



Media Release

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Laratinga Wetland

Laratinga Wetland was established in the early 1990s as a natural element of the wastewater treatment process. The original design of the wetland was to reduce the impact of nutrient rich water from the adjoining Springs Road wastewater treatment by assimilating nutrients into the wetland. As a result, the constructed wetland was, and remains an important part of the treatment process.

The wetland is an artificially created habitat where conditions can be manipulated to mimic a natural system, provide a wetland refuge to support diverse native flora and fauna, and provide habitat to support threatened and conservation significant species.

To the west of Laratinga Wetland and abutting the Springs Road wastewater treatment plant, Springs Wetland was constructed in 2016 to create further habitat for local wildlife by re-establishing native vegetation and linking to the linear trail.

Mount Barker District Council Mayor, David Leach said: “The precinct is a popular recreation area providing trails, pathways, seats, barbecue and picnic area, shelters and interpretive signage.

“The reserves provide habitat for local flora and fauna and have become an important refuge in an increasingly urban environment. We are lucky and appreciative to have this significant bird refuge so close to Mount Barker and Adelaide,” Mayor Leach said.

“Under normal conditions, many natural wetlands in Australia dry out in low rainfall periods and are recharged by seasonal rainfall. For many native plants and animals in southern Australia, these wet and dry periods are a necessary part of life.”

For many years, recycled water from the wastewater treatment facilities has been used for irrigation of public open spaces, local agricultural crops, and operations at Hillgrove Mine during summer with discharge to Mt Barker Creek occurring intermittently in winter in alignment with the council’s Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) license.

There is currently an excess of treated water which limits the ability to manipulate the water levels in the wetland. As a result, the wetland is operating at full service level, which has temporarily reduced habitat for some species, particularly some bird species.

“Council is currently developing a recycled water strategy to maximise the productive re-use of treated wastewater and in so doing minimise impacts to the wetland,” Mayor Leach said.

“Council has also constructed additional wetland cells to the south and north of the original Laratinga Wetland to provide extra habitat for bird species that require shallower water.”

The new Laratinga Water Recovery Plant, replacing the Springs Road Wastewater Treatment Plant, will also help reduce water levels in the wetlands by upgrading the current treatment process to a biological nutrient removal process that will reduce the nutrient content of the treated wastewater, and will no longer require the current final polishing treatment provided by the Laratinga Wetlands.

The Laratinga Water Recovery Plant will be completed by mid-2025 allowing the wetland to become an independent ecological system which will be managed solely for ecological and recreational purposes with the plant providing an environmental flow to help maintain the wetlands at the optimal level throughout the year.

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Mount Barker District Council Communications Manager, Ian Hildebrand

P: (08) 8393 6470 | E: ihildebrand@mountbarker.sa.gov.au