



# Newsletter

Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc.

Summer2007-08

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2006-07

*The Chairman's Report was presented by Philip Hicks at the Annual Meeting on 20 November, the day before the Stirling Linear Park Advisory Committee meeting referred to below.*

As you would be aware, I agreed during the last year to take over from David Ragless who was the inaugural chairman in 1995. I will have more to say about David's contribution later.

### The Current Environment

Before reporting on our activities for the last year and our plans for the future, a few words on the changing current environment as this has influenced our approach in the last year and will certainly have an influence on our role in the future.

You will recollect that in mid 2006 the Adelaide Hills Council accepted (with some significant amendments) a consultant's report regarding the Management Strategy process for the Park. A key recommendation was the establishment of a new Management Advisory Committee, consisting of individuals with appropriate skills, to make recommendations to Council. This terminated the Friends of Stirling Linear Park's long term partnership with Council as joint managers of the park and vested future responsibility solely with Council.

Perhaps not surprisingly, it has taken over a year since the report was accepted for the Management Advisory Committee to be established. The period of uncertainty in responsibility for the management of the park resulting from the decision by Council *not to proceed with new initiatives pending the commencement of the Management Advisory Committee* has in some ways been frustrating for us. Over this period there has been limited progress on activities and works in the park which require Council input.

The Advisory Committee met for the first time in October and is now starting to get down to business. Tomorrow it will hold its third meeting, to which representatives of Stirling Linear Park and the Green Web have been invited to provide briefings on management plans and our views on future work in the Park.

At this early stage, it is fair to say that our role in the next year and beyond will be significantly influenced by the approach taken by the Advisory Committee. This includes the level of advice provided by us to assist the Committee in their role, a process that is evolving at the moment.

Overall, once the Advisory Committee has settled into its role it is likely that our role will continue to become more focused on weeding and revegetation activities. At the same time, we will need to work closely with the Committee and I look forward to doing this.

### The Last Year in Review

I will now turn to our activities for the last year.

#### Weed control

Weed control in the park has continued to be a major focus. Our monthly working bees, led by Bob James, have

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concentrated on removing weeds from areas of good bush in Woorabinda, Stirling Park and Madurta and have been attended by between six and fifteen members. We consider that working from the good bush out is the best ongoing use of our volunteer membership resources who have developed an expertise in this area; something that is not easy to replace with alternative resources, such as the limited number of contractors both prepared and qualified to do this work.

Our volunteer work has been supplemented by the use of contractors employed by the Green Web for clearing larger scale weed infestations, mainly *Watsonia* in Madurta and Woorabinda with positive results. The Green Web funding for Stirling Linear Park in 2007 was \$6,500.

Bob James has continued his invaluable daily weeding work in Hender while other members have contributed on a lesser scale. Bob has also led CVA volunteers and a team of National Australia Bank staff in several days' work in removing specific weeds such as *Acacia longifolia* in Woorabinda.

Realistically, we have continued to make good progress in most areas. However, in some areas, particular weed species continue to spread into the margins of good bush with *Watsonia* continuing to be a serious threat.

### **Revegetation**

Revegetation of areas of the park continued to be an important priority. Once again, Annual Planet Ark – National Tree Planting in Stirling Park in August was very well attended.

In the last year, extensive plantings were also undertaken using CVA volunteers supervised by Friends members. Plantings included:

- 1250 plants in Madurta over three days and in line with the Revegetation Plan for Madurta
- 350 plants in Stirling Park as the first stage of the plan for understory plantings in areas that have already been planted in line with the Revegetation Plan for Stirling Park
- a smaller number of plants in areas of Hender following weed control work.

Our thanks go to AHC for growing tubestock used in the plantings and to Mark Fagan of Green Web for taking over responsibility for these plants after Alan Wickham resigned from the Council earlier in the year and also providing additional tubestock. Thanks also to Anne Hicks, our Trees for Life volunteer grower for producing further tubestock used for the plantings.

