

South Australian Parks Visitation Survey 2017

DEWNR Technical note 2017/24



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1 Purpose

The purpose of this survey is to gather information from South Australian residents to inform the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) about their current use of, and attitudes towards South Australian National Parks, Conservation Parks and Recreational Parks. This survey was initiated in 2011–12 and is conducted annually in May–June to report on that financial year.

2 Objectives

The objectives of the research were to measure South Australians’:

- current perceptions about their health
- their overall level of satisfaction with their life
- the number of times they have visited National Parks, Conservation and Recreational Parks over the last twelve months
- which parks they have visited
- the value they place on parks, and
- their familiarity with, and attitudes towards marine parks
- activities and experiences undertaken within parks over the previous 12 months.
- limitations to parks visitation

3 Method

A survey of 1143 South Australian residents was conducted between 9 June and 11 July 2017 and refers to the financial year period 2016–17.

The surveys were conducted by a combination of online and telephone (land line and mobile) surveys. This combined approach ensured that the surveys were completed by a representative sample of South Australian residents of different ages and at different life stages, and minimised weighting of the data.

The South Australian Parks Survey question regarding the percentage of visitors to parks was presented differently from 2014 to previous year’s surveys. All surveys identify a different range of parks depending on the postcode of the interviewee. The 2012–14 survey identified 10 parks which included iconic parks in SA as well as some parks local to the NRM region and a query about other parks visited. The 2014–15 surveys identified 10 parks which are within the NRM region and a query about other parks visited. This is likely to have reduced past errors in the survey caused by survey recipients either forgetting or not knowing the area was a prescribed park rather than council reserve. As a result the figures may be slightly higher compared with previous years but they are likely to be more accurate. The results have been treated the same as previous years’ data but the aforementioned information should be taken into consideration when comparing results.

For the 2017 survey the following parks in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM region were added to the list of specifically named parks: Para Wirra, Anstey Hill, Black Hill, O’Halloran Hill and Cobbler Creek. This was due to the requirement for increasing the accuracy of parks visitation data in response to the Connecting Residents with Nature initiative, which is investing 8.9 million dollars into seven metropolitan parks (Morialta and Onkaparinga River Parks were previously specifically identified).

To improve accuracy in parks identification the 2017 survey also identified Port Gawler, in conjunction with the International Bird Sanctuary, and Marino in conjunction with Hallett Cove as the walk between the two parks is the major visitation activity.

3.1 Processing

Data was weighted by age group and gender by benchmarks derived from the 2016 Census figures. The survey was administered using an ONLINE survey.

While telephone has traditionally been the method of choice for conducting quantitative research, households with fixed telephone lines have been steadily decreasing over time. Many more people tend to use mobile phones now and no longer rely on a fixed line. In many cases the telephone landline is only used for the household internet connection. Almost all households have an internet connection while the number of landlines is decreasing.

This combined approach ensured that the surveys were completed by a representative sample of South Australian residents of different ages and at different life stages.

The tables and graphs therefore show the weighted respondents numbers by gender, age and other variables. It should be noted that the weighting process can result in minor rounding variations.

Please note that, because of rounding, answers in single response questions will not always sum precisely to 100%. In addition, as the base for percentages is the number of respondents answering a particular question (rather than the number of responses) multiple response questions sum to more than 100%.

It should be noted in this report that all data based on sample surveys are subject to a sampling tolerance. Further details on statistically-valid significant differences are identified in the data analysis reports noted in the reference list of this document.

4 Results

1. In 2016–17 what proportion of South Australians visited parks, and how does this compare to previous years?

This far exceeds the People and Parks Visitor Strategy Target 1 – ‘By 2020 50% of South Australians will visit parks annually’.

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
59.6%	54.6%	56.2%	72%	69%	74%

2. Is this proportion of visitation similar across all NRM regions?

74% of South Australians visited Parks. (2016 results in red)

TOTAL	Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges	South Australian Murray-Darling Basin	Kangaroo Island	South East	Eyre Peninsula	Northern & Yorke	Alinytjara Wilurara	South Australian Arid Lands
69%	72%	61%	51%	58%	83%	46%	66%	68%
74%	73% +	79% +	80% +	73% +	82% -	64% +	100% +	72% +

Note: Approximately half of all respondents (55%, 2017 up from 52% in 2016) visited a National, Conservation or Recreation Park in the Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges NRM Region.

