

# Para Wirra News



'Whack a Weed Day'

From the Friends of Para Wirra (Patron: Mike Johnson)  
and the Barossa Goldfields Historical Society  
- Proudly members of Friends of Parks Inc.



# The Editor's Desk

Welcome to the September/December 2023 Edition of Para Wirra News

Apologies rather belated double issue of Para Wirra News. The newsletter is undergoing changes to fit in with a paperless digital world so please bear with me as I adjust and make changes.

The words of Mike Johnson of the Calitris on top of Glenburnie Addition were about to be published when disaster struck and the tree was hit by lightning. The One Tree Hill CFS crew did there utmost to save the tree and were there all night monitoring and watering it down. Such a shame. However, there are signs of continuing life and thanks to a mild summer, it might just live on. The before and after make great reading.

*Darren Williams*

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**FRIENDS OF PARA WIRRA**  
**Minutes for Quarterly Meeting**  
**16<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**Meeting Opened at:** 12:08pm

**Attendance:** Rupert Thorne, Anne Stone, Tom Stone, Steve Taylor, Phil Gillett, Leonie Hobbs, Kym Smith, Darren Williams, Jasmine Williams, Alex Mackenzie, Val Lacy, Colin Winsor, Kath Matthews.

**Apologies:** Patsy and Mike Johnson, Helen Thorne, Aislinn McAleer

**President's report:** President Rupert Thorne welcomed members to the meeting and thanked everyone for their support and hard work. It has been a busy and happy time for many members.

The new banner/flag has been admired by many and has been used effectively a few times.

The Whack a Weed Day was a great success with an impressive group of people working together and enjoying each other's company.

Safety issues are important when working in the bush. Members are encouraged to wear hats, gloves and glasses. A first aid kit and a portable defibrillator is carried at all working bees.

Report moved: Rupert    Seconded: Phil    Accepted by all

Rupert presented certificates, letters and badges acknowledging years of dedicated and active membership to the following members:

**Val Lacy** – 20 years

**Jasmine Williams** – 10 years

**Darren Williams** – 10 years

**Minutes of previous Quarterly meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

To be taken as read and confirmed:

Moved: Phil    Seconded: Tom

**Business Arising/Carried Forward from previous minutes:**

- The banner has been purchased and has been used a few times.
- Our group's attendance at the Town of Gawler giveaway plant sessions was worthwhile and successful as we gained two new members from interested people who attended.

**Ranger's report:** Aislinn was unable to attend the meeting and has sent the following report.

All is going well in Para Wirra.

We have been a little short staffed with Taylor on parental leave after having twins with his wife and welcomed baby Juliet and Nolan. Tammy is working a reduced amount with a broken leg.

We have a new staff member though; Alisha and she is backfilling for Tim Howard who has left on 2 years **leave** (redeployment to Pest Control, not leave). Alisha has a background in Environmental Science and has been keen to get involved in all things; park maintenance and volunteer working bees, which has been great.

August traffic counter numbers for Para Wirra were 1890 vehicles for the month, quite high compared to the usual!

September will be even busier because we had the Trail Running SA event on Father's Day and The Rogaine event on the 16<sup>th</sup> (just passed). Both events went well with 300-400 participants in each.

Wild flowers out in full bloom! Loving it.

Taylor and Tammy are both returning this week. Taylor had some wildlife cameras set up on Macbeth track and captured dozens of photos of deer in groups of 8-9 at once on multiple days.

There was a Blackham burn yesterday, 4 Ha, just South of Para Wirra Mack Creek boundary.

Kangaroo surveys are happening this week and next across the Barossa and Adelaide Hills to capture kangaroo population numbers.

