National Parks and Wildlife Service SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Mt George Conservation Park

Ridge Trail Guide



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Government of South Australia

Department for Environment and Water

Hi, my name is Park Ranger Patch.

I am an Autistic nonspeaker and communicate on a letterboard. I am the youngest and first nonspeaking autistic person to be on the South Australian Disability Minister's Advisory Council and an Ambassador for Walking SA.

I believe everyone belongs on our trails.

Welcome to Mount George Conservation Park in the Adelaide Hills.

I invite you to come on a 2.4 km bushwalk with me on one of my favourite hikes, the Ridge Trail.

The information contained in this guide will help:

- you make decisions about what you need to know before heading out on the trail
- keep you safe and
- to support you to have an enjoyable bushwalk.

I believe everyone can learn and that's why I have created my social stories for all ages.

I recommend using this guide before visiting the area and/or taking it with you to enhance your experience. This guide can be printed out or read on a phone, iPad or computer.









About Mount George

Mount George Conservation Park is on the traditional land of the Kaurna People. During the 1840s much of the surrounding area was cleared by European settlers for farming and market gardens. The park features a great variety of vegetation and spring flowers.

There are many walking trails to explore in the park, ranging in duration from 15 minutes to 2 hours. The park is divided into two zones. You can walk your dog in the recreation zone, between Mount George Road and Cox Creek.

As you enter the recreation area, marvel at the majestic Mountain Gums. Look out for pea flowers, ground-hugging correas and a variety of delightful native orchids. Many native birds can be seen around the trees and shrubs, including superb blue wrens, red-browed finches, white-throated tree creepers and scarlet robins. Many mammals and reptiles also exist in the park.

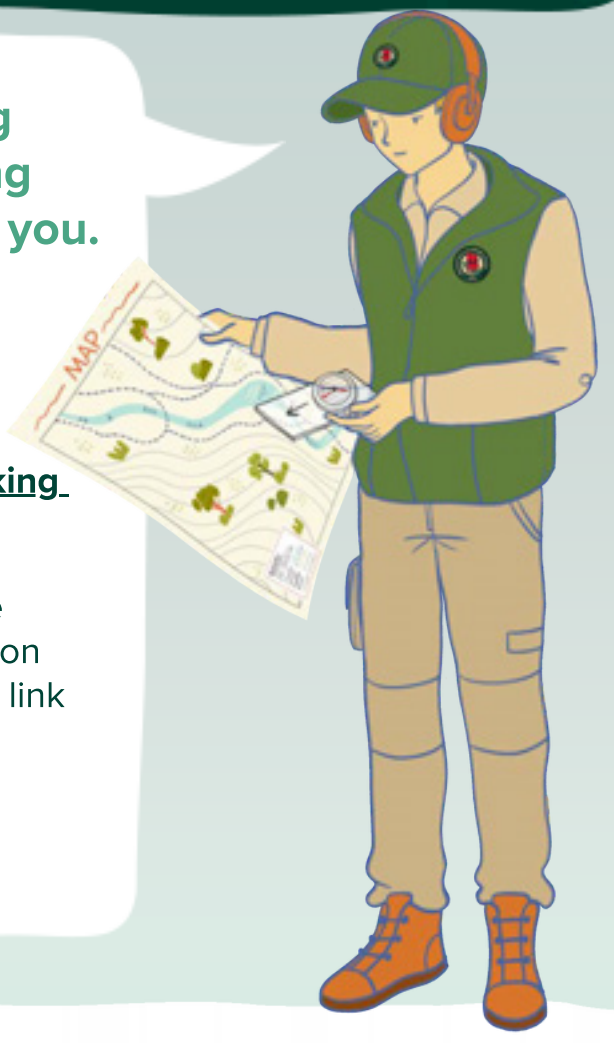
I recommend printing this map from Walking SA and taking it with you.

Click on the link to access and print the pdf version.

