

NEWSLETTER — Nov 2011

We win a statewide Landcare award!

We proudly announce that Friends of Willow Park has been awarded the Toshiba Community Group Landcare award. We also received a 'Highly Commended' in the Urban Landcare award category.

Alison Mitchell and Julie Hind travelled to Melbourne for the award ceremony, which was held at Government House. The Governor presented the group with two framed certificates, a trophy and prize money of \$500.



Julie Hind receiving the award on behalf of Friends of Willow Park – pictured with: Heather Campbell, CEO of Landcare Australia Limited; Victoria's Minister for Environment and Climate Change Ryan Smith; and Governor Chernov.

The awards recognised achievements in four areas:

1. *Working with comprehensive plans:*
In particular, it recognised:

- The significant role we played in developing the 25 year Master Plan for Willow Park; and
 - Our work in developing a concept plan for the Pearce Street wetland entrance that will increase diversity and the aesthetics of the area.
2. *Repairing or preventing degradation of land for the benefit of the community:* In particular, it recognised:
 - The advocacy and education we have undertaken to highlight the importance of phragmites in House Creek. This has resulted in its retention in the creek, which has provided needed habitat for small birds, especially the azure kingfisher, and helped minimise the flood damage to the creek and park;
 - Our auspicing of Gardens for Wildlife as an important way of spreading the biodiversity message to home gardeners;
 - Our regular 'community gardening in the park' activities that have helped to restore habitat to the creek and park;
 - Our regular Waterwatch activities which have provided important monitoring information and helped to detect early signs of creek-based noxious weeds; and
 - Our current Biolinks project that is helping remove woody weeds and revegetate 10 kms of House Creek.

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

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Email: president@friendsofwillowpark.org.au

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3. *Working with others to develop our plans:* In particular it recognised:
 - The community engagement process that we developed and implemented as part of the Master Plan and the concept plans for the Pearce Street wetland corner of the park; and
 - Our willingness to learn from other Landcare groups.

4. *Sharing results, skills and outcomes and to promote Landcare to others.* In particular it recognised:
 - Our regular information evenings that showcase expert speakers from a range of fields;
 - Our regular newsletters;
 - The field days we have hosted as part of our various projects;
 - Our collaboration with Wodonga West Primary School and Wodonga TAFE to build the frog pond in the school's Stephanie Alexander Garden;
 - Our regular National Tree Day events;
 - Our hosting of and support to Friends of Belvoir Park;
 - Our participation in community events such as Lounging on High; Paws in the Park; and Farmers' Markets; and
 - Our hosting of and support to new stewardship groups along House Creek.

Congratulations to all our members, volunteers and supporters – this award would not have been possible without you!



Alison Mitchell and Julie Hind proudly display our awards – Government House, Melbourne

Nesting boxes are a learning experience

Friends of Willow Park put up 45 nestboxes during Abor Week in 2008. The Wodonga Senior Secondary VCAL class built the boxes under the excellent supervision of Ron Herbert. Belvoir Special School and Wodonga South Primary School planted nectar producing shrubs and grass to support the wildlife.

These Gould League boxes are designed for Sugar Gliders and parrots. In 2008 we had sighting of Eastern Rosellas near the Hereford Street Bridge and evidence of Sugar Gliders close to the wetlands.

We have been monitoring the boxes over the last four years, cleaning out starling nest, replacing boxes when they have come down and organising to have bees removed from time to time. This year we have seen evidence of four Sugar Gliders' nests and Rosellas. We have also surprised a Brushtail possum (how did he fit through the opening?).

Last year Wolfgang and I thought one of the best ways to learn was to have closer observation. We placed one box and three hollow logs in trees just outside out kitchen window. A pair of Crimson Rosellas laid six eggs in the box and a pair of Eastern Rosellas selected a hollow log for their four eggs. The course of nature does not always run smoothly and both pairs successfully raised only one chick.

We learned to ensure that there was adequate drainage in the box and that the hollow log is able to be completely open at the end. They have provided hours of entertainment. We recommend one or two for every garden.



