

# Friends of Willunga Basin inc.

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Secretary/Treasurer David Gill ph 08 8556 2289

## Submission City of Onkaparinga Green Energy Future

12/03/2010

Friends of Willunga Basin (FOWB) greatly welcome the interest of the City of Onkaparinga in an investigation of the 'CORE' proposal and their 'Our Energy Futures' strategy. We are encouraged that, despite the recent prevalence of 'climate change scepticism' abroad in the community, Council continues to realise the essential requirement to move our communities towards a carbon neutral and sustainable energy future.

We believe it vital for Council to act as a model and a facilitator. These projects will be of great assistance. We endorse Council's current purchases of renewable energy and plans to expand it, and the proposals of the Energy Futures Strategy. We are fully supportive of the notion of a Lonsdale Clean Energy Precinct.

We wish to state that FOWB are disappointed not to have been contacted directly concerning the public consultation process for the CORE project given our track record of involvement with Council in issues of sustainable development and environmental issues. We were not able to attend the community consultation session due to a clash with our advertised monthly Committee Meeting, and have only become aware of today's deadline for submissions in the last two days. While we are attempting to write a submission in a very short time frame and its scope will be very limited, we are very keen to be kept involved in further investigations into the CORE concept, and want our enthusiastic endorsement of the notion of community/council joint involvement in renewable energy to be noted.

In our opinion the Options Paper is well written and represents a thoughtful approach to the subject investigated. The ideas presented and the case studies are valuable and receive our support. We do not feel able, given the short notice, to make much comment of the practicability of each proposal.

FOWB supports Council's decision to further investigate the three options of bulk buying, mini sun farms and a Community Energy Precinct concept made at its December meeting.

FOWB have some experience of the reticence of many individuals to participate in buyers groups for photovoltaic and solar hot water installations. This has mainly been due to concerns about the financial management and capacity to deliver by volunteer organisations, despite an apparently good track record. Thus we are extremely supportive of measures which would promote confidence in bulk purchasing of such systems, such as Council sponsorship. In particular the use of solar water heating appears to give one of the best carbon reduction in relation to cost, and should be strongly encouraged.

FOWB are also aware of many people with an interest in a photovoltaic installation who do not have a suitable roof space, orientation or clear solar access. We believe such people would constitute a good market for the mini-sun farm concept. This option would also allow small scale participation and 'ownership' for individuals with limited means.

The positive experience of community support for the Bendigo Bank suggests that were option 3 followed for a larger scale renewable energy facility that there would be a good level of support.

FOWB were supportive of the proposed Myponga Wind farm. While acknowledging that there were some environmental costs involved, we felt the benefits greatly exceeded the costs. We also believe that the level of opposition to that wind farm was reflective of a highly organised minority that does not represent broad community consensus. None the less, we feel that introduction of larger scale wind projects is problematic in the present social environment and that other forms of renewable energy are preferable in the short term. This is regrettable due to the abundant wind resource we have and the superior cost effectiveness of generation using wind turbines compared with solar. Perhaps the oil refinery site does present one option that would not generate excessive community opposition to a wind installation.

FOWB request that the City of Onkaparinga gets involved in the State Government review of feed in tariffs, in particular to expand the size of installation eligible and to promote the concept of gross feed-in tariffs.

In relation to the idea of biomass generation, we believe there should be evaluation of feedstock other than waste. There are good options for a large amount of purpose grown material where leaf and stem wood could all be used. Existing woodlots (for example on the Willunga Escarpment) and future woodlots on creek lines and perhaps Council owned land could be utilised. We refer the reader to the attached paper promoting woodlot zoning along watercourses in the Willunga Basin.

Signed: David Gill, Secretary FOWB