



# Mirnu Wirra/Park 21W (Golden Wattle Park)

## Living Natural Treasure

Mirnu Wirra (Park 21W or Golden Wattle Park) is one of Adelaide's hidden biodiversity treasures, overflowing with wildflowers, native grass meadows, birds and butterflies.

It is one of the most important Adelaide City parks for nature regeneration due to the number and rarity of its native flowers and other species.

Hard working volunteers from Trees For Life have spent years nurturing and tending this special place.

It is completely unsuitable for an eight hectare working horse barracks with industrial shedding, office buildings and high security fencing.

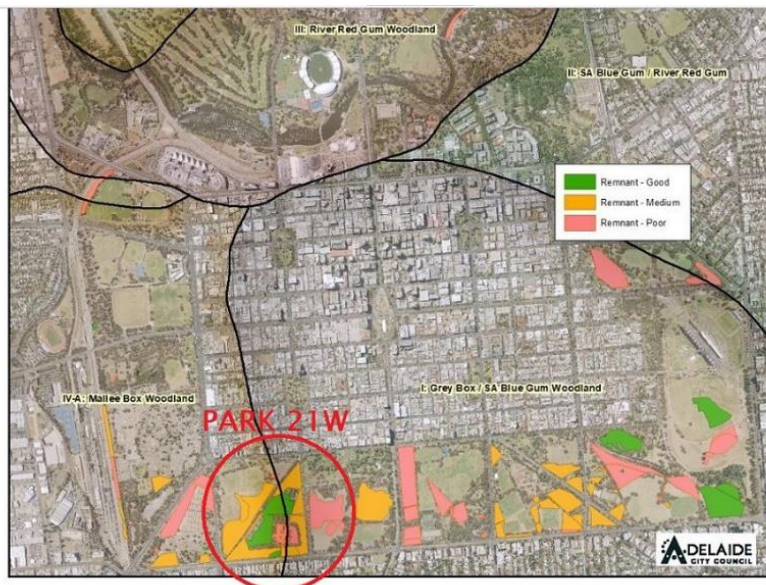
The Malinauskas Government needs to take a fresh look and identify a more suitable barracks location.

### A biodiversity treasure

Mirnu Wirra is the most biodiverse remnant vegetation in the Adelaide Park Lands, filled with rare wildflowers and other species.

There are over 70 different types of plants, providing a sanctuary to many varied species of birds, reptiles, insects and other fauna (See Appendix 1).

It is formally recognised by Adelaide City Council as a conservation zone.



**Map 1:** Pre-European vegetation boundaries and mapped remnant vegetation in the Adelaide Park Lands (areas under the care and control of the City of Adelaide). See text for explanation of the pre-European vegetation communities and categories of vegetation condition.

**From: ACC INTEGRATED BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2018–2023**

<https://d31atr86jnqrq2.cloudfront.net/docs/plan-integrated-biodiversity-management.pdf?mtime=20190521144918&focal=none>

Above: Adelaide City Council biodiversity in Park Lands map.

## What makes it so unique and valuable?

Mirnu Wirra is one of the rare places in the Park Lands with cracking clay soils which provide suitable conditions for native grasslands and grassy woodland species. These are one of the few remaining that resemble the physical features of the Adelaide Plains at the time of European arrival - a landscape that was maintained by patchwork burning by the Kaurna Nation.

There are five known areas in Mirnu Wirra which protect a cluster of rare herbaceous species or are the only known location in the Park Lands for that species.

While wildflowers bloom throughout the year, many of the daisies and lilies only appear in the wetter months; native grasslands naturally appear more 'dry' in summer but are essential habitat.

*"This is the most important historic record of what the Park Lands was at the time of settlement, and it's precious. It's like Ayers House or Ayers Rock; it's really, really important heritage."*

Ann Prescott, Botanist and Author of 'It's Blue with Five Petals'.<sup>1</sup>



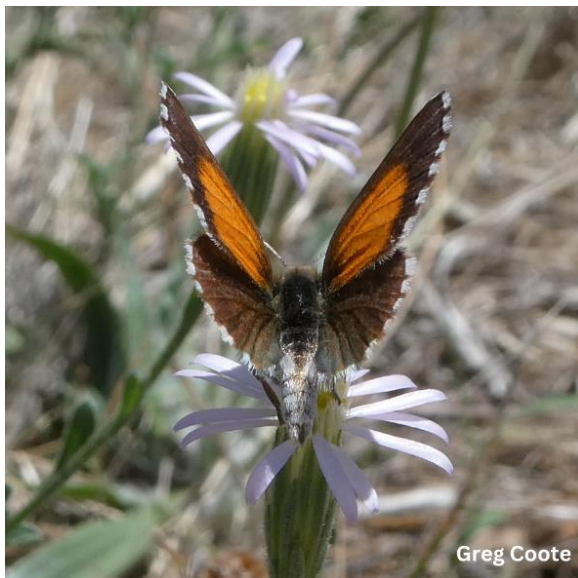
Above left: *Arthropodium strictum* (Chocolate Lily).



