

What to do

Step back in time and explore Waterworks Reserve. All around you are historical reminders of the role it played in the development of Hobart's water supply system – beautiful sandstone archways, the old Receiving House and pipeline system.

The reserve has long attracted locals drawn to its idyllic surroundings. Picnic and barbecue facilities look out over both reservoirs and there is a play area for the kids.

What to see

Follow the Pipeline Track up to Gentle Annie Falls and look out over the old pipe-head well, an engineering marvel in its day and part of Hobart's original Mountain Water Supply System.

Waterworks Reserve is a favourite haunt for local and visiting twitchers. Eleven of the 12 bird species found only in Tasmania visit this reserve.

Birds you might see include dusky robins, which love to perch on the sandstone posts near the entrance. Two of the four honeyeaters found only in Tasmania – the yellow-throated and black-throated honeyeaters – are particularly fond of the reserve's big blue gums.

When the weather warms up keep an eye out for large blue-tongued lizards and tiny skinks, like the metallic skink, which love to sun themselves on the sandstone walls and steps.



Herbert and Lucy King at Gentle Annie Falls, Hobart, 1918. Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery Collection.

A pipeline into the past

In the 1830s significant numbers of people were dying after drinking water from the Hobart Rivulet. Back then the city's main water supply was heavily polluted and described as 'worse than a witch's cauldron'.

Something had to be done and so engineer Joseph Gale was enlisted and drew up a plan to bring water down from Kunanyi/ Mt Wellington and into a reservoir holding 100 million gallons of water.

Wooden troughs carried water four kilometres down the mountain, into a channel carved from solid rock, before discharging over Gentle Annie Falls and into the Receiving House.

It took three years and 150 men to build the upper reservoir, which opened in 1888. It is considered part of Australia's largest and finest intact 19th century waterworks. The dam below it is the second oldest in Australia after Melbourne's Yan Yean Reservoir.

Hobart Nature Trails

Waterworks Reserve
and the Pipeline Track



Scan the QR code
to learn more about
these nature trails

Walks

Reservoir Circuit

3 km loop – Moderate

Start at the bottom of Upper Reservoir Track near Site 10, following it clockwise on to Lower Reservoir Track, returning along Waterworks Rd.

Note: Waterworks Rd is used by vehicles limited to 20 km/h.

Gentle Annie Falls Loop

1.3 km loop – Moderate

Head up the Gentle Annie Falls Track from Site 10 through a beautiful fern glade, returning down the Pipeline Track.

Waterworks to Fern Tree

4.6 km one way – Moderate

Starting at Site 9 car park, take the Pipeline Track up to the Pipe-Head Well, Gentle Annie Falls and on to McDermotts Saddle. Cross Chimney Pot Hill Rd then follow the Pipeline Track past beautiful historic stonework and stone aqueducts until you reach Fern Tree. Return the way you came, or catch a bus down Huon Road to the northern entrance of Waterworks Reserve.

Getting there

Metro bus route 448 departs from Hobart and stops on Huon Road. The bus stop is a short walk from the northern entrance to the reserve. Waterworks is a short drive from Hobart. Parking is available at the entrance and in the reserve. Cycling to Waterworks Reserve is also a great option, with the ride taking approximately 30 minutes from the city.

