



Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves

NEWS LETTER

Number 69, March 2022

Chair's report, Annual General Meeting

It has been a quiet but productive year for the Friends. Probably the first significant event that occurred was that the council's Rod McBeath, the go-to man if you wanted anything done on the ground, retired. He was a great supporter of the Friends over the years, always cheerful and willing to help. The Friends provided him with a certificate of appreciation and a voucher for Bunnings as a thank you. Thanks, Rod.

Fortunately his replacement, Sarah Gordon, seems to be just as good. We did invite her to this meeting but she is an apology because she is spending the weekend with the Army Reserve. Remembering what happened recently on a film set in the US, we just hope she doesn't get shot.

A major development, and one that caused considerable controversy in the committee early in the year, is the new native garden on the site of the old cottage, overlooking the lake.

The development of this was originally kept as a closely guarded secret, because it was intended in part to be a surprise tribute to the Raglesses for their pivotal role in saving, defending and improving the reserves over the past 30 odd years.

At one stage it was going to be the Ragless Memorial Garden, but that name was quickly rejected, partly because it sounded as though the Raglesses had died and gone to the Great Working Bee in the Sky, which of course they haven't. And partly because the Raglesses didn't feel comfortable with being singled out, and want any name or sign to reflect the effort that many others have put into the reserves over the years.

I would like to give a big thank you to Jane Schoettgen, who initiated and drove the project, and to her husband Wolf. They have both put an enormous amount of work and a considerable amount of their own money into clearing the area and buying, planting and watering-in native plants. A big thank you too to Merilyn Browne and other members of Jane's Thursday working bees who helped Jane make it a reality. The plants are in and most are thriving, and there is a magnificent seat, a work of art, made by Jerry Keyte from Willunga, installed with a view of the lake. The plants are labelled and if nothing else, it is an education resource demonstrating what people in the area could and should consider growing in their own gardens.

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Chair's report, continued

There was a fear that the garden would divert time and effort away from Jane's regular Thursday working bees, but this has not happened.

Another big achievement is the new interpretive sign which we have just unveiled. The council not only set aside \$10,000 for the new sign, but basically handed the entire project over to the Friends. In effect we were given a blank canvas and \$10,000 of ratepayers' money and were trusted to spend it wisely, stay within budget and on time, and produce something at the end that everyone could admire and be proud of. Many thanks to Steve Brooks, who was instrumental in organising the money and who had kept his faith that we could do the job.

We set up a sub committee, initially comprising Janet Pedler, David Ragless and Merilyn Browne, and I also got involved towards the end. It was Janet who came up with the initial concept and spent many hours detailing the design. However, she said at the start that she did not have the equipment or the technical skill to realise her vision, so on her recommendation we selected Mango Chutney to do the actual production.

The subcommittee did make some relatively minor adjustments to Janet's original work, mainly reducing the number of words somewhat and adding a key to the illustrations but the finished result is almost entirely Janet's work and something of which she can be justifiably proud. It's a pity she has had to be an apology tonight.

Speaking of signs, many of you will have noticed that the wooden Koala Green sign, which had deteriorated badly, has been renewed. Thanks to Jan Walker for organising that.

Still on signs, I have been promised that, after many years of pushing by the Friends, signs will be installed to guide CFS trucks to the fire tracks in the reserves. The council's Andrew Kirkley has assured me that they will be in place before the start of the fire season, that is, within the next 18 days. Fingers crossed!

One of the fire tracks in Stirling Park was blocked when a large gum fell over in one of the recent storms, but that was dealt with very efficiently by Sarah Gordon as soon as she was notified of it. Thanks, Sarah. Try to not get shot this weekend.

Apart from his help over the interpretive sign, I would like to give a general thanks to the Council's Biodiversity Officer, Open Space, Steve Brooks. He has again been a great support throughout the year, has provided monthly council reports to our committee and attended many of our meetings in person, as well as liaising on the ground with Phil, Bob and David over grants and work being done by contractors and conservation volunteers. Thanks Steve.

One example of where he has been a great help is our successful application for a grant to clear the willows which are choking the creek. The government is giving us \$5,000, the council is matching that with another \$5,000 and Steve Berry and his merry men will do the work.

Steve Berry tendered for the work when we made what turned out to be an unsuccessful application to do this three years ago. When David Ragless rang him and asked him to requote this time, Berry said he would stick by his three-year old quote, with no increase. Our thanks to Stephen No. 2.

Meanwhile, the core work of the Friends, bushcare, has continued on a regular basis, Covid and the occasional bad weather notwithstanding. This, probably more than anything, has made the reserves what they are today. But we could always do with more willing hands: 34 hectares is a big patch of land. So if you know of anyone who might be interested, please let us know.