**Secretary:** Anne

**Correspondence:** June 18 2023 – September 15<sup>th</sup>

**Email correspondence:**

Every Wednesday: Pam Smith: Friends of Parks Wednesday Weekly Mail out forwarded to all members

July 10<sup>th</sup> – Pam Smith - First Aid Courses - St John Ambulance Australia SA Inc. - procedure for booking in Friends of Parks and other DEW Volunteers - First Aid

July 16<sup>th</sup> – Stephen Fricker - Great Southern Bioblitz 2023 Increasing biodiversity awareness through Citizen Science

July 27<sup>th</sup> – Steve Taylor - Basal Bark Training

July 30<sup>th</sup> – Steve Taylor – Guided walk at Para Wirra for the Northern Foothills Land Care Group

August 4<sup>th</sup> – Elisha Brunton- Trees for Life - Bushcare activity Karwin Rd Humburg Scrub

August 9<sup>th</sup> – Matt Burnell - Volunteer Grant

August 14<sup>th</sup> – Steve Taylor – BiocollectSA

**Business arising from correspondence:**

- It was decided not to apply for the Volunteer Grant proposed by Matt Burnell. It does not seem appropriate for our needs.

**Membership:**

We have one new member: Russell Bone

Welcome Russell!

**Grant report:** Steve

**FOPW Grant Report to General Meeting 16/9/23, Steve Taylor**

Grant reports focus on a rolling set of current grants and applications. Each one is referenced with a Project number, hence P31, P32 etc.

\$30 000 in grants received in last 2 years, applications for \$10 000 in prep.

**P29** Eucalyptus odorata Woodland Protection in Para Wirra CP by removal of Woody Weed Threats. Green Adelaide, \$7000.



All work done and all invoices paid. Last activity was the August Whack a Weed Day with Cubs.

**P30** Further Restoration of South Para Valley. Friends of Parks \$5000.

All work done, including training of FOPW in basal bark olive control. All invoices paid.

**P31** Eucalyptus odorata Woodland Protection in Para Wirra CP by removal of Woody Weed Threats, Stage 2. Friends of Parks, \$5000

All work done and all invoices paid. Still more work to do in that area.

**P32** Boneseed control in Barossa Goldfields Re-started, NY Landscape Board, \$6000

Works order with contractor, **still waiting for DEW to induct contractor and FOPW to allow access to restricted area.**

Oct Working bee is a new Whack a Weed activity adjacent the restricted area with Southern Barossa Scouts and Cubs.

**P33** Accelerating Friends of Para Wirra's Strategic Olive Control. Green Adelaide, \$7304.

Sprayers purchased and delivered. Chemicals purchased, awaiting delivery. FOPW trained and ready to start Basal Bark olive control. Contractors organised, awaiting Works orders amounting to \$5000 for boneseed and olive control.

**P34** Riparian Restoration, PWCP. Friends of Parks \$5000 **to be applied for by mid Oct.**

Further contractor work to push Watsonia weed front downstream from controlled river section. FOPW to identify and treat outliers.

**P35** Strategic Weed Control in PWCP (2). Friends of Parks \$5000 **to be applied for by mid Oct.**

Isolated Cape Tulip, Blackberry, Opuntia, Artichoke etc. FOPW to identify outliers and treat some, Contractor to treat larger patches or difficult access sites. Follow up to FoP grant from 2020.

Report moved: Steve    Seconded: Alex    All Accepted

#### **Working bees:** Phil

Phil reported that the June/July working bees have been well attended and work undertaken controlling boneseed and olives has been successful. The various areas where weed control has been undertaken include the Quarry track, below Devil's Nose, below Lizard rock and the Scout Camp. The very successful Whack a Weed working bee with the One Tree Hill cubs/scouts was held on August 19<sup>th</sup>. The group of scouts, cubs, their leaders and family groups plus our members undertook a 2km trek to the Endangered Peppermint Box Woodland patch for another round against the invading boneseed.

The Thursday September working bee was rained out, although four intrepid members spent a little time weeding and set up an observation camera near the lake. The Saturday wildflower walk was well attended and enjoyed by many. Thanks to Darren and Steve for leading the two groups.

The Thursday October working bee will work on Tangier Pea.

Report moved: Phil    Seconded: Steve    All Accepted

#### **Program:**

- Saturday November 4<sup>th</sup> – Rotary Village Fair stall.

The stall will run from 8am until 3pm. Leonie has put in our application. The display boards and banner will need to be transported to the park, also 50 plants from Kersbrook nursery to be sold.

Rupert has organised the printing of 10 more flower books at a cost of \$13.80 each. It was moved that we sell the books for \$20 each.

