



# Friends of Willunga Basin inc.

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Newsletter Spring 2015

## WELCOME, FRIENDS!

The Friends' committee continues its regular round of monthly meetings, dealing with the wide range of matters that keep bobbing up and/or attracting our attention.

All are welcome to join us if you'd like to be part of the conversation or if there's something on your mind. We meet at 7.30 on the second Wednesday of every month at the Environment Centre in High St, Willunga.

You can support our work by simply being a member and thereby strengthening our 'voice' when we talk to the powers that be. Indeed, given recent events there is no better time than now to join Friends of Willunga Basin as your principal advocate for the built and natural environment in which we live.

Membership forms are available on our website at [fowb.net](http://fowb.net), or you are welcome to come along to the AGM, to be held at Waverley House on Wednesday 16 September, and join on the night.

HOW REAL IS THE POSSIBILITY OF AFFORDABLE HOME ENERGY STORAGE FROM SOLAR PANELS?

IS IT A CRAZY DREAM FOR WILLUNGA TO GO OFF-GRID AS A TOWN?

## Come & find out!

7:30 Wednesday  
16 September at  
Waverley Homestead

Left:  
No. This isn't a fridge!  
It's a serious sized  
power bank that's  
capable of storing a  
large amount of power  
in lithium batteries



## MICROGRIDS, BATTERY STORAGE AND THE FUTURE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGY

Friends of Willunga Basin are delighted to have arranged an excellent speaker for our AGM **7:30pm on Wed. September 16th.**

FOWB members and the public are welcome to attend our meeting, in Waverley Homestead, St Peters Terrace Willunga.

Each year we seek someone with something important to say about environmental or planning issues and this year we are delighted to announce that Richard Turner, dynamic CEO of Zen Energy Systems will be our guest, to fill us in with the latest in the rapidly changing scene of home battery power storage and microgrids for providing power to communities.

Richard will be talking about very advances in systems and technology that will make microgrids and battery storage of renewable energy an affordable reality in the quite near future.



Above: Richard Turner, CEO of Zen Energy

# Willunga Main Street Plan

Planning for the upgrade of the Willunga Town Centre is ongoing, but a lack of detail on precisely what Council is proposing to do is causing continuing unease in the local community.

A Community Reference Group was formed following a public forum called by FOWB in January and has been meeting regularly to discuss some of the detail that we would like to see to make the township a beautiful and enjoyable place to be. This group includes members of all key community groups in the town, and comprises:-

- Stephanie Walker - FOWB, WR&FA, chair
- Wendi Avery - FOWB, resident
- Cathy Beitz - WR&FA, WBTA, FOWB, resident
- Joy Forrest - FOWB, Environment Centre
- Mos Hancock - Willunga Recreation Park
- Michael Heath - National Trust, resident
- Margo Kellett - WB&TA, resident
- Jerry Keyte - FOWB, business owner, resident
- Rosie Knott - FOWB, WR&FA, resident
- Wayne Lawrence - Landcare
- Meme Thorne - WR&FA, FOWB, resident
- Anthony Whaite - WR&FA, resident

Both the Reference Group and FOWB itself have been in ongoing and not entirely satisfactory dialogue with Council regarding planning for the project. Council's view appears to be that it has consulted with the community, which should now sit back and wait to see what is delivered. We take a different view!

Most recently, on a cold and wintry August night, the group held another public meeting to bring community



members up to date and over 80 community members met at the Willunga Football Club to kick things around.

The clear view of this meeting was that the community wants a continuing and meaningful role in the planning of the project, beyond simply having a say on street trees. It seems to us that Council is conflating the Town Centre project with another but separate burning issue in town. Consequently, the meeting unanimously passed a motion that:-

That council recognise the existing reference group formed by the community at the meeting 14th January 2015.

That the group continues to consider the totality of the design of the streetscape.

That the council engage in a collaborative and iterative process with the group until a jointly acceptable design solution is achieved.