3. Of those people who visit parks how often did they visit? (2016 results in red)

- 1 to 3 visits 41% ↓ from 46%
- 4 to 11 visits 44% ↑ from 42%
- 12 or more visits 15% ↑ from 12%

4. What Parks values most directly reflect those of the community? (2016 results in red)

- Parks provide community spaces for recreation, enjoyment and health 49% ↓ from 49%
- Parks provide protection for native plants and animals or cultural heritage 49% ↑ from 47%
- Parks are not important to me 1% ↓ from 2%

5. What were the top ten most popular Parks in SA? (2016 results in red)

- Cleland 24% ↑ from 23% (incl. Waterfall Gully to Mount Lofty Trail)
- Belair 21% ↓ from 23%
- Morialta 17% ↓ from 18%
- Granite Island 14% ↓ from 15%
- Brownhill Creek 11% ↑ from 9%
- Marino to Hallett Cove 9% ↑ from 6%
- Onkaparinga River 7% ↓ from 8%
- Deep Creek 7% ↔ from 7%
- Anstey Hill 7% ↑ from 1%
- Torrens Island 5% ↔ from 5% (incl. Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary)
- Murray 5% ↑ from 3%

6. There has been a huge increase in the visitation rate of Belair, Cleland and Morialta between 2014 and 2016–17, why is that?

The increase in visitation might be attributed to recent initiatives that have occurred* i.e. Nature Play programs, open days, and mountain biking.

There appears to be a large community response to free organised events in these three parks.

Visitation %	Belair	Cleland	Morialta	Granite Island	Deep Creek
2013	14%	7.9	5.9	16.7	4.2
2014	14.6%	8.1	7.1	16.7	6
2015	24%	24 %	17	17	5
2016	23%	23%	18%	15%	7%
2017	21%	24%	17%	14%	7%

**In consultation with the park rangers associated with these parks this is a reflection of what they felt has occurred, but they have limited data to confirm this. Their view is that the increase in visitation is attributed to recent initiatives that have occurred relating to these parks i.e. Nature Play programs (ie ride with a ranger) and open day free events and mountain biking. Morialta has been celebrating its 100 yrs (2015) with promotions and events. Belair has had four big events over 2015–16. Cubby town, went for 2 days with approximately 800 and 900 cars attending, Belair open day had an estimated 1500 cars attend. There appears to be a large community response to the free access days.*

Overall the rangers feel the car visitation numbers are going down but there is an increase in numbers of people and bike rider visitors and an increase in visitation at other entrances to the parks.

7. What has been the community's attitude** to Marine Parks from 2012 to 2017?

The survey asked how familiar were you with what a marine park was and then asked of those who were familiar or very familiar "Would you say your attitude towards marine parks in South Australia is positive, negative or neutral?"

Respondents' attitude	2012 Pre-parks establishment	2013 Question not surveyed	2014 Pre-parks establishment	2015 Post-parks establishment	2016 Post-parks establishment	2017 Post-parks establishment
Positive	58%	-	61%	55%	60%	49%
Negative	9%	-	8%	10%	8%	7%
Neutral	32%	-	30%	32%	29%	36%
Don't know	1%	-	1%	3%	3%	9%

** The results from the Marine Parks Survey 2017 question "Are you in favour of Marine Parks to protect marine plants and animals? **Yes - 91%; No - 3% and don't know 6%**

8. How does the community's familiarity with Marine Parks relate to their attitude to Marine Parks?

61% of the community who are not familiar with what a marine park have a neutral or unsure position on marine parks compared to 33% of those who are familiar with what a marine park is.

	All respondents	Very familiar or Somewhat familiar	Not familiar
Positive	49%	58%	35%
Negative	7%	9%	3%
Neutral	36%	30%	47%
Don't Know	9%	3%	14%

9. What activities and experiences did South Australians participate in when visiting parks in the last 12 months?

Activities and experiences	S.A. parks visitors
Experiencing nature and scenery	82%
Walking	81%
Socialising with friends	65%
Connecting with family	61%
Learning about nature	50%
Picnicking/BBQ	49%
Time by myself	47%
Walking the dog	25%
Camping	22%
Four-wheel driving	15%
Volunteering in nature	9%
Cycling/Mountain biking	8%

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