CHAPTER 1  INTRODUCTION

The Mt Lofty Ranges comprise an extensive area of attractive landscapes located near Adelaide, a city of over one million people. In addition to being a productive agricultural and horticultural region and attracting many residents who commute to Adelaide, it is very popular area for tourism and recreation and its businesses gain considerable returns by marketing its scenic attractiveness. Planning policies have sought to maintain, protect and enhance its landscape character and quality. A proposal is in preparation to nominate the region for listing under the World Heritage Convention as a cultural landscape.

STUDY AREA

The Mount Lofty Ranges is considered to extend from the bottom of Fleurieu Peninsula at Cape Jervis north east into the Mid North. Maps of the Mid North cite the ranges as being the Mount Lofty Ranges. However for the purposes of this study, the northern boundary is Sturt Highway as it passes through Truro near the Barossa Valley. Figure 1.1 shows the boundary of the study area.

The study area encompasses the upland areas from the Fleurieu Peninsula through the main ranges to the Barossa Ranges in the north and the Palmer escarpment in the north-east. South of that escarpment the boundary extends along the eastern ridge of the Bremer Valley and excludes the Monarto area. It then extends along the base of the eastern ranges to near Goolwa and Port Elliot. The study area extends to the western base of the Barossa Ranges (i.e. not including the Barossa Valley), then along the western base of the Hills Face Zone fronting the northern suburbs of Elizabeth and Salisbury, Adelaide, Morphett Vale and the Willunga Plain. The McLaren Vale area to the sea is also included.

The project excludes the urban areas and towns and covers the non-urban areas, however the rural living areas such as the Longwood - Scott Creek area is included. The total study area comprises around 470,000 ha (4,700 sq km).

Because the coast of Fleurieu Peninsula was covered in the Coastal Viewscapes assessment of the South Australian coast (2005), further assessment of coast is excluded from this study and the results of that study incorporated into this study.
CHAPTER 2   HISTORY OF THE MOUNT LOFTY RANGES

2.1 ABORIGINAL HABITATION

Three aboriginal groups or tribes inhabited the Mt Lofty Ranges and its surrounds. The central ranges were inhabited by the Peramangk, particularly in the Mt Barker vicinity, but their land stretched from the Barossa Valley and Mannum, south to Myponga. To the west, the Kaurna occupied the Adelaide plains and coast south to Cape Jervis and north through to Port Broughton. East of the Ranges the Ngarrindjeri occupied the southern Fleurieu Peninsula, the Murray valley and Lakes and extended south along the Coorong.

Aborigines developed strategies which enabled them to live, survive and thrive in an often-hostile environment. A key strategy was their creation of sophisticated mythology and symbolism in the Dreamtime through which they viewed and interacted with the surrounding landscape. The Dreamtime is the mystical past of the aborigines and is the basis of their religious beliefs and creation stories. The Dreamtime, or *alcheringa*, was a “sacred, heroic time long ago when man and nature came to be as they are” (Stanner, 1979).

Across Australia, Dreamtime stories differed but they always had a strong bond with the land. Spiritual beings shaped the land, created the first people, set them in their territories, and established their laws and rituals. At the end of the act of creation, the mythical beings returned to the earth and the actual Dreamtime ended and now survives only as the “Dreaming” among the aborigines. However, animals, plants, astronomical bodies and land features are associated with the Dreamtime and rituals are re-enacted at certain sacred sites in order to maintain the life of the land. “These mythologies provide dramatic accounts of the creation of topographical explanation of origin in turn imbued them with an even greater significance in the belief and oral tradition of the society.” (Ellis, 1976).

Painting the landscape and the life within it had great symbolic significance and the artist was compelled to conform to traditional styles and designs that were relevant to his group. The aesthetic quality and the beauty of a painting related to how well the artist reflected the cultural style and his familiarity with design.

Aboriginal rock art is the oldest recorded in the world and has the distinction of continuity with the present population. Although the land was of critical importance to their survival, Aboriginal art as expressed in cave paintings and by more transient forms such as bark paintings never depicted the landscape as it was seen but rather in symbolic form.

In prehistoric times the central section of the Ranges did not attract occupation by the aboriginal people due to the steep, heavily wooded hills and the cold wet
winters. Tindale (1974) recorded that the aborigines from the Adelaide plains hunted possums in the wet sclerophyll scrub of the Ranges. Food and water supplies were abundant and the climate more congenial in the nearby Murray Valley and Adelaide Plains. Ellis (1976) noted that the Mount Lofty Ranges provided “an important social and cultural barrier” between the aborigines of the Murray valley and the Adelaide plains” although parts were occupied by the Peramangk people.

