habitat at the wetland
- To improve stormwater quality the water needs to remain in the wetlands for approximately ten days
- Construction cost: $10 million

A guided tour and investigation of macroinvertebrates at Barker Inlet Wetlands



Eastern Banjo Frog

NRM Education proudly delivers the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative - SA. We acknowledge the support of Local Government and, in particular, those Councils who are working in partnership with NRM Education and the AMLR NRM Board. KESAB environmental solutions is also a key partner and we recognise their ongoing support.

Government of South Australia
Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board

NRM Education

climate change biodiversity water food air waste transport energy

Barker Inlet Wetlands

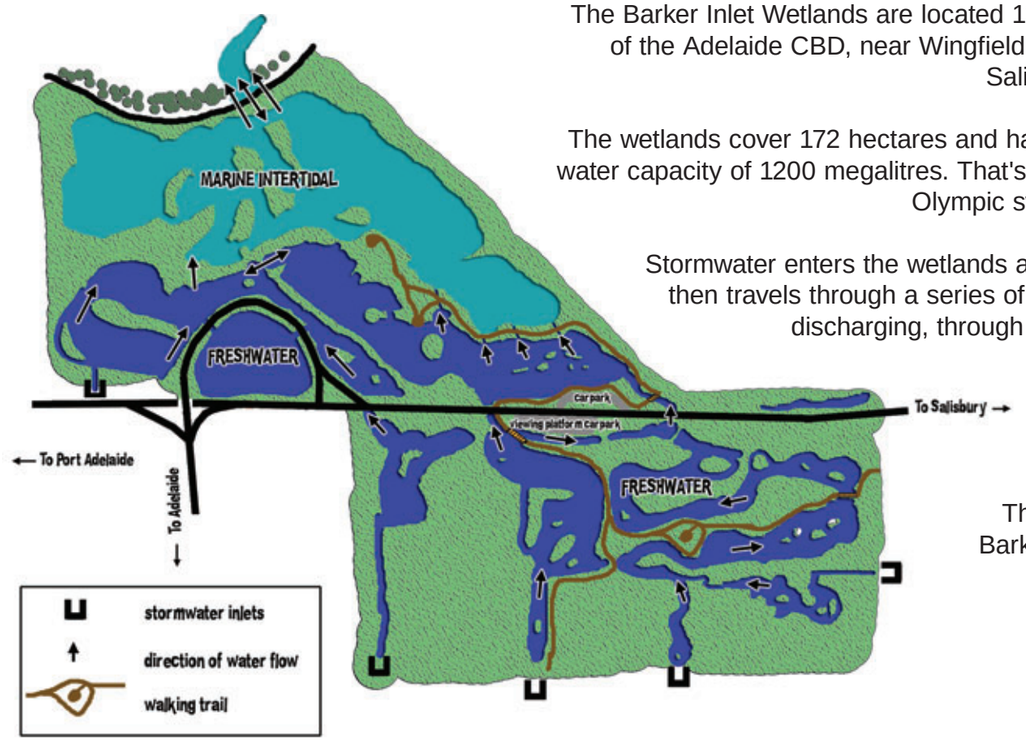
Helping to protect Adelaide's mangroves

The Barker Inlet Wetlands are located 12km north-west of the Adelaide CBD, near Wingfield adjacent to the Salisbury Highway.

The wetlands cover 172 hectares and have a maximum water capacity of 1200 megalitres. That's more than 500 Olympic swimming pools!

Stormwater enters the wetlands at several points then travels through a series of lagoons before discharging, through a sea wall, into the mangrove estuary of North Arm Creek.

This is part of the Barker Inlet Aquatic Reserve.



The Southern Basin of the wetlands consists of three freshwater ponds, while the Northern Basin is divided, by weirs, into freshwater and saltwater (inter-tidal) ponds.

Wetland History

Before urbanisation the area was covered by shallow tidal samphire flats extending all the way to Gepps Cross. Increased urbanisation and lack of appreciation for this unique environment led to the degradation of the land, which was used for waste disposal and landfill along with salt crystallisation ponds.

Stormwater drained through the area via concrete pipes and earth channels and discharged straight into the mangrove forests, as did waste water from the Islington Sewerage Treatment Plant (now closed).

The Barker Inlet Wetlands were constructed to address a range of environmental impacts in the area and provide habitat for wildlife. Construction of the wetlands started in 1994 with Commonwealth Government funding. They were officially handed over to the City of Port Adelaide Enfield in 1998.

Investigations are currently underway to supply the water that has been cleaned by the wetlands for local irrigation and industry use.

WHERE IS THE STORMWATER FROM?

Stormwater, from urban and industrial areas, enters the wetlands via four stormwater drains. The catchment area for the Barker Inlet is approximately 45 km² (4500 hectares) and extends from Park Terrace, Bowden through suburbs such as Prospect, Gepps Cross, Croydon, Woodville, Regency Park and Wingfield.

Land use within the catchment area includes commercial and residential, but is predominantly industrial, with major transport routes a feature.

Why were the wetlands constructed?

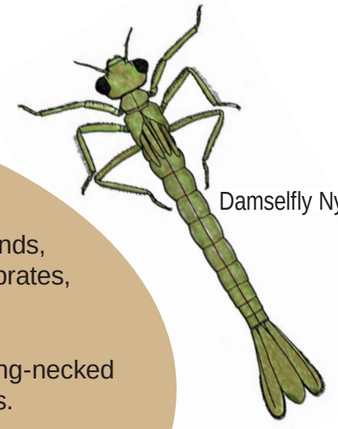
- To provide educational opportunities
- To provide habitat for plants, birds and other animals
- Ecotourism
- To improve the quality of water discharging into the Barker Inlet Aquatic Reserve and the sea
- Stormwater retention, pollution management and flood control
- Water Re-use

What lives there?

BIRDS

The wetlands have been designed to provide a range of habitat for birds, including breeding and nursery areas for water birds. Currently, 130 different bird species have been recorded, including pelicans, spoonbills and cormorants. From September onwards, many migratory birds from the Northern hemisphere visit the area, such as the red necked stint.

White-faced Heron



Damselfly Nymph

OTHER ANIMALS

Spotted grass frogs, common froglets and eastern banjo frogs can be heard along the edge of the wetland ponds, which are also inhabited by a variety of aquatic macroinvertebrates, including shrimp, water boatmen and damselflies.

Brown snakes and lizards live within the wetlands and eastern long-necked tortoises have been introduced into the freshwater ponds.

Feral animals, such as foxes, hares, rabbits and carp, need to be managed because of the negative impact they can have on the wetlands' fauna, flora and water quality.

Native fish, such as congolli, and native water rats also live in the wetlands.

PLANTS

Over 50 different species of local terrestrial plants have been planted in the wetlands, plus approximately 12 different aquatic plants, including reeds and sedges, such as Phragmites, Cyperus and Juncus species. These help with trapping sediment, slowing the water flow and absorbing nutrients.
Salt tolerant native vegetation has been planted to provide habitat for wildlife. The grey mangrove is being planted and regenerating in the estuarine tidal ponds near the sea wall.

Common Reeds