

Newsletter
Winter 2021

Friends of Willunga Basin inc.

PO Box 710, Willunga. Chair: Geoff Hayter Secretary: David Gill, Tel. 08 85562289 info@fowb.net



WELCOME, readers, to our Winter Newsletter

Friends of Willunga Basin has perhaps seldom had so many important issues on its agenda as we have had in the months since our last newsletter, with lively meetings and a huge amount of correspondence flowing. Described in this Winter Newsletter are many of our recent activities, most of which have been focused on the coastal part of Willunga Basin.

We have been fortunate to have Wendi Avery re-join our committee to add her skills and great experience of environmental management. We are always on the lookout for people wishing to be part of the Committee so, just as Wendi has done, please give this some thought if you have an interest in our activities.

The FOWB Committee welcomes the input of all members. All are welcome to attend Committee Meetings, which are generally on the third Thursday of the month – although if you would like to do so, please contact us by email (info@fowb.net) so we can confirm the time and venue of our next meeting.

ALDINGA WASHPOOL

The saga of the SA Water land at the Washpool continues, with still no confirmation that the much-discussed possibility of the sale of land on Justs Rd as hobby farms will not proceed. A Washpool Coalition comprising a range of local environmental and business groups has been formed to ensure that we present a united front.

We have had correspondence from the Premier's office stating that "The finalisation of land tenure arrangements, consistent with the commitment that the site will be protected from property developers as outlined in the Premier's correspondence of 17 February 2021, remains the intended outcome."

As fifty years have passed since the SA Environment Minister announced that the Washpool land needed to be consolidated, the frustration of the community at a lack of certainty or progress is indeed frustrating. For the moment, seeing will be believing, and we continue to call on both parties to transfer the SA Water land to the appropriate agency within government at the earliest moment.

STOP PRESS
New conservation park declared
Read more below on page 5

*Aerial view of Aldinga Washpool
showing land currently owned by SA Water*

Justs Road
Button Road

ALDINGA DAP

Working in concert with Friends of Port Willunga and Council, FOWB has remained active in lobbying for the best and most appropriate zoning of the land between Quinliven and Aldinga Beach Roads.

We made a detailed submission and Chair, Geoff Hayter, spoke at the community consultation meeting on the Plan Amendment. He noted that the one-size-fits-all zone proposed, wrapped up in the new Design Code, combined to make for a very opaque process, quite at odds with the Government's undertakings on public consultation at the front end of future re-zonings. It was small comfort that Council and even the attending members of the Planning Commission were scarcely better informed. FOWB has subsequently proposed that the area be treated as a Master Planned Township Zone rather than a Master Planned Neighbourhood Zone, as it allows for a lower intensity of development.

Through contact with the landowner, Renewal SA, we continue to advocate for best practice development outcome, founded in first principles of building sustainably. We oppose mediocrity and business as usual.

FOWB has also sought information from DIT about the basis for the decision to terminate the proposed railway corridor north of Quinliven Road rather than Aldinga Beach Road.



PORT WILLUNGA COASTAL TRAIL

Port Willunga is recognised by many of us as a most precious asset, with its spectacular northern end where active agriculture, not housing, meets the sea – something unique to Adelaide's coast.

We have made our strong reservations clear about the proposal for the current gravel walking trail above the cliffs to be part of a 3-metre wide shared use concrete path for cyclists and walkers. This is what is

currently planned as part of the continuous coastal trail from Outer Harbour to Sellicks. As a result of our early lobbying, we were able to secure a meeting between FOWB representatives and Council staff to present our views on this.

FOWB has also expressed its concern about the path crossing the old caravan park site at the beach, believing that for both environmental and indigenous heritage reasons it should be revegetated, diverting the path inland to the creek crossing at Water St.



FOWB considers a 3 metre wide concrete path like this across the creek estuary totally inappropriate.

Willunga to Port Willunga trail, Underpass, South Road duplication

Willunga to Port Willunga trail, Underpass and Main South Road / Victor Harbor Rd duplication

You will recall that a safe pedestrian/cycling crossing on South Road at Aldinga has been on our agenda for many years, with the encouragement of a local Bike User Group and local member, Leon Bignell. We have strongly asserted that the present crossing point at the Aldinga Township roundabout is very dangerous and will become more so after the duplication of Main South Road is completed.

At a most productive recent meeting between FOWB and Dept. Infrastructure & Transport (DIT), we were informed that a long hoped for underpass is to be built as part of duplication project and is now included in forward planning. While this commitment is not yet set in stone, we are very hopeful that it will come to (under)pass – especially as DIT has since advised Council of its intentions, thereby putting its position on the record.