According to the Torrens Valley Historical Journal (#32), “The Peramangk occupied an area which was well endowed with resources, food, water, firewood, and raw materials such as stone; timber and resins for tool manufacture; bark for huts, shields and canoes; pigments for painting; furred animals for warm rugs, etc. During winter, they constructed warm, dry huts of branches, bark grass and leaves, often built around the hollow side of old red gums.”

Hunting expeditions were made in the remoter hills during the summer and this encouraged game to re-occupy the nearer and more permanent hunting grounds. Existing roads along the river valleys and over the steep escarpments are known to follow old aboriginal foot tracks. Pioneer settlers followed these easy lines of access, first on horse and later with vehicles.

Aboriginal life centred on the many rivers and creeks draining from the Ranges. In prehistoric times, these streams were permanent except in dry years. The hunter-gatherers obtained fish from the deeper pools during their journeys to and from the hills.

Camping sites were usually on the high banks of the streams or near springs and permanent water-holes. These include the Sturt and Onkaparinga Rivers, Yankalilla, Bungala and other small creeks on the Fleurieu Peninsula as well as the Currency, Finniss, Angas and Bremer creeks that flow east to the River Murray.

Aborigines used fire to promote regrowth and attract wildlife during the drier summer months, causing consternation by the early settlers. Matthew Flinders reported seeing fires in the area and a colonist on board a ship was startled at night to see “the grand and fearful sight” of a bushfire across the face of the Mount Lofty Ranges (Whitelock, 1985). The eastern half of the Ranges have scattered trees and this formation is often the result of fire but in the Ranges is more likely due to the declining rainfall from west to east of the Ranges.
2.2 EUROPEAN EXPLORATION

Matthew Flinders was the first European to sight the Mount Lofty Ranges in 1802 and he named many features including Encounter Bay, Cape Jervis, Rapid Bay and Mount Lofty. He described the coast as “high, rocky and much cut by gullies or ravines; a short, scrubby brush wood covers the seaward side, and the stone appears to be slaty.”

Figure 2.4 Rock at Penneshaw carved by Baudin’s expedition: “Expedition of discovery by Captain Baudin in the Géographe, 1803”

Two weeks later, Nicholas Baudin viewed the area and named Fleurieu Peninsula and gave French names to other features. The area north of Cape Jervis he described as having: “very few trees, but offered several rather picturesque views, non the less. We did not find any shelter for ships and came upon only one reasonable bay, the shores of which seemed to be of very white sand. In other bays the coast rose sheer from the water and did not look to offer any landing-places...In the afternoon, after passing the range of mountains that lies along this coast, we sighted some very low land which began at the tip of a point sloping gently down to the sea.” From the top of St Victences Gulf (which he named Golfe Josephine after Napoleon’s wife), near where Port Wakefield is located, he wrote: “We could now see both sides of the gulf, ...The two coasts differ greatly from each other; the starboard coast, ... is formed by a range of high mountains with little vegetation, whereas the one opposite is flat and even...”. It is curious that he could describe the low ranges of the mid north which are distant from the coast as “high mountains”.

In 1830, from his vantage point along the River Murray, Charles Sturt commented favourably about the agricultural potential of the hills to the west.

Colonel William Light, the surveyor of Adelaide, explored the region prior to settling on the site for the capital. Arriving by ship on 8 September, 1836 at Rapid Bay he commented that they “came to anchor in ten fathoms, a beautiful little valley in view. At two, I went on shore, and was enchanted with the appearance of the whole. A fine stream of fresh water ran through the middle of the valley into the sea, and the soil was rich beyond my expectations.” Later in September he visited the site of the present Yankalilla and wrote: “walked up the valley; running in a south-easterly direction, between very high hills, I was enchanted with this spot, it put me in mind of some of the orchards in Devonshire, and I found it plentifully supplied with freshwater.”

In December he walked over the Adelaide plains and after traversing: “nearly six miles of a beautiful flat. I arrived at the river, and saw from this a continuation of the same plain for at least six miles more to the foot of the hills under Mount Lofty, which heights trending to the sea in a south-westerly direction...”.

