



Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves

# NEWS LETTER

Number 61, April 2018

## Totally Wild in bandicoot country

Channel 10's nature programme for younger viewers, *Totally Wild*, descended on Hender Reserve on December 15 to film a segment of the show in bandicoot country.

The bandicoots, not surprisingly, were nowhere to be seen, but the Friends fielded a team of bushcarers and experts including David Ragless, Janet Pedler, Bob James, Jan Walker and Lawrence Ng.

Stars of the show were Bennie Woodrow, a regular participant in the Friends' working bees, and



Janet and David being interviewed by *Totally Wild* host/presenter Leela Varghese

Jan Walker's granddaughter Emily Philpott. The two youngsters provided much of the action by demonstrating their bushcare and tree planting skills, and Bennie did an excellent piece to camera explaining why bushcare is important and fun.

The filming took most of the afternoon but will probably have been reduced to a few minutes by the time it goes to air. The program will be broadcast on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> April at 8.30 am on Channel 11. See elsewhere in this Newsletter for more details.



Steve Williams filming Bennie at work

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## Message from the Totally Wild Team

We would like to inform you that your Totally Wild story will be included in our episode TW25/036 which is going to air Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at 8:30 am on channel Eleven.

Stories in this episode include:

ROAM FREE FARM

BANDICOOT GARDENS

RETRO TREASURES

DOG ENRICHMENT

BACKYARD BEES

URBAN EVOLUTION

If you could please pass the message on to anyone else who may have also been involved in the segment, it would be greatly appreciated.

Unfortunately we are unable to supply copies of our show, so we encourage you to make your own arrangements regarding viewing and/or recording this episode.

After this episode goes to air, it will then be available to watch online. Just visit our website at:

<http://tenplay.com.au/channel-eleven/totally-wild>



Emily shows cameraman Steve Williams how to handle tube stock

Feel free to share this link on social media so that your friends and family can also see the finished story.

Don't forget to 'like' our official Facebook page to keep up to date with all the TOTALLY WILD action!

[www.facebook.com/totally-wild](http://www.facebook.com/totally-wild)

Thank you again for your assistance in the development of this story. We hope you enjoy it.

Kind Regards

*The Totally Wild Team*

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## Honorary Life Membership awarded to David and Lorri Ragless

At the last AGM, a motion was passed for a change to our Constitution allowing the granting of Honorary Life Membership to members who have shown exemplary commitment and service to the Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves. Awards granted would be by resolution of members in general meeting.

The meeting then unanimously voted to bestow Honorary Life Membership on David and Lorri Ragless for their unstinting efforts in first saving the reserve known as Stirling Park and then working hard to persuade the then Stirling District Council to purchase the Woorabinda property.

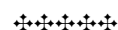
David and Lorri, along with the Landcare group looking after Stirling Park, joined with people working to protect Madurta Reserve, and the Friends of Stirling Linear Park came into being.

David and Lorri have each worked tirelessly for the past 25 years in various roles within the Friends of Woorabinda Reserves, and between them have held chair and secretarial positions for much of that time.



Lorri and David Ragless

They have attended countless meetings and working bees, and have worked hard to educate people of all ages about the importance of conserving the treasure that we have in Woorabinda Bushland Reserves.



## Chairman's Address, 2018 AGM - Brian Donaghy

This has been both another good year and a busy one for the Woorabinda Bushland Reserves.

So busy, in fact, that I won't have time to do what I would like to have done tonight, and should have done tonight, and that is to simply read out a list of all the people who have done so much for the Woorabinda Bushland Reserves since our last AGM.

It's invidious to try to rank them, but I think I would put at the top of the list the people who not only turn up for our working bees, but also do all the background work that makes those working bees happen – tramping around the reserves to see what needs to be done, emailing volunteers, organising the trailer and the tools, and providing morning tea for the troops (and thereby facilitating some useful shop talk). Generally speaking it is the same people who work with the regular working bee teams and also work closely with Conservation Volunteers Australia, the Green Army, and the Adelaide Hills Council.

But their work would all be in vain if no one turned up every month to actually wallop the watsonia, battle the broom, assassinate arum lilies, persecute periwinkle, gouge out the gorse and be a thorn in the side of new blackberries.

Month after month.

I salute you all.

We do try to put together statistics on the number of volunteer hours we put into the reserves each year – but it's a rather simplistic, market-economy approach, an attempt to put a dollar value on what we do. That's not really possible. It's certainly hundreds, probably thousands of hours, mostly skilled or highly skilled.