I reckon the Sunday working bees organised by Phil Hicks have probably contributed 300 or more hours over the past 12 months. The group has grown to the point where it averages around 14 people each time. To that add countless hours that Phil and Anne Hicks have put in in their own time. Bob James, when he isn't travelling, does the same thing, on almost a daily basis. That's perhaps another 75 or 100 hours.

Jane Schoettgen says her smaller Thursday group has clocked up 162 hours, and that does not include any work on the native garden.

As a group, we are apolitical in the party political sense, but we do have a shared interest in the environment. It is great to see that South Australia now has two new parks – Nilpena Ediacara National Park, with its precious fossils, in the Flinders and Glenthorne in Adelaide's southern suburbs.

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Unfortunately our Patron, Professor Chris Daniels, is an apology tonight. Among many other things, he is presiding member of Green Adelaide, and in that role he is leading the charge to have Adelaide designated as a National Park City. If he were here, I am sure he would urge you to sign the Adelaide Charter in support of that idea, and I personally hope you will jump online and do so, if you haven't already. I have some bumf about it here, if you are interested.

Last year Iris Iwanicki gave us a heads up about the threats to the environment and heritage inherent in the new state-wide planning code. You only have to look at the proposed riverbank development along the Torrens to realise how right she was.

How any government can back the push to make Adelaide a National Park City and at the same time carve 70 hectares out of the parklands to allow developers to build a stadium, car parks and multi-storey buildings along both sides of the Torrens, with residential apartments, shops and cafes, is hard to understand - until you realise that we are all extras in an episode of *Yes, Minister*.

Welcome to the State of Cognitive Dissonance, Minister.

One thing you can do is help us continue to defend and improve our own patch of green, by joining the committee. It's not hard. Some of us drink wine, none of us bite. We only meet ten times a year, eleven if you include the Christmas

get-together with partners and friends. It's worthwhile and can be very satisfying to know that you have contributed to protecting and improving these four reserves.

This year we have an extra vacancy, because unfortunately Marilyn Forward is retiring from the committee. She says she will still come to working bees when she can, but she no longer does evening meetings. Over the years in her own quiet way she has made a significant contribution to the committee. Since 1974 she has putting together extensive displays and with the help of her husband David, has been setting them up at the Stirling Market, Laneways, conferences, workshops and various council events.

So do we have any nominations for the committee?

It is not too late to nominate yourself now, if you wish. You just need a seconder. Do we have any takers?

In that case, I propose that the existing committee, with the exception of Marilyn, be re-elected. All those in favour? Any against?

In line with our usual procedure, the first meeting of the 'new' committee will elect its own office bearers.

That concludes the formal business of the meeting. I now invite Chris James to introduce our guest speaker.



TA – DA! Council Biodiversity Officer Steven Brooks and Councillor John Kemp, rugged up against the unseasonable weather, officially unveil the new Woorabinda information sign at the start of the AGM in November.

The sign, funded by the Adelaide Hills Council, reflects the Reserves' biodiversity, history, Aboriginal heritage and the work of the Friends of Woorabinda.

It was designed by Janet Pedler, with input from a small sub-committee of the Friends. It was put together by Mango Chutney and printed by ecept.

Signs of intent – and discontent

Eight years ago a fire in the Woorabinda scrub gave a new impetus to improving fire tracks in the reserves.

The dead-end Hender track was completed, forming a loop with two access/entrance points on Hender Road. The council had already built the concrete causeway across the creek in the Stirling Park reserve, enabling fire trucks to drive through from Branch Road to Keroma Drive, and levelled a section on the route along the back of Ethel Street.

Since then, council staff have continued to keep the tracks clear, trimming branches and responding quickly when notified that a tree has fallen across one of the tracks.

But as the 2014 fire demonstrated, it is virtually impossible for CFS volunteers not familiar with the reserves to know where the tracks are. The Friends have for years been urging the council to install signposts that would show the CFS how to get rapid access to any fire, and in particular to protect houses that border the reserves.

Now at last signposts have been installed but there are not enough of them and confusingly, the railway track between Woorabinda Drive and the end of Linwood has been relabelled as the Keroma track.

Part of the problem is that some of the tracks do not meet the minimum State standard for fire tracks.

CFS Mt Lofty deputy group officer Kevin Maciunas, asked by the council to assess the tracks, has judged most of them as unsuitable for the big bushfire trucks.

“The ‘tracks’ are very, very marginal in terms of suitability for use if something was happening ... donning my bushcare hat: you’d lose a heck of a lot of native vegetation to make a parks/CFS type fire track along (say) the railway line.