During 1837 he described the Sturt River: “...a beautiful valley, ...the country and soil altogether adapted for grazing or agriculture” and “...we found it running up to the eastward into the ranges from Mount Lofty, with fine grass and beautifully wooded...”. Crossing into the central ranges, he ascended: “a very gradual hill, and traversing afterwards through a most rich and beautiful country and encamped on the banks of the Onkaparinga River, in a most delightful spot.” Later in the year he visited the “Lynedoch Valley”: “a beautiful little plain we met with plenty of fresh water. ...At length ... we came to a beautiful valley which I named Lynedoch Vale ...”. North-east about 10 miles (i.e. in
In 1837, Hutchinson and Strangways crossed the Ranges to Encounter Bay, searching for suitable routes. Cocks and others crossed the Ranges to the River Bremer and followed it down to Lake Alexandrina. These and other explorations confirmed the high impressions of the agricultural potential of the Mount Lofty Ranges and settlement of the Mount Barker area commenced in 1837, attracted by the pastoral European-like landscape. Early settlements were established at Gawler, Pewsey Vale, Yankalilla and Encounter Bay.

He described the Hindmarsh valley as: “not of any great extent, but the soil is good, and its scenery in my humble opinion surpasses any other I remember in South Australia. I shall never, indeed, forget the beautiful effect of sunset, on a fine bold mountain at the head of it, called the Black Hill. The glowing orb was fast descending behind it to the west, and the Black Hill was cast into deep shade, whilst the sun’s rays shooting down two valleys on either side gave the grass the appearance of young wheat.”

Travelling north, Sturt enthused over the Barossa Valley area: “Beyond Gawler Town the country changes in character and appearance ... you leave the monotonous plain on which you have journeyed behind, and speedily advance into an undulating hilly country, lightly wooded withal, and containing many very rich, if not beautiful valleys. The Barossa Ranges and the districts round it are exceedingly pretty. ...The Keizerstuhl rises the highest point in the Barossa Range, the outline of which is really beautiful, and the Rhine (Jacob Creek?) that issues from its deep and secluded valleys flows northwards through their lands.” Inland, the area around Angaston (Angas Park): “is a place of great picturesque beauty, and is capable of being made as ornamental as any nobleman’s estate in
England.” (later the site of Lindsay Park). Eastward he described the hilly country as “an inferior description” until you reach “the brow of the last of these hills, (from which) the eye wanders over the dark and gloomy sea of scrub, known as the Murray belt...”

Nearer to Adelaide at the Glen Osmond Mine he described the road winding “up a romantic valley, with steep hills of rounded form, generally covered with grass, and studded lightly with trees on either side...” This road is now the route of the South Eastern Freeway. The Mt Barker district: “abounds in very many beautiful alluvial valleys, which, when I first crossed, had grass that rose above the horses' middles as they walked through it, and looked luxuriant beyond description.”

As a general comment, Sturt noted that: “In many places (in the Province) the trees are so sparingly, and I had almost said judiciously, distributed as to resemble the park lands attached to a gentleman’s residence in England, and it only wants the edifice to complete the comparison.”

In 1847, George French Angas published *Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand* describing his tours of the new settlement. He described a trip up from the Adelaide plains: “We soon commenced a gentle ascent towards the hills, and pursued our way along the great eastern or Mount Barker road, which suddenly enters a winding romantic pass between abrupt hills, scattered over with gum trees; this is Glen Osmond...the zigzag character of the pathway, are varied by scattered gum trees, grouped in ornamental and picturesque positions. The road becomes very steep as it ascends the Mount Lofty range, and on gaining the heights, a stupendous and magnificent scene presents itself. (he follows with a description of St Vincent’s Gulf across to Yorke Pen) From this point the scenery on all sides is enchanting; and whoever the settler may be who has perched his habitation amidst these mountains, he has certainly shown his taste in selecting one of nature’s loveliest positions, commanding some of the finest views in the colony.” Passing on, “From the summits of the Bugle range, the eye wanders over crowded hills, thickly sprinkled with wood, in all the beauty and grandeur of their primeval state.”

Angas described the area: “Mount Barker district is rich and beautiful, the soil very fine, and the climate cool, ...Mount Barker itself is an imposing feature in the landscape; its summit rises 1681 feet (520 m) above the plains, and is broken into two abrupt conical peaks. Undulating hills, thinly wooded, extend northwards towards Mount Crawford and the Barossa ranges...”.

“The Mount Barker country is situated to the eastward of the Mount Lofty range, and is separated from Adelaide by a forest of stringy bark. The hills are intersected by luxuriant valleys, and the manner in which the trees are grouped about conveys the idea that it is one immense park, skilfully arranged by the hand of man, rather than a natural paradise prepared for his reception. ...”