But how do you keep accurate statistics for the people who walk from door to door handing out leaflets, or the Friends who spend private hours on their own weeding in the reserves - not just on working bees? What's the hourly rate for the Friends who chat to visitors in the reserves and indirectly find out what people really think and need?

How many hours are spent liaising with councillors, council staff, local politicians, the Hut, helping the local high school, applying for grants, checking emails, updating membership lists, writing newsletters and even organising a meeting such as this AGM?

The statistics are always an underestimate. But never mind the width, feel the quality.

We do it because it is fun, because it is so satisfying to make a difference.

Look at what has happened this year.

This time last year the Hut was on the brink of taking over the management of these buildings. That has happened, and I think both they - and certainly the Friends - are delighted that it has proved to be a great success. Let's hope this is the first step towards a sensible, sustainable redevelopment of the access, buildings and parking facilities on this site.

Conservation Volunteers Australia have had teams spend eight days working here, supplementing the work done by our regular working bees.

A Green Army team under the leadership of Ute Grehn did great work on the western side of Stirling Park, clearing large gorse, tackling gorse regrowth and watsonia, and planting 200 plants grown by Anne Hicks.

A graduation ceremony was held here in July, and a relaxed and jolly occasion it turned out to be.

It was also a year when we took major steps towards the creation of an Indigenous Flora Display.

The Friends have been hoping to do something like this since 2001. Aims include teaching people to use plants that need less water and help people to move away from traditional European-style gardens that are basically deserts so far as local wildlife is concerned. But the idea has been revived, revised and kicked along by Mark Richardson, last year's AGM speaker, who has an impressive CV in this area. The Council has already funded a feasibility study – I'd be happy to email a copy to any one who does not already have one.

By the way, as some of you know, Mark Parnell's bill to get biodiversity properly considered in all planning decisions has just been passed by the upper house. By encouraging more people to grow native plants that provide food and habitat, the proposed Indigenous Flora Display would be a real contribution to the push to preserve biodiversity.

I'm glad to say that the Adelaide Hills Council also gave the tick to the Friends' submission to the Fund My Neighbourhood scheme. That gave us the go-ahead to ask everyone in the area to vote in favour of the State Government putting \$65,000 into creating the Indigenous Flora Display.

If you have not yet voted in favour of this, please do so ASAP. The deadline is 5pm on Monday, so there is still time. (*Editor's note: our submission was not funded.*)

We have had two outdoor education classes for students from Heathfield High School, with the students – or most of them – getting down and dirty

and doing some real bushcare. Hopefully it is the start of greater collaboration between the school and the Friends, particularly if the Indigenous Flora project becomes a reality.

I said earlier that it would be invidious to try to rank the people who have contributed to all of this, but there are some I really should mention at this point.

Phil Hicks. I can't think how long he has been a Friend of what is now Woorabinda Bushland Reserves. He is also deeply involved in the Friends of Mark Oliphant and the Green Web, he was our chair of what was then Stirling Linear Park during some of the most stressful and contentious times, he is still our Treasurer and he has even taken on the role of organising the monthly Sunday working bees now that Bob James has retired from that role. Not only that, but Phil has been one of those heavily involved in organizing and supervising CVA and Green Army projects in the reserves.

I doubt very much if he could have done all of this without his wife Anne, who is with him on every working bee as well as numerous informal expeditions, tools in hand, into the reserves. She probably knows as much or more about native plants than he does, and she can even propagate the damn things.

Jane Schoettgen. Not only did she initiate and still runs the Thursday monthly working bees, but she also spends many hours weeding away on her own, and she is ever vigilant to ensure that people are doing the right thing and tipping off the ranger or the council if they are not. She won a Hills Treasure award this year, and it was well deserved.

## **Council to fund more Blackberry Control in the Reserves**

You will no doubt have noticed the proliferation of blackberry growth over the last couple of years throughout the district - including the Woorabinda Reserves.

While Friends volunteers have removed countless individual plants and small patches of blackberry recently the speed of proliferation of sizeable patches has been beyond Friends volunteer resources to control.

Traditionally Council has accepted responsibility for controlling most of the big blackberry patches and left the smaller areas to Friends volunteers.

Recent research has indicated that dense blackberries can provide shelter for Southern Brown Bandicoots - provided that there is excellent bushland habitat in immediately surrounding areas.