“You’d be looking at 3x the width, with thinning of vegetation along the length and some fair amount of tree removal to ease the tight access around trees. Plus earthworks because it ain’t flat!”

Unfortunately the Friends were not invited to join Kevin on his inspection tour and it is not clear exactly where he went.

Sadly, Kevin is out of action for the foreseeable future. He was leading a strike team at the Coles bushfire near Lucindale in the south-east in January when a large tree branch fell, killing CFS volunteer Louise Hincks. Standing beside her, Kevin ‘escaped’ with serious injuries including broken ribs and vertebrae.

The Friends would argue that the minimum standard fire track of four to five metres width is not necessary in the reserves because the tracks are very short and are open at both ends. All have at least one place where trucks could be turned to go back the way they came.

Friends chair and CFS life member Brian Donaghy has suggested that the smaller tracks should be classified as ‘asset protection access’, on a par with driveways on private property.

Aldgate CFS volunteers have already driven a large bushfire truck over most if not all of the fire tracks on a number of occasions in the past. All fires start small and can be easily dealt with if you can get there quickly enough.

The Friends will continue to press for clear and rapid access to protect adjoining properties.

In the meantime, Councillor John Kemp, a trained cartographer, has volunteered to produce an updated map of the trails and local water points, for distribution to the local CFS brigades.



The creek crossing in Stirling Park showing the still unmarked opening giving emergency access to the track to Keroma Drive

Adelaide 100

In late February, three Committee members met with Meridee Jensen, AHC Trails Officer, to identify locations for Adelaide 100 walking trail signs through Woorabinda Bushland Reserves (WBR). Wherever possible, existing posts will be utilised to avoid 'sign clutter'.

Adelaide 100 is a long distance walking and cycling trail which connects existing tracks and paths to form a 100 km + circuit of the city and suburbs. It takes in the coastline from Kingston Park to Henley Beach, then follows the River Torrens inland to Paradise. From there the trail traverses Black Hill and Morialta Conservation

Parks and wends its way to Mount George Conservation Park before coming through WBR and on to Mark Oliphant Conservation Park, Belair National Park and back to the coast.

Walking all or part of the circuit can begin at any point along the route.

Much of the route has now been signposted and completion of the remainder is scheduled for early this year.

A map of the route and more information can be found on the trail's website, <https://adelaide100.com.au> .

Emerging Minds

Lou Turner has 'multiple birthlines'. One of the strongest is his Aboriginal heritage – his Aboriginal grandmother was born in Central Australia, but was taken from her family at the age of four and sent to Darwin. Years later her daughter, Lou's mother, was also taken as a young girl.

Now the father of three, including two sons, Lou works for a community organisation dealing with the impact of trauma.

He was invited to take part in a video project for Emerging Minds, the children's mental health group. Rosie Schellen, who is running this *Rebuilding our Shields* project, interviewed him on camera at the foot of the Shield Tree in the Hender Reserve in late February.

Lou spoke of his own history, of the challenges faced by Aboriginal parents, particularly Aboriginal men, in modern Australia, and how

those dealing with anger and the impact of racism and ignorance can be helped to become more resilient.

"You have to be genuine, to be open, to be curious and humble. It is about understanding that other person's life," he said.

He also touched on identity politics, the negative narrative embraced by some media outlets, and even the importance of the Woorabinda Bushland Reserves.

"This is where I live and it is where I come with my family to get grounded," he said.

It was a place which had long had significance for local Aboriginal people and so it was also about relationships with people and country.

The video will be available on the Emerging Minds website (www.emerginglearningminds.com.au) in September.



Lou Turner in discussion with Rosie Schellen in Hender Reserve. Video by Artist Made Productions team, Ian Bone and Victor Koolmatrie

Bushcare working bee report

Our four Sunday bushcare working bees held since the working bee report in the previous Newsletter were attended by an average of 12 volunteers.

As usual, much of our work involved following-up invasive weed regrowth in areas where we had already undertaken work in recent years. For example, in our February working bee in Woorabinda Reserve we spent some time cutting and swabbing Blackberry regrowth near the junction of the path south from the lake and the track along the railway line. On the other hand, in our November working bee which was also in Woorabinda Reserve, we swabbed Watsonia in an area of good quality native vegetation where we had not previously worked. At the same time we followed-up earlier work on Watsonia in adjoining areas.