North of Mt Barker, “following up the ranges of hills, a rich and fertile country extends to the Barossa, and from thence stretches still further north; gradually becoming more open, and affording splendid runs for sheep, hundreds of thousands of which find pasture in this part of the colony. The country around Lynedock Valley and the Barossa range is of a very superior character; it consists of well-watered valleys and gently swelling hills, covered with good grass. The rich verdure and the deep foliage of the evergreen trees, together with the park-like style of the scenery, render these luxuriant districts most beautiful to the eye; whilst the settlers’ homesteads frequently display an air of comfort quite inviting: the white buildings peeping through the trees, and the lazy cattle reposing beneath the shade of some umbrageous eucalyptus.”

Angas found the location of Adelaide itself: “is pleasing and picturesque; it is surrounded by rich level land with park-like scenery, and backed by a range of bold mountains, that in their every-varying tints
afford a constant succession of delightful pictures throughout the day.” Heading south of Noarlunga, he found the: “scenery in every direction is peculiarly charming. Morphett Vale, the Willunga hills, and the plain of Aldinga, with Mount Terrible beyond, present scenes of unequalled beauty. Towards Rapid Bay and Cape Jervis the country is more broken and mountainous, and the scenery romantic in the extreme.”

In 1837, Sir John Morphett led a party which pursued cattle into the Mt Barker district and on climbing the Mount, “They were immediately impressed by the pastoral possibilities of the land they beheld. They described it as gently undulating land with fine soil and pasture. They noted its park-like appearance, and also noted the presence of large, red and blue gums. This country contrasted greatly with those parts of the ranges they had already traversed and which had been characterized by thin soils supporting Stringybarks.” (Butler, in Corbett & Whitelock, 1977).

In 1838, John Finniss brought 400 cattle across from Sydney and found the Mt Barker country reminded him of the water meadows of England and suggested in a letter to the acting Governor in 1839 that: “The country at the base of Mount Barker, where we had fixed ourselves for a time, is of great pastoral capability. It is broken into rounded hills and worn valleys, clothed with plentiful verdure, and watered by numerous chains of ponds and, its present state, far exceeds in richness any portion to New South Wales that I ever saw.” (Butler, in Corbett & Whitelock, 1977).

Elizabeth Davison, an early settler near Mt Barker, wrote in her diary on 16 March, 1840, “We reached our new home which we call Blakiston late at night. On rising next morning I was delighted with the place. The house is pleasantly situated on the brow of a hill looking down upon a pretty narrow valley and a well wooded hill opposite. The cattle were grazing in the valley and the air felt so pure and invigorating that I would not think I was in

2.3 EARLY EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

Edward Gibbon Wakefield wrote: “The object is not to place a scattered and half barbarous colony on the coast of New Holland, but to establish ... a wealthy, civilized society.” Anthony Trollope, a visitor to Australia, wrote that South Australia was expected to become “a happy Utopia” of free religious conscious, progress and respectability. (Whitelock, 1985).

Wakefield’s systematic colonisation of the area began in 1836 and within four years settlements had been established at Crafers, Mount Barker, Hahndorf, Barossa Valley, Strathalbyn, Meadows and along the coast at Yankalilla, Normanville, Second Valley and Encounter Bay. According to Williams (1974) the central Mount Lofty Ranges were avoided because of the steep slopes, podsolised soils and cover of dense stringybark-bark forest. However by 1837, settlers moved into the Mt Barker district, attracted by its European-like landscape.
the same country with Adelaide.” (Butler, in Corbett & Whitelock, 1977).

Farming started on the Adelaide plains. An early writer in 1843 stated “the plains and forests around Adelaide changed from their original desolation into a continuous mass of farms.” He wrote “I can scarcely imagine a more interesting scene than to observe a country in the course of being rescued from nature.” (Bennett, 1943).

As the farmers moved quickly into the central Ranges, George French Angas (1847) proclaimed that the sound of the woodman’s axe echoing through the solitude of the Mount Lofty Ranges represented the “dawn of civilisation and industry.”

These sentiments were echoed in an anonymous description lodged in the SA Archives: “And for the face of the country, it has become more like a British country, covered with Royal forests, aristocratic estates, thriving farms, and flourishing gardens,...” (Butler, in Corbett & Whitelock, 1977).

Whitelock wrote that despite the lofty impressions of the explorers, the settlers saw little that was picturesque in Australia: “Its uncouth state of nature inflamed their instincts to change and develop their surroundings. They attacked the bush like the occupiers of a rank neglected garden, full of weeds and vermin.” Yet there were other views: a colonist in the Southern Vales wrote in the 1850s; “the wild

bushland is fast disappearing to make way for ‘civilization’. There is, indeed, a certain sadness associated with our pioneering work.” (Whitelock, 1985).