We are now writing to Council to express the views of the community and will be seeking to make a deputation to the elected members to express these views in person. In our view, Council should be thrilled to have such an engaged community and should be seizing the opportunity to work collaboratively to achieve an outcome that we can all be proud of.

Watch this space!



A parklet: one of the many options being explored for High Street

## SIGNIFICANT TREES

The felling of significant trees in Willunga has been a hot issue this year and has aroused considerable community anger and agitation. Indeed, it has given rise to the creation of a new community group – Willunga Residents & Friends Association – whom we welcome to the fold.

FOWB has been very active in this space, via its ongoing discussion with Council. We are advised that since the outrageous felling of the trees on Aldinga Road (we're still cross, Mike) the Minister for Planning has authorised conversion of its Development Plan to the 'Better Development Plan' model. It says that this has achieved a number of 'subtle but important' improvements to encourage development that enhance the established character in Willunga and McLaren Vale, such as additions to the desired character statement within the Residential Zone and objectives within the Willunga Policy Area.

Whilst the minimum allotment size in the Residential Zone continues to be 300sqm, the zone's desired character statement now includes a provision that:

Development in the country townships of McLaren Vale and Willunga will be undertaken in a form and pattern of land division that is consistent with the early character established in those areas. Development of a kind, density and character that is typical of suburban areas within the metropolitan area will be avoided.

In other words, all land divisions in McLaren Vale and Willunga will now be considered against this requirement. What this doesn't address is the fact applications to remove Significant Trees will still attract a 'Category 1' designation and so the community will neither be notified of such application nor have opportunity to have any say in the process. This is a State Government rather than a Council matter and the State continues to take a hard line.

In our view, the minimum allotment size should be increased to 500sqm where there is a Significant or a Regulated Tree, thereby largely removing the case for these trees to be felled because there's no room for them.

Willunga especially remains a 'place of trees' and we will continue to lobby for their protection.



**Before**



**During**

**After**



# ALDINGA DISTRICT CENTRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Council has put out for public consultation amendments to the district centre – Committee members have examined the proposals which if implemented would in some far distant future lead to an improved and more coordinated development of the area between the existing shops and the other developments to the north. Take a look at the plans (online or in libraries) if you have an interest or wish to make comment.

## ALDINGA AIRFIELD



The Aldinga Airfield is the third busiest airfield in South Australia (behind Adelaide Airport and Parafield), generating in excess of 40,000 aircraft movements annually.

Members may have heard that then Environment Protection Authority recently issued a licence to the operator of the Aldinga Airfield imposing limited controls on its hours of operation, but little else. We understand that this is the first such licence it has ever issued.

Notwithstanding the softness of the conditions imposed, the directors of the airfield have initiated a challenge to the licence and to the EPA's power to have issued it. We are pleased to report that the EPA is responding as we believe it should. FOWB has written to the Minister encouraging him and the EPA to be robust in their defence of this unwarranted and wasteful legal manoeuvre on the part of the airfield.

Meanwhile, FOWB continues to lobby Council to recognize the existence of the airfield in its Development Plan – which is not presently the case, but which needs to be in order to provide appropriate control over land use and development matters. In our view, the best approach will be for the overarching Primary Production zone to remain in place as is, with an 'Airfield Policy Area' established to provide appropriate land use controls as required.

We are pleased to report that Council appears to have backed away from an earlier view that the future of the airfield should be viewed through the lens of its Transport & Movement Strategy. We do not see the airfield as a transport hub and, more particularly, do not want to see it become the 'Parafield of the south'.



## THE WASHPOOL

The Aldinga Washpool is one of this region's environmental treasures and is close to FOWB's heart. It was a plan to turn the Washpool into a marina that gave birth to birth to FOWB way back when.

With the coming of the winter rains, the basin is now filling again and flocks of birds – stilts, swans, white-faced herons and others – have returned on their annual journey to enjoy the rich pickings that it provides. If you haven't visited lately, now's the time (but please leave your dog at home).

And if you want an auditory treat, the frogs are singing their hearts out, especially at night.

