



# CITY OF HOLDFAST BAY CULTURAL MAP KAURNA YARTA-ANA.



Original watercolour by William Cawthorne, 1843. Mitchell Library, Sydney.

A guide to sites of Kurna significance  
and historical landscapes in the  
City of Holdfast Bay.

# HOLDFAST BAY – AS IT WAS

The coastal plains of Pathawilyangga (Glenelg), Wituwartingga (Brighton), Tulukutangga (Kingston Park) and Witawartingga (Seacliff Park) provided an hospitable environment for the Kurna people, whose country stretches from Crystal Brook in the north to Cape Jervis in the south.

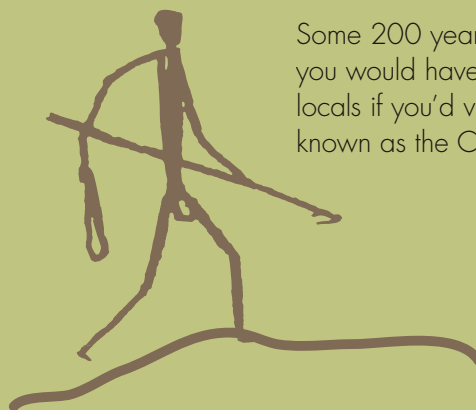
Today, there is little to remind us of the lives of the people who occupied the land for tens of thousands of years before European settlers claimed it for themselves, following their arrival at Holdfast Bay in 1836.

Old records, oral histories and memories of today's Kurna people provide us with some idea of the landscape before 1836. Camp sites lined the coastal area and plains in summer months, where food and water were plentiful. When the cold south-westerly winds and the flooding Warripari (Sturt River) that fed into the Pathawilyangga estuary made life difficult during the winter months, the Kurna generally moved further inland to the foothills. This seasonal movement allowed important food sources to regenerate and was part of the careful management of their lands.

Today, the rolling sand dunes, freshwater lagoons and natural springs that lined the coast have long been replaced by housing, commercial developments, roads and drainage systems. We are left to imagine the lifestyle of the Kurna in the Holdfast Bay area before their lives were so dramatically interrupted by European settlement. Exploring the identified sites listed on the map can help us.

*"Marni naa putni  
Kaurna yarta-ana."*

"Welcome to Kurna country."



Some 200 years ago, this is how you would have been greeted by the locals if you'd visited the area now known as the City of Holdfast Bay.

# THE KAURNA LANGUAGE

*"Marni niina pudni.  
Pulthunari payima,  
ngadlu yarta tampinhi."*

"Welcome. When we understand the placenames, we recognise the land."

Before European settlement, the Kurna people named places using their own language. Today, some places, such as Willunga, are still known by their Kurna name. The Kurna Naming Project, combining the work of the Kurna Warra Pintyandi language group and the Land Services Group, is working to identify and map places with Kurna names, and to increase the knowledge and use of these names.

Below are some of the Kurna placenames in Holdfast Bay.

Kurna	English	Location
<b>Pathawilyangga</b>	Swamp gums and foliage, young branches, brushwood	Glenelg
<b>Wituwartingga</b>	In the midst of reeds (witu 'reed')	Brighton
<b>Tulukutangga</b>	Kurna form of Ngarrindjeri name, 'Tulukudangk'	Kingston Park
<b>Witawartingga</b>	In the midst of peppermint gums (wita 'peppermint gums')	Seacliff Park
<b>Ngutinilla</b>	Place of Ngutinai (Kurna man)	Ngutinilla/ Brian Nadillo Reserve
<b>Tarniwarra</b>	Voice of the waves	Tarniwarra Reserve

## LOCAL NATIVE PLANTS

Layers on the map show what kinds of landscape and vegetation were natural to the Holdfast Bay area prior to European settlement. The following local native plants are just some examples of what has grown in this area for centuries (and perfect for today's gardens). Keep an eye out for interpretive signs in council areas to find out more.

Tall Woodlands



### Clasp Goodenia

*Goodenia amplexans*

Provides an important food source for pollinating insects (including the 'kartlaparti', a type of native bee) which can often be seen flying from flower to flower.

Mallee Woodlands



### Mallee Box

*Eucalyptus porosa*

After about 120 years, tree hollows form for nesting birds, bats and possums. In Kurna language, our local possums are known as 'madlurta' (Ringtail) and 'pirlta' (Brush-tail).

