



Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves  
**NEWS LETTER**

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## **Heritage Agreement achieved**

On the beautiful blue sky day that was Wednesday 22 May, a large group of people gathered at Woorabinda Environment Centre. The Minister for Environment and Water, the Hon. David Speirs, local Member Josh Teague, Adelaide Hills Council (AHC) Mayor Jan-Claire Wisdom and CEO Andrew Aitken, Woorabinda Patron Prof. Chris Daniels, Ministerial, Departmental and AHC staff, several journalists and a good number of Friends of Woorabinda Bushland Reserves (FOWBR) were all present for this auspicious occasion.

Emily Jenke, Presiding Member of the Native Vegetation Council (NVC), opened proceedings with an acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the land on which we were gathered, then introduced the Minister.

Minister Speirs mentioned the work of David and Lorri Ragless in getting Woorabinda Bushland Reserves (WBR) established. He noted that the ongoing work of maintaining WBR requires partnerships such as that between the NVC, AHC and through them, the community.

The Minister said the Heritage Agreement creates connections between the past, present and future; it offers an extra layer of protection, saving WBR for the community in perpetuity. He thanked all those involved with the Reserves.

Mayor Jan-Claire Wisdom mentioned a recent conversation she had with a Peramangk elder, in which she learned there are still shield trees in the area. She thanked the volunteers who work in and for WBR, emphasizing that protection of biodiversity hotspots such as the Reserves is critical. This needs continued moral and real support from government.



The Mayor continued that we all need access to good natural areas as part of our lives; the Heritage Agreement assures that future through the partnership between NVC, AHC and the volunteers.

David Ragless responded on behalf of FOWBR. The group is

*Minister David Speirs,  
Mayor Jan-Claire Wisdom  
and David Ragless*

delighted that the Heritage Agreement has been finalised. This recognises the importance of the biodiversity of WBR, its role as public open space and its contribution as part of the catchment of Aldgate Creek.

David noted that the current high biodiversity of WBR is due to more than 45 000 hours of volunteer labour and a quarter of a million dollars in grant funding for work beyond the capacity of the volunteers. He said that FOWBR began talks on a Heritage Agreement 20 years ago, but this was dismissed by the Council of the day. Those involved in changing that situation include FOWBR's Patron, Prof. Chris Daniels, the current AHC CEO, the previous Minister and the current State Government.

After the certificates and signs were presented, everyone adjourned for a walk around the lake before enjoying some afternoon tea.

*Right above: Emily Jenke opening proceedings*

*Below: Minister David Speirs addressing those present*



## What is a Native Vegetation Heritage Agreement?

A Native Vegetation Heritage Agreement is a legal covenant between a landowner and the State Government, through the Minister for the Environment and Water, to permanently protect a special natural area of high biological value.

The agreement is entered into voluntarily and binds current and all future owners of the area to protect the biodiversity of that title in perpetuity. It is registered on the title of that land and continues if the land changes ownership.

Agreements are only made following the recommendation of the Native Vegetation Council who assess the area for its biological value and whether it warrants protection.

The Agreement specifies that the landowner must protect flora and fauna in perpetuity. Broadly speaking anything that adversely impacts on the Agreement is not allowed.

Some activities in Heritage Agreement areas are listed as prohibited, such as grazing by livestock, introduction of non-indigenous vegetation, introduction of non-indigenous fauna, removal of timber (dead or alive), trail biking or use of any other vehicles.

Other activities, such as walking dogs on lead on paths, are allowed as long as they are not impacting on flora or fauna.

Further details are on the Department of Environment and Water (DEW) website.

Areas under Heritage Agreements are regarded as the most secure areas in which to invest by external grant funding organisations.

Landowner assistance in preparing management plans is available from the DEW for areas under a Heritage Agreement.

The Adelaide Hills Council has had a detailed management plan for Woorabinda Bushland Reserves in place for a number of years. It focuses on environmental protection and will remain in place, unchanged but reinforced by the Heritage Agreement.

Heritage Agreements are helping to maintain ecosystems in South Australia. Since the scheme was introduced in 1980, more than 2,800 landowners have agreed to pursue long term protection of over 1 million hectares of the State's native vegetation outside of Government-owned Conservation Parks and National Parks.

*Contributors to this issue: Merylyn Browne, David Ragless, Kath Bowman, Iris Iwanicki*