

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2006

WELCOME to the first newsletter of
Friends of Willow Park

Why Friends of Willow Park?

Willow Park plays a major role in the lives of the Wodonga community.

- It contributes to the health, leisure and wellbeing of Wodonga residents wishing to undertake physical activities, whether joggers, walkers, soccer players, cricketers.
- It provides a haven for the community to connect with nature and escape the stresses of everyday living.
- It is a valuable meeting place for people.
- It is an important ecosystem; home to abundant birdlife, some endangered species and a platypus family in a nearby creek.
- It provides an important greenbelt corridor.

Council's proposal to build an aquatic centre in this iconic park was a wake up call. None of us can take the future of Willow Park for granted - hence Friends of Willow Park!

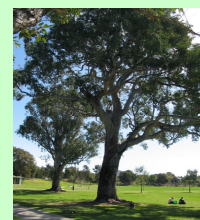
At a meeting on Tuesday 24 October Friends of Willow Park voted to incorporate. The following objectives were endorsed.

Our Objectives

- To promote the protection and preservation of Willow Park as public open space parkland;
- To promote the protection and preservation of the social, economic and environmental value of Willow Park including the flora, fauna and features (scenic, archaeological, geological, historic or scientific);
- To educate and inform the community about the role and value of Willow Park; and
- To foster community involvement in, and enjoyment of, Willow Park in accordance with the above objectives.

Friends of Willow Park will work in consultation with its members, the broader community, the City of Wodonga and relevant State Government Departments.

Friends



Of Willow Park

Patrons:
Professor David
Mitchell

Postal Address:
c/- P.O. Box 1083,
Wodonga, 3689

Phone:
Julie: (02)6056 1787
Gerard: (02) 6056 1600
Brydie: (02) 6059 5498
Steve: (02) 6056 6275
Kim: (02) 6024 3023

Our incorporation meeting

Friends of Willow Park held a meeting on Tuesday 24 October to formally vote to become incorporated association.

The meeting was chaired by long-time Wodonga resident **John Shearer**. John is geographer, former teacher, jazz enthusiast and supporter of Friends of Willow Park.

Guest speaker **Mike Copland**, who operates the Aquatic Environment Education Centre at Wonga Wetlands, spoke to us about the potential of Willow Park as an environment educational resource. He congratulated the Wodonga City Council for its foresight on environment matters such as restricting development of Wodonga's hillsides. "The decision to locate an aquatic centre in Willow Park is an aberration" said Mike. He urged the Council to find a more suitable place for the aquatic centre.

The meeting endorsed a proposal to establish a formal membership base. Fees have been set at:

- \$10 for individuals/concession/concession households
- \$20 for households

The meeting agreed that the committee could waive the membership fee in situations of hardship.

The new committee was elected

Committee of Management

At the incorporation meeting the following committee members were elected:

President - Julie Hind
Vice President - Gerard Moore
Secretary - Brydie Rebetzke
Treasurer - Steve Anderson
Public officer - Kim O'Shea
General committee:

- Nina Merrilees
- Pauline Anderson
- Geoff Emmanuel

The new president, Julie Hind, thanked the former committee for its hard work in establishing **Friends of Willow Park**.

Julie paid particular thanks to Rob Toleman, Alison Mitchell, Steve Anderson and Wolfgang Huber who formed *Save Willow Park*, the forerunner of **Friends of Willow Park**. "These people were instrumental in bringing the plight of the park to the notice of the community" Julie said.

Membership

Come join us!
The membership form is on page 4.

As a member you will:

- be able to join in any of Friends of Willow Park activities
- be helping the group protect and conserve the park for future generations
- receive a regular newsletter
- be able to attend **Friends of Willow Park** meetings - hear guest speakers - make new friends

Website

Our website is launched! Visit us at:
www.vicnet.net.au/~fowpwod
or simply Google: Friends of Willow Park

SAY *NO!* TO A POOL IN WILLOW PARK

In August Wodonga City Council announced its intention to construct a \$33 million aquatic centre in part of Willow Park. The Council plans to build a two or three storey building. With associated outdoor areas and car parking, the Council plans to take over between 2.5 - 3 hectares of parkland.

Friends of Willow Park believes such a development would impose a frightening and harmful footprint on a tranquil and much loved public open space, as well as the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Once lost, this parkland can never be replaced, whereas the aquatic development may be located at other sites. **Friends of Willow Park** is actively encouraging Wodonga City Council to consider other sites for its aquatic plans.

Council has agreed to defer any action on the aquatic centre until after a community consultation process. The first stage of that community consultation is happening **now**. This stage of consultation ends on 30 November. Council wants feedback on:

- Where an aquatic and leisure centre should be built
- Why a particular site is a good idea - or a bad idea
- What type of pool and other facilities the community wants
- What people think about how much money should be spent on the pool and other facilities

IT IS **IMPORTANT** FOR ALL OF US TO TELL COUNCIL OUR IDEAS

WE have until **30 November** to contribute.
WRITE TO COUNCIL WITH YOUR IDEAS.
TELL THEM NO POOL IN WILLOW PARK!
TAKE YOUR LETTER TO COUNCIL BY 30 NOVEMBER.

If you need help to write your letter, or to get it to Council, you can contact any of the following people. Julie: 6056 1787;
Gerard: 6056 1600; Brydie: 6059 5498;
Steve: 6056 6275; Kim: (02) 6024 3023

Patrons

Patrons are eminent members of their community. They are chosen on the basis of the compatibility of their values with those of **Friends of Willow Park** and the potential of their contribution to our objectives.

Friends of Willow Park is pleased to welcome **Professor David Mitchell** as our first Patron. David is an internationally respected wetland ecologist. He has spent his professional life as an advocate for improving the quality and use of water in the landscape, particularly in the management of catchment and irrigation systems.

Unleash the budding scientist in you

Jess Aitken from North East Catchment Management Authority will hold a *Water Watch* training day for interested Friends of Willow Park supporters.

This is your chance to...

Learn how to test the health of the water in House Creek

Look at how the stormwater treatment wetland works

Discover water bugs - good and bad

Play around with water test kits and nets

For further information contact:
Alison on 6056 1938

FRIENDS OF WILLOW PARK

Membership Form

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES AND FEES:

- \$10 concession, students, individuals, concession household
- \$20 households

Note: the membership fee can be waived in situations of hardship

I wish to join Friends of Willow Park. I agree to be bound by the rules of the Association and to support the group's objectives

Membership category: _____

Payment: (circle) Cash/Cheque
Cheques payable to: Friends of Willow park Inc.

SIGNATURE: _____

Participating in Friends of Willow Park

Friends of Willow Park is an active group and we encourage you to get involved. Please indicate how you would like to participate (you can tick as many of these as you want).

- Helping with the campaigns to save Willow Park from undue development
- Being part of the Committee of Management
- Helping with the newsletter
- Walks, talks, tours, socials
- Hands-on environment projects
- Water quality testing
- Information stalls and publications
- Interest Groups
- Fundraising

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