Riparian



### Knobby Club-rush

*Ficinia nodosa*

Knobby Club-rush provides valuable habitat for butterflies (some known as 'pilyapilya' by the Kurna people). The Kurna use this plant for weaving baskets for fishing and various other practical purposes.

Coastal



### Native Pigface

*Carpobrotus rossii*

The Kurna people know Pigface as 'karrkala' and eat the reddish fruit (known as 'multyu'). Sleepy Lizards (known as 'kalta') also feed on the 'multyu' of 'karrkala'.

# TJILBRUKE'S JOURNEY

Although not a powerful man, Tjilbruke was a great man, a master of fire making and a skilled hunter.

One day his much loved nephew, Kulultuwi, and Kulultuwi's two half-brothers decided to go hunting. Tjilbruke did not want to go with them; he decided to set up camp at Tulukutangga (now called Kingston Park by non-Kaurna people). Tjilbruke saw the old tracks of Kulultuwi's hunting party and found fresh tracks of an emu. Tjilbruke tracked this emu but lost the track.

Tjilbruke continued to walk in the direction he thought the emu would have taken. While he was walking, he came across Kulultuwi starting a fire to cook an emu that he had killed. Being new at hunting, Kulultuwi had accidentally killed the emu that Tjilbruke was hunting (it was against tribal law to kill an animal that was rightfully someone else's). Tjilbruke forgave Kulultuwi's mistake and returned to his camp. Kulultuwi placed green herbs on the bird, laid it on a bed of hot stones and poured water on it to make it steam. As Kulultuwi leaned over the bird to see if it was nearly ready, a burst of steam blinded him.

His two half-brothers, who were jealous of Kulultuwi's popularity, thought he should face tribal justice for killing the emu. They speared him to death, then took Kulultuwi's body to Warriparinga, where they started to smoke it.



Later, on looking for Kulultuwi, Tjilbruke discovered evidence of his nephew's death. He went to Warriparinga where he found Kulultuwi's partially smoked, dried body. He picked up the body and carried it to the freshwater spring at Tulukutangga (Kingston Park).

At Tulukutangga, Tjilbruke completed the smoking of Kulultuwi's body. An inquest was held and Tjilbruke discovered how his nephew had died. Tjilbruke carried Kulultuwi's body to Murrkangga (Hallett Cove) where he rested. As he thought about his nephew, he cried. His tears formed a freshwater spring. He continued along the coast to Witawali (Sellicks Beach), crying as he carried Kulultuwi's body. He cried as he travelled along the coast and more freshwater springs were created by his tears. Springs were created at Tayinparingga (Port Noarlunga), Karkungga (Red Ochre Cove), Wirruwarungga (Port Willunga) and Kungkaratingga (near Wirrina Cove).

Near Pariwarangga (Cape Jervis), Tjilbruke went into a cave, where he left Kulultuwi's body. He travelled further in and emerged covered in yellow ochre. Feeling old and saddened by the death of his nephew, Tjilbruke decided that he no longer wanted to live as a man. He found a swampy lagoon and killed a grey currawong. He plucked its feathers, rubbed its fat over his body and tied the feathers onto his arms. As he flapped his arms, he started to fly and became an ibis. Today you can see Tjilbruke's spirit in the ibis that live around springs and swamps.





# MULLAWIRRABURKA

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When Europeans first arrived at Holdfast Bay in 1836, they discovered the indigenous people had a clearly defined system of land ownership.

German missionaries, Schurmann and Teichelmann wrote that local groups were associated with a pangkarra, 'the district or tract of country belonging to an individual, which he inherits from his father', along with the totemic rites and songs associated with it. The position of burka, the 'owner' of a pangkarra, passed from the father to the first-born son.