Early settlers ploughed the land in long furrows called lands reminiscent of the English open field system of agriculture. Twidale et al (1971) states that: “Furrows survive and can be observed as far apart as Victor Harbour in the south, Williamstown in the north, Upper Hermitage in the west, and Palmer in the east...The lands are generally 150 to 200 yards long, though they range between 300 yards near Harrogate and 20 yards at both Mt Crawford and Tungkillo. The lands are much longer than they are wide, characteristically appear in the fields as long, narrow rectangles or parallelograms.”

Escaping religious persecution in Prussia, German immigrants first arrived in 1838 and later through the 1840s, settling at Mt Barker, Hahndorf, Grunthal (now Verdun), Lobethal (“Valley of Praise”), Blumberg (now Birdwood), Lyndoch, and throughout the Barossa Valley. In the 1850s, soon after arriving, they planted the first vineyards thus contributing significantly to the establishment of the Australian wine industry.

Captain Hahn, accompanying the Lutheran settlers to Hahndorf in 1838 wrote in his journal: “My first glance fell on beautifully formed trees, which nature had planted there as with the hands of a gardener – the beautiful long grass wet with dew coloured the ground a lovely green; from the several big trees standing majestically, wild birds flitted from branch to branch, cockatoos, parrots and parakeets etc warbling their varied tones.”

Figure 2.10 shows the progressive spread of settlement out from Adelaide during the early decades of settlement. The first map shows the surveys covering much of the Mount Lofty Ranges in the initial decade and then spreading east and north over subsequent decades. The farms and towns in the Mt Lofty Ranges were an early focus of survey. Williams (1974)
comments "Settlement was controlled carefully and there was always an under-lying and conscious plan for most of the actions taken. It is this curious blend of the theoretical and the practical that characterizes so much of South Australian historical geography."

The Special Survey areas were provided for anyone who deposited £4000 for land. Many of the Special Surveys were provided throughout the Mount Lofty Ranges.

Farms were surveyed on the European model, based on 80 acre (32.4 ha) sections which were the size of a viable farm in Victorian England at the time. However this size was not viable in the drier Ranges and the land had to be over-exploited to derive a living, which sapped the soil of its fertility. Settlers failed to comprehend the harshness of the Australian climate, persisting long in the
belief that the land, and somehow the climate, could be modified.

The invention in 1843 of the Ridley stripper enabled the reaping of the crops on stony and stump strewn paddocks. It worked best on flat land so cereal growing moved out of the hills to the plains including between Strathalbyn and Milang. Farms in the hills turned increasingly to raising sheep and cattle for wool, meat and dairy products.

Acclimatization societies introduced exotic plants and animals into the new country in the mistaken belief that the land was “neutral stuff” and could be modified. The Adelaide Botanic Garden was established in 1855 partly to introduce new plants to the colony. Rabbits, introduced in 1870s in Victoria, spread quickly with devastating impacts. The South Australian Acclimatization Society was formed in 1878 and within three or four years and introduced “skylarks, thrushes, blackbirds, bullfinches, green-finches, goldfinches …in the hope that they may be permanently established here, and impart to our somewhat unmelodious hills and woods the music and harmony of English country life.” (Whitelock, 1985).

Bringing civilisation meant literally bringing England to the new land. In the mid-1850s Howitt (1855) wrote:

“In spite of foreign vegetation, the English stamp and the English character are on all their settlements. They are English houses, English enclosures that you see; English farms, English gardens, English cattle and horses, English fowls about the yard, English flowers and plants are fully cultivated ... England reproduces herself in new lands.”

Roads were slow to develop and were hazardous. Port Elliot was linked to Adelaide in 1847 and Victor Harbor via the Inman Valley and Yankalilla in 1853 and later, in 1860, to Adelaide via Bull Creek and Blackwood. At first the journeys to Victor Harbor took three days by bullock dray but Cobb & Co with its coaches shortened this to less than eight hours in 1867.

The early years were spent in felling the trees and opening up the forests for grazing and cropping. The Crafers area was known as “Stringy Bark Forest” on account of the tall stringy trees, the wood from which was used in housing and fencing.

Cattle were brought down the River Murray from the eastern states and were established in the Ranges. In the 1850s the first railways were constructed enabling produce to be taken quickly to markets. While wheat farming commenced in the Ranges, it was much easier on the plains and gradually gave way to sheep and dairy cattle, orchards, vines and market gardens. The advent of refrigeration in 1879 allowed meat to be exported to England. Subterranean clover was discovered near Mount Barker in 1889 and its widespread sowing together with the use of superphosphate restored productive pastures.