Moved: Rupert    Seconded: Phil    Accepted

Darren has offered to print more cards and will let us know the price.

A roster will be made for members to help at the stall. It was suggested that two people need to be there for 2 hour sessions each. There are plenty of FoPW brochures available.

- Saturday December 16<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Break up starting at 5:30pm at the Goldfields cottage, weather dependent.

#### **Treasurer: Kym**

Kym reports that there has been no income since June.

Kym will be away on Flinders Island for 6 months from December and is able to work electronically from there.

#### FOPW Treasurers Report September 2023

Opening Balance

Bank balance 6038.65

Cash 0.00

Petty cash 0.00

Balance 15/06/23 6038.65

Income 0.00

Payments 1059.95

Defibrillator 580.95

Banner 300.20

BBQ for Whack a Weed Day 96.80

Weeding tools 82.00

Bank balance 4978.70

Cash 0.00

Petty cash 0.00

Balance 15/09/23 4978.70

Treasurer's report

Moved – Kym                      Seconded – Colin                      Accepted

#### **Newsletter/Facebook/Website: Darren/Richard**

- It was noted that Patsy's name and contact phone number is still to be found in several different places, including our website. Rupert will contact Richard to ask him to change this to our email address.
- Darren plans to produce a PDF newsletter for October.

**PED Counts:** Phil

- **Jun 2023** - Goldfields, Victoria Hill, PW CP: **842**      Devil's Nose, PW CP: **778**      Warren CP: **683**
- **July 2023** - Goldfields, Victoria Hill, PW CP: **764**      Devil's Nose, PW CP: **723**      Warren CP: **637**
- **August 2023** - Goldfields, Victoria Hill, PW CP: **865**      Devil's Nose, PW CP: **857**      Warren CP: **671**

#### **Any other business:**

- Rupert talked to us about the use of our new defibrillator which will be carried at all working bees. Rupert reminded us about the procedure of CPR and stressed that it is important that CPR is kept up until the defibrillator is ready to be used.
- The Goldfields Open Day is to be held on Sunday September 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Steve talked about Biocollect, which is a Government app used for recording sightings of flora and fauna. It is not easy to use for the average person and is more suitable for confident and competent observers. Steve recently recorded the sighting of 30 black tailed cockatoos in the Park and has added a few other sightings. Steve has asked us to let him know of anything we see so that he can record them for us.
- Phil showed us some safety glasses that Ash found in the cupboard that are of Australian standard and are available for our use.
- Phil let us know that there is one new seat in the Park provided by Steve in memory of Howard MacBeth. It is at the end of the MacBeth track. Howard MacBeth was a local resident who was not a member of FOPW but was very supportive of the Park behind the scenes.
- There was some discussion about creating a trail from the ford to the new section of Glenburnie. Steve pointed out that this was not safe due to the terrain and the fact that the water could be running in the river at various times. More work needs to be undertaken by the Department to open up the Glenburnie section of the Park.

#### **Next working bees/meetings:**

**Thursday October 5th** – Weed control – Tangier Pea

**Saturday October 21<sup>st</sup>** – Cubs and Scouts will join us to weed on the fenced perimeter of the Goldfields.

**Thursday November 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Weed control as required

**Saturday November 4<sup>th</sup>** – Rotary Village Fair

**Saturday November 18<sup>th</sup>** - Weed control as required / Committee meeting

**Thursday December 7<sup>th</sup>** - Weed control as required

**Saturday December 16<sup>th</sup>** – Christmas Breakup

**Meeting closed at: 1:30pm**



## Barossa Goldfields Historical Society



### Secretary's Report - Leonie Hobbs

#### November 2023.

Quieter time of year in regards to school visits. We had a visit from the Adelaide Hills Home School group. They were all ages and a great group who really enjoyed their time here.

Open Day was a bit quieter than other years, but still a good day. It was easily managed and we all had a nice time. We managed with the volunteer numbers, and I thank all volunteers including those that joined in on the day. Thank you everyone!

The prescribed burn didn't happen yet. Expected to be Autumn next year. Maybe.....

