



# Friends of Willunga Basin

Newsletter, May 2009

## RAIL TO SEAFORD

At last! FOWB have been lobbying for many years about the necessity for public transport to extend further south. Although there is a present reprieve from high fuel prices we are sure that situation will not last long, with peak oil and the necessity to reduce greenhouse gases ever present, regardless of the economy. Although FOWB is not presently pushing for expansion of the rail to Aldinga we believe it will be needed one day as society decarbonises, and identification of a route is essential. We are told this is happening, we trust it is so.

## ALMOND BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

*A reminder to keep the last weekend in July free to come and assist on our stall on Almond Blossom Fair Day to help to raise public awareness.*

This newsletter is written, compiled and published by the committee of Friends of Willunga Basin Inc.

Views expressed do not necessarily represent those of Friends of Willunga Basin Inc.

Letters to the editor are welcomed!

The group can be contacted by writing to: PO Box 710, Willunga SA 5172  
Or by phoning:  
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## WILLUNGA BASIN PROTECTION BILL

It was with great pleasure that FOWB heard that Robert Brokenshire (former a Liberal Party Cabinet Member and now with Family First) has tabled a bill to seek legislative protection of Willunga Basin. Such protection has long been an aim of FOWB, and was very strongly promoted by John Lawrie over many years of lobbying. Rob Brokenshire has a lifelong association with the area, his family farmed here for generations and he is still actively involved in farming just over the hill in Mt Compass. Rob has addressed the Committee to give us details of his proposal.

The bill is based on legislation enacted in Western Australia to protect the Swan Valley against inappropriate legislation. Its aim is to protect the area from inappropriate housing and other development and promote agriculture as the main activity. A consultative committee with local representation would be involved in decision making about development.

FOWB believe such a bill is of central importance due to the following reasons:

- The Urban Boundary (recently expanded to include open land at Bowering Hill vital for tourism) and normal planning laws give little protection. Eventually the area would doubtless be destroyed by the sum of many small changes.
- There is almost no industrial or commercial employment in the Willunga Basin – our employment and economic future is in tourism including day trippers from urbanised Adelaide, and agriculture. Turning the district in to a dormitory would largely destroy any tourist appeal.
- We face a carbon constrained future – climate change science now indicates a cut of 80 to 90% in greenhouse emissions will be needed. This can not be achieved in sprawling suburbs that are dependant on cars. Peak oil will also undoubtedly bite hard in time, making car travel extremely expensive.
- Food is the final major issue. The Murray Darling Basin, Australia's food bowl is under serious threat from climate change. But Willunga Basin, with good soils and assured water from recycling can be a vital source of fresh food for Adelaide. The city was built where there is good soil and water – it is madness to cover that with houses!

We are delighted to hear that the Liberal Party have thrown their support behind the bill, we eagerly await the response of the ALP.

**The committee encourages all members to print the attached petition in support of the bill, and collect as many signatures as possible.**

**Completed sheets can be posted to:**

**Robert Brokenshire MLC, Parliament House, North Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000**

# Cars on the beach

The issue of allowing cars on our Willunga Basin beaches has become hugely divisive in our community of late, and Friends of Willunga Basin felt it important to add their voice to the debate. The Committee has twice been briefed by members of Aldinga Bay Coast Care on their position, which based on environmental values, safety concerns and the results of a Flinders University study aims towards the ultimate total removal of all cars from our beaches. We have been in no doubt about the position of the anti-car restriction lobby from masses of information in the media. They love the easy access and accessibility and believe problems to be minimal.

Major issues identified by FOWB are the need to protect the beach environment, in particular the fragile dunes and the nesting opportunities of the Hooded Plover, the desire to prevent cars simply driving along the beach as a road, entering at one point and leaving at another and safety issues. Biodiversity of micro life in the sand and wrack are also important. However we also recognise the long history of car access, and accept that its reduction will need to be stepwise to achieve community acceptance. FOWB have proposed that the section opposite the Washpool become car free in addition to the existing area in the short term, and would support gradual reduction in car access but not sudden drastic restrictions. We strongly oppose any extension of cars accessing the southern end of Sellicks Beach, and believe that stronger enforcement is required.

FOWB have participated in the Council initiated discussion group meetings to assist them in making a decision about this tricky issue. We appreciate the efforts of the Coast Care group in identifying the need for environmental protection and in the process being demonised by a vocal minority in the community.



