

# Friends Of Willow Park Inc.



Educating and involving the community in protecting, preserving and valuing parklands

## NEWSLETTER – May 2009

### Promoting FOWP on Facebook

We have launched a new Friends of Willow Park Facebook page to promote our work and communicate with a broader range of people.

#### What is Facebook?

Facebook is an internet tool designed to facilitate networking. It is used by 200 million people around the world to share photos, track what friends are up to, send messages, and organise events. Users post updates, photos and messages to their Facebook profile. They also add other users as "friends". Then the main page of Facebook provides each user with an overview of what their "friends" are talking about, planning and doing. The best way to understand it is to try it out - <http://www.facebook.com/>

#### What is our Facebook Page?

Our Facebook page allows Facebook users to become our "fans". Our "fans" will receive notifications when we add photos, update our "status" or announce an event.

It will also promote us to Facebook users. For example, if someone is "tagged" (captioned) in a photo on our Facebook page, their "friends" will receive a note saying there is a new photo. By going in to check out the photo, people learn about Friends of Willow Park. Facebook can be a great tool for promotion and for communicating with our "internet generation" supporters.

If you are on Facebook, search for Friends of Willow Park, or go directly to <http://tinyurl.com/pqajz6>

If you are not on Facebook, why not join and become a fan – and then recommend us to all your Facebook friends!



Our Facebook page is one new way we are communicating with our members and the wider community.

### Next Community Gardening in the Park & Waterwatch

**Sunday 24 May & 28 June**

**Community gardening in the park  
1.30 pm**

**Waterwatch:  
3.30 pm**

**BYO refreshments, sunscreen, hat  
Meet near the BBQ area in Willow Park**

**Phone Pauline – 6056 6275  
or Ali - 0409 032 490**

Patrons: Professor David Mitchell, Professor Allan Curtis, Dr Juliet Bird

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

Website: [www.friendsofwillowpark.org.au](http://www.friendsofwillowpark.org.au)

Phone: Julie: (02)6056 1787, Ali (02) 6056 1938

## Fire ecology

Dr Brian Lord shared his extensive knowledge and experience of fire ecology and behaviour at our Information Evening in April. Brian began by explaining how fire is a regular feature in the Australian environment. Geological charcoal deposits increased approximately 40,000 years ago, indicating evidence of the use of fire by Indigenous people for food gathering, pathway clearing, cultural activities and as a weapon. Captain Cook described this use of fire by Indigenous Australians as “smooks”.

Brian contrasted the use of fire by Indigenous Australians with that of new Australians. Burning is used by Europeans to reduce fuel, create firebreaks, to aid mineral prospecting, create green-pick for stock and, sadly, for fun. It is interesting to note that the two groups start fires for very different purposes. However, traditional burning is rarely allowed in modern-day Australia.

Brian went on to discuss the difficulties authorities face in determining the fire regime for fuel-reduction and ecological burns - How hot? How often? How big? What is the right timing? What has happened in between the burns? These are very difficult questions for those charged with reducing fuel to minimise the impact of wildfire in Australia. They must achieve this goal within a very narrow window of opportunity with respect to weather.

Brian then detailed the plant, animal and human responses to fire. He outlined the research around the ecology and behaviour of fire, including fire spread and what happens after a fire. It was interesting to hear Brian explain why none of the current models of fire behaviour are adequate for all conditions. Brian described how a severe firestorm (such as the recent ones in Victoria) behaves like pyroclastic flow from a volcano with a “pyroclastic surge” created as the smoke column collapses. Brian’s description created vivid imagery in the minds of all those who were fortunate to hear him speak.

We are all now fully aware that “if you make your house part of the fuel complex, it is going to burn”. Thank you so much, Brian, for sharing your knowledge and experience with us. We hope to have a guest speaker in October who will add to our knowledge in this area and talk about fire plans for urban areas.



F.O.W.P members, supporters and members of the public listening to Brian Lord’s presentation

### Next Information Evening

House Creek: What is going on in there?

#### Guest Speaker – Dr Alison Mitchell

Friends of Willow Park is thrilled to announce that Dr Alison Mitchell will be Guest Speaker at our next information evening.

Alison spent 20 years working for CSIRO at the Murray-Darling Freshwater Research Centre where she gained a broad understanding of freshwater ecology.

Alison will speak about how we can limit the impacts of urbanisation on our streams and our Waterwatch results.

All welcome.

**When:** 18 June at 7:30pm

**Where:** Belvoir Special School, Bowman Court, Wodonga.

**RSVP** by 15 June by email [president@friendsofwillowpark.org.au](mailto:president@friendsofwillowpark.org.au) or call Julie on 6056 1787

## Friends of Belvoir Park-Sumsion Gardens

Belvoir Park-Sumsion Gardens is a vital green space on the northern side of Wodonga. Commonly referred to as simply "Sumsion Gardens", the gardens established by Eric Sumsion make up just one part of this beautiful park.