In 1969, the then Governor of South Australia, Sir Mark Oliphant, spoke of his upbringing near Mylor in the Adelaide hills in the early years of the 20th century:

“Two parallel creeks, which in my memory never failed to flow crystal clear to join the Onkaparinga, crossed the road in the delightful valley beside the school. Here gigantic white gums reigned over the thick bush of tea-tree and other shrubby growth... The streams abounded in yabbies and tiny fish, and the quieter pools were filled with tadpoles. .."

“This area of the hills at that time, 60 years ago, was thickly wooded and very sparsely inhabited...”

“Later, we lived in Upper Mitcham...During the school holidays, my father, my brothers and I walked often through the hills, by various routes to Goolwa, Victor Harbour and the shores of Encounter Bay, and back. We carried swags and billies, and slept in the open on fragrant beds of gum-leaves and bracken. On one
occasion, we walked the 50 odd miles home in a single night. The Mount Compass area was then just being developed for vegetable gardens. Near Clarendon one could buy magnificent strawberries, and on the slopes below the road outside Willunga, we picked the largest and tenderest mushrooms I have ever tasted. Mount Compass potatoes, boiled in the billy or roasted in the glowing embers to have crisp shells, split and plastered liberally with the very salty local butter, and eaten at dawn in the open, made a breakfast with royal qualities for hungry walkers. …

“The beauty of the Inman Valley, and the country between Cape Jervis and Yankalilla, with its heat-haze of eucalypts on a summer’s day, and glimpses of a cool sea, the road lined with dusty Christmas bush in flower are memories of a wonderful boyhood. It seems terrible to me that this country has been utterly devastated so that it might support a few sheep. The trees which Hans Heysen immortalized have almost all been destroyed. They are irreplaceable and for what paltry gain!” (Oliphant in Whitelock, 1969)

In a later seminar in 1974, Sir Mark repeated his concerns:

“I am much concerned that places of historical interest in beautiful rural settings like Sir Hans Heysen’s estate near Hahndorf should be preserved for the delight of our children’s children, because the unique beauty and tranquillity of that piece of the hills are irreplaceable. Once gone, they can never be restored. Resources such as those are non-renewable.” (Oliphant in Whitelock, 1974)

2.4 POST WW2 DEVELOPMENT

In 1891 the first national park was established, at Belair, being only the second established in Australia. Since then, a large number of parks have been established in the Ranges, totalling over 6,000 ha and include Morialta, Cleland, Para Wirra and Deep Creek. To these were added in the 1980s large parks established by the then State Planning Authority from funds raised by the open space contribution in subdivisions. The areas were originally identified in the 1962 Metropolitan Adelaide Development Plan by the Town Planning Committee. These parks include Anstey Hill, Black Hill, Onkaparinga Gorge, Horsnell Gully, Aldinga Scrub and Scott Creek, many of them along the Hills Face east of Adelaide. They formed the basis of the second generation ring of parklands around Adelaide (Lothian & Pichard, 1984) which became the Metropolitan Open Space System (MOSS) identified in Council Development Plans.

In the post WW2 period, industrialisation and population growth required pipelines to be constructed through the Ranges, bringing River Murray water to Adelaide. Reservoirs were constructed in the Ranges, the largest being the Mt Bold Reservoir in the 1930s and the Kangaroo Creek Reservoir in the 1960s. Major electricity power stations were built at
Osborne in 1947, Port Augusta (1954, 1964) and Torrens Island (1971, 1976) and large-scale pylons and transmission lines were strung through the Ranges and across the Hills Face to convey the electricity to areas of demand.

Following WW2, the discovery and rectification of trace element deficiencies in the soil of the upland lateritic plateau south of the Inman Valley led to the widespread clearance of the native vegetation and the establishment of pastures.

Pollution of the reservoir catchments in the Mount Lofty Ranges was identified as a significant issue by the Committee on the Environment which reported in 1972 that the reservoirs were polluted by nitrates producing algal blooms and eutrophication requiring increasing dosages of copper sulphate. They wrote: “The catchment areas have a significant and growing population and are used for a variety of agricultural and farming purposes which include fruit growing, sheep and cattle grazing, pig and poultry raising, dairying and market gardening.” Controls over land use in the catchments, including the removal of piggeries and dairies together with subdivision controls and buffer zones around reservoirs were established. The Chain of Ponds township which was “situated almost on the banks of Millbrook reservoir, is to be razed and citizens relocated outside the immediate catchment area.”

Major quarries were opened into the quartzite and rock of the Hills Face and other localities in the Ranges, presenting their scarred faces for full view from the Adelaide plains. From the 1970s onwards, rehabilitation of these quarries occurred, greatly reducing their visual impact.

