



Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves

NEWS LETTER

Number 73, March 2024

Sign of the Times

Stirling Park's colourful new sign tells some of the history of this valley. Designer and local resident, Tess Malpas, worked closely with the Friends group to develop the concept and content of the sign.

Stirling Market Committee provided the funding for the sign.



Tim Shaw, Chair, Stirling Market Committee, and Tess Malpas, designer, with the newly erected sign

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Chair's AGM report November 17 2023

It's been another good year for the Woorabinda Bushland Reserves.

The reserves were re-opened pretty quickly after the storm a year ago which tore through the reserves, particularly Hender and the area overlooking the boardwalk, but the council is still working on rebuilding the boardwalk at the end of the lake.

The council wanted to rebuild the Branch Road steps and the boardwalk, but the initial quotes were three times what was expected and there simply wasn't the money in last year's budget. The boardwalk has been patched up, but it will be rebuilt properly. The current proposal is to close the Branch Road steps for safety reasons but fix up the boardwalk bridge over the creek.

There has been a lot of scary talk about us facing a long hot summer and there has been some concern expressed about the fuel loads in the Woorabinda Reserves, especially after the storm.

I know the Council is very conscious of the fire risk and keeps the open areas well-mown, which has been a particularly big job on all the council reserves this year because of the good spring growth we have been having.

Council staff are also making a particular effort to keep asset protection zones clear, that is, the areas adjacent to the houses that back on to the reserves. That's important.

But they are not going to remove all those fallen trees elsewhere, and that's important too. Those trees and branches today are tomorrow's soil. They are part of the natural ecosystem, they are habitat, they are food for lots of tiny creatures which are food for lots of less tiny creatures and so on. And while they are munching or being munched, they are all part of the regenerative cycle of life.

Which is why the Woorabinda Bushland Reserves is important as a conservation area, with native vegetation heritage protection, in an increasingly urban area.

There is a lot of emphasis, quite rightly, on clearing our properties in preparation for the fire season – which incidentally began two weeks early this year, on Wednesday this week. Cleaning up is important. It will make your house a lot easier to defend in a small to medium-sized fire.

But if I learned anything from 20 years in the CFS it is that access is even more important than fire breaks. If you get to a fire quickly enough you can probably put it out just by stamping all over it.

Which is why we have fire tracks throughout the reserves, and why John Kemp did a great job last year producing an excellent map of those tracks for all the local brigades.

Council staff keep those tracks clear, and are quick to respond if they are notified that a fallen tree or something else is blocking one of the tracks. But they won't be dragging fallen trees out of the park.

This year we had to refresh our public fund committee. Tax deductible donations go into a special public fund, which is overseen by the committee to ensure that the donations are spent for the benefit of the reserves. So thanks to Nigel McBride, Lawrence Ng and Janet Pedler for agreeing to fill vacancies on the committee. Thanks for long, though hardly onerous service, to Isobel Redmond and Anita Aspinall, who wanted to step down, and to Brian Gangooly, who has sadly passed away.

One again our volunteers have done hundreds of unpaid hours on our monthly working bees, with particular focus on blackberries, gorse, ivy, watsonia and arum lily.

During the year we have been helped on occasion by students from Heathfield High School -- thanks to Nathan Daniel – the scouts, Trees for Life and others. All help gratefully received, but of course we always want more. Everyone welcome: the third Sunday and the last Thursday of each month.

You can join the next one on Sunday – just talk to Phil Hicks, who organises Sundays, or Lawrence Ng, who took over the Thursday sessions first when Jane Schoettgen was recovering from her leg operation and now while she is in the US visiting family.

In April, the Stirling Market Committee responded to a request by offering \$4,000 to replace the interpretive sign inside the Branch Road entrance to Stirling Park. The completed sign was finally installed yesterday, with the designer, Tess Malpas, the chairperson of the Market Committee, Tim Shaw, and Steve Brooks, the AHC's biodiversity officer, all in attendance. If you haven't seen it, go and have a look, it's great.

The old interpretive sign, done years ago by Janet Pedler, is still excellent and is not being scrapped. We are storing it, along with the one that used to be at the Woorabinda entrance, in the hope that we will be able to display it somewhere else, possibly here in the Environment Centre, if and when these buildings are upgraded.

We have a new email address;
woorabindabushlands@gmail.com
(woorabindabushlands is all one word, no full stop).

