

Sandy Creek Conservation Park



Healthy Parks
Healthy People



One of the few remaining tracts of undisturbed and undeveloped native bushland in the Barossa Valley, this 142-hectare park plays a vital role in providing habitat for native birds and wildlife. Surrounded by sand quarries, farmland and vineyards, the park has several well-marked trails ideal for bushwalking.

How to get to the park

The park is located an hour's drive north of Adelaide, around 10.5 km north of Gawler. Turn right from the Barossa Valley Highway on to Conservation Park Road and follow the dirt track to the car park. Entry is free.

Facilities

Sandy Creek Conservation Park is home to the Barossa Valley Farmhouse youth hostel. For more information and bookings phone the Youth Hostel Association on (08) 8414 3000.

Bushwalking

An extensive network of trails allows bushwalkers to explore different parts of the park.

WALK
EASY

- even surfaced trail
- suitable for small children

Wren Walk (3.5 km loop, 1 hr loop)

This walk around the main sandy ridge provides attractive views across the park's heath country and peppermint box woodland. Look out for the superb fairy-wren. The circuit links to northern and southern entrances, as well as several boundary vehicle tracks.

Boundary Walk (4 km loop, 1.5 hr loop)

Explore the perimeter of the park and discover a variety of vegetation types that provide a refuge to wildlife. The park is a tiny island in a sea of agriculture and sand quarries, conserving some of the last remaining woodlands in the Barossa Valley. Look for the western grey kangaroo, which is commonly encountered along this trail.

Honeyeater Link

A 1 km walk that connects both walks with the southern entrance on Pimpala Road, passing the Barossa YHA Hostel. Scarlet bottlebrush flowers in spring near the eastern boundary.

Firetail Link

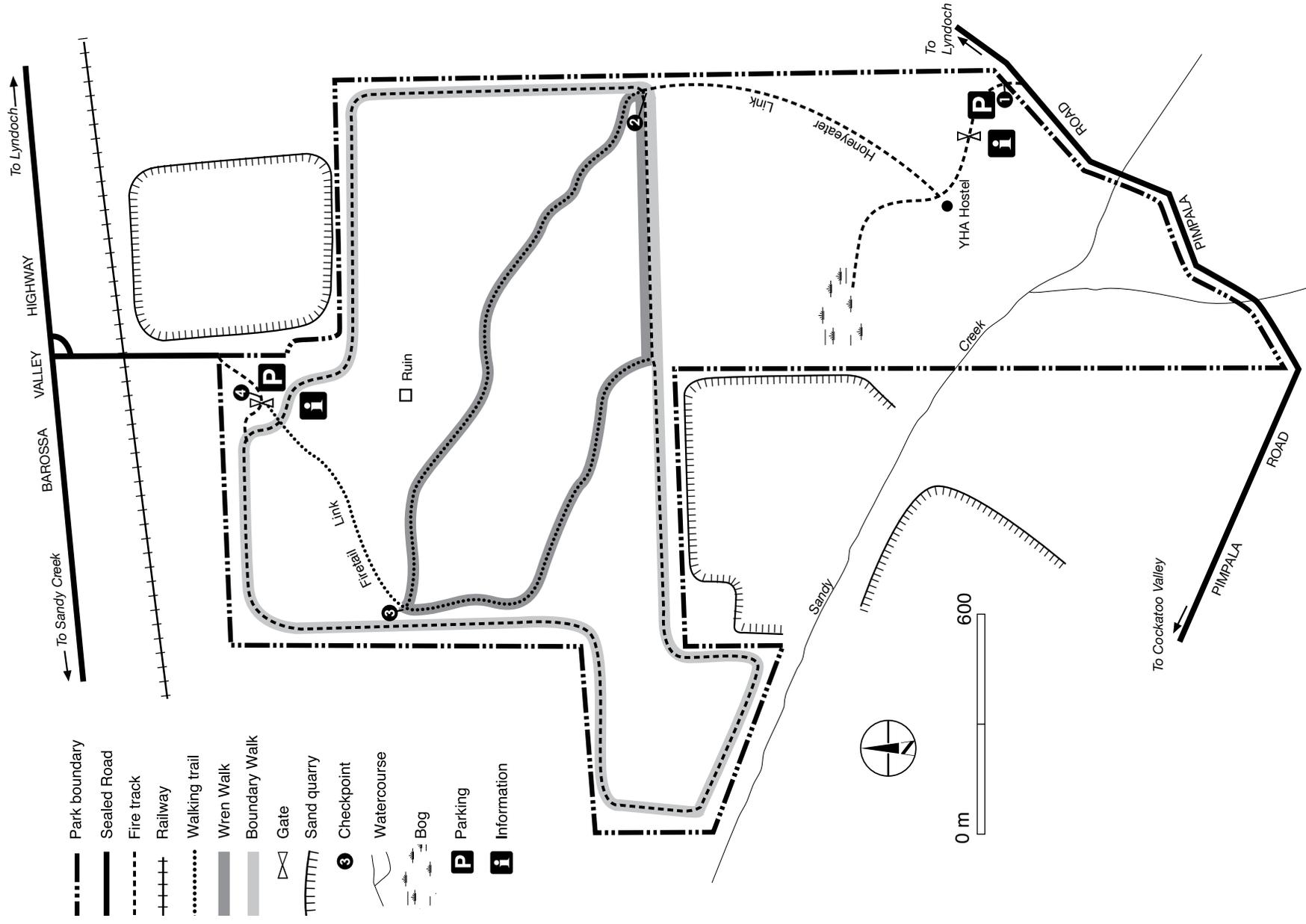
A 600-metre walk through an old farm clearing from the northern entrance on Conservation Park Road to the Wren Walk.