Above: Hooded Plover



## Safe cycle routes in Willunga Basin

We are blessed to have the Coast to Vines cycle track running from Willunga to McLaren Vale to provide safe and pleasant off road route. But we are now in an era of rapidly increasing cycling for both recreation and the serious business of getting around for work, shopping etc. We need a lot more safe cycling routes and we need to have cycling treated as a serious transport option. A glaring deficiency is a satisfactory connection between Willunga and the coast. At present cyclists have to brave the very busy and narrow Aldinga and Biscay roads with no marked cycle lanes, or divert via Malpas Road which also lacks a cycle lane. Some cyclists presently use the quiet Little Road, including a closed section of the road and a hair-raising crossing of the Victor Harbor Road on foot.

FOWB would love input from cyclists of the Willunga Basin with ideas for lobbying for safer and more interesting cycle tracks in the Basin. And some proposals for longer term planning, for example an off road route from Willunga to Sellicks. Ideas please?

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## Maslin Beach

It seems that problems at Maslin beach seem to remain unresolved year after year. FOWB have continued to press for a more satisfactory response to the dual problems of sediment from the abandoned sand quarry at the northern end of the beach after any heavy rainfall and concerns that we have over the continued situation of stormwater passing over the abandoned rubbish dump under the Frank Hilton Reserve. We have had several meetings, including an on site one with Minister Jay Weatherill and with representatives of the Adelaide & Mt Lofty NRM Board who assure us there are no problems, we continue to disagree.

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## Aldinga Scrub Controlled Burning

FOWB jumped into action lobbying the Environment Minister in April when we became aware of a plan for controlled burning within the park to reduce fuel loads prior to the recent rain. Although appreciating the need for fire safety we had great concerns that unless a burn was done with the greatest care and with massive follow-up to control weed infestation the risks were not worth it. Factors impacting on this included the very dry state of the subsoil and perched aquifers, the stressed state of much of the vegetation and the presence of a lot of Veldt Grass, a weed which will proliferate after a fire.

## ITS' HAPPENING AT ALDINGA

### PERMACULTURE WOODLOTING & CHOOK FREE RANGE USING NATIVE SPECIES.

In 2007 Friends of Willunga Basin put forward our plan for bio corridors along drainage lines in the Willunga Creek and Washpool catchments. A key element in this plan was the establishment of native vegetation woodlot zones along flowlines; principally for bio fuels via mallee coppice plantings, but including a full range of other native plants for bio diversity value and productive uses.

Whilst the RANGE to REEF idea for vegetation and water retention corridors across the whole catchment is well accepted in landcare and conservation circles, I believe progress towards achieving the vision will be slow, until we have some tangible examples on the ground to catch people's imaginations.

I have been supporting a friend of mine, Sue Eltahir, to set up a productive native woodlot of ½ hectare, adjacent to Pt Willunga Creek at Aldinga. Her project is part of an innovative permaculture farm being developed by the Aldinga Arts/Eco Village. The principal planting is the local mallee Eucalyptus Porosa for short rotation harvesting of the stemwood for producing electricity & bio char (a form of charcoal) –

Read more about biochar here. . . . .



Other plantings include wattles for seed, saltbush for fodder, native pines (callitris) for pole timber and Christmas trees and a variety of native grasses and shrubs for chook fodder. The range of plants, none of which need irrigation and some of which come from dryer areas; will provide diversity in products and potential income streams and maximize capture of solar energy with very low energy inputs. Because only mallee stems will be cut, large amounts of carbon will accumulate in the root tubers over the next 100 years or so. Further carbon can be extracted long term if bio char is one of the products. All of the mallees and saltbushes and most of the wattles were planted last winter (2008), and a lot of the other plants are going in as this article is being written (May 2009). I have calculated that biomass from our project can produce a steady 3 kilowatt electrical output after 5 to 10 years, which would provide a cash flow of \$30-00 / day assuming we qualify for the state government feed in tariff. Hopefully it will be a federal government policy by then. It would be good to organize a district bio char co-operative to handle biomass once enough is available for a small scale plant.

We hope other people will join us in realising the vision of a more diverse, resilient and sustainable Willunga Basin.

Chas Martin May 2009.



#### Soils offer new hope as carbon sink

The huge potential of agricultural soils to reduce greenhouse gases and increase production at the same time has been reinforced by new research findings.

Trials of agrichar – a product hailed as a saviour of Australia's carbon-depleted soils and the environment- have doubled, and in one case, tripled growth when applied at the rate of 10 tonnes per hectare.

Agrichar is a black carbon byproduct of a process called pyrolysis, which involves heating green waste or other biomass, without oxygen, to generate renewable energy.

Tim Flannery is a major advocate of agrichar and pyrolysis.

Trials have demonstrated improved soil biology and raised water holding capacity.



