

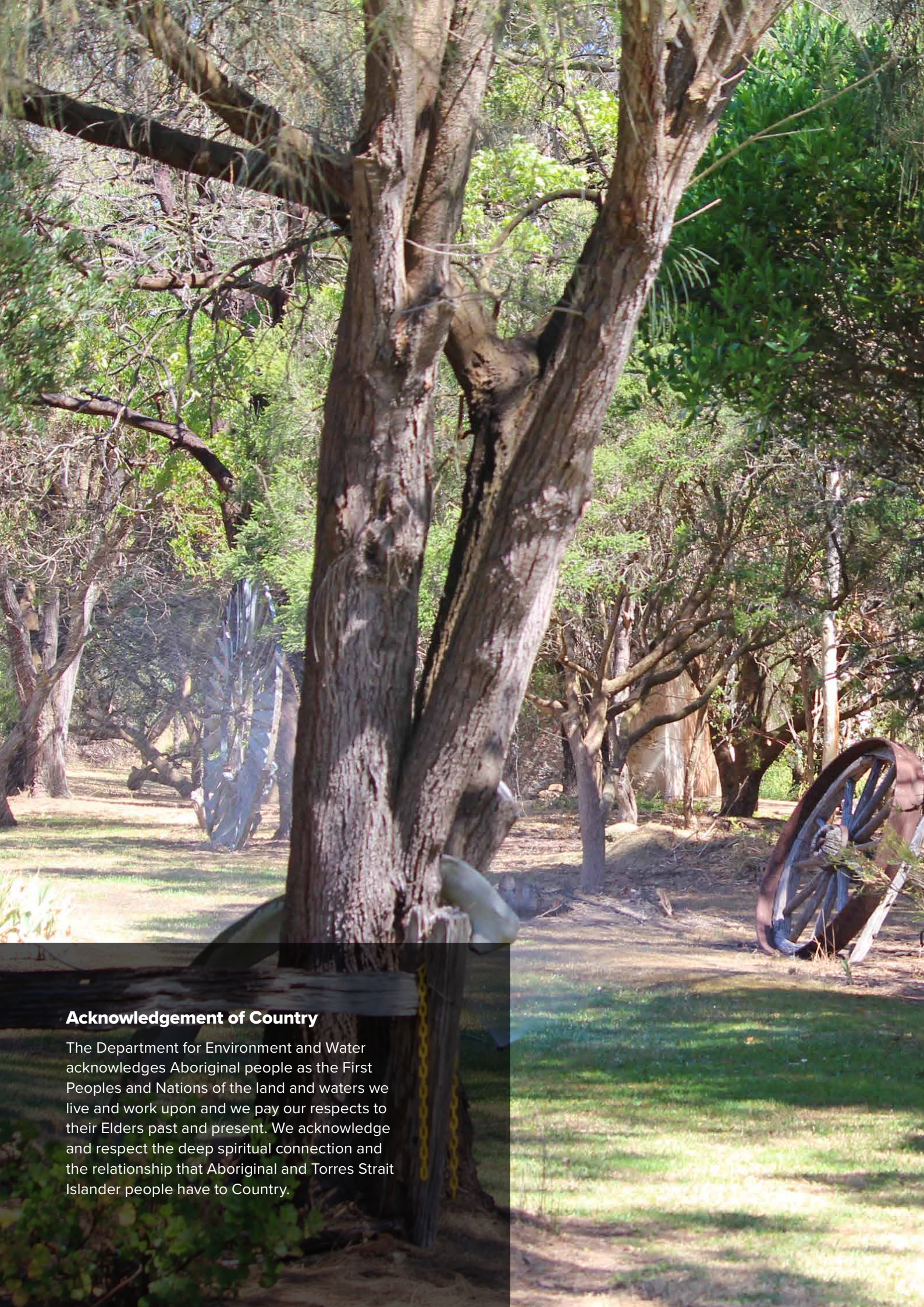


Dingley Dell Conservation Park

Draft Management Plan 2024



Government of South Australia
Department for Environment
and Water



Acknowledgement of Country

The Department for Environment and Water acknowledges Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Nations of the land and waters we live and work upon and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge and respect the deep spiritual connection and the relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to Country.



