

Newsletter
Winter 2020

Friends of Willunga Basin inc.

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



Hello Friends

Somehow time flew and the newsletter became stranded in the departure lounge, but a bumper issue has now landed.

Covid-19

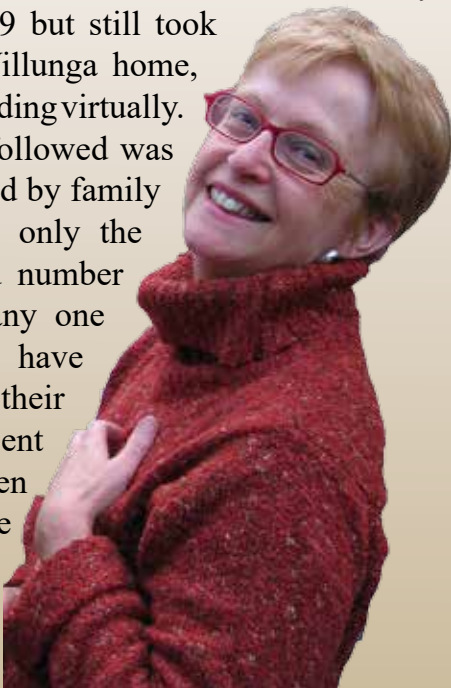
Whilst Covid has frustrated many activities, the FOWB Committee has continued to meet via Zoom, a new experience for most members – and seemingly quite effective. Planning issues have been key items of discussion and action, none of which has been terribly light-hearted.

Passing of Stephanie Walker

Long term and valued former Committee member Stephanie Walker passed away late April. Steph always brought a sense of humour, sometimes wicked, to Committee proceedings and always had something valuable to contribute. Stephanie was particularly active in tree preservation and the Willunga Mainstreet project, and acted in the important role of Minute Secretary.

The service of celebration of her life was obviously affected by Covid-19 but still took place at her Port Willunga home, with almost 100 attending virtually. The gathering that followed was ingeniously organised by family and friends so that only the maximum permitted number could be there at any one time; guests had to have a coloured stone in their hand to be present and stones were then passed on at the gate as each guest left.

We will miss her.



Willunga Basin Walking Trail



Chairperson Chris Davies reports that work sessions have been ongoing since mid-January, finishing up a 5km stretch of trail in the Onkaparinga River National Park between Gates 20 and 15 using two existing tracks linked by a path designed and built by WBT – all at a 1:10 gradient as specified by Park Ranger Steve Johnson.

The job was made possible by the tireless and committed group of Friends of Onkaparinga Park volunteers who cleared many pesky olives ahead of the trail work itself.

Simultaneously the group has been working at the opposite corner of the Basin, exploring and negotiating the establishment of the trail along the coast between Sellicks and Moana. This is a complicated process but some progress has been made, including signage on Sellicks Esplanade and agreements with Dept. of Environment & Water to traverse Aldinga Scrub and with Council to install the trail through the Hart Rd wetlands.

The Willunga Basin Trail website is now up and running, thanks to help from Chris Collin. It contains information and maps of those parts of the trail which are now established. Many people are walking these paths and FOWB members are invited to enjoy them too. The website address is www.wbt.org.au Michael Whitaker's new book "More Short Walks in the Onkaparinga Park" both talks about WBT Inc. and incorporates our route in some of the walks.

The group is eager to resume normal operations on the trail, though the recent downtime has been useful to catch up with some of the never-ending paperwork!