### **Other activities**

#### *Environmental monitoring*

We continued our previous range of programs which included:

- annual photo monitoring from 30 sites

- bi-monthly water sampling and testing from the lake and creek
- bushcheck bird observations from 16 sites eight times per year
- an annual frog census
- mapping of *Monodenia* infestations.

#### *Publicity*

We have continued our seasonal newsletter to members, with the exception of an Autumn newsletter.

During the year we have mounted displays publicising the Park and our community volunteer work at a number of locations including the Mount Lofty Summit Tourist Centre, the Woorabinda Environment Centre and the Park notice boards. Our thanks go to Marilyn Forward for her work in setting-up the display material.

Our thanks also go to Lorri Ragless who been very busy over the last few months arranging for the opening of the 2008 walking season to be held in Stirling on 6 April with a focus on walks through Stirling Park.

#### *Funding*

In 2005-06, while the Park Management Strategy process was taking place, the Friends group was instructed by Council staff not to apply for further grant funding or commence any new projects. This position continued through 2007-08 so again we have had to let a number of opportunities pass us by this year.

During 2006-07 we received \$205 in public donations. We express our thanks to the generous donors. This amount, together with amounts already held in our public fund, will be used for on-ground works.

#### *Meetings*

Over the last year, the Committee has met either monthly or every alternate month depending on the need at the time. We decided not to hold monthly meetings as a matter of course in response to an expected reduction in activity following the decision to establish the Management Advisory Committee.

#### **Volunteer Resources Used**

During 2006-07 about 2,200 volunteer hours were donated to the Park.

#### **The Year Ahead**

A few thoughts about our work in the Park in the coming year.

#### **Weed control**

I mentioned earlier the problems posed by the spread of *Watsonia* into the margins of good bush. One of our challenges in the year ahead is to find means to increase our efforts to counter this problem. In

addition to using our own working bee volunteers and Green Web contractors, we will need to look further at the use of additional contractor resources to target *Watsonia* in Woorabinda.

### **Revegetation**

In the coming year we plan to increase our revegetation efforts with additional plants to be grown by Mark Fagan of the Green Web funded through Envirofund grants. The plantings planned are:

- Stirling Park – continue understory plantings started last year with a further 5000-6000 plants.
- Madurta – continue revegetation plantings started last year with a further 1000 plants.
- Hender – continue small scale plantings in areas cleared of weeds.

As we plan to continue using external volunteers such as CVA to plant much of this additional tubestock, we will need to try to find additional volunteer resources from within FSLP membership to supervise these volunteers.

We are working with AHC on plans for reroofing parts of the Woorabinda Environmental Centre and are hopeful that progress will be made in the near future.

### **Member Contributions**

I imagine that those of you who like me have been associated with the Friends of Stirling Linear Park for some time are probably thinking something similar to me. Could we really be at a FSLP AGM without David Ragless in the chair? I would like to take this opportunity to thank David on behalf of us all for his outstanding contribution to FSLP.

Now, although I don't know all of the details as I joined the friends after it happened, I am aware that David, together with a few others, was instrumental in bringing together the separate parks that make up SLP. What I do know, as I'm sure most of us do, is that in the twelve years since FSLP was established, he has been tireless in his dedication to the cause of SLP through things such as:

- doing everything possible to ensure that the park is not broken up through pressure to use parts of it for other purposes
- encouraging the involvement of others, not just individuals but organisations - to the extent that this site now functions as the Woorabinda Environmental Centre.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. I suspect that most of us would have little idea of the full extent of David's contribution towards the park. Many of you would have heard this story, but I will relate it nevertheless, at the risk of not telling it accurately. Once David was having some work done on a car, somewhere on "The

Plains". On finding that he came from Stirling, David was asked if he knew of SLP. "Yes", he said. "I know it well. It is my life."

Hopefully, David, it is still part of your life in a very positive sense and any negative aspects of it being your life over the last few years have lessened.

John Allison, who was our inaugural Treasurer, recently resigned from the both his role as Treasurer and as a member of our Public Fund committee. Thank you John for your significant contribution.