Chas Martin

## Recognition of outstanding environmental commitment

In April this year Chas Martin was recognised by The City of Onkaparinga for his outstanding commitment to the environment.

He has been awarded the Council's Individual Category Environmental Award in recognition of over 20 years' dedication to the environment.

The Council recognises in particular his work as a member of the Washpool steering committee and the Washpool community reference group, and as the community representative on the Washpool committee of the former Willunga District Council..

His deep sensitivity to all matters environmental, historical and cultural has been greatly appreciated by the many groups with which he has worked.

FOWB is enriched by his continued commitment.

# Impressions of Copenhagen

by Chris Davies

*Wonderful, wonderful Copenhagen!*

*Hans Christian Who? As I gaze across the statue of the Little Mermaid, who in turn gazes at the foam to which she must return, never to gain a human soul, I notice the slow turn of the wind turbine blades out past the harbour. I reflect on how much this country, and this city, has contributed to our world.*

*This resilient city, born out of a fishing village, established as a fortress town by a knight bishop in 1167 and now a busy port, is home to one and a half million people.*

*A tall elegant woman in a long coat and wearing high heeled shoes sits upright, shoulders square as she pedals past to join the throng of cyclists making their daily commute. She is one of the 36 percent who choose this form of travel. Cyclists, and probably due to the excellent public transport, pedestrians, outnumber cars. The air is sweet to breathe and one cannot but help notice how fit and relaxed most people seem. Observe the clean, uncluttered open spaces between the buildings. The open air cafes invite one to sit and enjoy conversation. Kayaks glide by on the canals, the water buses ply the harbour. The skyline has a human scale, with no building over 6 storeys high. Many are renovated older buildings. Only church spires poke their way higher. Architecture is amazing, there are no mimics here.*

*The automated Metro, the light electric rail trains whisking one to the suburbs. And the bicycles- so many! The whimsical Pedersen cycle, the utilitarian Christiania bike – the ute and family taxi of cycles with its upfront cargo or passenger space .A twenty Kroner (five dollar) deposit hires a citybike, a boneshaker with solid rubber tyres (like riding a jack hammer over cobbled areas) but a great way to expedite ones journey when one has been dawdling!*



*Impression of Copenhagen cont . . . .*

*Most city dwellers are apartment dwellers, with private or communal space contained within courtyards, many the size of a city block, but if you don't live in an apartment you might reside in the freetown of Christiania, an arts-eco village of free spirits that has managed to co-exist within the city since 1972. When the youth of Copenhagen tire of Tivoli (its rollercoaster will be 100 this October) some spend their weekends sampling the alternative lifestyle of Christiania, where it is legal to smoke pot.*

*For a fortnight in December Copenhagen will host COP 15, the fifteenth Conference Of Partners of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – the third COP was held in Kyoto in 1997. The UNFCCC comprises 192 countries and 4 observers.*

*So, my original question as I gazed over the Little Mermaid to those turbines where many kilos of copper wire loops spin within magnetic fields to help produce the 3150 MW of electricity from renewable resources that make up 28% of Denmark's supply and a 13% reduction of CO2 since 1990? Did you think Andersen?...Hans Christian Andersen?*

*No, I was thinking of Hans Christian Oersted who discovered the link between magnetic flux and electricity..and whose name is given to the unit of measurement of magnetic field strength.*

*Yes, Copenhagen is an appropriate and auspicious place to hold the fifteenth Conference of Partners of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change !*



36% of Copenhagen workers commute by bicycle

# National Climate Emergency Rally

saturday  
**June 13**  
11am

Tarndanyangga (Victoria Square)  
march through CBD to Rymill Park

**A safe climate future is possible!**

For more information:

Visit : [www.cleansa.org.au](http://www.cleansa.org.au)

Climate Emergency Action Network



If undeliverable return to  
Friends of Willunga Basin Inc  
PO Box 710  
Willunga 5172  
The Willunga Basin

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If you appreciate the work that Friends of Willunga Basin please pass the membership application to a friend who may be interested in joining us.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

There is an annual fee of \$8.00 (\$10.00 family, \$5.00 concession). Members have voting rights at general meetings and are eligible to stand for office.

Please post to: P.O. Box 710, Willunga 5172

I hereby join as a FRIEND OF WILLUNGA BASIN and declare my support for retaining the natural and rural character of the Willunga Basin.

Title..... Name: (Surname)..... (First Name): .....

Address: .....

p.code ..... phone ..... Payment enc. \$  Tick if you wish us to post you a receipt

email ..... (We give our assurance that this will not be disclosed)