Aldinga to Willunga Bike Path

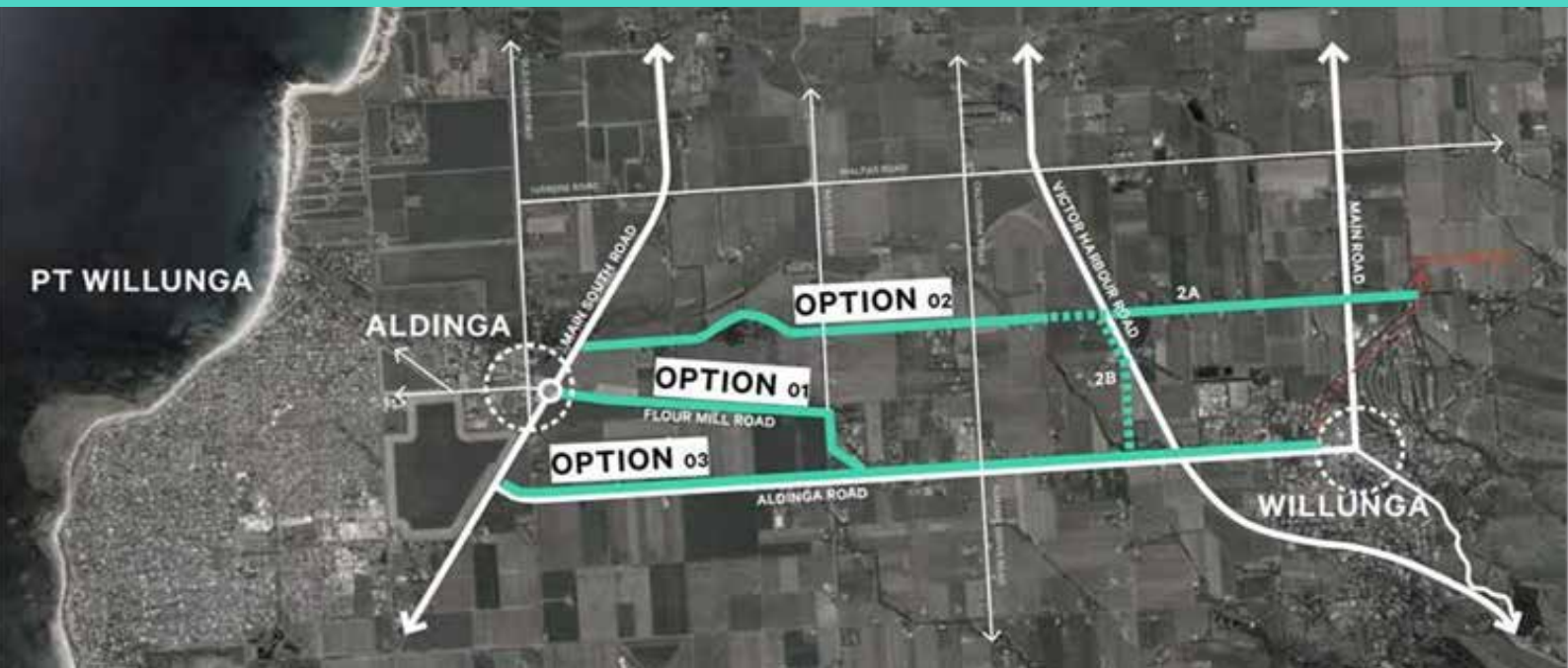
In April, Council released an options outline for community comment regarding a proposed Cycling trail from Willunga to Aldinga (and vice versa). Three options were presented for comment:

- Option 1, via Aldinga & Flour Mill Roads
- Option 2, via Aldinga, Pethick & Little Roads
- Option 3, via Aldinga Road

FOWB has been lobbying for this cycleway for many years and was pleased to see the matter coming to the fore. Our submission to Council did

not support Option 3, along Aldinga Road, while the other options both have potential depending on funds and time frame. Our key concern is for a safe crossing at South Road – which we maintain can be achieved by going under the road as part of the pending duplication project. We therefore also wrote to the Minister for Transport outlining the need for cycleway provisions in the Main South Road duplication. A non-committal response was received.

The committee continues to liaise with Council and DPTI on this issue.