Given this and the fact that it is a punishable offence under the EPBC Act to destroy Southern Brown Bandicoot habitat Council has adopted a cautious

Janet Pedler. Janet like Phil wears many hats, but it is probably fair to say that the great work that was eventually done by the Green Army not only here but in other areas would probably never have actually happened if Janet had not worked tirelessly, combining her technical knowledge, her contacts, and her understanding of how the system operates, and sometimes doesn't operate, to eventually get some good boots on the ground.

I could also mention David and Lorri Ragless, who were jointly short-listed on a short short-list this year for a Conservation Council Unsung Hero Award but they already appear elsewhere on our agenda.

I'm delighted to say that our Patron, Professor Chris Daniels, has agreed to continue as our patron. He did an excellent job in addressing the AHC on why the reserves should be given natural heritage protection, and I am sure that that was one of the reasons why the council agreed to go ahead and lodge an application with the State Government.

He has assured me that he is willing to be our guest speaker at our AGM next year. We had hoped to have him this year, and in fact he would have been happy to do that, but he was on long service leave overseas when we were organising this, and we thought it might be safer and kinder to find someone else. While Chris was overseas, we have been very fortunate to get Penny Paton, who will talk about natural heritage agreements at the end of the meeting.

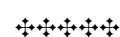


policy approach to destruction of large blackberry patches and aimed to only control their spread rather than remove them.

However several new large blackberry patches have now established and Council staff and Friends Committee believe that they should be controlled by spraying.

Three areas have been identified as of high priority. One is along the creek in Madurta, one along the trail from the lake to the creek crossing in Stirling Park and one in Woorabinda near the fallen White Gum.

Contractors have already commenced this work funded by \$2000 from the Council Reserves weed control budget and another \$ 5000 will be available to complete the work.



## 2018 Working Bee Timetable

<b>SUNDAY Working Bees 2018 - 9 am to 11 am</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Meeting Place</b>
April 15	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
May 21	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
June 17	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
July 15	Stirling Park	Branch Road
August 19	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
September 16	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
October 14	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
November 18	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
December 16	Stirling Park	Branch Road

### Working Bees

You are invited to join our working bees at any time. Wear sensible protective clothing, boots and gloves. The Park has a variety of terrain, and can be wet underfoot. Gloves are provided for people using herbicide (swabbing the stumps of woody weeds).

To receive reminder notices for the working bees, or to find out more about them, send an email to Philip Hicks, [lhicks@chariot.net.au](mailto:lhicks@chariot.net.au).

If you are interested in the Thursday working bees, call Jane Schoettgen on 8339 7245.

<b>THURSDAY Working Bees 2018 - 9 am to 11 am (last Thursday each month)</b>			
<b>MEET AT WOORABINDA DRIVE</b>			
April 26	June 28	August 30	October 25
May 31	July 26	September 27	November 29

### Natural Heritage bid update

Back in December, the bid to obtain natural heritage status for the Woorabinda reserves seemed to be stalling.

The stumbling block was that although the Adelaide Hills Council (AHC) owns three of the reserves and is responsible for all four, Hender is actually Crown land.

A natural heritage agreement, once approved, is incorporated in the land title and binds any subsequent owners of the land if it is sold. But modifying the title of Crown land, it seems, is a complex business.

Professor Chris Daniels, as patron of the Friends, took it upon himself to have a word with the then Environment Minister, Ian Hunter.

The Minister was more than willing to help and put forward several options for the Friends to consider. As a result a joint delegation from the AHC and the Friends of Woorabinda met the minister shortly before Christmas to agree on a way of solving the problem or at least speeding up the process.

The option initially preferred by both the AHC and the Friends was for the ownership of Hender to be transferred from the Crown to the AHC for a nominal payment.

However, the Minister had been advised (as we had been), that simply transferring ownership of Hender from the Crown to the AHC is not quite as simple as it appears, and could take years.

It was agreed therefore that the transfer of Hender from Crown Land to full council ownership should be

deferred. It is something the AHC CEO Andrew Aitken said he would like to see happen, but not if it delayed or complicated getting heritage agreements in place.

Instead, the Minister undertook to have the classification of Hender upgraded as soon as possible from recreation to conservation, and he also said he would ask for the heritage agreements over all four components of the Bushland Reserves to be expedited as soon as possible.

He even told his officials he would like to see it done in time for him to join us all in a celebration in the reserves in late February.

That did not happen, despite the best efforts of those involved.

Staffing cuts to the Heritage Branch under the previous government, combined with a large number of native vegetation applications, have resulted in a considerable backlog.