Your views are important

The Dingley Dell Conservation Park Draft Management Plan has been developed to outline the objectives and strategies that will set the direction for the long-term management of the park.

It is released for public comment to provide members of the community with an opportunity to express their views on the future management of the park.

Feedback received will be considered before the development of a final plan. Once developed, the final plan will be submitted to the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water for adoption under Section 38 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*.

I encourage all interested people to assist in shaping the long-term management of the park by making a submission on this draft plan. Guidance for making a submission can be found on page 10.

Mike Williams
Director of National Parks and Wildlife

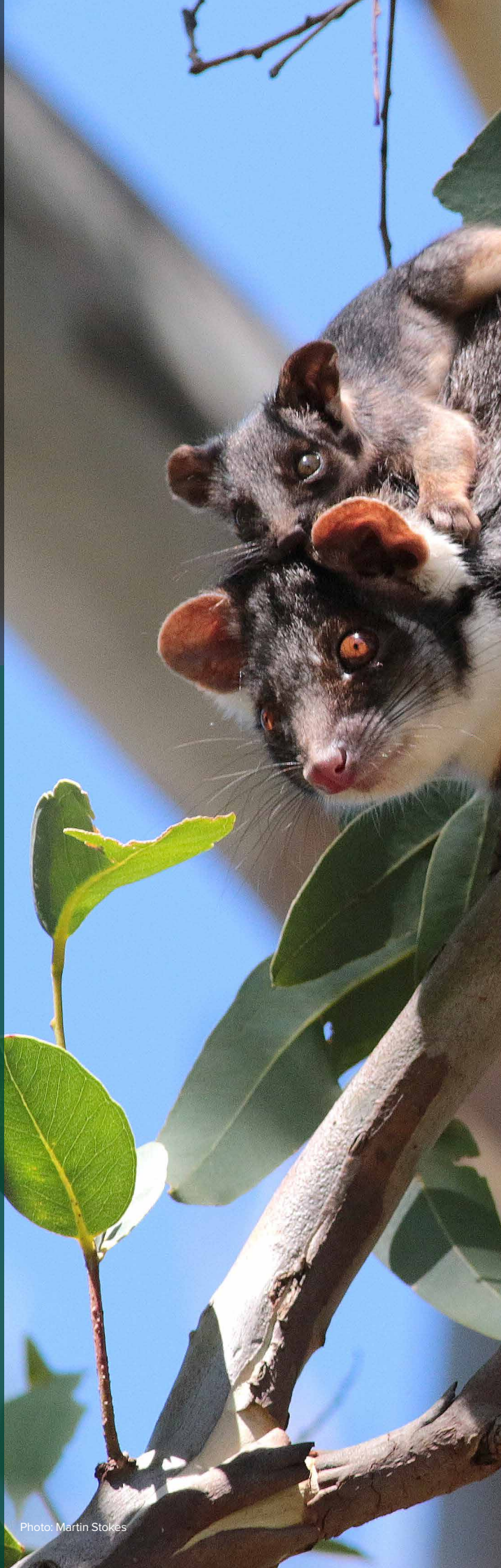
Developing this draft plan

This draft plan has been developed to outline strategic management of the park's heritage and natural values and to enable nature-based tourism in the park.

Once finalised, this plan will replace the Dingley Dell Conservation Park section of the *Small Inland Parks of the South East Management Plan*.

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Directions for management

Dingley Dell Conservation Park will be managed to ensure the conservation and preservation of Dingley Dell cottage and remnant woodland vegetation and the establishment of new nature-based experiences in the park.

The park was proclaimed in 1922 to protect Dingley Dell cottage for its heritage value. The cottage is protected under South Australian heritage legislation and will continue to be preserved and interpreted to educate visitors on its importance in the state's history.

Existing buildings and infrastructure are available to support the development of small-scale tourism operations that provide experiences where visitors can appreciate and learn about the park's biodiversity and Dingley Dell cottage.