Ridge Trail, Mount George Conservation Park, bushwalking loop trail map

Want to explore a trail before you leave home? You can start exploring this trail on Google Street View using the following link

Ridgetop loop trail



Ridge Trail Walk Summary

Park: Mount George Conservation Park

Distance: 2.4 kms

Time: 1 - 2 hours

Type: Circuit

Terrain: Some steep hills

Grade: 3 (Moderate Hike)



Total Ascent: 132 m

Transport Options: Car and Bus

Distance from Adelaide: Less than one hour



Before you go bushwalking

Before heading out on your walk consider the following

- **What you need** to take with you (refer to the packing list).
- **The length of the walk**, your fitness level and ability to move over the trail.
- **The time of day** you plan to walk.
- **Telling someone** where you are walking and when you will be home.
- **The location of the walk** and how far away the walk is from help.
- **Emergency exit points** and/or locations and directions to shorten the walk.
- **The terrain.** Consider the trail width, surface, overall elevation and the amount of ascent and descent, amount of shade, locations that may be hot or cold on the trail, possibility of overgrown sections and other obstacles, dangerous spots and beautiful locations and appropriate places to stop for food, drink and views.
- **Checking the National Parks SA website** for up to date information Mount George - National Parks and Wildlife Service South Australia. (www.parks.sa.gov.au)



Click on the map for more details

- **Checking the predicted weather** conditions with the Bureau of Meteorology (www.bom.gov.au).
- **Downloading Alert SA** (www.alert.sa.gov.au) to your phone to stay informed about fires, severe weather, floods, hazardous (dangerous) materials, total fire bans and heatwaves.
- **Walking SA** (www.walkingsa.org.au) recommends you access their trails database for your walk, then go to the resource page to access up to date resources and tools for walking in South Australia (www.walkingsa.org.au/resources)
- **Other useful safety apps** I recommend to download to your phone include Emergency Plus (www.emergencyplus.com.au) and What3Words (what3words.com). They could help save your life.

What should you take on a day walk?



Plan for unpredictable conditions to help you enjoy your walk and stay safe.

When choosing the equipment to take on your bushwalk consider the following:

- Conditions (time of day, weather, temperature, steepness, remoteness, hazards)
- Location (urban or remote)
- Distance/Activity (short, long, wandering vs working hard)
- Ability (fitness, experience, support required)

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National Parks and Wildlife Service South Australia

WalkingSA

Day Walk Equipment Options

- [ ] 
Appropriate shoes

- [ ] 

Map,Compass and/or a trail app on your phone

- [ ] 
Suitable Clothes

- [ ] 
Water (1-2 litre capacity)

- [ ] 
Shelter

- [ ] 

*Matches should only be used by a responsible person in an emergency

Whistle / Matches / Flint

- [ ] 

Communication (fully charged)

- [ ] 

Energy food (including spare snacks)

- [ ] 

First Aid Kit (including snake bandage and personal medication)

- [ ] 

Personal Items

- [ ] 