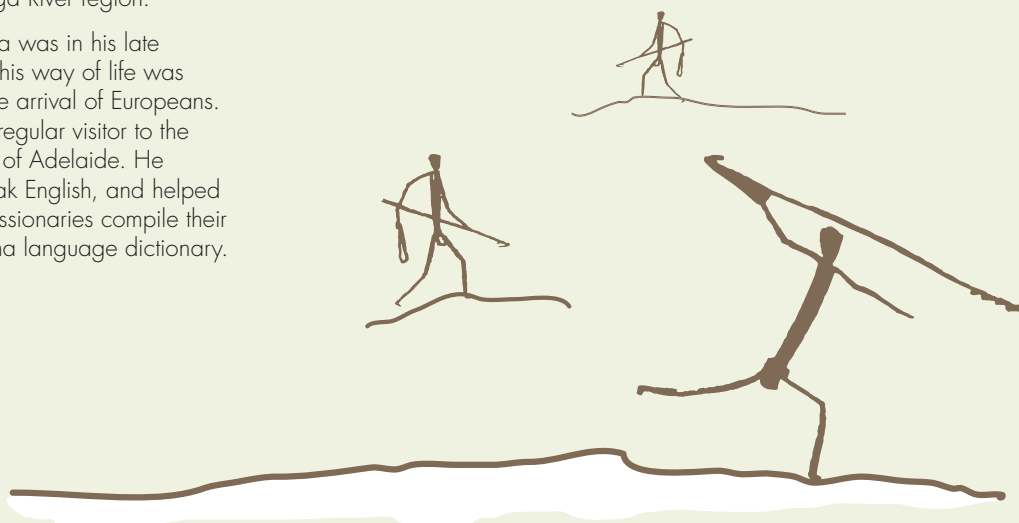
Mullawirraburka (his name means, literally: 'dry gum forest old man') was the 'owner' of Mullawirra, the pangkarra on the eastern side of the Aldinga Plains. Today he would be regarded as the senior custodian of the Willunga area. There is some evidence that before 1840 he had been the custodian of the areas covering Adelaide, Glenelg, Sturt River and Hurtle Vale (Reynella) but had 'exchanged' these lands for those further south, perhaps as a result of the lands formerly in his care being taken over by settlers. He is known to have spent much time in the Onkaparinga River region.

Mullawirraburka was in his late twenties when his way of life was disturbed by the arrival of Europeans. He became a regular visitor to the new settlement of Adelaide. He learned to speak English, and helped the German missionaries compile their extensive Kurna language dictionary.

He was keen to keep the peace between his people and the newcomers, at times assisting in disputes. But when orders were given to suspend rations to the Kurna people in Adelaide, following the killing of two shepherds by Aborigines from northern tribes, it may well have been Mullawirraburka, often the spokesman for his people, who expressed these sentiments reported in the local newspaper:

Mullawirraburka died in Adelaide eight years after the arrival of settlers at Glenelg. He had seen his traditional hunting grounds, camping places and ceremonial and sacred sites overrun by people who had no idea of the culture they were destroying. He watched as his people became victims to poor living conditions, alcohol and introduced diseases. Deaths among the Adelaide Aborigines consistently outnumbered births by at least two to one.

"You white men have taken away our land and you have driven away our kangaroo and emus. We have no food now but what you please to give us. We are few and weak; you are many and strong. You say black man have killed white man. We say take and kill bad black man but do not kill and starve good black man, your friends, and their women and children."



Adapted from: Tom Gara – The life and times of Mullawirraburka ('King John') of the Adelaide tribe. In History in portraits: Biographies of nineteenth century South Australian Aboriginal people. Ed. by Jane Simpson and Luise Hercus. Aboriginal History Monograph 6.