Belvoir Park was created after the 1914-18 war. It centres on a Lagoon between Church St and Huon St. The park, lagoon and gardens offer unparalleled community green space, centring on a vibrant wetland.

The lagoon and surrounds attract much bird life, including pelicans, native swans, king fishers, galahs and cockatoos. The lagoon is an important breeding ground for local turtles.

We know that Belvoir Park-Sumsion Gardens is worth protecting, enhancing and preserving for future generations.

If you feel the same way, please come to our initial discussion next Monday, from 6 p.m. to be held at the Albury Wodonga Community College.

A light meal will be provided. RSVP to Kieran on 0430509913



We would like to acknowledge and thank Landcare for its generous support. We have received a Start-Up Grant to help establish Friends of Belvoir Park-Sumsion Gardens.

## Master Plan – an update

As reported in our March newsletter, *Friends of Willow Park* continues to meet with staff and councillors from the City of Wodonga regarding the Master Plan process for Willow Park. We hope that through this process with council we can develop a community vision that would guide the management and any development in Willow Park well into the future.

In our discussions with council staff the following program of community engagement activities has been proposed. These activities seek to find out what people value about the park; how they would like the park used; and what it should look like in the future.

**A Say and Play Day:** A day in the park that would involve a variety of fun activities, targeted at both children and adults. Open to the whole community, this event would be an important starting point, gathering ideas for the rest of the process.

**A Community Survey:** This survey would be distributed randomly to two hundred people living in close proximity to the park. This would give us more scientific data on the views of residents.

**A Photoboard at Wodonga Library:** An opportunity for people to photograph their favourite things about the park, and share them with the rest of the community.

**An Online Forum:** Designed to bring together all the different groups that have an interest in a park, as well as being open to the wider community. This forum would give people a chance to have more in depth input, especially if they are unable to attend other events.

**A Community Forum:** Drawing on the information gathered in other activities, this forum would explore a shared vision for the park, and address key issues and challenges facing the park in the future.

These proposed activities will soon be put to Council for its consideration. Watch out for further information about the master plan activities in Council's *CityLife* and our next newsletter.

## Paws in the Park

Friends of Willow Park joined in the fun of *Paws in the Park* on Sunday 19 April. It was a great opportunity for us to let people know what we do in the park – and for the park.

Thousands of Wodonga residents came out to walk and socialise their dogs – and to find out more services and products from the various pet oriented merchants.

A great hit with children were the lucky-dip prizes we gave away to those who completed our short fun quiz about being a responsible dog owner.

Many members of our group are dog owners. *Friends of Willow Park* supports the shared use of public green space for all sorts of activities, such as *Paws in the Park*.



Paws in the Park participants learn and ask questions about our work in Willow Park.



A dog in a flyball race in which teams of dogs race over a series of hurdles to fetch a ball to take to their owner

## Renewal of our Landcare grant

We are happy to announce that our Landcare grant has been renewed for another year. Among other things, this grant enables us to employ our coordinator.

Many thanks to Landcare for its generous support.

## Our Strategic Plan for 2009-2010

We would like to thank those members who attended our planning evening on Tuesday 7 April (and those who put forward ideas via email and the telephone).

We have drafted up an exciting range of activities to progress our important work. Members will soon receive a copy of the draft plan for comment. Please take the time to read it and make comment.

## Nest boxes in the park

Recently, three members (Bart, Ali and Wilma) renumbered the nest boxes in the park and 'mapped' them using geographic information systems. This will form part of a small research project. By monitoring what is using the boxes, over a few years we can see if bearing and/or height and/or ledge or no ledge have any impact on the use. You can help by taking notice of what is using the boxes and then emailing your observations (including the number of the box) to:

[newsletter@friendsofwillowpark.org.au](mailto:newsletter@friendsofwillowpark.org.au).

Please note that some boxes have two numbers – a number on the side and one on the bottom. It is the number on the bottom of the box that is relevant.

We will soon add the nest box map to our web site so that you can look at where they all are.

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## FRIENDS OF WILLOW PARK

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIP IS FREE**  
Donations always welcome

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 (below).

Donation: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Receipt Number: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Send your completed form to:

Friends of Willow Park Inc.  
c/- P.O. Box 1083, Wodonga, 3689  
Email:  
[membership@friendsofwillowpark.org.au](mailto:membership@friendsofwillowpark.org.au)  
Fax: 6056 2694

#### 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). I would like to help out with:

- 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

#### Our Objectives

- (a) To promote the protection and preservation of Willow Park as public open space parkland;
- (b) 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);
- (c) To educate and inform the community about the role and value of Willow Park; and
- (d) To foster community involvement in, and enjoyment of, Willow Park in accordance with the above objectives.

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