The old Internode one will still work, probably for up to a year, but the gmail address is now the one to use to contact the Friends.

Council hops into rabbit control

The Adelaide Hills Council, in conjunction with the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board, will be distributing rabbit baits in selected reserves, including Woorabinda.

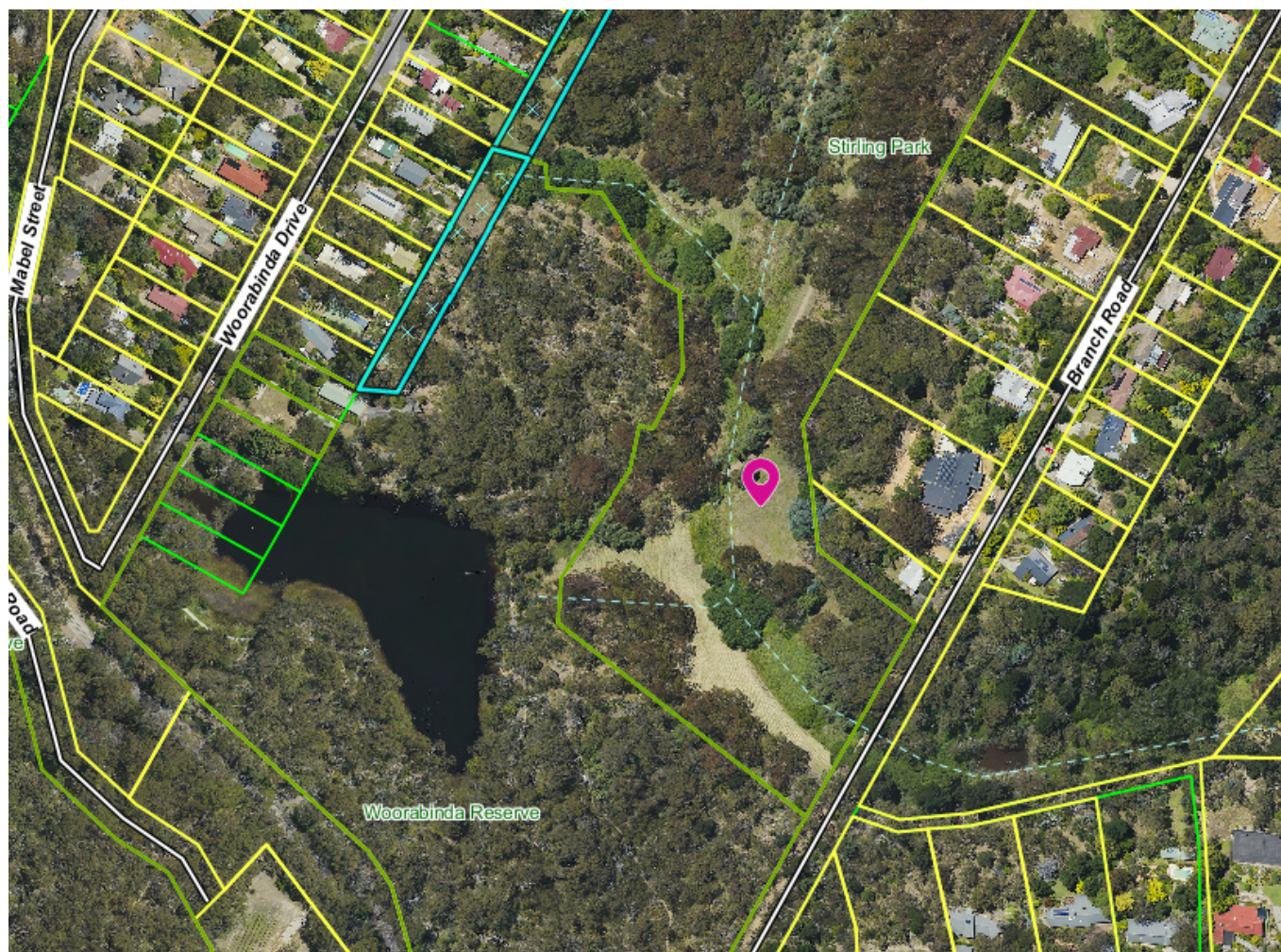
The baits, laced with Calicivirus, will be distributed in February / March. The site in Woorabinda is expected to be in Stirling Park, in the wide grassy area near the end of Branch Road.