Head torch and fully charged batteries

- [ ] 
Backpack

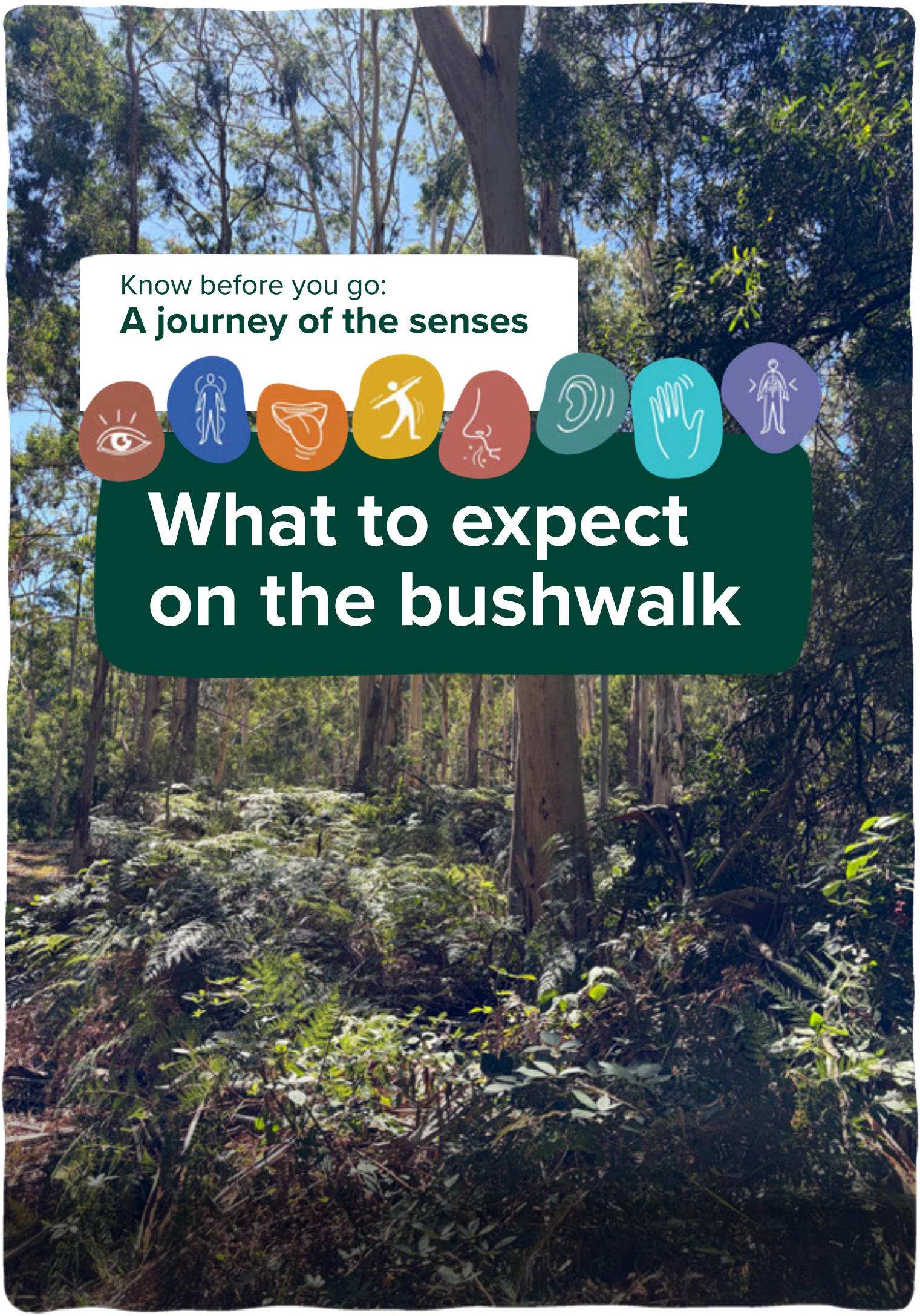
Regulation, communication and other supports



You might also like to take some of the following resources and tools with you to support your communication, regulation and overall experience on the trail.

1. **Communication Devices:** iPad or other devices that you use to express yourself if you are non-speaking, minimally speaking or an unreliable speaker.
2. **Visual Aids:** like picture cards, first-then boards, or other visuals that can help you understand what to expect and make choices.
3. **Regulation and Sensory Tools:** a variety of fidget toys and other sensory items that you use to self-regulate and help you stay engaged during the activity. Such as straw, chewy tube, spinner, headphones, favourite toy/ item.
4. **Personal/Emergency Supplies (not contained in First Aid Kit):** contains personal first aid supplies, emergency contact information, change of clothes, wipes and other items that can be accessed quickly if you or someone else needs it.
5. **Program-Specific Resources:** Depending on the activity, the bag may contain additional resources like binoculars, bird identification guides, coloured pencils/sketch pad or other materials that can enhance your experience and learning during the bushwalk.
6. **Company:** Support worker, friends, parents/carers to communicate, socialise with and assist you if necessary.