*'Tulukutangga'* | KINGSTON PARK

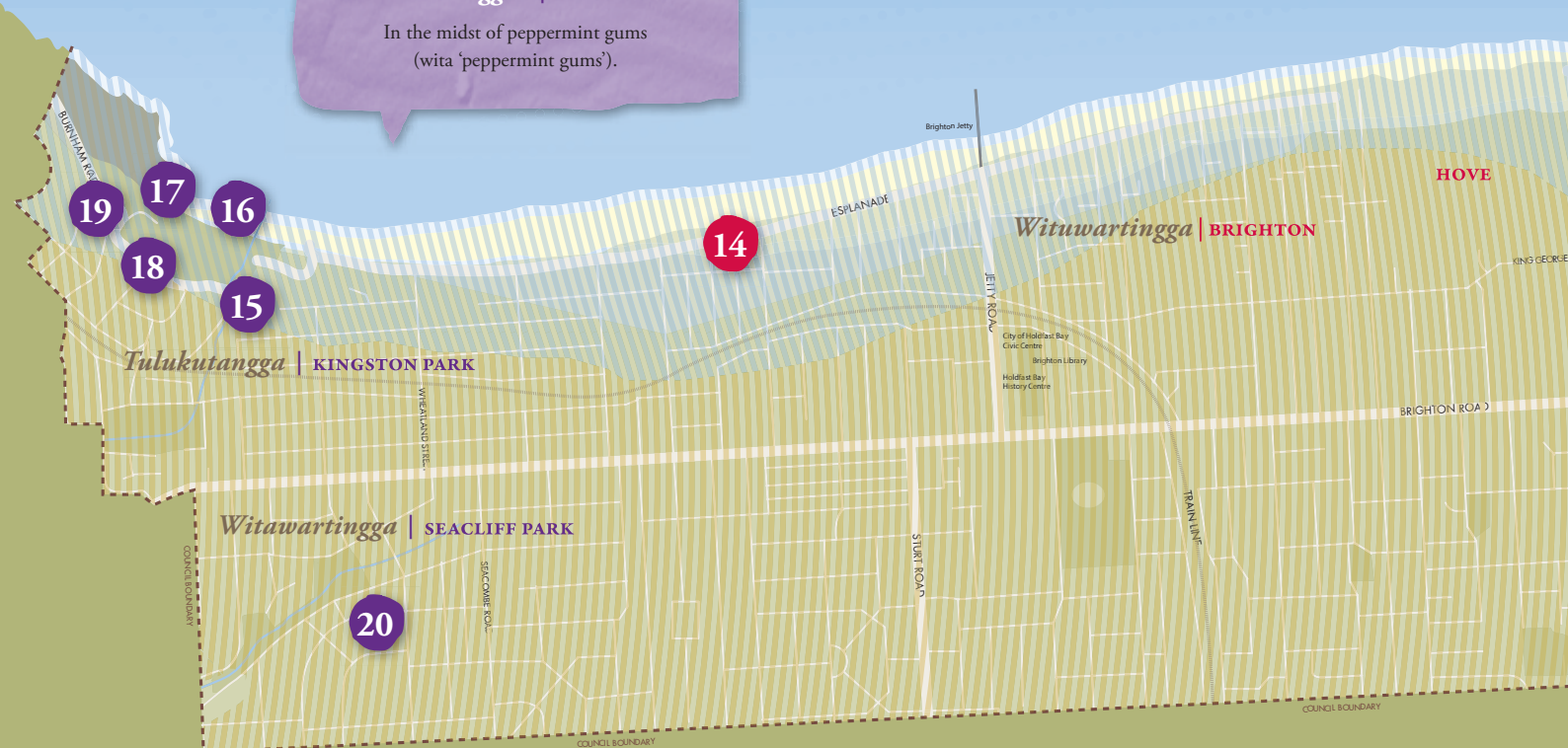
Kaurua form of Ngarrindjeri name,  
'Tulukudangk'.

*'Wituwartingga'* | BRIGHTON

In the midst of reeds (witu 'reed').

*'Witawartingga'* | SEACLIFF PARK

In the midst of peppermint gums  
(wita 'peppermint gums').



# HOLDFAST BAY AS IT WAS

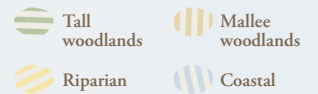
'Wangayarlu' | GULF ST VINCENT

'Grave Sea'.

'Pathawilyangga' | GLENELG

Swamp gums and foliage,  
young branches, brushwood.

#### PRE-EUROPEAN VEGETATION



Tarntanya  
(Tandanya) | ADELAIDE



- 1 Site for camp, dances and ceremonies
- 2 Deposit of pipe clay used for ceremonial purposes
- 3 Tarniwarra Reserve – spring and camp site
- 4 Pathawilyangga
- 5 Old Gum Tree
- 6 Patawilya Reserve – camp site
- 7 Wigley and Colley Reserves – camp sites
- 8 Ngutinilla Reserve
- 9 Burial site, St Mary's Memorial School
- 10 Spring
- 11 Lagoons, camp site
- 12 Site of stone implements, mangroves and oyster beds
- 13 Camp site – 'fighting pitch'

- 14 Spring, lagoons and camp site
- 15 Kingston Park cliff face reserve
- 16 Burial site and artefacts
- 17 Tjilbruke Spring
- 18 Tjilbruke monument
- 19 Local native garden recreated
- 20 Seacliff Park

# GLENELG SOUTH/GLENELG/GLENELG NORTH

## 1. Site for camp, dances and ceremonies

Camps were made and dances and ceremonies were held in the dunes in the area south of Anderson Avenue, Glenelg North, between the shore and the Patawalonga Creek.

The white sand dunes, which stretched from Largs Bay and Osborne in the north to Seacliff in the south, are long gone, replaced by housing and the sewage treatment plant.