We've had one enquiry for a booking for next year. This is a school, 120 students, which I have already said will need to be over two days. Just have to organise which days when they get back in touch next year.

We've also had an enquiry from a NDIS group in December. Both groups have been made aware that fire bans might mean a change of plans.

I've had the surgery and am recovering well. Thank you to all my well-wishers!

Thanks to the Tuesday group who have probably done more these last two months than I have mentioned, but I have been a bit distracted lately!





Barossa Goldfields Historic Society Open Day '23 Photos

## Friends of Para Wirra / OTH Scout Group

### 2023 Whack a Weed Day-Steve Taylor

On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> August, 21 One Tree Hill Joeys, Cubs, Scouts with 5 Leaders and 8 family helpers joined Friends of Para Wirra again for the 2km trek to our Endangered Peppermint Box Woodland patch for another round against the invading boneseed. This activity was the final stage of a project funded by Green Adelaide: *“Eucalyptus odorata Woodland Protection in Para Wirra CP by Removal of Woody Weed Threats”*.

We were able to celebrate the success of last year’s efforts, finding only scattered tiny boneseed where last year there were thickets filling in spaces under the Peppermint Box trees. Now we have opened up the ground for Painted button quail, Robins and other woodland birds to forage and sustain themselves.

After tidying up last year’s patch we dealt with another dense area of about 0.5ha, clearing 2.5ha in total, adjoining further woodland areas cleared of boneseed by contractors. A remarkable effort topped off by scouts drilling and poisoning one big olive on the way out.

By the time we got back to the lake, the sausages were ready with tea and coffee supplied by Rangers and we all enjoyed a chat and well-earned lunch.

FOPW is really grateful for the support of the OTH Scouting community and the OTH Grapevine in this important work to look after our local and very special Conservation Park. Both groups have enjoyed weed whacking for several years now and there are plans for a different and interesting venue next year!

If you would like to help look after Para Wirra, our amazing local Conservation Park, please contact [friendsofparawirra@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofparawirra@gmail.com) We meet for working bees at the Para Wirra office at 9.00am on the first Thursday and third Saturday of the month.

If you would like to find out more about getting involved in scouting to help support our community and the environment by taking part in opportunities such as Whack A Weed, please contact Group Leader Mike Branson on 0430 422 895 or [onetreehill@sa.scouts.com.au](mailto:onetreehill@sa.scouts.com.au) .





Near the top of a north facing ridge south, south, east of Veronica's Bowl stands a large thirty-metre tall "Native Pine" dominating the area. From this distance almost a picture book shape, a single sturdy trunk with long branches gradually getting shorter as they form a pyramid shape with a rounded top. That single trunk is a mass of fluted columns that burst apart into strong individualistic branches about three metres above the ground. Some of the lower thick round limbs strain quickly away from the



vertical. They then curve over under the weight of a solid patch of branches and old foliage. Other branches, becoming thinner as they climb, assume an acute angle, upwards and outwards, seeking the open sky. Light flows through the upper tree as the foliage is all clustered at the extreme ends of the smaller branchlets. Cloud like foliage, consisting of small needle like leaves, gleam yellowish green and hide the clusters of this year's soft seed capsules. Below the clouds many years of older empty capsules still attached can be seen, hard and dark brown, forming a tracery below the ends of the branches. This day the shade under the lowest bowed branches can be seen darkening the ground underneath. That shade is the result of a raft of dead wood, dried needle foliage and