Chas Martin and Georgina Williams hosted a walking tour of the Washpool on 21st June which was attended by about 50 people. Demand is increasing for specialist bird and botanical walks. Expressions of interest in attending such walks may be left at the Willunga Environment Centre, for the attention of Chas.

In other news, FOWB has long had concerns about the fractured management arrangements over the Washpool – which arise because it has four owners (SA Water 35%, DEWNR 30%, DPTI 26% & Council 9%). Following his attendance at a recent FOWB meeting, local state member, Chris Picton, has initiated discussions within government regarding the possibility of consolidating this historic ownership arrangement under a single body so as to allow a more integrated approach to its long term management.

In our dreams, we see both the Washpool and the Aldinga Scrub being managed as one. Again, watch this space...



## **WILLUNGA BASIN TRAIL**

Planning for the Willunga Basin Trail is continuing. As previously reported, Chris Davies and Zara Upton have been leading this project, which has identified a 100 km walking trail that circumnavigates the entire Willunga Basin.

Our current focus is on having the trail incorporated into Council's Trails Strategy, in order to give the project formal status and to provide a solid platform for future planning and activities.

Our hope is that, in years to come, the trail will be well known and loved by the local community and will provide yet another reason for tourists from far and wide to visit and stay in our beautiful region.

## **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Members will have seen that the On the Run service station at Old Aldinga has been demolished and is being redeveloped. While it's not perfect, the form of the redevelopment will reflect the strong intervention made by FOWB and our kindred local groups against the original plan.

Next on the agenda is an application by Aldi for a new super-market in Old Aldinga – on Port Road, opposite the service station – which is under review as we go to print.

## **OTHER PLANNING MATTERS**

Council is about to undertake a review of its rural lands through a 'townships, tourism and rural project', which will consider the broad role of the city's rural areas (including townships), rural activities, character and policy to support the rural areas. This project is in response to the introduction of the McLaren Vale Character Preservation Act.

The Act has legislated the township boundaries to effectively and importantly stop urban expansion into primary production areas. In turn, Council is considering how it manages growth in its rural townships to support local businesses, provided ageing in place and housing for future generations in a manner that balances cultural, character, heritage and environmental considerations.

As part of this process, it intends to engage with relevant community groups and to provide opportunity to further define the role and character of townships, including Willunga. FOWB sees this as an important opportunity to influence future planning policy across the Willunga basin, including on the matter of Significant Trees in the townships, and will be actively involved in the review.

Other – We note with sadness and dismay the decline in State and Federal Government support for such matters of environmental concern as global warming, renewable energy and environmentally damaging mineral, oil and gas exploration and extraction. The Secretary met with local Federal Member Jamie Briggs stressing the need for real action including promoting renewable energy. FOWB will continue to lobby on these issues.

**The Willunga Basin is under increasing pressure to adapt and change. To ensure that you have a say in how this occurs join Friends of Willunga Basin NOW.**

## **Membership Application**

*You are invited to join us.*

*Our annual membership fee for individuals is only \$8.00 (\$6.00 concession).*

*Please post to: P.O. Box 710,  
Willunga 5172*

*I hereby join as a FRIEND OF WILLUNGA BASIN and declare my support for retaining the natural and rural character of the Willunga Basin as stated in the objectives.*

*Title ..... Name: (First Name).....*

*(Surname): .....*

*Address: .....*

*.....p.code .....*

*email (optional)*

*.....*

*Payment enc. \$.....*

*FOWB gives its assurance that your email will not be disclosed to anyone.*

*Tick if you wish us to post you a receipt.*

*Please let us know of any particular interests or concerns that you may have.*

*Please print, cut out, complete and post to join, or visit [fowb.net](http://fowb.net)*

## **Membership Renewal**

FOWB annual membership remains very very affordable at

- \$8 for an individual
- \$6 concession
- \$10 for a family

and falls due for renewal each year at the AGM

As the cost of membership is so low, we hope that members who join will be happy to renew at the AGM even if their initial 'year' of membership was less than a full calendar year.