A similar approach was adopted in our other two working bees, one in Madurta Reserve and one in Stirling Park. In the north east of Madurta Reserve we followed-up work undertaken a few years ago by Conservation Volunteers Australia teams funded by Council and FoWBR volunteers while in Stirling Park we continued working on mainly Blackberry and Ivy regrowth in the revegetation area in the valley between the Branch Road and Ethel Tracks

Once again, we have made good progress in the areas in which we have worked and overall there is a long term improvement in the level of weeds in the good bush and surrounding areas but there is always fresh weed regrowth to follow-up and there are still a few areas in which we have yet to make an impression..

Since the previous report we have welcomed new working bee members Bhu and Robin, and are always keen to welcome new members.

Heathfield High School students 'clean-up' in Hender Reserve

On the morning of 7 December, 12 year 9 students from Heathfield High School undertook a 'clean-up session' and removed ivy growing up and around trees in Hender Reserve, not far from the school grounds. They were supported by three teachers, two Council staff members and three FoWBR volunteers.

The 'clean-up' was the idea of one of the teachers, Robin Parsons, who walks through WBR on his way to and from the school. It was planned by Robin and another teacher, Nathan Daniell, in consultation with FoWBR members and Council's Natural Resources staff members. FoWBR members recommended that Hender Reserve

would be a suitable venue for the activity as some of the ivy there was more easily accessible than other parts of WBR where much of the ivy is surrounded by blackberries or is in areas that can be relatively difficult to access.

Ivy reduces the availability of nutrients and water to the trees it grows around and inhibits the growth of native vegetation.

The success of the 'clean-up' was evidenced by a large Council trailer load of Ivy, positive feedback received from the participating students and the fact that the teachers said that they would like to arrange similar events in future.



The work group

The results of the work group's efforts





Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves



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2022 Bushcare Working Bee Calendar

SUNDAY Working Bees 2022 – 9 am to 11 am

Date	Location	Meeting Place
February 20	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
March 20	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
April 10 *	Stirling Park	Branch Road
May 15	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
June 19	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
July 17	Stirling Park	Branch Road
August 21	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
September 18	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
October 16	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
November 20	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
December 18	Stirling Park	Branch Road

* Sunday April 10 is the second Sunday of the month, as the third Sunday is Easter Day.

THURSDAY Working bees 2022 – 9 am to 11 am – last Thursday each month

February 24	March 31	April 28	May 26	June 30
July 28	August 25	September 29	October 27	November 24

The locations of the Thursday working bees can vary, so call Jane (8339 7245) for the location of the next working bee to join in.

Come and join in!

Our bushcare working bees help to restore native bush by removing invasive weeds. Everyone is invited to join in at any time. All are welcome, including experienced volunteers and those who are not. People new to bushcare will receive help on-site from FoWBR members to recognize plant species and to carry out basic minimal disturbance weeding. The working bees finish with some morning tea. It's lots of fun!

To receive reminder notices for the Sunday working bees, or to find out more about them, call Phillip Hicks (0437 812 870) or email lhicks@chariot.net.au. If you are interested in the Thursday working bees, call Jane Schoettgen on 8339 7245.

Committee, 2022

Kath Bowman	Public Officer, membership, website	0459 291 777
Merilyn Browne	Newsletter	8339 6839
Brian Donaghy	Chairman	8339 2033
Philip Hicks	Treasurer, Working bee coor- dinator, Past Chair	0437 812 870
Bob James	Deputy Chair	8339 1903
Janet Pedler	Volunteer support	
David Ragless	Past Chair, History	8339 1038
Lorri Ragless	Minute Secretary, publicity	8339 1038
Jan Walker	Committee	

Contributors to this issue include Brian Donaghy, Kath Bowman, Philip Hicks and Merilyn Browne.

Disclaimer: Contributors' views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the editor, the committee or the general membership of the Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves Inc.



Affiliations: The Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves Inc. is a member of Friends of Parks Inc. It is a registered Landcare Group and a member of Greening Australia, Trees for Life and the Central Hills Green Web.

Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves Membership application/renewal

I/we would like to join/renew membership of the Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves Inc. (Strike out words not applicable)

Membership fee for both individuals and family: 1 year, \$10.00, 5 years, \$40.00

\$.....membership fee is enclosed.

\$.....donation is included. (Donations of \$2.00 or more are tax-deductible. A separate receipt will be issued.)

*Payment included / Bank transfer made (*please circle your payment method)

Name.....

Address.....

.....**Phone**.....

Email address for sending Newsletter.....

Please return this form to: Brian Donaghy, Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves Inc., 3 Branch Road, Aldgate 5154

Bank transfer details:

BSB: 105-079

Account: 040748240

Please include your name and "Subs" or "Subs/Don)" for identification of your payment.