

# Making plans for

City Life  
October 2009

THE Willow Park Community Forum heard most people in the community want the much-loved Wodonga parkland to stay the same.

Community stakeholders and Wodonga Council met to discuss the 25-year master plan for the park, with common theme coming from discussions that the park was the centerpiece of the community.

Apart from discussions on some small improvements to toilets, shading and seating, the forum delegates agreed they wanted the park's natural state to be retained.

Wodonga Council has been working in partnership with Friends of Willow Park in the Willow Park Community Conversations project since July this year.

Since the launch of the project both organisations have been working hard to find out what park-users, neighbouring residents and the general community value about the park, how they want it used and what it should look like.

A Play and Say Day in the park, community surveys, as well as on-line discussions also contributed to inform the Willow Park Community Forum.

Wodonga Mayor Cr Mark Byatt spoke to participants about the importance of community engagement and community ownership of the park.

The floor was then opened up for discussions from Glen Johnson from the Department of Sustainability and Environment about why

parks are important to cities, Julie Hind from Friends of Willow Park shared community information and Peter McLarty from Wodonga Council spoke about the park from a city perspective.

The forum was a great opportunity for the community to be involved in local action on the environmental and planning issues affecting the future of Willow Park.

Some of the key themes of the forum were Willow Park:

- Is in the heart of the city and connects all other parklands to other;
- Is the centerpiece for thriving communities;
- Is owned by the community;
- Is integral to the city as it is the main urban parkland within central Wodonga;
- Is used in a variety of ways supporting both active and passive recreation;
- Supports a living, urban and bushland network;
- Needs to be environmentally sustainable and support increased biodiversity; and,
- Is a safe place for all.

The feedback will now be used to assist in formulating the master plan, which will be completed this financial year.

The Friends of Willow Park will be consulted and involved in this process as the plan takes shape.