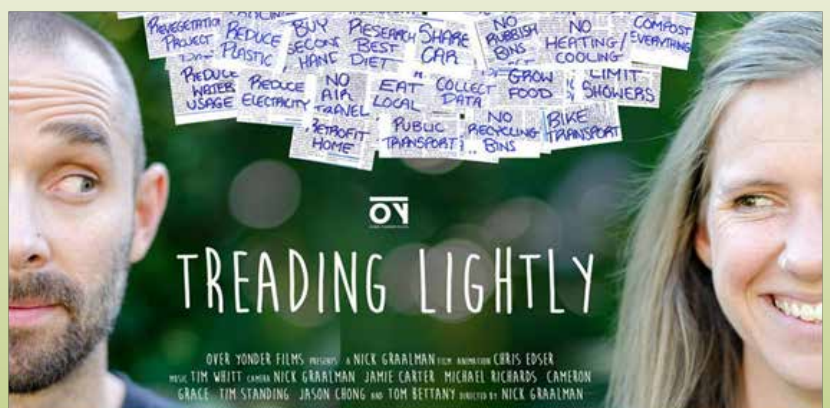
TREADING LIGHTLY AND EMISSIONS REDUCTION

Earlier in the year the FOWB Committee decided to become more active in advocating for carbon emissions reductions and formed a carbon sub-group to progress the issue within our membership and the community. The proposed first action was to screen the film *Treading Lightly*—but this was unfortunately cancelled due Covid-19.

'Treading Lightly is an intelligent, honest documentary on a subject about which we all need to be better informed – personal CO2 emissions. The challenges of controlling climate change are daunting and getting worse by the day. What can be done as an individual is an essential question. Treading Lightly provides many answers in an informative, engaging and sometimes humorous way. It shows it is not beyond the individual to act. But what are the first steps and what does the path look like? Treading Lightly shines a light on both questions.

Documenting filmmakers' Nick & Jamie's daily lives and their questions and decisions about CO2, including interviews with a range of academics and activists and the use of animations to make facts and figures readily accessible, the film works a treat. Nowhere else will a viewer get such an insight, an education, about these issues in such an absorbing and attentive way.'

We are currently holding the screening over until we can all gather in a way that allows face to face discussion.



Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

The EPBC Act makes sure that 'nationally significant' animals, plants, habitats and places are identified, and any potential negative impacts on them are carefully considered before changes in land use or new developments are approved.

Section 522A of the EPBC Act requires an independent review of its operation, and the extent to which its objects have been achieved, to be undertaken at least once every 10 years. Fowb made a submission to the current review as did some individual members of the Committee.

Planning Matters

The Planning & Design Code

In conjunction with Friends of Pt Willunga, FOWB made a strong submission to the new Planning & Design Code, which can be viewed on our website: <http://www.fowb.net/planning-matters.html>.

It was difficult to comment coherently because the information released for consultation was deficient in so many ways – and, more recently we were alarmed to learn that there will be no more consultation.

Long story short though, we do not like a lot of what we see, which appears to sweep away a generation of thinking about how local communities want their towns and suburbs to develop. Desired Character Statements have been done away with while not a single Policy Area from the current Onkaparinga Development Plan has made the transition to the new Code. These Character Statements and Policy Areas are where the fine grain currently lives, but in their place will be pro-forma land-use policies where, within the new truncated palette of zones, one suburb will be largely the same as the next.

We also fear that the new public notification settings during the development approval process will side-line community groups like FOWB, who seek to work for the betterment of their local built and natural environment. But these are only a few of our concerns. The settings for protection of Significant Trees and heritage items are problematic, as has been the consultation to date,

We are confronted with a system which looks to be a triumph of bureaucracy over community. We anticipate its implementation with a sense of dread and, meantime, continue to lobby against its implementation until the community has a better idea of what it's getting.

City of Onkaparinga Local Area Plan

Council scheduled a meeting of community leaders to discuss planning of our area over the next 10 to 20 years, with a particular focus on growth. Although Covid interfered with the process, FOWB did make input to the Local Area Plan discussions at both the initial phase of discussions and during a later online opportunity. Our focus was on limiting undue urban expansion, of seeking sustainable forms of development which encourage opportunities for trees and other vegetation and of opposing the all too familiar gutter to gutter style of development now so prevalent.

Review of McLaren Vale Character Preservation Act

FOWB was a major player in the framing and eventual passing of the Character Preservation Act, legislation to maximise planning certainty and preventing urban sprawl engulfing our rural lands. The review, which occurred 2 years ago and to which we made submissions opposing contracting the zone boundaries or requiring regular reviews appears to have had a very inconclusive result. The Government has flagged possible regular reviews and alterations to the boundaries.