Council Biodiversity Officer Tonia Brown notes that "Calicivirus (RHDV) K5 only impacts rabbits and hares. It is considered a safe control method in residential areas, as it poses no threat to

humans, domestic animals such as dogs, or native animals or birds".

She says owners of domestic and pet rabbits are strongly encouraged to get their animals vaccinated against the virus as there is a known mortality rate of up to 90%, however the risk is reasonably low if they are not housed in paddocks where they may have contact with wild feral rabbits.

Council will erect signs at baiting areas to warn the public for the duration of the program.



The proposed baiting site in Stirling Park

Discovering Nature

Nature Play SA held another successful event in Woorabinda recently, with children and their parents joining a guided bushwalk around the Reserves, learning about the local ecosystem.

Participants also heard about the importance of their surroundings from Kurna Nurungga man Uncle Tamaru. He explained the traditional names and uses of plants and animals found in the bushland.

More than half of those attending said they had not been to Woorabinda before.

The event was partly funded by a grant to Nature Play SA from Adelaide Hills Council. Visit natureplaysa.org.au to find out more about upcoming events and guided walks.

Woorabinda Inspires

An exhibition of art inspired by Woorabinda is set to open at Gallery M at Marion Cultural Centre on March 8 and will run to May 5.

The artists, all women, have been meeting at Woorabinda each month for about four years. Their creations range across various mediums including watercolour, ink on board and sculpture.

The plein air style of painting (painting outdoors) is a common theme of the exhibition, which is entitled *Outside x 10 – Woorabinda: an Interpretation of Place*.

Boardwalk Update

Adelaide Hills Council engaged a contractor in 2023 to redesign and replace the boardwalks at the end of the lake. While the contractor was able to remove the existing storm-damaged boardwalks, extended delays in obtaining the replacement materials eventually led to termination of the contract.

A new contractor has been engaged and is working hard with Council to enable the new boardwalks to be constructed in April.

The boardwalk at the bottom of Branch Road, which has been closed for some time, is also flagged for removal and replacement in April.

As part of the work the contractor will upgrade the lower section of stairs which lead to the trail going northwest into Stirling Park. Measures to address storm-water runoff will be part of this upgrade.

Committee 2024

The Committee welcomes former Adelaide Hills Councillor John Kemp as a new Committee member.

Committee positions for the coming year are:

Chair	Brian Donaghy
Deputy Chair	Bob James
Secretary & Membership	Kath Bowman
Treasurer	Philip Hicks
Newsletter	Merilyn Browne
Members	John Kemp
	Janet Pedler
	Lorri Ragless
	David Ragless
	Jan Walker



John Kemp

Bushcare Working Bee Report

This report covers our 2023 working bees and also provides some information about Council-funded weed control work and plans for our 2024 working bees.

Overall, our bushcare work was influenced by the need to follow-up even more extensive weed growth than usual following favourable weather conditions over the last few years.

Sunday working bees

Although we proceeded with the planned 11 monthly working bees, 3 were affected to some degree either by a forecast for very wet weather or by persistent drizzle. In the event, we proceeded with these 3 working bees but modified our approach and did not use poison. Volunteer numbers across the year averaged 10 and ranged from 6 at wetter working bees to 15 in more favourable conditions. A summary of the work done in each reserve follows.

Woorabinda Reserve

In our five Woorabinda working bees we continued our ongoing follow-up work on reducing the level of invasive weeds in and around the margins of a number of separate areas of high quality native bush which are a special feature of sections of this reserve. We have now reduced the level of *Watsonia* in most areas of good bush but still need to follow-up this and other weed species, particularly *Sollya* (Bluebell Creeper), Blackberry and Ivy.

Thanks to Bertie Hunt, who has attended our working bees over the last two years, for bringing along three of his fellow Scouts to our October working bee as part of his work towards a King's Scout Award. They did an excellent job in pulling Ivy between good bush area and the track next to the railway line. During this work, other members persisted in the painstaking task of slowing the spread of Violets into nearby good quality bush. This contrasted with our more regular work on larger scale, more obvious weeds, even though it is evident that smaller, more difficult to manage weeds continue to gradually extend their range.

In December, a Council-funded weed control contractor carried out widespread work on larger scale blackberry infestations in both Woorabinda Reserve and Stirling Park but there is still much blackberry remaining after recent prolific growth.

