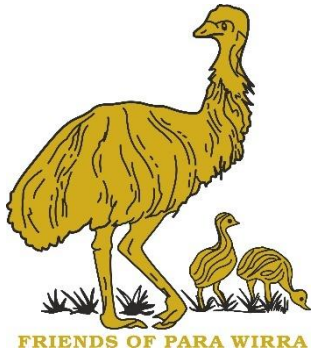




PARA WIRRA TIDINGS

July/Aug 2026

Vol 2 No. 3

Update from our President, Anita Corbran

They say March is Adelaide's silly season, but I think Para Wirra's might be right now! We've had plenty of rain, plenty of weeds, and we are well into school and group visit season. Recently, we hosted almost 60 One Tree Hill Primary School students with Green Adelaide for a lively day of activities, which you can read more about in this edition. Needless to say, we were all a little exhausted by the afternoon. I did hear Anne and Tom say they were rather glad to be retired from teaching!

The Friends of Parks and Nature AGM in Adelaide was well attended by our group in May, with Anne, Tom, Colin and I all making the trip.

Hayley Hogan was voted in as the new President, with **Duncan McKenzie** stepping aside to take on the role of Vice President, and Kevin Osborn has stepped down after some 25 years as Treasurer.

We don't just go for the morning tea, although it was very good! It was also lovely to catch up with

friends from **Anstey Hill**, the **Orchid Society** and **Mound Springs**. Sandy Carruthers presented a fascinating history of South Australia's natural oyster reefs, which UniSA biologists are now working to reconstruct. I imagine it is probably as challenging as trying to restore cleared bushland, but they are seeing encouraging results so far.

Birds SA and BirdLife recently hosted a webinar on the **importance of mid-storey vegetation** and the birds and other wildlife it supports, which I was pleased to attend. The preference for neat, open gardens has its roots in early European ideals as well as safety concerns, and getting the message on the importance of multi-storey planting through to councils can still be a challenge. Personally, I have noticed a significant change along the Torrens Linear Park, from Athelstone to the coast. I grew up on the River Torrens in Paradise, when bamboo,



Photo credit: Friends of Parks and Nature facebook page

boxthorn forests and orchards were common before the Linear Park was established. It changed from a wild patch of mostly weeds into a tree-and-lawn park, where the bullying **Noisy Miners** seemed to dominate — a behaviour we have influenced by planting in that style. Lately, however, I have noticed more low and mid-storey plantings throughout the Linear Park by many councils, and it is bringing back the smaller birds and changing the behaviour of the Noisy Miners. Great to see.

Our July bushcare session was happily cut short for a grand **4WD safari to visit Mike's seat** at Glenburnie, followed by lunch back at the Resource Centre. Thank you to everyone who helped on the day, with Anne and Tom still managing to pull everything together despite being unwell all week. Steve, Erik and friends also did a stellar job with the installation of the seat. Rose's kids enjoyed a cheap sideshow, giggling all the way in my Suzuki Jimny, which does tend to tip a little! Hearing about Mike and Patsy's time with the park was beautifully presented by Steve, along with some memories from Mike himself. (We've included a summary of Steve and Erik's speech on the day later in this newsletter.)

We also had the pleasure of recognising Kathleen Matthews for 20 years of membership and Bernice Cohen for 10 years with Friends of Para Wirra. It was a special moment to hear them reflect on how much the park has given back to them over the years — perhaps even more than they feel they have given through their volunteering. I think that is something many of us can relate to.



Keep up the good work everyone!

Anita Corbran

President, Friends of Para Wirra Conservation Park

Long Service Awards

Kathleen Matthews

A member of Friends of Para Wirra for 20 years, Kath has made a wonderful contribution to the group. She played a major role in both editions of Focus on Flora: Native Plants of the Adelaide Hills and Barossa, and the little green book, Flowers of Para Wirra published by FOPW back in 2011.

Kath has been a regular contributor to our newsletter, including her well-received photography and research on Wanderer Butterflies.

Known for her resilience and determination, Kath once braved freezing, wet conditions at night in the park to photograph a ghost mushroom. After trudging half a kilometre into a secluded area of the park in pitch darkness, she lay in wet mulch under an umbrella and still managed to work her camera and capture the shot.