FOWB will watch this issue very carefully

Function & Conference Centre, McMurtrie Road, McLaren Vale

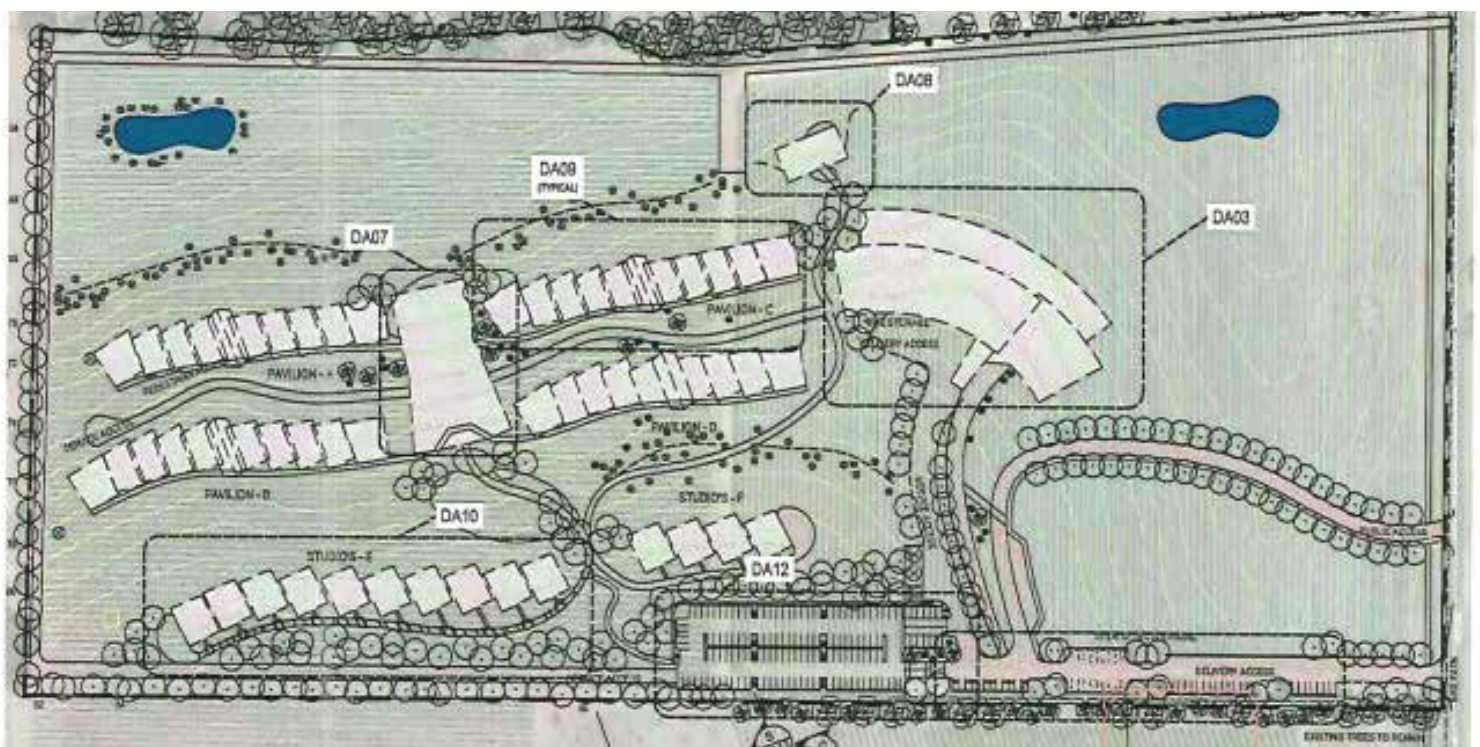
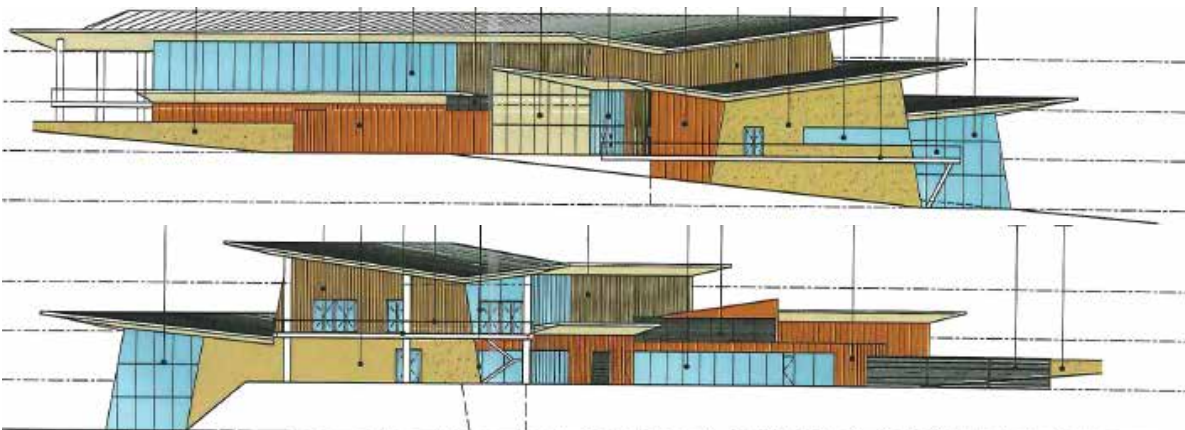
The Friends considered the Development Application for a major function & conference centre on McMurtrie Road, McLaren Vale. The proposed development comprises 150 bed accommodation, 500 seat banquet hall, 100 seat café and 100 seat restaurant.