Commencing in 1965, the South Eastern Freeway was constructed through the Ranges, eventually extending 74 km through to Murray Bridge in 1979. The freeway greatly enhanced the accessibility of the middle Ranges such as the Onkaparinga Valley and the Mount Barker area, leading to increased subdivision pressures on the ranges.

Comparing the extent of natural vegetation in 1945 with that remaining in the late 1960s, Andrew Lothian found that it had been reduced by over half (Figure 2.13).
In the 1960s the National Fitness Council established a network of walking trails through the Ranges. Later, in the 1980s, the Heysen Trail was established to run 1200 km from Cape Jervis to Parachilna in the Flinders Ranges. The Yurrebilla Trail runs 54 km largely across the Hills Face from Belair to Black Hill. The Eagle Quarry opposite the Eagle on the Hill has been converted into trails for mountain bikes.

The Mawson Trail for mountain bikes extends 900 km from Adelaide through the Mt Lofty Ranges and Mid North to Blinman in the Flinders Ranges. The 225 km Kidman Trail runs from Willunga through the Ranges to Kapunda.

Trails have also been established along the routes of former railways, and these include the Amy Gillet cycle trail along the Onkaparinga Valley from Oakbank to Mount Torrens.

During the 1960s through to the 1980s, the Mount Lofty Ranges Association was active in promoting the conservation and protection of the Ranges. The University of Adelaide’s Adult Education Department sponsored a number of seminars on the future of the Ranges – Whitlock, 1969 and 1974, Corbett & Whitelock, 1977.

A proposal which gained much prominence at the time was to establish the Mt Lofty Ranges as a national park in the English model, privately owned with farming and towns and industry but under tight planning controls to safeguard its landscape amenity.

In a 1969 seminar on the Adelaide Hills, Warren Bonython, a prominent conservationist suggested that: “the British form of national parks has possibilities as a model. Under this, landscapes which have been occupied and worked for centuries are conserved by a particular sort of planning control under a special Act of Parliament. Normal activities continue, but allowable developments are limited to those which will harmonize with and not alter the basic character of the landscape. Such a system introduced here could conserve the living environment and scenic amenity as well as protect such things as the water catchments. Since ‘national park’ has a different meaning in this country, a new name is called for. The area put under this sort of planning control could be called the “Adelaide Hills Scenic Reserve”.

The State Planning Authority conducted a study of the Mt Lofty Ranges in 1972-3 and in its report (SPA, 1974) recommended:

“The protection of natural beauty should be the overriding policy governing all decisions relating to the development and use of land in the Mount Lofty Ranges.”

The report went on:

“The outstanding conclusion of the study is that the Mount Lofty Ranges are one of South Australia’s greatest natural assets and their beauty must be preserved. However, the Ranges are a valuable source of food, timber and minerals, they are a major source of water and they provide outlets for recreation and places for people to live. All these activities must be accommodated by governed by a policy which places preservation of natural beauty foremost.”

Geoff Mosely, Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation who had studied the English system of national parks spoke at the 1974 seminar:

“The main aims of my paper are to try to summarise progress in attempts to provide blanket protection for landscapes of defined rural areas.... While I will use the English national park as an example of a successful application of the technique, it is not my intention to suggest that all one has to do in Australia is to transplant the British methods lock stock and barrel. Rather I would argue that the British experience is worth careful study and that there are many methods used there which may be worth adapting for Australia.” (Mosely in Whitelock, 1974).
Alas it was not to be and gradually interest and pressure waned to establish some form of special management for the Mt Lofty Ranges.

It is worth, in this context, to remember the prescient words of Warren Bonython, spoken in 1969:

“In the rush of insistent claims the need for aesthetic landscape preservation is largely pushed aside. The need for reserving specific areas of natural scenery and bushland for the pursuit of enjoying nature, for obtaining relative solitude and respite from the artificialities of city living, and for conserving samples of the original, natural environment (for scientific study and for the edification of future generations), tend to be ignored until too late – until possible areas have been oblitered by development, or costs of acquisition have risen to prohibitive levels.” (Bonython in Whitelock, 1974).

Several researchers attempted to measure and map the landscape quality of the Ranges including Richard Dare (1978), Geoff Sanderson (1979) and Grant Revell (1981). Although they made some progress, particularly Revell, overall they failed to accomplish the task. Lothian, (1984) summarises their methods.

In 2004 the Natural Resources Management Act was enacted in South Australia and under this, Natural Resource Management Boards were established. Natural resources were defined by the Act to cover soil, geological features and landscapes, native vegetation, animals and organisms, and ecosystems. The term landscape was not defined but the objective of the Act and its administration is on the ecologically sustainable management of natural resources. While the author carried out an assessment of the aesthetic values of the River Murray for the SA Murray Darling Basin NRM Board (Lothian, 2007), the two Boards that cover the Mt Lofty Ranges have evinced no interest.