Bernice Cohen

A member of Friends of Para Wirra for 10 years, Bernice has been a regular and valued presence at our bushcare sessions, travelling quite a distance to join us. She also supports Friends of Belair and Friends of Mound Springs, bringing with her a broad interest in conservation and volunteering.

As a former DEW staff member, Bernice has a unique perspective on park management issues and a wealth of insight to share. If you have the opportunity during a bushcare session, take the time to chat with Bernice — you are sure to come away enlightened by her many interesting recollections.

Bushcare Bites

Thursday 7 May – Track Maintenance, Olives and Boneseed on South Para River

It might have been the coldest day in six months (just 14° max) but the sunshine made for a pleasant excursion to the South Para ford at the bottom of the Devil's Nose track, travelling via Scenic drive and the Quarry track in 4WD vehicles.

We enjoyed a spectacular morning tea spot on a rocky ledge overlooking South Para River.



We cut and swabbed and hand-pulled boneseed from amongst the native vegetation. On the main track, Steve pointed out a turpentine bush, which has separate male and female plants, and only grows in this part of the park.

Anita filmed some of our activities, which Darren edited into a short video for National Parks and Wildlife. Some snippets are included in a video they posted for National Volunteer Week on their Facebook page (18 May 2026).



<https://www.facebook.com/NPWSSA>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1HoJZhXvj5/>

Saturday 16 May – Scout Corner

Luckily the predicted rain held off and we had very pleasant (cool, overcast) weather for this working bee in the Goldfields area. We parked at a spot known as 'scout's corner', where local scout groups used to camp regularly, pre-COVID.

We hand-pulled small boneseed, grubbed out olives and cut-and-swapped a couple of wild roses. The tree-popper worked a treat on the small-to-medium sized olives. The area also has lots of bridal creeper and some larger olives, to be tackled on another day.

Anne narrowly avoided walking into this horrifying giant spider!



Morning tea was on a rocky slope with a nice outlook.



Thursday 4 June – Mack Creek

The first Thursday in June was cold and wet, but that didn't deter our trail maintenance team. Years of intermittent heavy flows in Mack Creek had undermined part of the walking track, putting it at risk of collapse. Our team redirected the track around an *Exocarpos* (native cherry tree) and two large *xanthorrhoea* (grass trees).



It took a lot of hard, muddy work but by the end of the morning, the

redirected track was made safe for bushwalkers.

Meanwhile, other members of the group pulled scattered small boneseed on nearby hillsides.



Saturday 20 June – Wallaby Grass and Bridal Creeper

For something a little different, we sowed some wallaby grass near the Gawler View car park. This involved raking the ground, spreading the soft, fluffy seed and tamping it down.

Other members of the team grubbed out South African weed orchid, or used small hand sprayers to tackle bridal creeper. Even a small olive or two were removed.



Saturday 18th July – A very special celebration

Glorious winter sunshine greeted the large number of volunteers who assembled for our shortened bush care session. Geoff and Steve led the FoPW team who spread out in the bush from the park office, removing or treating scattered invasive weeds like boneseed and bridal creeper. We returned to the park office for a social morning tea and barbeque lunch with our guests of honour, Mike and Patsy Johnson (and many family members).

Thank you to Mike and Patsy

A convoy of 4WDs took our guests and many FoPW members for a drive through the newer Glenburnie section of the park to Michael's Seat. On this panoramic site, Steve and Eric had recently installed a magnificent redgum log seat in honour of Mike and Patsy's many years of contributions to our unique park.

On return a BBQ luncheon was enjoyed by all. Bernice and Kath received long service awards. We celebrated Mike and Patsy's great contributions to the park over many years with some speeches and a lovely cake made by Kath Swarbrick.

Photo credits: Darren Williams and Mike's daughter Julie.





Following is a summary of the speech Steve gave on behalf of himself and Eric, to honour Mike and Patsy.

We met Mike and Patsy through Friends of Para Wirra, and Mike strongly believed Glenburnie should become part of the park. He could not bear the thought of walking Devils Nose trail with subdivision and trail bikes just over the fence.

When NPW could not find the funds to buy it, Mike and Patsy showed remarkable foresight and purchased the property themselves. It was a relief to have neighbours with such strong conservation ethics. Over many years, Mike put enormous effort into controlling olives, boneseed, artichoke and grazing pressure across Glenburnie and Para Wirra.