The small size of the remnant woodland makes it vulnerable to impacts from pest plants and animals, bushfires and a changing climate. A priority is managing threats impacting the health of state threatened large-fruit blue gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon* ssp. *megalocarpa*), also known locally as the Dingley Dell gum. Pest plants that threaten the key biodiversity values of the park are to be controlled. Any new infrastructure and facilities will be located in areas where disturbance and impacts to native vegetation can be minimised.

The park is proclaimed under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* (Act) which sets management objectives for South Australia's parks and provides a regulatory framework to support their adaptive management. The park will be managed in line with the objectives of the Act.

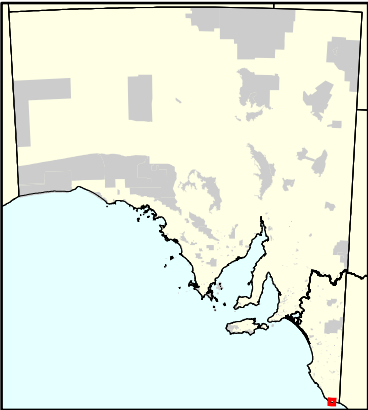
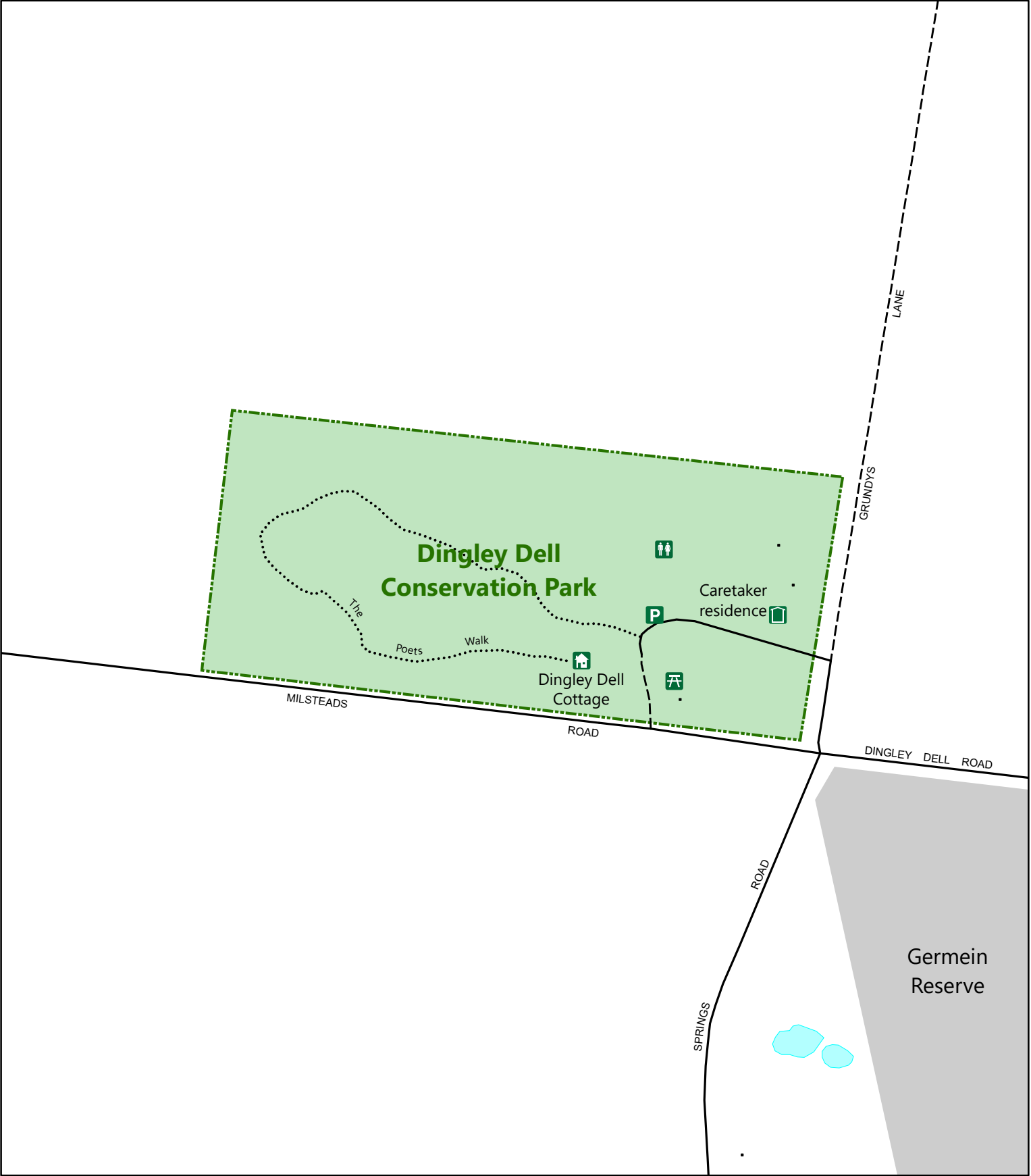
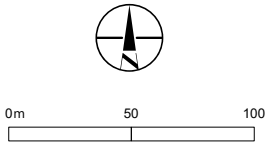