## 2. Deposit of pipe clay used for ceremonial purposes

A deposit of pipe clay existed near the current intersection of Sturt Creek and Pine Avenue, Glenelg North. Pipe clay was used for decoration in Kaurna ceremonies. Today, the Sturt River is lined with concrete in this area and there is no longer any evidence of this once-rich source of ceremonial clay.

## 3. Tarniwarra Reserve – spring and camp site

There was a freshwater spring in the dunes at the end of King Street, Glenelg North, and a camp site. A scene of a wardli (wurley) found in the City Archives and believed to have been done in 1836–7, overlooks Holdfast Bay from this spot. Tarniwarra means ‘voice of the waves’.

## 4. Pathawilyangga

The Patawalonga Lake, accessible from Adelphi Terrace, Glenelg North, is controlled by the weir and lock at its entrance to the sea shore. Today it provides a space for water sports and a marina. The area looked very different when the Kaurna people were caring for their land. Fed by Warripari (Sturt Creek) from the south, and the Karrawirra Pari (River Torrens) passing through swamps and reed beds to the north, the water meandered through dunes to the sea and at times was subject to flooding. The area was known as Pathawilyangga (swamp gums plus foliage, young branches, brushwood). The new bridge spanning the Patawalonga between Adelphi Terrace and King Street, Glenelg North, has been named Wardlipulthu Waadlakatha (place of former encampment plus a tree lying across a river and serving as a bridge).

## 5. Old Gum Tree

The Old Gum Tree, located at the corner of Macfarlane and Bagshaw Streets, Glenelg North, is commonly thought to be the site where Governor Hindmarsh presented the Proclamation of the Colony of South Australia in 1836. The gum tree has its own significance to the Kaurna People and was known as Patha Yukuna ‘crooked gum’ (patha ‘swamp gum’; yukuna ‘crooked’).

## 6. Patawilya Reserve – camp site

The Patawilya Reserve is located in Adelphi Terrace, Glenelg North, between Rothwell Terrace and Macfarlane Street, Glenelg North. The boundaries of the original camp site are unknown. After European settlement, this area became a fringe camp until the 1880s, but it was possibly part of a much wider camp site area, including Sites 1 and 3 and stretching across the present day Colley and Wigley Reserves. In each of these seasonal camping sites, a ceremonial place and burial ground would be somewhere nearby.

## 7. Wigley and Colley Reserves – camp sites

It is likely these areas, fronting Adelphi Terrace and Colley Terrace, Glenelg, were used for large gatherings of Kaurna people. After European settlement, Holdfast Bay was, on at least two occasions in 1842 and 1843, the location of inter-tribal conflict occurring when the Murray tribes and the Encounter Bay tribes entered into Kaurna territory. One senior Kaurna woman recalls the area was still known as a camping place into the early 1900s.

## 8. Ngutinilla Reserve

The present reserve, on the beach side of The Beach House in Colley Terrace, Glenelg, is close to the site where Governor Hindmarsh’s secretary, George Stevenson, met an Aboriginal man, Ngutina, several days after his arrival in the colony in late December 1836. He invited Ngutina to accompany him on board the ‘Buffalo’, where he was given cold tongue, fried fish, beef, pie, and plum pudding. Ngutina expressed great delight when he heard the flute and piano being played.

## 9. Burial site, St Mary’s Memorial School

During the excavations for a new school building, a burial site was uncovered in the grounds of St Mary’s Memorial School, Milton Street (near the corner of Chapel Street), Glenelg. The bones are believed to be more than 200 years old and were removed and stored by Kaurna Elders. A number of burial sites have been recorded by the SA Museum along the coastal dunes and in the marsh and lagoon areas east of Glenelg.

## 10. Spring

A spring was located a few yards inland from the high water mark at the end of Kent Street, Glenelg, but has long been obscured by a concrete drainage outlet to the sea.

## 11. Lagoons, camp site

Lagoons stretched from ‘Hack’s Lagoon’, in the old suburb of Helmsdale (now part of Glenelg East bounded by Anzac Highway, Brighton Road, the tramway and Sixth Avenue) through the Glenelg Lagoon to Novar Gardens and Camden Park. Hack’s Lagoon was described as one of the largest and most beautiful of the lagoons, where giant gum trees cast their shadows upon its clear water, and ibis, ducks, geese and other birds were in abundance. The surrounding areas were used for camp sites.

## 12. Site of stone implements, mangroves and oyster beds

At the western end of the Broadway, Glenelg South, stone implements and old mangroves growing on the beach were uncovered during storms in April 1948. Oyster beds, which were soon depleted by European settlers, were thought to have been located at this spot.