Eastern Rosella chicks with nesting adult

Through Wodonga TAFE we were introduced to creating habitat tree hollows in logs and pruning for hollows. The nesting hollows include excellent drainage and an internal ladder to assist the chick to leave the nest. Wolfgang has created a number of these and shown them at local eco fairs. If you are interested in seeing the hollows contact him on wj.huber@bigpond.com

Information on creating the boxes is available online.

Pruning for Habitat workshop information from VTIO Victoria http://www.qaa.net.au/cmsAdmin/uploads/Vtio_Habitat_Paper_SEPT_2010.pdf

Habitat Tree Hollow Dimensions <http://faunature.com.au/news-research/habitat-creation.html>

When next walking in Willow Park, you can see where the Wodonga Council has used this technique. On the large Red Gums near the soccer club room, they have removed two dangerous branches and have created nesting hollows in the remaining stump. It will be a delight to watch to see who takes up residence.

Jenni and Wolfgang Huber

Important dates

End-of-year and Christmas celebration

Friday 16 December

6.15 p.m.

**German Austrian Club
McFarland Street**

Cost: Mains, \$6; dessert, \$4; drinks at bar prices.

RSVP is essential!! – contact Pauline on: 0403 149 860 or 6056 6275



Next Community Gardening in the Park

**Sunday 18 March 2012
Sunday 15 April 2012**

9.30 – 11.30 am

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

RSVP or information:
Pauline – 6056 6275

Annual General Meeting

Our fifth Annual General Meeting was held on 3 November. Our guest speaker was Tony Marsh, president of the Baranduda Landcare group. He presented an overview of the club and its activities. Formed 12 years ago, their aim is "Restoring native vegetation to create a diverse weed free environment".

For the last 11 years Baranduda Landcare group has organised activities on Planet Ark Day, involving three local schools. These activities are conducted over a week.

Baranduda has experienced increased urbanisation, increased land clearing for agriculture and a decrease in remnant vegetation. This has increased pressure on Indigenous plants and animals. Over the 12 years the group has planted over 3,500 plants with an aim to increase biodiversity and to create wildlife corridors. It has also undertaken a nesting box program. Two hundred nesting boxes have been placed in appropriate locations and are monitored. Camera technology is being implemented to improve monitoring. Other programs undertaken include workshops, weed control, plant propagation and increasing public awareness of the threats to our native wildlife.

Information is held on the Landcare website including details of workshops, projects, past events, information videos and contact detail.

<http://northeast.landcarevic.net.au/baranduda>

The meeting was greatly entertained by videos on an overview of the group and a second video on how to deal with bees in nesting boxes. Tony also spoke of the challenges facing the group, a major one being sourcing funding and applying for grants.

Thanks to Tony for a very informative and entertaining show and tell.

Annual reports

A number of reports were tabled at the Annual General Meeting and will soon be available on our web site:

www.friendsofwillowpark.org.au

The new committee

The committee for 2012 was nominated at the Annual General Meeting. Congratulations and thank you to:

President – Julie Hind

Secretary – Jenni Huber

Treasurer – Stephen Anderson

Other committee members:

- Bart Citroen
- Pauline Anderson
- Alison Mitchell
- Margaret Richardson
- Gerard Moore



The new committee: Jenni, Ali, Stephen, Julie, Gerard, Pauline and Margaret – Bart was away.

The committee meets on the first Wednesday of the month. If you would like to input to the meeting in any way contact Jenni on:

secretary@friendsofwillowpark.org.au.

Volunteer job vacancies

We would like to thank Bruce Nulty for his generous offer to help with our web site. This is greatly appreciated!

Members and friends can volunteer in a number of ways. Current vacancies include:

- helping with the newsletter
- helping with nestboxes
- helping with Waterwatch

For further information contact our coordinator, Jill on: 0457 834 852



Friends of Willow Park Inc.

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

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: _____

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

Send your completed form to:

Mail:
Friends of Willow Park Inc.
c/- P.O. Box 5319, Wodonga Plaza,
Wodonga, 3690
Email:
membership@friendsofwillowpark.org.au

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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