Figure 1

Dingley Dell Conservation Park



- LEGEND**
- | | | | |
|--|----------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| | Toilets | | Sealed road |
| | Parking | | Unsealed road |
| | Picnic area | | Trail |
| | Dingley Dell Cottage | | Perennial waterbody |
| | Caretaker residence | | Dingley Dell Conservation Park |
| | Building | | Germein Reserve |

Significance and purpose

Dingley Dell Conservation Park (6 ha) is situated in the Limestone Coast region of South Australia, approximately two kilometres northwest of Port MacDonnell and 25 kilometres south of Mount Gambier.

The park is most notable for the protection of the State Heritage listed Dingley Dell cottage. The cottage was built in 1862 and purchased in 1864 by Adam Lindsay Gordon, one of Australia's early recognised poets. In 1922 the South Australian Government purchased the property at the request of the Dingley Dell Restoration Committee as a memorial to Gordon. The cottage was the first declared National Pleasure Resort in South Australia associated with a notable person and one of the earliest house museums associated with a notable person.

The park also contains remnant native vegetation including regionally significant coastal *Eucalyptus* woodland and native grassland. The large-fruit blue gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon* spp. *megalocarpa*) tall woodland association and kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*) grasslands are not well represented elsewhere within the state's protected area system.

Challenges and opportunities

Key challenges and opportunities in the protection and management of the park:

- Conserving Dingley Dell cottage and permitting people to view the cottage museum and learn about Adam Lindsay Gordon and the history of the cottage.
- Enabling the establishment of nature-based tourism while maintaining the existing character of the park, and protecting heritage and natural values.
- Achieving a balance between maintaining heritage values, supporting public use and enjoyment and enabling commercial tourism in the park.
- Providing visitor facilities and experiences that are flexible to suit both the short-term and long-term changes in visitor use and demand.
- Providing information on the heritage and natural values of the park to encourage greater appreciation of the park and the values it protects.
- Understanding the impacts to mature large-fruit blue gum in order to develop a program for their protection, recruitment and restoration.





THEME 1:

Creating visitor experiences

With its historic cottage, native vegetation, walking trail, and picnic area the park offers visitors a chance to learn about the heritage significance of the park and enjoy spending time in nature.

Dingley Dell cottage is the former home of one of Australia's recognised early poets, Adam Lindsay Gordon. The cottage is preserved as a reminder of its former resident. Restoration works have maintained the cottage in good condition and returned it to near original 1860s appearance. The cottage has been transformed into a museum which displays a collection of Gordon memorabilia and period furniture, exhibiting a life in that era and an insight into the world of Adam Lindsay Gordon. The cottage is not open for general public access but tours of the cottage may be provided by a commercial tour operator under a licence or lease arrangement. The displays around the grounds build upon the legacy of Gordon's life and works and depict the history of the cottage and how the natural setting of the grounds had appeal and provided inspiration for Gordon.

The provision for the development of up to 20 semi-permanent tents and bathroom facilities in the central and northern areas of the park and an activity centre adjacent the picnic area will support nature-based tourism and contribute to regional tourism and the local economy. The existing 3-bedroom residence, toilet block, all-weather shelter, events oval and walking tracks have previously been managed through a lease under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* and are available for use to support commercial ventures in the park.