old seed capsules that over many years has accumulated attached to that 13  
now bowed down branch. The Native Pine is very slow growing but is  
prolific in producing seed. The seed is protected while developing in a  
small round marble sized oval ball scored with marks of the six pods that  
are contained within. The soft and green the capsules become hard once  
they burst open scattering the seed but remain firmly attached to the  
branch. Over the years under the increasing weight the branch gradually  
sags down, more dead foliage from above falls and is caught up with any  
other wind debris increasing the weight yet more. Over the long years a  
thick raft has formed floating above the ground, creating thick shade.  
Underneath becomes ideal for kangaroos to lie in a dust bath during the  
heat of summer. Close up their bedding places can be seen among the  
tangle of roots where there are hollows in the dust. A peaceful place to  
spend a hot summers afternoon with the refreshing clean smell so  
distinctive of this type of tree. Eventually the weight of a raft can cause  
the branch to break and some fallen branches can be seen on the ground  
to the left of the trunk. The bark on the trunk and old branches is very  
hard thickened and rough. Lots of crevices for insects and other crawling  
creatures such as centipedes to live and thrive. Covering some of the  
bark is a thin layer of yellow lichen ,another form of life that draws its  
sustenance from the air. In wet weather it swells up changes colour and  
then dries out in the heat. There are many different lichens on  
Glenburnie and it is said that the aboriginals used some of them for  
medicinal purposes. Over the years much seed has fallen from this tree  
but there are no young juveniles in view as this area became grazing land  
over a hundred and fifty years ago when this tree already lived probably  
tall enough not to be eaten by stock. Unlike the Adelaide Plain areas  
these hilly areas with thin light soils were not cleared for sowing of crops.  
Flatter alluvial areas were cleared, the “better” soils. They were also the  
most diverse areas in terms of plants and animals. The “native Pine” was  
a favoured timber for construction and saw mills were erected to process  
the forests that grew around the Roseworthy and Wasleys areas. Seeing  
the large open wheat paddocks just north of Gawler it is almost  
impossible to believe the old report of a man being lost for three days in  
the thick forest of native pine growing near the site of Roseworthy  
College. In our area much timber was cut for the gold mines that  
operated nearby but the main lack of large stands of native pine is from  
the grazing of stock preventing seedlings from flourishing.

## Lightening strikes two hundred year old tree (After...)

**Michael Johnson**

Why now?

This venerable old “Native Pine” has withstood the vagaries of weather and nature since possibly before Europeans knew this species existed. During a storm at the end of December 2023 a lightning strike hit the tree. Fire occurred burning down into and hollowing out the middle of the main trunk. Where the weighty



lateral branches joined that trunk the ancient limbs ripped away and collapsed down into a tangled heap.

Majesty defiled.

Thanks to the local fire service volunteers alerted to the potential of a wild fire through the surrounding grassland that could spread into the nearby conservation park the fire was extinguished. Only a few square metres of grass at the base of the tree was burnt and they also extinguished the seat of the fire in the heart of the trunk before

those broken branches flared into flames. Further danger averted.

Why now?

Throughout those long years, every year, these storms have raced across the land. Lightning strikes by the thousands are recorded during these storms.

Why now?

Lightening strikes down from the clouds onto high points be they ridges, buildings or trees. But why this tree? Yes it was a tall tree, the largest many people have seen of this species but there are nearby gum trees taller higher up at the top of the ridge whereas this tree was lower down the ridge side.

The forces of nature are not always predictable. It was just time. How many millions of thunderstorms and lightning strikes have passed over this centuries old specimen from when it was but a seedling until the present day where it became a giant of the area. Slowly growing upwards, flowering and shedding seeds of renewal in good seasons and bad. But where is that renewal from all those years of seed being scattered around the area? The nearest Callitris tree is on the ridge line some 30 metres away and that is more dead than alive, a much smaller tree but again of great age. The nearest young trees are about 500 meters away over the ridge grouped around the remains of another old tree that died and was blown down by another storm some ten years ago. A fence erected around those remains kept the grazing sheep away from any fallen seed germination and now a small grove of Callitris is some 4 to 5 metres in height. Perhaps now we should fence this old stricken tree in the same way for a similar result.

Hopefully we could have an even better result. This “venerable old “Native Pine”” is stricken but not dead. One of those lateral limbs is still firmly attached to the burnt trunk and stands proud against the sky. With luck this branch will develop into a main leader and lead to the continued life of this magnificent specimen.

Here’s Hoping!

## FRIENDS OF PARA WIRRA PROGRAM 2024

**\*PLEASE NOTE: in the event of Extreme Weather and/or Fire Conditions, meetings or working bees will NOT be at the park. An email will be sent to members if there is a cancellation and other arrangements may be advised if extended forecast allows time.**

**Colour code => Whole group meetings** **Committee Meetings** – All members are welcome to attend.  
**Working Bees** – Working bees start at 9am at the Parks Office.

