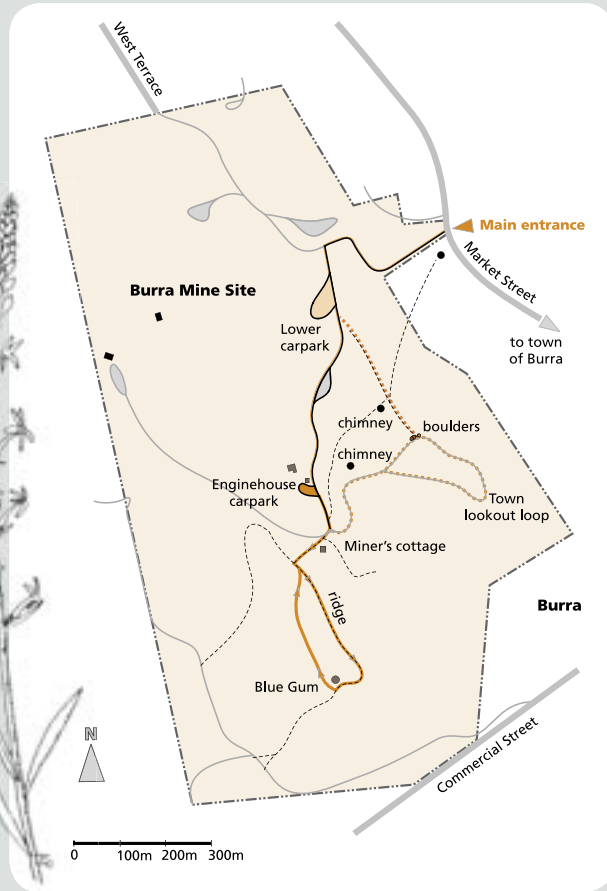


When to do the walk

This walk is best in late spring or early summer when the wildflowers and native grasses are most likely to be flowering. It is usually cooler on an early morning or late afternoon walk, and this is a good time of day to see birds and other wildlife.

The walk is about 800 metres, with gentle slopes. Allow 30 minutes to do the loop.



Walk details

Park in the Enginehouse car park. Follow the track up past Hector Shaft and the Miners Cottage c1870.

The walk starts here. Walk about 50 m up to the ridge, to Stop 1. Turn left and walk along the ridge track to continue the walk using the map and markers along the way to guide you.

Please take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints.

Walk extensions

If you wish to extend your walk, there are two options. See the map for the routes.

- 1) Walk around the Town Lookout road loop.
- 2) Walk along the road past the 2 chimneys on your left and then veer left off the road at the boulders and walk down the slope to the lower car park. Walk back up the road to the upper Enginehouse car park.

Grassland plants



The blue leaves and white flowers of White Goodenia are distinct in amongst the grasses. This grassland specialist is rare in many areas but forms patches on the Burra Mine hills. White Goodenia (*Goodenia albiflora*)



Cut-leaf Goodenia is a grassland specialist. In late spring, look for the highly indented leaves on the ground and the yellow flowers with a delicate edge to the petals. Cut-leaf Goodenia (*Goodenia pinnatifida*)



Many of the tussocks in grasslands are Iron-grass, related to lilies and grass-trees, rather than true grasses. Grasslands in the Burra area with these iron-grasses are unique in Australia. Stiff Iron-grass (*Lomandra multiflora* var *dura*)

Plant illustrations used with the kind permission of Ann Prescott from the book "Its Blue with Five Petals".

Early explorers

"Upon starting this morning we traversed a succession of fine open and very grassy plains, we came upon the "Hill", a fine chain of ponds taking its course through a very extensive and grassy valley, but with little timber of any kind growing near it."

Edward John Eyre (1845) *Journal of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia and overland from Adelaide to King George Sound in the Years 1840-1*. Volume I. T. and W. Boone, London. Facsimile Edition published by the Library Board of South Australia, Adelaide, 1964.