Whilst the size of the development is considerable, and some concern was expressed over this, the Friends chose not to make any submission because:

- A large scale development of this type is seen as inevitable in the region and will open McLaren Vale to new markets and new opportunities, which we think is not a bad thing
- Be it 100, 130 or 150 bed, we accept that, as a resort, it will be at a certain scale, so discussion around the proposal is a matter of degree - and it is beyond our expertise to assess the proposal in terms of market need and viability

- McLaren Vale will only get one development such as this – witness the single resort in the Barossa Valley – and if there is going to be only one then McMurtrie Rd, within walking distance of town and on the region's existing 'golden mile', is arguably as good a location as any
- The design follows the land contours, thus minimising height impacts and the architectural form fits into, rather than sitting on top of the landscape, while the materials palette of rammed earth, Corten steel, timber cladding and glass is appropriate to the region.

The Friends acknowledge that there will be local effects, negative and positive, and there may be objections from other parties but, for reasons outlined, we struggled to develop an objection that could be either strongly argued or reasonably defended.



Southern Waste Resource Co (SWRC), PFAS Waste Disposal

SWRC has sought a license from the Environmental Protection Authority to accept per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at its Main South Road/Tatachilla Road site. The waste would be contained in a double-composite-lined disposal cell designed to accept and dispose of a long list of toxic contaminants other than PFAS for which the site is already licensed.

The EPA sought public comment and outlined that:

PFAS, are manmade chemicals that have been used in a range of industrial and consumer products since the 1950s, including in domestic and commercial applications such as the manufacture of non-stick cookware, stain protection for fabrics, furniture and carpet, food packaging and in some types of fire-fighting foams.

On 30 January 2018, South Australia became the first state to ban potentially hazardous fluorinated firefighting foams. This ban effectively negates further environmental and human health risks associated with their use. (EPA, LANDFILL LICENCE-SWR McLaren Vale Community Information Sheet)