Unfortunately in terms of the coordinated management and protection of the Mt Lofty Ranges, the region is divided between two NRM Boards. The watershed provides the boundary.

It is worth reflecting that the early settlers often remarked on the beauty of the Mt Lofty Ranges and, in their drive to survive and develop the land, were by no means insensitive to the beauties of the hills environment around them. Such interest persists through to this day, as evidenced by the popularity of the Ranges in which to live and to recreate.

2.5 WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION OF THE MT LOFTY RANGES

On 1 June, 2012, Professor Randy Stringer of the School of Agriculture, Food and Wine and the Environment Institute at the University of Adelaide released the results of an 18 month study proposing a bid for World Heritage listing of the Ranges. It proposed that the bid cover the working agricultural landscape of the Adelaide Hills, the Barossa Valley, Mount Barker and McLaren Vale.

If successful, the Mount Lofty Ranges would join other working agricultural sites in Italy, Portugal, Hungary and Mexico to be recognised in this way.

Professor Stringer, an agricultural economist, said:

“World Heritage listing for agricultural landscapes is very rare, and rarer still for working, evolving agricultural landscapes. Achieving World Heritage Site status would aim to conserve the unique qualities of the Mount Lofty Ranges, not just for future generations of Australians but also for the world. This would not be seen as turning the Ranges into a museum, but protecting its status as a working, growing, changing landscape under local planning control.

“World Heritage listing would provide the globally recognised branding that our food, wine and tourism industries are seeking – it would tell the story of
what makes this place so special to the outside world, and to the people of Adelaide."

The report concluded that seeking World Heritage status is a no-lose proposition, whether or not it succeeds. "World Heritage status has evolved into a widely respected brand that countries use to attract tourists and to promote and add value to their products," Professor Stringer says. "For me it all comes down to answering one question: 'If we can get it, why wouldn’t we?"

The report found:

1. **Solid grounds exist** – on the basis of history and continuing culture and practice – to mount a bid for World Heritage Site (WHS) designation for the Mount Lofty Ranges agricultural region. Such a bid should be pursued in two stages, and would have a good chance of success. Two criteria for World Heritage listing concern outstanding examples that ‘illustrate[…] significant stage(s) in human history’ or are ‘directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas or beliefs…of outstanding universal significance’. South Australia was not only the first place in Australia to be planned and developed by free settlers, but also the first place in the world to apply the principles of ‘systematic colonisation’, developed by Edward Gibbon Wakefield, John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham. The region’s links to this unique philosophical movement of ‘universal significance’, and the continuing reflection of these ideas in the modern landscape and land use policy, would form the basis of a future World Heritage bid.

2. WHS designation would stimulate **higher economic growth** in the region by boosting producers’ global competitiveness (e.g., branding opportunities), supporting continued development of high-value primary production, and attracting investment. Extensive analysis of direct benefits-to-costs alone shows **strong returns** for low-, medium- and high-growth scenarios if WHS listing is achieved – taking note of uncertainties in generating such estimates – and real benefits even if it is not, simply through undertaking the process of mounting a bid.

3. By placing high value on character- and heritage-conserving innovation, WHS listing would provide a much **more resilient development path** for the region, and help reverse trends of agricultural land loss in the greater Adelaide area. Existing zoning and proposed legislation will not ensure the economic viability necessary to retain the region’s rural character in the long term.

4. WHS and National Heritage listings will **not affect ordinary planning processes** for the vast majority of development applications in the region. These processes will remain the same before and after listing.

5. The value of WHS listing is unlocked not by the listing itself, but by the motivation and **coordinated action of local stakeholders** and the integration of systems of governance marshalled to make the bid work. The bid process would catalyse and unify discussion of issues vital to the future of Adelaide and South Australia, as well as to the region, including 'intangibles' with real consequences, such as sustainability, climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation and ethics, as well as senses of place, identity and community.

6. **Continuing loss of productive agricultural land** means that securing the place of agriculture in the regional landscape and economy cannot be left to a 'business as usual' policy stance. A decisive shift in public policy and in private behaviour is needed, as are multiple vehicles to carry that decision through.
Following the release of the proposal, a Project Steering Group comprising the Mayors and CEOs of six Hills Councils was established together with a Project Management Group. Under these, six advisory groups were established covering Aboriginal, Heritage, Economic, Community, Landscape, and Management.