AUSTRALIA



NATIONAL TRUST
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Natural
Heritage
Trust

Helping Communities
Helping Australia
A Commonwealth Government Initiative



NATIONAL TRUST
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

There is more to the hill
than first meets the eye

Burra Mine site

Experience both
mining and
habitat heritage
at the Burra mine site



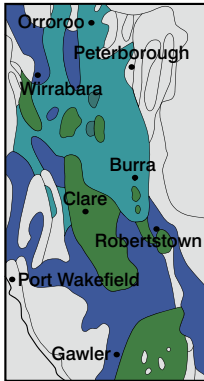
The Burra Mine Site protects our natural heritage as well as our mining heritage. The hills conserve native grassland habitat. This is a nationally significant record of the original vegetation of the mid-north. Come and see. Add to your heritage visit.

More than 120 species of native plants, 37 of which are listed as rare or endangered, are protected here.

Stop 1

Our grasslands extended over wide areas

You can see to the hills on the horizon in all directions. Have a look around. There are very few trees. Most of the trees you can see now, in rows, in groups, and in the town, have been planted. Come and learn about grasslands – almost treeless habitats.



- Temperate Grasslands
- Grassy woodlands with Peppermint Box (*Eucalyptus odorata*)
- Grassy woodlands with Teatree (*Melaleuca lanceolata*)
- Grassy woodlands with Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*)

Our grasslands originally extended over much of the now “settled parts” or better agricultural areas of our state. This was the probable extent of grasslands and grassy woodlands in the mid-north at the time of European arrival in the 1840s. Adapted from Specht, R. L. (1972) *The Vegetation of South Australia*. Government Printer, Adelaide.

Stop 2

Grasslands are a real habitat

A grassland is a habitat of native grasses and other low-growing plants. There are few, if any, trees or large shrubs. Most of the native grasses are perennial grasses, which means each grass lives for many years. They grow to form a definite clump or ‘tussock’ and are visible all year round. Look for the tussocks on the slopes opposite, which are almost shrub free, although there are groves of small shrubs nearby.

Stop 3

Meet some of our native grasses, wildflowers and shrubs

Many grassland plants are visible all year round. In the next section of the walk, some of the native grasses, grass relatives, small bushes and shrubs are name-plated for your general interest. Look for these along the way.

Samuel Thomas GILL

Kooringa, the Burra Burra Township,
April 12th 1847, Adelaide
watercolour on paper, mounted on linen
33.0 cm x 68.4 cm
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Gift of Mrs F.M. Graham and family 1947



Stop 4

Almost no trees is normal for grasslands

Compare the above watercolour of Burra painted by S.T. Gill in 1847 with the current view across this gully. You can see only a few trees in either, even on the distant hills. This painting is only 12 years after settlement of South Australia and only 2 years after opening the Burra mines. The main tree that Gill has drawn is clearly the Drooping Sheoak.

Stop 5

Did you have grass for breakfast?

Look back into the valley. Cropping and ploughed fields have replaced native grasslands on the flats. Most food staples are grasses – corn, wheat, rice, maize, rye, and barley. All of these were originally cultivated from wild native grasses in native grasslands throughout the world and have been introduced into Australia. Grasslands were the cradle of civilisation – where crops and agriculture first became established.

Stop 6

Grasslands and grassy woodlands are similar

Our grasslands would have been interspersed with patches of woodland. Woodlands are very similar to grasslands, with the same ground level or understorey plants. The woodlands have an additional layer of widely spaced trees. The opposite hillside has groves of relatively short-lived Golden Wattles.

Stop 7

Grasslands need to be managed

In many places on the mine site native plants dominate, while in other areas, like here, weeds are winning the battle for space, water and nutrients. Annual weed grasses are competing with the native grasses. The bulk of annual weed grasses can choke out the wildflowers, stop young native grasses from germinating, and fill the “inter-tussock spaces” in which wildlife moves around to live. Also, pepper trees and pine trees on the mine site are spreading and invading the grassy areas.

Grasslands can be invaded by weeds, and they must be managed carefully - not just left alone. The National Trust is working to keep the site in good condition. Important chores are:

- remove woody weeds which compete for space
- control feral rabbits that eat the wildflowers and native grasses
- reduce annual weedy grasses which choke out the native plants

Stop 8

Native grasslands are now rare

The variety of plants in this grassland is remarkable and many of the species are rare. This remnant of the original grasslands is an important heritage item. We trust that you have enjoyed this visit to our natural history as well as our built heritage.