

# How to Get Involved

There are many stakeholders associated with the conservation of the Patawalonga Creek. The Friends of Patawalonga Creek group involves community volunteers working towards rehabilitating and managing the local environment. Local school groups such as the Immanuel College GATE students work with Waterwatch as tour guides for school groups on Schools Tree Day to improve awareness of the significance of the site. Local community groups and organisations, such as Conservation Volunteers Australia conduct flora and fauna studies, test water quality, revegetate areas and control weeds along with many other roles.

If you would like to be involved contact:

**Environment Manager**  
Adelaide Airport Ltd  
Phone: 8308 9216

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# Our Unique Patawalonga



-  Adelaide Airport Ltd
-  Remnant Native Vegetation
-  City of West Torrens
-  Harbourtown
-  Service Station



*Neobatrachus pictus*



# History of the Patawalonga Catchment

Indigenous people occupied the whole of the Australian continent prior to the arrival of Europeans. The Kaurna people lived along the Gulf of St Vincent from Cape Jervis to Port Wakefield.

The Creek of course was not far from Glenelg; the 'birthplace' of South Australia and its waters would have been familiar to Colonel Light and all early settlers. Colonel Light wrote of the Patawalonga, 'much might be hereafter made of this little stream'.

The catchments of the Torrens and Sturt Rivers originally drained to 'The Reedbeds', the vast tract of wetlands which, hemmed in by the coastal dunes, once stretched from Glenelg to the Port Adelaide River and as far inland as Torrensville. The richness of this area – fertile soils and abundant water – attracted the early settlers and today this small section of Patawalonga Creek is the largest part of the Reedbeds remaining.

Looking back on the impact of European history of the area, it is remarkable that the remnant Patawalonga Creek has survived the assault of 'Progress'. Even in the early days the creek was lucky to escape the passion for drainage demonstrated by the pioneer Gray family.

At the core of the site is a stand of Swamp Paperbarks (*Melaleuca balmaturorum*). These attractive trees, which can tolerate high salinity, are a reminder that this area used to be subject to occasional tidal inundation, before the lock gates were constructed at the mouth of the Patawalonga estuary in about 1960.

The stand of Swamp Paperbarks at Patawalonga Creek has been given the highest ranking on the National Trust of SA's register of Significant Tress.

In very recent times the creek has just survived the Airport extension, the

Patawalonga Lake clean-up project and the construction of the silt ponds.

Patawalonga Creek forms part of the area's stormwater drainage network, and the City of West Torrens has proposed that an adjacent area be developed as stormwater detention ponds, to alleviate concerns about the risk of potential local flooding.

In 2001 the first management plan was written for the site and was reviewed in mid 2007. A management plan ensures that the activities near the creek will be controlled to ensure that impacts on the creek are minimal. Examples of such activities include the recent upgrade to the Cowandilla Mile End Drain project which was successfully completed by the City of West Torrens with involvement of the Friends group as well as being overseen by the environment team from Adelaide Airport Limited.

## Patawalonga Creek Location

Patawalonga Creek is located due west of the current Adelaide airport, on the western side of Tapleys Hill Road and is a site that involves many stakeholders with one unified aim in the conservation of the Patawalonga Creek. Environmental degradation of the site has been a measured process over the period of European settlement. All of the stakeholders have come together to begin processes to rehabilitate a semi-natural ecosystem.

Patawalonga Creek is located on Adelaide Airport land and is situated to the west of Tapleys Hill Road. The site involves input from many stakeholders who all have the same goal of conserving and revegetating remnant Patawalonga Creek. The creek and the area immediately surrounding is classified as a Conservation Zone in the Adelaide Airport Master Plan, this illustrates the commitment of Adelaide Airport Limited in protecting the site from further degradation. Following removal of the silt ponds, adjacent to the creek, the conservation area will be expanded to start the process of reversing the degradation caused by European settlement.



## Significant Flora

The Patawalonga Creek has many significant flora species which include the Swamp Paperbarks low open woodland, *Maireana* shrubland and the samphire salt marshes. The Melaleuca is of particular importance due to its conservation significance as it is believed to be the last remaining intact area of this coastal association in the region.

## Habitat Value to Local Fauna

The habitat including the Melaleucas is very important to all of the local fauna as an integral part of the ecosystem and for supporting the food chain. The flora supports the stability of the creek beds which also enables the invertebrates, frogs and other species to seek refuge. The habitat also provides protection against feral and introduced species.

There are many interesting and important fauna species that can be found at the Patawalonga Creek including the Lined Worm Lizards (*Aprasia striolata*), Painted Burrowing Frogs (*Neobatrachus pictus*), Snake-neck tortoise (*Chelodina longicollis*), yabbies and the essential waterbirds such as the Egrets, Spoonbills, Ibis, Cormorants and Herons.

The Nankeen Night-heron and Black winged stilts have also been observed at the site as well as the Congolli and Common Galaxias.