Upgrades to these will provide an improved visitor experience and support tourism operations. Installation of solar power and water infrastructure will enable self sufficiency in terms of utilities on site. Tracks in the park may be expanded to provide connectivity between amenities. Tourism ventures and accommodation will be privately operated and managed under leasing arrangements. Lessees will be responsible for maintaining infrastructure and facilities and protecting and enhancing native vegetation by controlling weeds and undertaking restoration works.

Conditions of any lease will ensure that the general public not staying in accommodation in the park or participating in a tour of the cottage will be able to access and enjoy the area immediately surrounding the cottage, the picnic area and the car park.

All proposals for the development of facilities in the park, including tourist accommodation, will be assessed on their merits. This includes analysis of risks to park values and formal assessment and approval processes under relevant legislation including the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*, *Heritage Places Act 1993 (SA)* and *Native Vegetation Act 1991*.

New development and upgrades to existing infrastructure will be sympathetic to natural and heritage values and ensure inclusive experiences and access for all abilities where possible. Additional parking spaces may be established to sustain an increase in visitation to the park if necessary.

Dingley Dell cottage is protected under the *Heritage Places Act 1993* (SA). Any proposal to alter or further restore the cottage will need to be compatible with the site's heritage values and will be subject to assessment and development approval under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*.

The Poets Walk, interpretive displays and material will help educate visitors about the heritage and natural values of the park. Additional tracks and trails will provide connectivity to new amenities developed.

Objective and strategies

Maintain Dingley Dell cottage and support opportunities for nature-based tourism that enables visitors to experience and learn about the heritage and natural values of the park.

- Collaborate with commercial tourism operators for the provision of tours of Dingley Dell and the curation of Gordon memorabilia to educate visitors about the heritage significance of the cottage.
- Facilitate opportunities for the provision of small-scale tourist accommodation and improved visitor facilities to support nature-based tourism. Ensure new development and upgrading of existing infrastructure is ecologically sensitive.
- Provide visually compatible interpretive material that educates visitors on the heritage value of Dingley Dell cottage and supports appreciation of the natural values of the park.
- Ensure that general public access to the area immediately surrounding Dingley Dell cottage, the picnic area and the car park is maintained as a condition of any lease or licence in the park.
- Maintain and improve park facilities and infrastructure to protect park values and provide access for all abilities where possible.





Photo: Claire Harding

THEME 2:

Protecting natural values

The park comprises gently undulating dunes and native vegetation associations comprising large-fruit blue gum, and dryland tea tree (*Melaleuca lanceolata*), blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), golden wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*), coastal bearded-heath (*Leucopogon parviflorus*) and sweet bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa* ssp. *spinosa*). The understorey consists of scattered patches of native grasses including kangaroo grass and large infestations of introduced blue periwinkle (*Vinca major*). An area of maintained lawn and garden beds surround the cottage and buildings.

Although the size of the park is small, the habitat it contains makes a valuable contribution to biodiversity conservation where 95% of remnant vegetation in the region has been cleared for agriculture. Native fauna including the ringtail possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*), brushtail possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), swamp wallaby (*Wallabia bicolor*), swamp rat (*Rattus lutreolus*), butterflies and woodland birds have been recorded in the park.

Adjacent the southeast corner of the park is Germein Reserve, a 55 hectare reserve containing native vegetation and natural wetland areas. The connectivity of these reserves is separated by a road, however it still provides a corridor for wildlife to utilise.

Large-fruit blue gum is a threatened species under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. There is a high mortality rate of mature large-fruit blue gum trees within the park, while trees along the adjacent roadside and within Germein Reserve remain healthy. The cause of death is not well understood, however it is expected

that the significant infestation of blue periwinkle throughout the woodland areas may be starving the trees of valuable moisture and nutrients. Additional impacts from possums grazing on the sugar rich leaves of stressed trees could also be contributing to the mortality rate.

Germein Reserve contains one of the largest woodland areas dominated by large-fruit blue gum within the state and is highly significant for the protection of the species. Until the recent death of the mature trees within the park, Dingley Dell Conservation Park would have been included in this statement.