Erik was tasked with developing a Vegetation Management Plan for Para Wirra. Mike also supported Faye Mitchell's work collecting data for the Para Wirra Vegetation Management Plan, a major survey that has guided weed control across the reserve for the past 25 years.

Mike and Patsy were tireless advocates for Para Wirra and the South Para Biodiversity Project. Mike served as patron and strong supporter for around 20 years, while Patsy was a dedicated President of Friends of Para Wirra for 14 years. Together with Ted and Molly Hughes, they also played a key role in the re-dedication of Para Wirra as a Conservation Park. Alongside this work, they restored the old cottage and built an energy-efficient, fire-resilient home, while Mike continued his determined weed control work on Glenburnie and in the park.

More recently, Mike and Patsy sold most of Glenburnie, much improved from when they bought it, so it could be added to Para Wirra Conservation Park. This followed many attempts, negotiations and surveys that confirmed important grassland habitats and species not found elsewhere in the park.

The remaining unsold sections include a large area protected under a Heritage Agreement.

On a personal note, I acknowledge Mike and Patsy's support, encouragement and generosity over more than 25 years. As both a Ranger and member of Friends of Para Wirra, I am deeply grateful for their extraordinary contribution.

Steve Taylor and Erik Dahl,
ex Para Wirra Rangers,
18th July 2026



Scouts, Schools and other Visits

Mon 11 May – From the Hills to the sea!

Some Friends of Para Wirra enjoyed a day out at the beach, joining volunteers from the Semaphore Largs Dunes Group at their regular Monday morning coast care session.

Many of the weeds in the coastal sand dunes are different to the ones we usually tackle in Para Wirra, so it took a while for us to get our eye in and learn to spot them. *Euphorbia terracina* was prolific, growing in amongst the native vegetation, identified by its distinctive red stems, caustic white sap and long tap root. It was certainly easy to pull weeds out of the beach sand, and much more comfortable to kneel on sand rather than on hard, rocky ground! A combined group of more than 20 people had a very successful morning, filling many large bags with weeds.



The Semaphore Largs volunteers provided a delicious morning tea. Then they led us on a coastal walk, where we saw some wonderful examples of local species regenerating naturally (including prostrate acacias and native geraniums), once the worst weeds had been removed. It was interesting to see some familiar species, like Muntries (*Kunzea pomifera*, native cranberries) and *Dodonea viscosa* (sticky hop bush) thriving in such a different environment.



There were plenty of butterflies (a swallowtail was a highlight) and birdlife. Our group saw the Singing Honeyeater, Crested Pigeon, Nankeen Kestrel, Australian Magpie and, of course, plenty of Seagulls.

For more information about caring for the dunes, check out <https://www.facebook.com/SemaphoreLargsDunesGroup/>. They meet every Monday morning (weather permitting).

This article was first published in the One Tree Hill Grapevine newsletter June 2026.

<https://www.onetreehill.org.au/index.php/grapevine>

Thursday 11 June – Green Adelaide One Tree Hill Primary School Visit

Year 3 and 4 students from One Tree Hill Primary School spent a day at the Gawler View area of Para Wirra. In addition to activities organised by Green Adelaide and the school, the Friends contributed a small part of the day's program. We took students on a short nature walk, and ran a 'show and tell' session with trail camera footage of local animals, and a display of Anita's taxidermy raptor specimens, raptor pellets, bird nests, feathers and other interesting items.

More details in the One Tree Hill Grapevine newsletter July 2026 issue, pages 6 & 7.

<https://www.onetreehill.org.au/index.php/grapevine>

Friday 25 September – Trinity Gawler River Service Day

Steve is coordinating a visit from about 15–17 students, aged between 12 and 16 years, plus staff from Trinity Gawler River. Details to follow closer the date of this event.

Grants

Wiping out Watsonia at Para Wirra

Steve has completed the project acquittal for this grant. Our contractor followed on from previous work, and undertook Watsonia control in a steep section of the rugged Para Wirra Gorge.