Above right: *Oxalis perennans* (Native sorrel) a critical species for the Chequered copper butterfly by Ann Prescott,

## Home to rare butterfly

The site is also home to the rare Chequered copper butterfly (*Lucia limbaria*) which needs a diverse range of species including native sorrel and native grasses for its unique breeding traits - with the caterpillar eggs being raised by ants.



Right: Male Chequered copper butterfly feeding on Vittadinia by Greg Coote.

<sup>1</sup> Prescott, AM (1994) *It's Blue with Five Petals: Wildflowers of the Adelaide Region*. Second Edition. A. Prescott Publishing, Adelaide and Prescott

## Maintained by hardworking volunteers

Trees For Life's Bush For Life volunteers care for one of the important biodiversity sites in the park. Together with other volunteers they have contributed thousands of hours of effort towards protecting Mirnu Wirra's existing native vegetation. Adelaide City Council Biodiversity Staff care for other important biodiversity sites in Park 21 West.

The City of Adelaide and the Green Adelaide (former Natural Resource Management Board) have helped fund this important work.



Above Left: Thriving Bush For Life site in Mirnu Wirra taken in 2022. Above Right: *Convolvulus angustissimus* (Australian Bindweed) by Ann Prescott.

## But isn't Adelaide a National Park City?

In 2021, Adelaide was formally declared Australia's first National Park City and the world's second. National Park City is a global movement to create cities worldwide where people and nature are better connected<sup>2</sup>. Sites like Mirnu Wirra are critical to Adelaide's successful status.

## Wrong location for SAPOL's Mounted Operations Unit

SAPOL plans for Park 21 include high perimeter fencing, stables for an expanded troop of 40 horses, accommodation for 30 staff, a modern horse training facility plus tack and fodder stores spread over eight hectares.

This level of development will destroy the values that make Mirnu Wirra so unique and special.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.adelaidenationalparkcity.org/>



Above: Aerial photo showing that 8 hectares of land is significant within the Park Lands.

## Shocking process

Land use planning and consultation processes exist for a reason. Different needs and perspectives can then be balanced while making important decisions.

No one expects SAPOL to know about biodiversity and rare species in the Park Lands.

So it is extremely disappointing that through fast-track legislation they have been able to nominate a totally unsuitable Park Lands site for their new horse barracks without any input from others, including nature experts.

An alternative location must be found.

*“Mirnu Wirra is a very special place and a biodiversity hot spot. We need to preserve it for future generations.”*

Natasha Davis, CEO Trees For Life.

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Appendix 1: Grassland specialist species found in Mirnu Wirra and adjoining South Parkland Parks.

Flowering species

<i>Acacia acinacea</i>	Gold Dust Wattle
<i>Arthropodium fimbriatum</i> <sup>1</sup>	Summer Nodding Chocolate-lily
<i>Atriplex semibaccata</i> <sup>1</sup>	Berry Saltbush
<i>Calostemma purpureum</i> <sup>1</sup>	Garland Lily
<i>Euphorbia dallachyana</i>	
<i>Maireana enchylaenoides</i> <sup>1</sup>	Wingless Blue-bush
<i>Pauridia glabella</i> <sup>1</sup>	Tiny Star
<i>Pseudognaphalium luteoalbum</i> <sup>1</sup>	
<i>Teucrium racemosum</i> <sup>1</sup>	
<i>Vittadinia blackii</i> <sup>1</sup>	Black's Vittadinia
<i>Vittadinia cuneata var cuneata</i>	New Holland Daisy
<i>Vittadinia gracilis</i> <sup>1</sup>	Woolly New Holland Daisy
<i>Vittadinia megacephala</i>	
<i>Wurmbea latifolia</i> <sup>1(?)</sup> , <sup>2</sup>	Flat leaf Nancy

Grass and Grass related Species

<i>Anthosachne scabra</i>	Tall or Common Wheat-grass
<i>Aristida behriana</i> <sup>1</sup>	Three-awned Grass
<i>Austrostipa blackii</i>	Crested Spear Grass
<i>Austrostipa curticoma</i>	Spear Grass
<i>Austrostipa flavescens</i> <sup>1</sup>	Spear Grass
<i>Austrostipa gibbosa</i> <sup>2</sup>	Spear Grass
<i>Chloris truncata</i> <sup>1</sup>	Windmill Grass
<i>Enteropogon acicularis</i> <sup>1</sup>	
<i>Lomandra nana</i>	Little Mat-rush
<i>Rytidosperma auriculatum</i>	Lobed Wallaby Grass
<i>Rytidosperma carphoides</i>	Short Wallaby Grass
<i>Rytidosperma fulvum</i>	Link Wallaby Grass
<i>Rytidosperma setaceum var setaceum</i> <sup>1</sup>	Small flowered Wallaby Grass
<i>Themeda triandra</i>	Kangaroo Grass