Thank you also to all those who contributed during the year and who I have not already mentioned. This includes all of the Committee and other members, particularly:

- Bob James for his support as Deputy Chairman, convening working bees, work in Hender and involvement in supervising CVA and other outside volunteers.
- David Ragless, in addition to what I have already said, for his contribution as a Green Web committee member, representing FSLP at a number of events and functions, supervising CVA volunteers and advice and patience when I asked him about subjects that he had briefed the Committee on at meetings over the years.
- Brian Donaghy for his high quality minutes
- Marilyn Browne for producing our quarterly newsletter
- Lorri Ragless and Marilyn Forward for their Waterwatch work
- Kath Bowman for maintaining our membership list and website
- Neil Strong for his always well considered advice
- Alistair McHenry for his work towards the re-roofing of the Woorabinda buildings.
- Danielle Shallow for producing a revegetation plan for Woorabinda as part of her course
- Mark Fagan of the Green Web for his work on the Green Web's contributions to the Park already referred to
- Recently appointed Council staff for their positive approach towards our work in the Park.

### **Conclusion**

In the coming year I see the main challenge as being to work effectively with the Advisory Committee while at the same time continuing to redefine our role.

Philip Hicks

## Recent working bees

The four working bees completed since our last newsletter have been attended by from 10 to 14 people and we also received a number of apologies from members who were unable to attend.

Our September working bee continued work on the smaller, more isolated patches of *Watsonia* around the Woorabinda Lake. This complemented work on larger areas of *Watsonia* to the south-east of the lake by the contractors employed by the Green Web. As those who are familiar with the area around the lake would appreciate, we plan to do further work on *Watsonia* in this area next spring.

At our October working bee we continued clearing gorse and other woody weeds from the western slope of Stirling Park.

Our November working bee in Madurta concentrated on following-up earlier work by Green Web contractors who had eradicated most of the larger *Watsonia* infestations in the good bush areas at

the western end of the reserve. We managed to poison most of the isolated *Watsonia* plants that had survived, together with woody weeds growing in the surrounding areas.

In December we made very good progress in the area to the east of the track between Woorabinda Lake and Linwood Avenue. We worked from the good bush near the track towards the large *Acacia Longifolia*s to the northeast, clearing mainly gorse, *Longifolia* and *Erica Aborea*. We plan to continue working in this area at the next Woorabinda working bee.

A reminder that the Working Bee reminder notices are now being sent out by email to the "regulars". If you are considering joining us on the third Sunday in the month at 10:00am, send your email to Bob James at [bobjames@chariot.net.au](mailto:bobjames@chariot.net.au) and he will include you on the list of working bee reminder notices.

### WORKING BEES 2008

Date	Location	Meeting Place
February 17	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
March 16	Stirling Park	Branch Road
April 20	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
May 18	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
June 15	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
July 20	Stirling Park	Branch Road
August 17	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
September 16	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
October 21	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
November 18	Stirling Park	Branch Road
December 16	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
<b>Time: 10.00 am – 12 noon</b>		

## WOORABINDA ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE REROOFING

Observant passers-by may have noticed that the building known as the Waterwatch Building and the adjacent ablutions block in the Woorabinda Environmental Centre have new roofs. The Waterwatch Building is used by *Onkaparinga Waterwatch* for accommodation and displays for visits

by school students. Other environmental and community groups, including FSLP, regularly use the conference room in the Waterwatch Building. On behalf of all the users, our thanks go to the Adelaide Hills Council for organising and funding the re-roofing.

## STIRLING LINEAR PARK MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Management Strategy Plan for Stirling Linear Park, adopted by Adelaide Hills Council in mid 2006, provides for a new Management Advisory Committee to make recommendations to Council.

Membership of the Committee is not on the basis of representatives of interest groups, but on the basis of individuals with appropriate skills. The members of the Committee are Simon Bradley, Claire Butler, Harry Gill, Amelia Hurren, Kirsty Long, Gerald Thompson, Councillor John Kemp, and Councillor Ron Nelson.

