

For the birds

More than 30 types of birds have discovered the wetland at Warriparinga Reserve.

Grebes, cormorants, herons, coots, ducks and dotterels are among the water birds, and the parrots include the crimson rosella, the red-rumped parrot, and the rainbow and musk lorikeets.

The 15 other species include the kookaburra, the welcome swallow, the new holland honey-eater, the spotted turtledove and the red wattlebird.

The island in the second pond is a refuge for wetland birds.

Some of the water birds are shy. Please do not disturb them, especially while near their roosting areas.

You may also notice bird boxes installed along the pathway between the boardwalk and wetlands. They help attract native birds back to the area.

Many more birds lived along the river before the wetland was built. The kookaburra, mopoke and ibis particularly have Aboriginal traditions about their presence here.

Back to the river

From the boardwalk you can see the outlet - a rock riffle that slows the water down before diverting the flow back to the River.

You can also see the start of the Sturt River's concreted section.

The river at the Warriparinga Reserve is one of the few places on the Sturt River that isn't concreted.

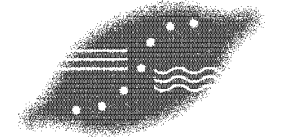
That's another reason to enjoy where you are to the full.

Information

City of Marion
Phone (08) 8375 6600

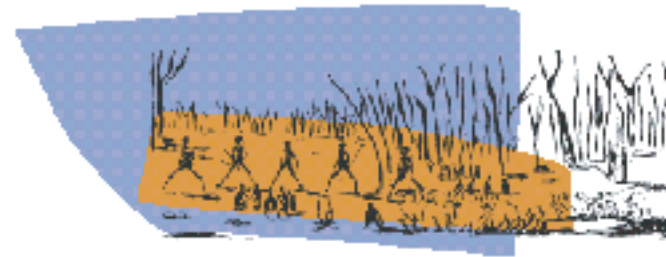


Wetland Walk



Warriparinga

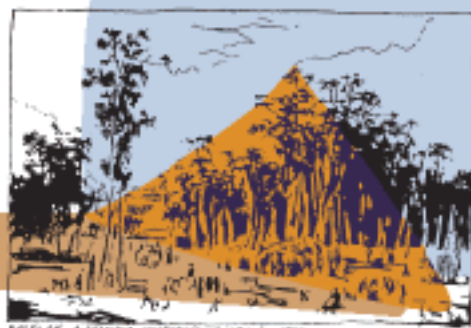
Kurna ceremonial meeting place
European early settlement site
A conciliation project



The Warriparinga Reserve

Warriparinga in the Kurna language means 'windy place by the river'.

Warriparinga is a rare place where two cultures meet. Here, the Aboriginal spirit is part of the environment. The story which is contained in the Warriparinga land can be shared by people who visit Warriparinga.



Warriparinga offers a unique interpretive experience for Kurna culture that includes the land, the Sturt River, the wetland and the Living Kurna Cultural Centre. This is the traditional land of the Kurna people and is sacred to them.

The Kurna people met at Warriparinga for thousands of years - for celebrations, recall, ritual gathering and food of the area. They called it 'warri parri'. The winds coming to Warriparinga still speak to the Kurna custodians.

In the 19th century, the Laffer family built on, and farmed the land until late in the 20th century. The space was then called Laffer's Triangle, a triangle within Marion, Sturt and South Roads. It held one of the last vineyards near the City. Aboriginal people still visited the land then.

Through Warriparinga runs the Sturt River. The river is edged with river red gums, natural to its banks, and other plants including willows introduced by Europeans.

In 1998 a wetland was created on the 3.5 hectare reserve to improve the water quality out to the sea, give a home and resting-place to hundreds of water birds, and return some of the area to its original condition.

Native plants - nurtured by Council and local environmental groups - and some native animals have returned since the wetland was established. The possum, owl and kookaburra never left.



The wetland walk

The wetland provides a place where you can stroll and be aware of the past, present and future of your environment.

It is part of a shared vision for Warriparinga's 'reparation' (repairing the physical and spiritual environment) and will help restore a self-sustaining ecosystem supporting many native plants and wildlife.

You can approach the wetland from several places, shown on the map. If you access it from the Warriparinga Access Road where Tjirbruki Gateway or Fairford House carpark is, you can enjoy many other Kurna, European and natural features. (These are listed in another brochure.)

With plenty of seating available it means there is ample opportunity to sit down, relax and appreciate the areas, sites and sounds.

A bicycle/walking track has also been established around the wetland that joins up to other Bikedirect routes.

Toilets are available adjacent to Fairford House, and are open from Monday to Friday during business hours.



The need for a wetland

The wetland is a series of ponds up to three metres deep with a total capacity of 23 million litres.

At the footbridge near Fairford House you will see a fallen log. This acts as an inlet weir, diverting water from the Sturt River into the wetland.

At the inlet, pollutant traps catch large debris like leaves and litter (which have washed down the river) before the water enters the wetland.

Then the wetland itself filters pollutants like heavy metals, particles of clay from the earth brought down from the hills, and nutrients such as phosphates and nitrates. Nutrients in the water and this fine debris are removed from the water by sedimentation - fine material settling on the bottom of the ponds.

Wetland water plants can absorb nutrients that can cause algal blooms if left in the body of the water. The sun's ultraviolet rays kill pathogens (germs and bacteria) when the water is less than a metre deep.

When the water has moved slowly through the four ponds, it re-enters the Sturt River and drains into the sea through the Patawalonga Basin.

Up on the boardwalk

From the boardwalk, you gain a perspective of the whole wetland.

Above the water you may see damselflies, dragonflies or even mayflies. The juveniles of these insects can be found in the water, and can be used as a measure of its quality.

On a clear day you can see the gabion weirs. These are dam-like wire cages filled with rocks, which separate the four connecting ponds and ensure an even flow throughout the ponds.

More than 8000 trees and shrubs have been planted, with 20 varieties of reeds and water plants. Many of the plants are local species (indigenous) and some were used for bush tucker and fibre by Kurna people. The remainder of the plants are Australian natives.

Plants such as fennel pondweed are submerged, while reeds, rushes and sedges grow out of the water. Their deep roots stabilize banks and provide food and shelter for organisms that improve water quality.

Fish abound, although the redfin, carp and mosquito fish are not native to the Sturt. However, natives such as black bream, the small-mouthed hardyhead, the bigheaded gudgeon and the bribled goby were introduced to the wetland early on. Fishing is not permitted at the wetland.