History

In the first half of the twentieth century much of Sandy Creek Conservation Park was cleared and planted with vines. Low soil fertility saw the vineyards abandoned and, in 1965, the area was dedicated as a conservation park. Sections were named after life-long ornithologists and conservationists, Cecil Rix and Mark Bonnin – they identified many native bird species in the area. The Sir Keith Wilson section of the park was a gift from the Wilson family and the Nature Foundation of SA Inc – it increased the habitat available for numerous birds.

Today, regenerating cleared land and the ruins of a small hut, built in 1918 from locally quarried stone and native pine, remain in the park. In addition, an abandoned vineyard in the southern section contains grasses that provide important habitat for birds such as the grass-dwelling stubble quail.

Sandy Creek Conservation Park lies on the edge of the land of the Permangk people, Kaurna people (south) and Ngadjuri people (north).



Plants

Featuring mainly low fertility and deep sandy soil, the park is home to stands of southern cypress-pine and pink gum, both now rare in the state. Wildflowers are common in spring, with wattles, daisies, heaths, lilies, gums, banksias, grevilleas and orchids in full bloom. The remnant vegetation in the park is currently under threat, with many species such as pink gums, banksias and bottlebrush failing to regenerate and leading to a decline in bird numbers. One theory for this is the park's isolation from other large areas of native vegetation.

Animals

Walkers may hear the occasional 'plonking' sound of the bull frog. The eastern bearded dragon and marbled gecko can be seen on sunny days. At dusk look out for western grey kangaroos and echidnas. The park is a haven for birds migrating through the Barossa Valley, Adelaide Hills and Plains, with over 130 species being recorded. Diamond firetails – which move around the park in pairs or flocks of up to 30 and mate for life – are an amazing sight.

Fire bans

This park may be closed on Total Fire Ban days. Check the CFS hotline 1300 362 361.



Blue wren

The National Parks Code

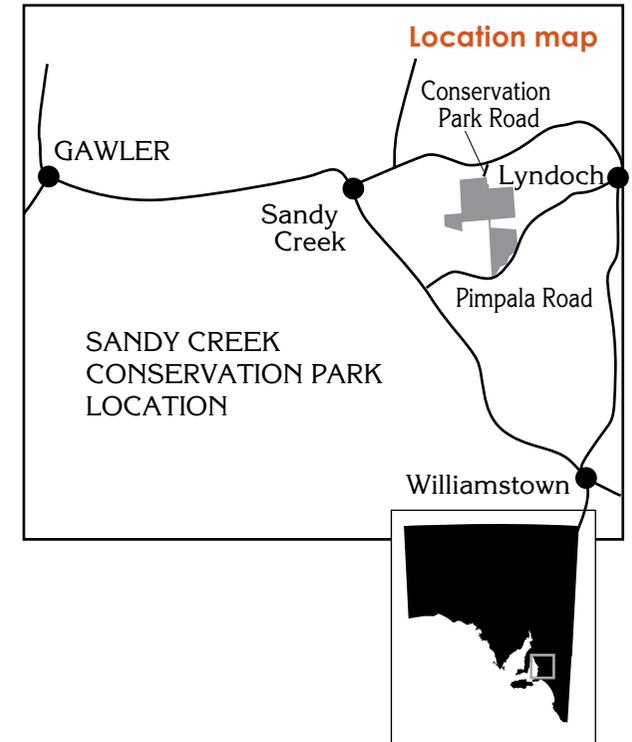
Help protect your national parks by following these guidelines:

- Leave your pets at home.
- Take your rubbish with you.
- Observe fire restrictions, usually 1 November to 30 April. Check the CFS hotline 1300 362 361.
- All fires including gas barbecues are prohibited.
- Respect geological and heritage sites.
- Keep our wildlife wild. Do not feed or disturb animals, or remove native plants.
- Keep to defined vehicle tracks and walking trails.
- Be considerate of other park users.

Thank you for leaving the bush in its natural state for the enjoyment of others.

Friends of Sandy Creek

The Friends of Sandy Creek is a community-based volunteer group that actively works with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to protect the natural features of Sandy Creek Conservation Park. For more information contact the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.



For further information contact:

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