Know before you go:

A journey of the senses

What to expect on the bushwalk

What you might see



When you arrive at Mount George Conservation Park, the first thing you will see is the carpark and large gum trees. The first carpark is on the right as you enter the park and has 13 parking spaces. A little further along, the second carpark has 8 parking spaces.

Near the carparks, you will see covered shelters (Rotundas) and a picnic table where people can sit, rest, socialise, and drink and eat. Close to one of the rotundas, there is a small body of water (Dam). You cannot swim in the dam.

There is **NO TOILET** at the park. Make sure you go to the toilet before you come. If you must go while out walking, please clean up after yourself or get someone to help you. (Click on the link for going to the toilet in nature - How to Go to the Toilet on a Hike: Hygiene, Privacy and Leave No Trace)







1



2



3

Look up when you arrive and you might see a Koala resting high in a gum tree. I rarely see them but maybe you will if you look carefully$_1$.

The start of the Ridge Trail is hard to find. The Ridge Trail starts once you enter the yellow gate$_2$ opposite the carparks. You will need to cross the road. I always make sure I look for cars. Follow the fire water sign to get to the gate. Please close it behind you.

You are now on the Ridge Trail$_3$. It is a loop walk. I always walk clockwise but I recommend walking anticlockwise and following the numbers on the map. It is ok to walk both directions. Make sure you stay on the main path to protect plants and follow the signs and trail markers to avoid getting lost.

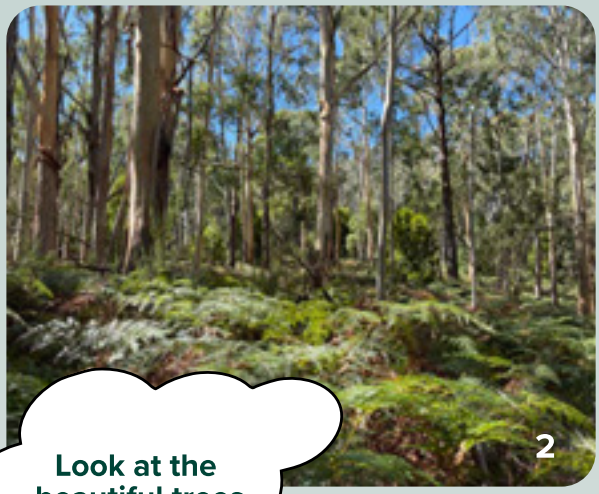


1

This is one of my favourite walks close to the city. You may experience an elevated heart rate as you move along the trail[1].

As you begin walking you will see ferns (leafy green plants), tall gum trees, and sometimes wildlife (animals) You may also notice small, raised piles of soil (ant mounds) on or near the trail[2].

The Ridge Trail has a few different types of tracks. You will walk on fire trails (wide access tracks) that are 3 metres wide and single tracks (narrow walking paths) that are approximately 1 metre wide. The surface (ground) of the trail is made of dirt and rocks and is often covered in leaves[3].



2



3



1



2



3

As you continue walking, you might see butterflies moving through the trees and along the track. Keep a look out for snakes and watch where you step. Don't worry though – I have been walking this trail for many years, and I have never seen a snake[1].

When you reach the top of the trail, you will see amazing views of the forest. It makes me feel happy and calm at this spot. Take a moment to relax and sit down on the large rocks[2].

I love the large gum trees along the Ridge Trail. When I look at them, my mind wanders and I think about what this place may have looked like before humans cut down the forests[3].

Understanding your body



1

Moving over different surfaces on the Ridge Trail will help you understand where your body is in time and place. This supports your body awareness (proprioception) and helps you build an understanding of your body parts and how they work (gross motor development), providing you with confidence and belief in your ability[1].