Alongside this, FOWB also supports an overpass at the Tatchilla Road intersection, as this will deliver a non-stop traffic flow for all traffic between Seaford and Aldinga, and extension of the duplication to Aldinga Beach Road. As one last thing, we have proposed that duplication work should start at the southern end where the new Port Road roundabout is causing such a bottleneck, an idea which the project manager has taken on board for further consideration.

At last, the wish for a safe and scenic cycling route linking Willunga and the coast is in sight – and what a huge boost to cycling residents and tourists alike this will be!



Above: Proposed lane duplication at Port Road roundabout'

Below: Proposed South Road overpass over Tatchilla Road



SELICKS QUARRY

We recently met with AdBri, owners & operators of the Sellicks Quarry, to discuss matters relating to the Old Victory Road, which we see as a significant local heritage asset and wish to see preserved. To its credit AdBri moved quickly to address a recent instance of spillage onto the road.

During the meeting we learnt that the mine has a remaining life of 150 years and that, to uncover the resource, AdBri is presently seeking approval to place 10 million cubic metres (or 20 million tonnes) of overburden in the gully on the eastern side of Victory Road. It's hard to argue the need, but we would prefer and are working on another solution.

coles trees

The owner of the McLaren Vale Shopping Centre recently secured approval to build a multi-level motel on Coles' northern Field St carpark. The approval required the removal of two Significant Trees on the western side of the Foodland store to provide replacement carparking. As a result of lobbying by Leon Bignell and FOWB, Coles has advised that it no longer requires additional carparks or, therefore, the removal of the two trees in contention.

We now hope that the property owner will now take Coles' changed position into account and proceed accordingly.

Southern Waste Resource Co (SWRC) PFAS Waste Disposal

You probably know that the fraught issue of the possibility of the ResourceCO landfill at the corner of Tatchilla and Main South Roads being approved to accept PFAS waste has now been put to bed with refusal by the EPA to allow its licensing.

ENVIRONMENT AND FOOD PRODUCTION AREA REVIEW

This is a bit of a technical topic but is looking like something of a slow burner for groups like ours. We have a weather eye on both the as-yet unfinished review of the McLaren Vale Character Preservation Act and the associated and now concurrent Environment and Food Production Area Review. We wouldn't want to go so far as to say we smell a rat but we are concerned at the prospect of a back-door undermining of the Character Preservation District and/or legislation. You'll be hearing more from us on this subject.

FERAL OLIVE REMOVAL



FOWB is in discussion with Council regarding the ongoing issue of feral olives across Willunga Basin and especially on roadsides. Council has been doing good work with limited funding – an increasing percentage of which is now going to the maintenance of areas already worked.

Working alongside Council, we hope to be able to prevail on other parties – such as Landscapes SA, SA Power Networks and private landholders – to increase the resources currently being directed at this problem. We want to clean the scene.

AND THAT'S NOT ALL . . .

Did we mention the Sellicks Masterplan or the Victor Harbor Road duplication?

As you can see, your committee is hard at work, not opposing stuff but working to make sure that when stuff does happen, the result isn't a stuff-up

MEMBERSHIP

Your support is appreciated and is of real value in strengthening our 'voice'.

New members welcome so please spread the word. Membership is \$15 for individuals and \$10 concession.



WELCOME NEWS

continued from page one

SA Water is transferring approximately 32 hectares of land to the Department for Environment and Water because of its conservation importance.

The SA Water land will be combined with the adjacent Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park to create a new conservation park and when complete, the total area of land will be about 340 hectares.

A planning process with local communities will commence next year and will consider the future management of the park and also consolidate hydrological, ecological and cultural work done so far.

Excerpt from a letter to FOWB from David Speirs, Minister for Environment and Water, 17 June 2021

I am delighted to be able to let you know that the government is going to create a new conservation park to protect the Aldinga Washpool forever!

. . . As you might be aware, the washpool is surrounded by parcels of land which are under the care and control of different government organisations, including SA Water and the City of Onkaparinga. Over the past couple of years we've been working to bring these under a more simplified tenure arrangement with the aim of protecting all of this land under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972, ensuring that its cultural and environmental value is secure.

Now that the land has been secured, it will be proclaimed as a conservation park and all stakeholders will be brought together to help shape a management plan for this area. Cultural interpretation and enhancing the biodiversity of the new park through revegetation will be at the heart of this work. We will explore opportunities to formalise access points and walking trails, ensuring that there is a level of structure on the site that does not detract from the biodiversity and cultural significance.

I know that you have had an interest in the Aldinga Washpool and the local environment for some time, and I thank you for your advocacy, passion and commitment to seeing this site protected.