We had hoped to fully clear Watsonia from a further 1.5km of river valley. However, due to the very rough, steep topography with hidden pockets of Watsonia, it became obvious the contractor will need to go over each section a number of times to completely control the weed. We consider it a sound decision to be thorough and maintain a good weed front rather than push on downstream leaving pockets above untreated. The contractor achieved significant reduction of Watsonia density with minimal off target damage.



FOPW has monitored areas previously treated and found survival and recruitment of lilies, other herbs and shrubs along with some Watsonia regeneration that will need to be followed up. Photo shows native species regenerating amongst the dead remains of a patch of Watsonia, approx 12 months after treatment.

New weed warning!

A new weed has been spotted in the park. **Gazania** is a South African groundcover with



bright yellow and orange flowers. It spreads by wind-blown seeds and roadside dumping. Unfortunately, if it escapes into the park it will out-compete and smother our native vegetation. Gazania is a declared weed in South Australia – it is banned from sale in nurseries (except for sterile hybrid cultivars), but you can still see it growing on verges in the main street of One Tree Hill and elsewhere.

Olives – now a weed of National Significance

<https://weeds.org.au/national-established-weed-priorities-newp/>

National Established Weed Priorities (NEWP) is a new prioritisation process that aims to improve weed management in Australia. It has identified 15 weeds of national significance, including Olive (*Olea europaea*). These species were assessed as having

- significant negative impacts in Australia
- many feasible management options
- strong benefits and stakeholder support for taking a nationally coordinated approach to containing the species' spread and improving its management.

Note that in agreeing the new national established weed priorities, governments are **not agreeing to any regulatory changes**. Regulatory decisions on weed management are the responsibility of individual state and territory governments. However, there is potential for future investment to control these weeds.

Proposed actions for olive control include [NEWP assessment report pp83-85]:

- innovation in chemical and mechanical control methods
- integrating fire and chemical control
- improving detection using AI imaging, remote sensing and mapping
- promoting work of community groups
- integrating restoration of native bushland following olive control.

Ornithogalum Control Strategy

Chincherinchee (*Ornithogalum thyrsoides*), sometimes called 'Star of Bethlehem' is yet another garden escapee weed.

Phil has spent many years keeping it under control in Para Wirra – last year he removed over 2000 plants.



Early Chincherinchee leaves and bulbs; note small bulbils growing from roots (Photo: Kym Smith)

Geoff and Phil recently represented FOPW at an Ornithogalum Control Strategy meeting at Morialta.

Also represented were DEW NPWSA, LandscapeSA Hills & Fleurieu, Green Adelaide, and Friends of Morialta Black Hill.

The following outcomes were agreed:

- Prioritise the eradication of isolated and newly detected infestations.
- Support ongoing herbicide and control trials and share results across the group.
- Develop and distribute community awareness materials, signage and reporting tools. (Atlas of Living Australia (ALA), BioCollect and iNaturalist were identified as preferred pathways for data sharing.)
- Maintain collaboration through an ongoing stakeholder working group, with a follow-up meeting in about 6 months.

Ornithogalum is not currently a declared weed in South Australia. It is still sold in nurseries and used in the cut flower industry.

Photo credits: <https://hf.landscape.sa.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/chincherinchee-fact-sheet.pdf>

Green Adelaide Regional Landscape Plan

Green Adelaide (GA) has released a new landscape plan that sets out their strategic direction for the next 5 years, with a strong emphasis on mitigating the adverse effects of historical developments and future climate change.

<https://www.greenadelaide.sa.gov.au/about-us/plans-reports>

GA has identified three focus areas (coast and marine, inland waters, and urban neighbourhoods) aligned with 7 legislated priorities from the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 as shown in the table below (ref: p9 GA Regional Landscape Plan 2026–2031).

	Coast and marine	Inland waters	Urban neighbourhoods
Coastal management	✓		
Water resources and wetlands		✓	
Green streets and flourishing parklands			✓
Biodiversity-sensitive and water-sensitive urban design	✓	✓	✓
Fauna, flora and ecosystem health in the urban environment	✓	✓	✓
Controlling pest plants and animals	✓	✓	✓
Nature education	✓	✓	✓

This is relevant for Para Wirra, because the part of the park that is south of the South Para River, and the river itself, are included within the Green Adelaide boundary. They fund grants for activities like planting, pest and weed control, species reintroductions and seed collection. They also undertake monitoring, mapping and other data collection.