Friends of Stirling Linear Park were invited to give a presentation at the Committee's third meeting on 21 November. David Ragless, Bob James and Philip Hicks each addressed the Committee. David Mussared of the Central Hills Green Web set the scene for our presentation by highlighting the scarcity and environmental significance of bushland areas within the Mount Lofty Ranges from a global perspective, the importance of the Green Web properties, and the significance of Stirling Linear Park within the Green Web.

David reviewed the history and current position of the series of management plans for Stirling Linear Park and the supporting revegetation plans for individual sections of the Park. He also referred to the need for reclassification of Hender and Woorabinda to more appropriate classifications.

Bob outlined our bushcare work in the park with an emphasis on our monthly working bees.

Philip addressed:

- FSLP's immediate concerns including reclassification of reserves, dog control

(not addressed) and the need for reinvolvement of AHC on-ground staff in work in the park once new staff are recruited.

- FSLP's vision/plans for the long term management of the Park including specific infrastructure upgrading projects, particularly the crossing over the creek in Stirling Park, re-roofing and overall upgrade of Woorabinda Environmental Centre which is occupied by *Onkaparinga Waterwatch*, Conservation Volunteers Australia and the Green Web and re-fencing degraded areas on the edges of Woorabinda Lake.
- Recent and planned revegetation work mainly in Stirling Park and Madurta. In line with revegetation plans.
- The resources available for bushcare, weeding and revegetation work including FSLP working bees, Green Web and other externally funded contractors and CVA, Greencorps and other volunteers.
- The need for Council involvement in removal of large weed infestations from areas adjacent to good bush and areas where plantings are planned in accordance with revegetation plans.
- Implementation in SLP of the AHC's Bushfire Prevention - Reserve and Roadside Management Plan 2007-08.

Members of the Committee asked us a series of questions and indicated that they would like our vision/plans for the long term management of the Park to form the basis for an action plan.

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### RECENT FAUNA SIGHTINGS IN STIRLING LINEAR PARK

A large kangaroo was seen in Woorabinda in December. This may be the same kangaroo reported on in the Spring Newsletter. Again, it did not appear to be disturbed by people passing close by on an adjacent path but was chased by dogs.

At least one Little Black Cormorant has made itself at home on the tree that recently fell into the Woorabinda Lake and is surrounded by water.

In the Spring Newsletter, a Sacred Kingfisher was reported as being recently seen near the lake.

Since then a pair of Sacred Kingfishers has been seen regularly in Woorabinda and Hender and another pair was seen in Madurta disturbing a pair of Striated Pardalotes in a hollow tree trunk.

**Friends of Stirling Linear Park Committee  
2007-08**

Kathy Bowman	8370 9177
Merilyn Browne	8339 6839
Brian Donaghy	8339 2033
Marilyn Forward	8339 3162
Phillip Hicks	8339 3156
Bob James	8339 1903
Ian Perrin	8339 3262
David Ragless	8339 1038
Lorri Ragless	8339 1038
Jane Schoettgen	8339 7245
Neil Strong	8339 4085
Alistair McHenry (Advisor)	8339 5114
Russell Seaman (Advisor)	8398 0626

**Web address:** <http://esc.net.au/~slp/>

**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 Stirling Linear Park Inc.

**Contributors to this issue** include Philip Hicks, Merilyn Browne and Bob James.

**Affiliations**

The Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc. is a member of Friends of Parks Inc. We are also a registered Landcare Group and a member of both Greening Australia and Trees for Life.



**Friends of Stirling Linear Park Membership application/renewal**

I/we would like to join/renew membership of the Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc. (strike out words not applicable)

\$.....membership fee is enclosed.

\$.....donation is included. (Donations of \$2.00 or more are tax-deductible. A separate receipt will be issued.)

**Name**.....

**Address**.....

.....**Phone**.....

**Email address for sending Newsletter**.....

**I am interested in helping out at working bees**.....**Yes / No / Possibly**

**Please return to:** Kath Bowman, Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc., 2 Bogaduck Road, Aldgate 5154

Membership fee for both individuals and family:	
1 year.....	\$10.00
5 years.....	\$40.00