Stirling Park

Our five working bees in Stirling Park concentrated on the revegetation and regeneration area along the western slope of SP, starting at the southern end and working north, mainly on reducing the level of *Gorse*, *A longifolia*, *Watsonia* and *Erica*. In our December working bee we started work on a challenging stand of large *Gorse* in an area where we had not worked for many years as we had been working towards it alternatively from the north and south but never quite reached it.

Once we have cleared the large *Gorse* area in Stirling Park, we will need to recommence work on the *gorse* regrowth that is already emerging in the nearby areas where we have recently worked in order to protect the impressive amount of regeneration of local native species.

Madurta Reserve

We held one Sunday working bee in Madurta Reserve in 2024 after taking into account the amount of work done by specialist bushcare contractors funded by Council 2023 and 2024 in good quality bush along the northern slope of the reserve and our Thursday group's work.

Our October working bee in persistent drizzle in Madurta concentrated on pulling broom, onion weed and *Pittosporum* as it was too wet to use poison. Where there was not too much water, we also cut but did not poison *Arum* Lilies along most of the creek line. A few weeks later, a couple of volunteers followed-up by cutting and poisoning (using a mixture not supplied by Council) the *Arum* Lily regrowth and any uncut Lilies (apart from those at the very lower end of the creek). Ongoing follow-up will be needed as large amounts of *Arum* lilies are present in private properties along most of the small tributary water courses.

Hender Reserve

We have not had regular working bees in Hender for many years as Bob James, our very long-term working bee member and former bushcare coordinator, worked there on an almost daily basis. In recent years, Bob's work has been supplemented by an ongoing Council contract with Bush for Life to employ a supervisor to work with their volunteers. A separate specialist weed control contractor also worked in Hender in 2022-23 and will be doing a follow-up shortly.

Now that Bob has retired from his long term commitment, we have scheduled a working bee there for later in 2024 and will monitor the extent of contractor work so that we can decide whether to increase the number of our working bees in Hender in future.

Thursday working bees

In 2023 we managed to reduce the level of *Tradescantia* in the creek (although there still remains a large amount to continue on as soon as the water level sinks). Thanks to Sarah from Council who kindly supplied us with a trailer so we were able remove the weed growth from Madurta. Generally our group consisted of 6-7 volunteers, with Clarissa even coming from Mount Barker to attend.

Our hardy group finally managed to eradicate a large watsonia infestation growing along the creek line and spreading down the middle of the Madurta valley. It took us almost two years

to complete the task as much watsonia was in amongst native trees close to the creek which made for difficult work.

During Jane Schoettgen's absence due to ill health, Marilyn Browne took over the group and they removed large swathes of ivy growing up the slope towards Keroma Drive. This was an arduous job in difficult terrain, but it has made a huge difference as now healthy bracken is taking the place of weed.

An Echidna was spotted waddling across the valley some months ago.

We will continue working in Madurta Reserve for the whole of 2024. There is still much to do in the way of removing blackberry, gorse, ivy, water weed in the creek (*Tradescantia*) and, of course, watsonia. We will mostly be working on weeds along the creek line as well as along the valley and up the slope beneath Keroma Drive.

SUNDAY Working Bees 2024 – 9 am to 11 am		
February 18	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
March 17	Stirling Park	Branch Road
April 21	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
May 19	Stirling Park	Branch Road
June 16	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
July 21	Hender	Woorabinda Drive
August 18	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
September 15	Stirling Park	Branch Road
October 20	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
November 17	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
December 15	Stirling Park	Branch Road

Bushcare Working Bees

You are invited to join our working bees at any time. Wear sensible protective clothing, boots and gloves. The Park has a variety of terrain, and can be wet underfoot. Gloves are provided for people using herbicide (swabbing the stumps of woody weeds).

To receive reminder notices for the working bees, or to find out more about them, call Philip Hicks on 0437 812 870, or email lpamhicks@gmail.com

If you are interested in the Thursday working bee, call Jane Schoettgen on 8339 7245 as locations vary.

THURSDAY Working Bees 2024 – 9 am to 11 am (last Thursday each month)				
Feb 29	Mar 28	Apr 25*	May 30	Jun 27
Jul 25	Aug 29	Sep 26	Oct 31	Nov 28

* ANZAC Day

Committee, 2024

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

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 Trees for Life and the Central Hills Green Web.

Contributors to this issue include Brian Donaghy, Kath Bowman, Philip Hicks, Jane Schoettgen 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.



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.