Our work in the park and our grant applications are already well aligned with their priorities, such as this quote from p19 GA Regional Landscape Plan 2026–2031.

We have opportunities to create less fragmented and healthier riparian habitat by connecting watercourses and wetlands, reducing concreted sections, and managing introduced flora and fauna that outcompete native species. This will create healthier rivers and creeks that help our native species survive and thrive.

Something to consider is how we can help to monitor the condition of the park and watercourses (e.g. native flora and fauna, invasive species) and identify ongoing improvements or deterioration.

Focus on Flora – new edition out now!

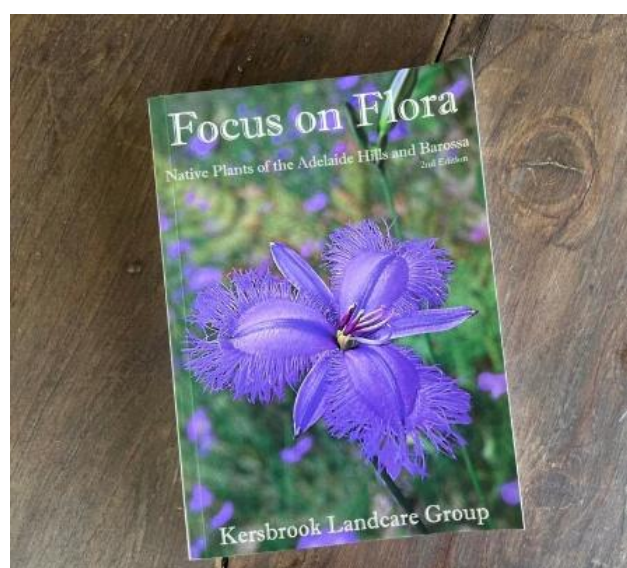
'Focus on Flora' is Kersbrook Landcare Group's wonderful photographic guide to local plants. It was first published in 2017. The new 2026 edition has been revised by Yvonne Gravier and our own Kath Matthews and Kym Smith. It includes 50 new species and the latest revised plant names.

We have some copies available for sale at our next few bushcare sessions. Books are \$40, payable in cash on the day, or by EFT to our FOPW bank account.

Account details: Friends of Para Wirra

BSB 633 000

Acc 244 211 918



Rainfall report (Bassnet Road on the eastern edge of the park)

After a dry start to the year, May, June and July were wetter than average with 390mm (more than half of our average annual rainfall). Some of this rain was very localised, with brief fierce downpours that flooded Humbug Scrub Rd near Glenburnie Rd (South of the park), while areas North of the park missed out.

Rainfall in mm (Humbug Scrub)												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
25-year Monthly Average	24	26	30	46	81	100	95	95	79	53	44	36
2026 Monthly	0	1	43	48	118	153	119					
2026 Cumulative	0	1	44	92	210	363	481					
25-year Cumulative Average	24	49	79	125	206	307	401	497	575	629	673	709

A very strong El Nino is in the long range weather outlook, with temperatures expected to warm quickly through spring into summer heatwaves (so wildflowers might be a short show this year), but rainfall through late spring and summer could go either way (wet or dry).

What is coming up

Thursday August 6th	Bushcare session	
Saturday August 15th	Bushcare session	OTH Cubs/Scouts with BBQ to follow
Thursday September 3rd	Bushcare session	
Saturday September 19th	WILDFLOWER WALK/Social morning tea with Native Orchid Society , followed by a talk about iNaturalist at the Resource Centre	
Sunday September 27 th	Barossa Goldfields Historical Society Annual Open Day 9:30am - 3pm	
Thursday October 1st	Bushcare session with Friends of Anstey Hill joining us.	
Saturday October 17th	Bushcare session	FoPW MEETING

Newsletter Articles & Facebook Page

Please send any photos, articles or updates about past and present members to our Friends email address:

friendsofparawirra@gmail.com



Those on Facebook please keep reading, liking and spreading the word on Luke's Facebook postings.

Follow us on Facebook: Friends of Para Wirra Conservation Park

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Friends-Of-Para-Wirra-Conservation-Park-100080843821265/>

You might also be interested in the One Tree Hill Grapevine newsletter:

<https://www.onetreehill.org.au/index.php/grapevine>