Thursday	February 1 <sup>st</sup>	*Weed control and trail maintenance as required. Morning tea at work site.	
Saturday	February 17 <sup>th</sup>	*Weed Control as required. Morning tea at work site.	Committee MEETING.
Thursday	March 7 <sup>th</sup>	*Weed Control as required. Morning tea at work site.	
Saturday	March 16 <sup>th</sup>	*Weed Control as required. Morning tea onsite. BYO Lunch. Family & friends welcome.	AGM -and meeting to follow
Weekend	March 29 <sup>th</sup> – April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Easter	
Thursday	April 4 <sup>th</sup>	*Weed control as required. Morning tea at work site.	
Saturday	April 20 <sup>th</sup>	*Weed control & trail maintenance as required. Morning tea at work site.	
Thursday	May 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Weed control as required. Morning tea at work site	
Saturday	May 18 <sup>th</sup>	Weed Control as required. Morning tea onsite.	Committee MEETING.
Thursday	June 6 <sup>th</sup>	Weed control as required. Morning tea at work site.	
Saturday	June 15 <sup>th</sup>	Weed control as required. Bring morning tea and lunch if attending meeting.	Mid-Year MEETING.
Thursday	July 4 <sup>th</sup>	Weed control and trail maintenance as required. Morning tea at work site.	
Saturday	July 20 <sup>th</sup>	Weed control as required. Morning tea at work site.	
Thursday	August 1 <sup>st</sup>	Weed control as required. Morning tea at work site.	Committee MEETING.
Saturday	August 17 <sup>th</sup>	Weed control. Whack A Weed Day. may include local community groups. Morning tea at work site and perhaps a BBQ to follow	
Thursday	September 5 <sup>th</sup>	Weed control as required. Morning tea at work site.	
Saturday	September 21 <sup>st</sup>	WILDFLOWER WALK or working bee.	Quarterly MEETING &/or Social Function. All Family and friends encouraged to attend.
Thursday	October 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Weed Control and trail maintenance as required. Morning tea at work site.	
Saturday	October 19 <sup>st</sup>	Weed control, possibly a visit to another "Friends" park. Morning tea onsite.	
Saturday	November 2 <sup>nd</sup> ?	Rotary Village Fair Stall??	
Thursday	November 7 <sup>th</sup>	*Weed control as required. Morning tea at work site.	
Saturday	November 16 <sup>th</sup>	*Olives, Boneseed as required. Morning tea on site.	Committee MEETING.
Thursday	December 5 <sup>th</sup>	*Weed control and trail maintenance as required. Morning tea at work site.	
Saturday	December 14 <sup>th</sup> or 21 <sup>st</sup>	End of year social breakup/Christmas party	

**Group in recess until February 6<sup>th</sup> 2025**

**\*CHECK CFS/BOM OR OTHER WEBSITE FOR FIRE BANS & SEVERE WEATHER WARNINGS.**

**PLEASE NOTE: This program may be varied/added to if/when guest speakers or special training opportunities arise. Members are encouraged to please advise the President or Secretary by text, email or phone if they learn of potential guest speakers or training/educational programs.**



### THE FRIENDS OF PARA WIRRA

For more information please contact:

[friendsofparawirra@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofparawirra@gmail.com)

Or visit our web page: [www.communitywebs.org/parawirrafriends](http://www.communitywebs.org/parawirrafriends)

\*Please check CFS Website. Events cancelled during days of Total Fire Ban.



### THE BAROSSA GOLDFIELDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bowden's Cottage: Cnr Goldfields & Allendale Roads

For more information contact:

**Leonie Hobbs 0413 331 598**

[bgoldhs@gmail.com](mailto:bgoldhs@gmail.com)

Website: [www.communitywebs.org/BarossaGoldfieldsHistoric/](http://www.communitywebs.org/BarossaGoldfieldsHistoric/)

Friends of Para Wirra is now  
on facebook.



Newsletter Articles and Correspondence Welcome  
Email: Darren Williams, [dgwillsguitar@hotmail.com](mailto:dgwillsguitar@hotmail.com)