At times, you will need to lift (raise) your feet over tree roots[2] (roots growing above the ground) and climb (move up and over) small and large rocks[3] and logs (fallen trees and branches).


2


3







When you go downhill you might need to hold onto branches to help your body feel steady. When I was smaller, I held onto my parents' hands for support. It's okay to ask a friend or put your hand out for help[1].

As you move downhill, you might feel your knees (leg joints) working to help you balance and control your body moving forward[2].

At the top of the trail, be careful of big rocks and watch where you step to avoid losing your balance and falling[3].

What you might taste



There is no place to buy food or get drinks. Make sure you bring snacks and water with you. Once you start walking your body uses up energy (strength to keep you going) and you become thirsty.

Plan as many breaks as required to make you happy. I like to stop several times along the trail to have a drink and eat my snacks at the lookout at the top. This is about halfway on the walk.







How you might move



Planning every step and how you move can be challenging. Walking uphill engages your glutes (bottom muscles), calves (lower leg muscles), quads (thigh muscles), and hamstrings (thigh muscles). Walking uphill also helps you engage your core muscles (muscles in your stomach and back).



Your legs may feel tired or heavy - this is normal. Turn back if you don't feel well, safe, or are too tired. When I am struggling to move my body, I think about the body part I need to move and the action (movement) required, such as "move my feet" or "lift my foot". This helps my body know what to do next.

When you walk downhill some parts of the Ridge Trail can be rocky and steep. To make it easier, I recommend using small steps or making zig zag movements (side-to-side) across the track.

When it is really steep, I sometimes slide on my bottom and use my hands and feet for balance and grip. This helps me feel safer as I move. You might like to try this method too.

What you might smell



As you walk along the Ridge Trail you might smell fresh air, gum trees, plants and animal droppings (poo). Sometimes I also smell other people I come across on the trail, for example, their perfume or scent, their sunscreen or the food they are eating or carrying.

Smells can change depending on the weather and where you are on the trail.







What you might hear







You might hear birds and leaves rustling in the trees and on the ground and traffic in the distance.

The traffic noise may make you feel a bit overwhelmed in the carpark. It disappears the further you get along the trail. This makes me feel a lot better.

You might like to wear headphones if noise impacts you. It's quiet once you have walked a few hundred metres.

What you might touch



You may feel plants brushing gently against your legs as you wander along the trail. When its windy you may feel air touch your skin and feel cold or hot depending on the weather.

You need to be careful of blackberry bushes along the trail. Try not to get your legs caught and scratched on the thorns. There are only a few blackberry bushes on the Ridge Trail, but it is still good to watch where you walk.

Make sure you leave the Ridge Trail untouched and do not touch plants or go near or feed wildlife. Please take all your rubbish home and leave **NO TRACE** (leave nature the way you found it). There are **NO BINS** in the park as it helps preserve nature (protect plants and animals).





How your body might feel inside



When you walk uphill you might notice your breathing increases, and you may need to take a rest stop. Your legs might start to feel heavy because they are building up Lactic Acid (a substance that causes your muscles to be tired). You might also notice your skin starting to sweat (perspire) as your body works harder.



I like to listen to what my body is telling me. When my mouth is dry, I stop and have a drink. When my stomach feels empty or I lack energy I eat some food. When I listen to my body, I feel safe and in control.

During exercise my body often sends signals telling me I need a toilet stop.

Bushwalking usually makes my body and mind feel calm and regulated. This is because I have moved my body, spent time in nature and meditated (paused and focused quietly).

I hope you feel as good as me after finishing the Ridge Trail.

Meet Park Ranger Patch



This guide was produced and developed by Patrick Saunders for National Parks SA in collaboration with Walking SA and Co-Art. This guide was written (spelled) by Patrick and images produced by artists under his direction. www.thestoryspeller.com

theStoryspeller.com

Co-Art studio

WalkingSA

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