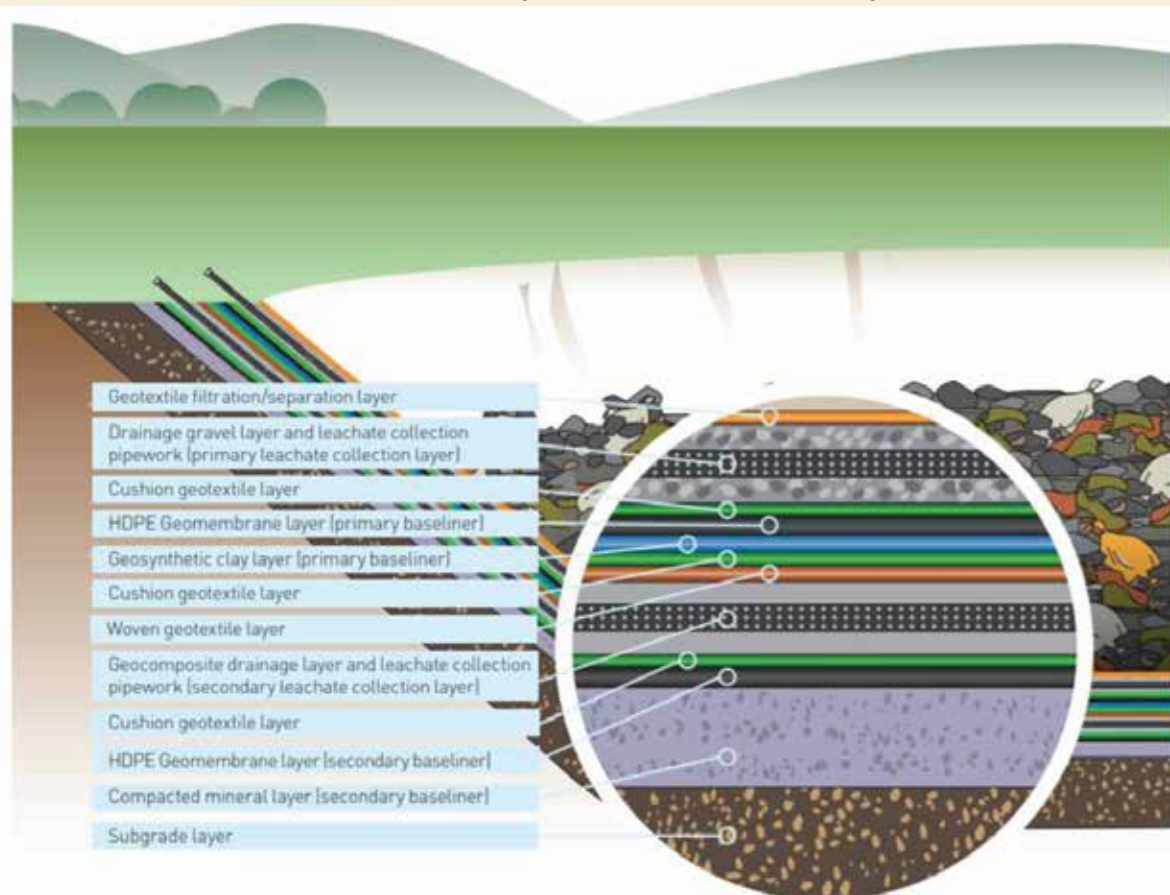
In April FOWB made a submission to the EPA outlining several points of concern about the proposal. Following on from this, we received an invitation from SWRC to tour the site, which several Committee members did, accompanied by an independent environmental auditor, invited by us. A meeting with the EPA followed, where we again had opportunity for open discussion with experts in the field.



Above: Committee members at SWRC Below: SWRC site



Below: SWRC's diagram of toxic contaminants storage site



Latitude Development, Aldinga Central

The proposed multi storey apartment development on Aldinga Beach Road opposite the shopping centre looks likely to proceed following amendment of the original proposal to reduce its overall height.

The matter has been before the ERD Court for some time and Council has now agreed a compromise proposal with the developer.

As an appellant, the Friends had to decide either to continue its objection or accept the compromise design. Whilst still not entirely to our liking, the changes made are significant and it would be an expensive and legally difficult task to achieve anything more.

We have therefore accepted the compromise and advised the Court accordingly. A final approval for the amended scheme is expected to be granted before Christmas.

MEMBERSHIP

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

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

The Victory Road

By way of an update on our interest in the old Victory Road – which members will recall we celebrated at its 160th anniversary in March 2019, the Friends have recently written to Adelaide Brighton, the owner of Southern Quarries, to ascertain its long term plans regarding any quarrying impact on the old road. A response is awaited.

Committee member Chas Martin has also written to Council about the emergency services access value of the road, particularly firefighting, and received a polite but non-committal response regarding the reinstatement of the closed bridge. The Friends have also written to Council on this matter supporting the reinstatement of the bridge for emergency service access.