## SOMERTON PARK

### 13. Camp site – ‘fighting pitch’

Until the 1920s, there was a depression filled with reeds, shells and bones behind the sand dunes stretching between Eton and College Roads, Somerton Park. There have been references to ‘battles’ in the area and it became known to Europeans as the ‘fighting pitch’. One source recorded ‘Somerton Lake’, which may have been this location, or further north between Whyte and Philipps Streets, as an important ceremonial site. Another reported finding evidence of a camp site, including hearth and food remains at the edge of the beach. A section of an ancient red dune system extended from Glenelg East through this area. It was bulldozed in 1943 to make way for housing.

## BRIGHTON/HOVE

### 14. Spring, lagoons and camp site

The area around the Esplanade and Edwards Street, Brighton, was made up of large sand dunes and contained a freshwater spring where reeds grew in the marshy soil. It became a series of lagoons in wet weather and was a well-used camp site. One European settler who lived in the area in the 1840s and 50s recorded that the people made baskets from the reeds, cooked fish and ate native apples (‘mantirri’), which grew in little bushes in the sandhills. The camp site was used until 1911. Today the spring has disappeared into a drainage system going out to sea, and the sand dunes have been lowered and are covered with houses. Dune swamps in this area are called Wituwaringga – ‘in the midst of reeds’. There is some evidence that the lagoons may have stretched further south to Young Street, Seacliff.

## KINGSTON PARK/SEACLIFF

### 15. Kingston Park cliff face reserve

The cliff face, rising behind the Brighton Caravan Park, contains some of the last examples of the original vegetation of the metropolitan coast. The Kurna people used a lot of the plants found here for food, tools and weapons. There are 76 original plant species remaining on the cliff face, 33% of which are endangered or vulnerable at a local level. Revegetation programs are continuing to bring back some of these plants.

### 16. Burial site and artefacts

In the 1950s, burial sites were uncovered on the beach in front of the Brighton Caravan Park, south of the Surf Life Saving Club. A circular heap of stones, believed to be the remains of traditional cooking ovens, was also discovered here.

### 17. Tjilbruke Spring

Nestled below the cliff face, beside the Kingston Park Kiosk at the end of the Brighton Caravan Park, a natural spring still fills the reedy area surrounding it with fresh water, although today its high mineral content has rendered it not suitable for human consumption. In former times, the spring formed a coastal lagoon. Today, because of landfill between the spring and the sea, it is difficult to see the spring water bubbling up on the sand at the water line. This spring is of great importance to Kurna people, and is now listed as an Aboriginal Heritage Site. It is where the Ancestor Being, Tjilbruke, stopped with his dead nephew, Kulultuwi to complete the smoking of his body before continuing his long journey south. This area is known as Tulukutangga and was a camp and ceremonial site.

### 18. Tjilbruke monument

On the headland above the spring, at the end of Strickland Road, Kingston Park, the Tjilbruke Monument rises majestically above the sea and looks down over the freshwater spring known as Tulukutangga. Made of massive gneiss stones and designed by John Dowie, the well-known South Australian sculptor, it represents Tjilbruke carrying his dead nephew, Kulultuwi, on his long journey southwards.

### 19. Local native garden recreated

Directly south of and overlooking the Tjilbruke Spring, a local native garden has been planted with vegetation common to the coastal area. Signage describing the plants and the uses made of them by the Kurna people also tells the Dreaming story of Tjilbruke. It is accessible from the coast and from Burnham Road, Kingston Park.

### 20. Seacliff Park

The area around Seacliff Park was originally covered by a light low woodland. It was known as Witawaringga ‘in the midst of peppermint gums’. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Gilbertson Gully, adjoining Gilbertson Road, Seacliff Park, may have been a source of fresh water and used as a camp site as the Kurna people moved around the southern plains of Adelaide. There are no significant cultural sites in the gully.

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*The City of Holdfast Bay acknowledges  
Kurna people as the traditional owners  
and custodians of this land.*

*We respect their spiritual relationship  
with country that has developed over  
thousands of years, and the cultural  
heritage and beliefs that remain  
important to Kurna people today.*

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This brochure could have not been produced without the support and valuable contribution from the Kurna Warra Pintyandi, Kurna Nation Cultural Heritage Association, the Holdfast Bay Reconciliation Group and the City of Holdfast Bay History Centre.

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Background notes and information sources are available on request from the City of Holdfast Bay History Centre.