At the time of writing, the finalising of the heritage agreement for Hender is expected to take another three to six months. It is not clear what if any difference the change of government may make to this time frame.



## The round dozen

Just when the Committee of the Friends were beginning to wonder if they smelled, three new members have joined the team – Jan Walker, Nicola Hastings and Iris Iwanicki.

They are a very welcome addition to the group, in a year when the Committee already has a number of major items to deal with.

As well as the perennial items of bushcare planning, grant applications, finance, publicity, and liaising and sharing information with other groups, we have the application for Natural Heritage listing, the proposed native garden, a change of government and the end of the Mt Lofty Ranges Natural Resource Management Board to consider.

The new members bring the Committee up to 12. That includes Janet Pedler, who has taken leave of absence to take up a teaching contract on the West Coast.

### On being a (new) Committee member – Jan Walker

Apart from the wine and nibbles supplied at meetings, and the company of interesting people, why am I happy to be on the Committee?

Areas like Woorabinda and its surroundings are precious in our increasingly urbanised environment and once alienated they are almost impossible to reclaim.

Unfortunately the idea of preserving areas for the conservation of our flora and fauna is not a given. Their continuance in that role is usually the result of the efforts of community groups who not only recognise the huge benefits of having areas of local bush but are able to persuade others to this view.

The progress on conservation listing of the Woorabinda Bushland Reserves is testament to the success of this committee and I do appreciate how much time and effort has gone into obtaining such a listing.

As a new resident of the district I am benefiting from the areas of bushland close to my home so I am glad to help the Committee and the rest of the Friends to maintain the integrity of Woorabinda.

Steven Brooks, the Biodiversity Officer from the Adelaide Hills Council, is a regular attendee, though not a voting member. Steven is our main point of contact with the council, but is occasionally joined by other council staff members on specific issues.

Any member of the Friends is welcome to attend any of the monthly meetings as an observer. Technically, you will not be allowed to vote, but you can raise issues and will be welcome to share the nibbles and a glass of wine at the end.

The Committee meets at 7.30 pm on the third Tuesday of (almost) every month, in the Environment Centre building.

An April meeting has still to be confirmed, as a number of Committee members will be away.



FoWBR Committee 2018		
Kathy Bowman	8370 9177	Public Officer, membership, website
Merilyn Browne	8339 6839	Newsletter
Brian Donaghy	8339 2033	Chairman
Marilyn Forward	8339 3162	Displays
Philip Hicks	8339 3156	Treasurer, Working Bee Coordinator, Past Chair
Bob James	8339 1903	Deputy Chair
Janet Pedler		Volunteer support
David Ragless	8339 1038	Past Chair, Historian
Lorri Ragless	8339 1038	Minute Secretary, publicity
Nicola Hastings	0467 043 222	Assistant Secretary
Jan Walker	0418 851 266	
Iris Iwanicki		

The committee can also be contacted at [woorabinda@internode.on.net](mailto:woorabinda@internode.on.net)

## Recent Wildlife sightings

Three recently fledged White-faced Herons were photographed at the lake in January.

Other recent sightings include an Australasian Grebe, Little Pied and Great Cormorants, and Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos.

A Southern Brown Bandicoot has been seen at Madurta.



Little Pied Cormorant



Great Cormorant

## Working Bee achievements

The February Working Bee removed a large amount of gorse, *Sollya*, blackberry and *Acacia longifolia* from the fire revegetation site. A lot of good regeneration has occurred in this area.

In March the group worked upslope from the creekline in Stirling Park, again addressing gorse, blackberry and *Acacia longifolia*. There were also many ivy and sycamore seedlings to be removed.

The Thursday group has been working on broom, gorse and blackberry near the boardwalk by the lake.



Young White-faced Herons



Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo

Contributors to this issue include Brian Donaghy, Kath Bowman, Philip Hicks, Jan Walker, Jane Schoettgen, Lorri and David Ragless and Marilyn Browne.

Affiliations: The Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves Inc. is a member of Friends of Parks Inc. It is a registered Landcare Group and a member of Greening Australia, Trees for Life and the Central Hills Green Web.

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 Woorabinda Bushland Reserves Inc.



**Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves Membership application/renewal**

I/we would like to join/renew membership of the Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves Inc. (Strike out words not applicable)

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

\$.....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**.....

**Please return to:** Kathy Bowman, Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves Inc., 2 Bogaduck Road, Aldgate 5154