

Joining the Dots: Analysis of the Trigonometric Surveys of the Adelaide Plains, 1837 – 1838

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SUMMARY

Tasked with selecting the best site for a capital and seat of government from 1500 miles of coastline, Surveyor General William Light pioneered the use of the co-ordinated cadastre in his Trigonometrical Survey of the District of Adelaide, South Australia. Light was also commissioned to carry out an accurate survey of the Port Adelaide River, the capital's port.

Light applied his expertise in navigation, and from years of diligent service in Wellington's Peninsular Army and as an accomplished artist, to establish South Australia with an exemplary and sustainable land and water management framework. In addition to having regard to making the best use of natural resources, Light deliberately ensured his survey guarded against flood and future-proofed the City and District of Adelaide.

This paper is the first publication of details of the District of Adelaide Trigonometrical Stations, including those in William Light's Port Adelaide River Harbour Survey.

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