Monitoring will be undertaken to assess the likely causes of death in order to manage and protect remaining mature trees and ensure the death rate is not accelerated by development in the park. Encouraging natural regeneration supported by strategic revegetation and weed control will seek to improve woodland condition and ensure survival of large-fruit blue gum. Seed for revegetation will be collected from nearby sources to maintain local provenance. Saplings and planted tube stock will need to be guarded to prevent browsing by swamp wallabies. Restoration works will take into account tourist accommodation, commercial ventures and fire management requirements. Control measures to prevent over-browsing by possums will be implemented if monitoring confirms possum damage is contributing to tree death.

Scattered and isolated woody weed species will be controlled to prevent further spread. Controlling blue

periwinkle to protect native vegetation will be a focus. Non-native plants in the garden areas around the cottage and buildings will be monitored to ensure they don't spread into the woodland areas. Known invasive plant species, and plants found to be spreading from the garden areas will be removed and replaced with local native species. Further planting of non-native species will not be permitted.

Opportunities for volunteer involvement in activities that contribute to biodiversity and heritage conservation outcomes will be supported where appropriate in consultation with any commercial operator or lessees.

Fragmented habitat across the Limestone Coast region has resulted in an increased risk of localised flora and fauna extinction if fire burns entire habitats. Bushfire mitigation activities are a critical part of prevention and preparedness in the park and are guided by the relevant fire management plan. They will be implemented to manage the risk of bushfire affecting park visitors and built assets within the park

and nearby private property, and minimising the risk of uncontrolled fire burning the entire park.

Climate change projections for the region indicate decreasing rainfall, increasing temperatures, extreme fire danger days and rising sea levels. It is likely to exacerbate threatening processes such as invasion by non-native plants and bushfires. The changing climate is also likely to add further stress to the remaining remnant large-fruit blue gum. Monitoring vegetation health and species present will be vital in developing an understanding and implementing subsequent programs to mitigate the impacts.

Objective and strategies

Manage native vegetation to ensure survival of priority species and improve habitat condition.

- Monitor the health of large-fruit blue gum and stands of native grasses to inform future management requirements including preventing further decline of mature trees.
- Improve the condition of large-fruit blue gum tall woodland by encouraging natural regeneration of native flora supported by revegetation of large-fruit blue gum.
- Manage pest plants with a focus on control of blue periwinkle and woody weeds. Remove known invasive plants and monitor non-native plants around the cottage and buildings. Remove species that are spreading and having an impact on biodiversity.
- Monitor pest plants along the roadsides and work with the District Council of Grant and the Limestone Coast Landscape Board to develop control programs when required.
- Support opportunities for volunteer involvement in activities that contribute to the protection of park values.
- Support monitoring projects to inform future management and climate change adaptation actions for key species in order to maintain natural values.
- Implement the actions identified in the fire management plan for the park to protect wildlife habitat, and to protect park visitors, Dingley Dell cottage and visitor facilities.

Invitation to contribute

The Dingley Dell Conservation Park Draft Management Plan has been released for public consultation to facilitate community input into the management of the park.

You are invited to contribute by making a submission. Please consider the points below when drafting your submission to help ensure that it is effective:

- Make your feedback concise and clear
- Reference any specific comments to a page or section within the draft plan
- Identify aspects of the draft plan that you support, or do not support. Explain your reasons for disagreeing with the content of the draft plan and suggest alternatives
- Highlight any information that may be inaccurate and provide a reference to assist with further editing.

After all submissions received have been carefully reviewed, a final park management plan will be prepared and forwarded to the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water for consideration together with a detailed analysis of submissions received.

Please note that your submission will become part of the public record and will be available to anyone who requests a copy unless you specifically request otherwise.

You can submit your comments via post, email or online using the details provided.

Submissions close at 5pm on 6 September 2024

Written submissions:

National Parks and Protected Area Program
Department for Environment and Water
GPO Box 1047 ADELAIDE SA 5001

E-mail submissions:

DEWProtectedAreaManagement@sa.gov.au
with 'Dingley Dell Conservation Park Draft
Management Plan' in the subject heading.

Online submissions:

YourSAy.sa.gov.au





For further information please contact:

Department for Environment and Water.
Phone Information Line (08) 8204 1910, or see
SA White Pages for your local Department for
Environment and Water office.

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