



WESTERN ADELAIDE COASTAL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 7 March 2024 7.30pm

Acknowledgement of Country

Welcome and apologies

Apologies: Paul Acfield, Sandy Ball, Deb Cashel, Greg Cashel, Matt Cowdrey, Mayor Angela Evans, Tina Koch, John Stoiber, Julie Whitehead, Tony Williams

Present: Amy Beardsley, Bert Brown, Wade Candy, Marty Cielens, Peter Collins, Kate Denton, Jim Douglas, Chris Farran, Bruce Foster, Fernando Gonçalves, Karen Hansen, Shelley Harington, Deirdre Knight, Karen Lawrence, Warwick Norman, Jonathan Pope, Andrea Rankin, Fabian Ravalico, Robyn Ravalico, Geoff Short, Kate Smith, Richard Smith, Paul Sutton (CEO, CSC), Peter Watson, Geoff Wood, Alan Young

Guest speaker – Paul Sutton, CEO City of Charles Sturt Council

'Council action planning for 2024 and questions'

The Chief Executive Officer presented on council's planning agenda, including proposals such as the Council Community Plan, Community Battery and Power Sharing, Tree Canopy development, the Coastal Management Review and the West Lakes Oval development.

Presentation available on the WACRA website: <https://wacra.org.au/news-events/meetings/>

Questions:

Q: Tree canopy – going backwards – how is council going to get to 25% in 2045? Where are you going to put these trees?

A: Tree planting programs plant 3000 trees per year. This will increase to just over 6000 per year plus additional water trucks etc. The plan won't get us the whole way there as there is not enough space in public land. Road reserves and verges are targets on public land.

Q: Has council considered employing areas around sporting clubs for planting trees and also additional use of school grounds could be for increasing canopy?

A: Good point. The tree rebate program has also included schools.

Q: Trees – have council given enough priority to climate change and canopy in their budget? What is the problem?

A: Council has made the decision to fund the program, it's in the budget. Council also has SAPN on board. Planting season is second half of year. Politics in the chamber has moved on this and there is greater commitment now.

Q: So does the state government control what is built in this area? Is that true? Why are houses continuing to be built from fence to fence, black roofs and driveways etc.

A: The policy has to be approved by the minister. Council consults with the community but every stage has to be approved by the minister. So it's state government policy that council implements.

Q: I went to the Green Adelaide/CCS forum on verge planting last year. Has a compilation of all the great ideas been put together to share with the community.

A: *[This information was provided by Janet Willoughby post AGM]* It was an excellent forum, well attended by most urban councils. The day was attended by 55 participants. The makeup was approximately 60% local government, 15% state government, 10% community members, 15% other (non-govt/not for profit/private business). See **Appendix 1** for the small group discussion summary.

There was a clear sense of increasing community interest to plant and care for their nature strips and, promisingly, an increased interest for planting locally endemic plant species to support biodiversity. From a council perspective, there were some great examples of work being undertaken to simplify the application process for residents, and an appreciation for the important community connection outcomes this work can support.

There was also an online follow-up session for council officers who oversee the process of nature strip planting a few weeks after this session.

Q: CCS has the greatest rise in beach management costs. The state government has funded \$14m of sand to our beaches. Is it time to say council will do it rather than state government – to participate?

A: Correction: Council didn't reject sand, community members blockaded the trucks. Coastal management costs are beyond the revenue base of council. In SA the federal government should fund here as they do in other states.

Response: They do. Council is quibbling about putting a certain proportion of council money into maintaining a stairway etc. Surely you pick your battles?

A: We'll agree to disagree.

Q: The wall that's propping up the West Beach Surf Life Saving Club – who has built it?

A: Council had to built it. It's a council responsibility.

Q: So that wall is causing erosion in front of it – is council responsible for that?

A: We had no choice.

Q: Traffic management – the improvements to Military Road has put a lot of traffic up onto Seaview Road which has caused more congestion. That's an issue. Urban infill – what we see in side streets is car parking on both sides of the road, especially in summer. This is becoming quite dangerous. How are we going to manage this in the future? What is council doing about that?

A: Seaview Road – we have long had discussion with DIT to turn this into a pedestrian zone but they haven't supported it. Re infill, we are in a zone where the width of the carriageway is largely set. We are driving different vehicles which are much bulkier. Better public transport is a solution. We are continually advocating for western suburbs transport studies. Most of the state government transport money is going into tunnels on South Road.

Q: We wanted a blue line bus to cover the coastline. Are there any further discussions around this?

A: There is nothing I am currently aware of.

Q: Seaview Road is a state government road. Cars are banked up all along there. The 40/50 switch is a problem.

A: Council is advocating for 40k all the way along.

WACRA thanks Paul Sutton for his time and information.

Acceptance of AGM minutes 2023

AGM minutes 2023 <https://wacra.org.au/news-events/meetings/>

Moved: Geoff Short

Seconded: Kate Denton

Carried

Treasurer's Report

Theo Ellenbroek reporting

Balance of \$4774 which includes a \$3000 grant for MTP.

We will have insurance to pay in October.

We have a \$2000 term deposit.

Moved: Geoff Smith

Seconded: Marty Cielens

Carried

Chair's Report

Marty Cielens reporting

Well, it certainly has been quite the year. Past WACRA campaigns have resorted to the use of barricades – human barricades, such as the West Beach Boat Harbour protests. Times have changed and 2023 saw us still at the barricades – but in this case they were paper barricades. As near as I could work out, our campaign teams wrote at least 14 submissions. On top of that, we made 10 deputations and had numerous informal meetings with people from council, government and the community.

Coastal management issues such as the Beach Management Review and Coast Path Project absorbed a lot of energy. Climate-related issues were also a major focus and formed a substantial part of submissions. These included the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan, the wastewater site redevelopment on Fredericks Road and the SA Parliamentary Inquiry into Adelaide's Urban Forest. It is safe to say that environmental concerns were a substantial component in most WACRA submissions and related activities in 2023 – for very good reason.

Other important areas of engagement have been urban planning and community wellbeing which we incorporated into most submissions. These included Council's Community Plan consultation and review of the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act. A full list of submissions and deputations by WACRA is on our website: <https://wacra.org.au/council-connect/>. Throughout the year we invited a wide range of speakers to present at General Meetings on topics such as coastal management and climate action.

It is important to bear in mind that WACRA is just one of the community organisations that has been making representations on these issues. At the local level, we have generally had a pretty good hearing from Council staff and elected members, but at times, there has been a mismatch between what the community has said they want and what Council has decided to do.

This gap is one that needs to be addressed, otherwise residents will become disillusioned by so-called 'community consultations' that result in outcomes at odds with community expectations. Sometimes lack of engagement is taken as a sign that people are OK with things as they are. But what is more likely, is that people don't believe they can have an impact, so they don't bother to engage.

The biggest disconnect is between the state government's rhetoric on openness and accountability, and what appears to be a complete disregard for community feedback and a lack of transparency. Examples include reviews into the Planning Act, Beach Management and the Coastal Protection Board.

Despite these concerns, I am confident that WACRA's voice has been heard at every level of government and that they know we are not going to let up on campaigning for what we think is fair and beneficial for the community. There will be regular updates on these issues in our newsletter – WACRA Messenger. While most of this has been through the efforts of elected members, I would like to stress that you don't have to be on the Committee to make an input. Individuals are welcome to work with Committee members on specific projects at any time. A good example is the remarkably successful My Tree Project (MTP) that has been made possible by the leadership of Julie Whitehead with support from the MTP team: Steve Fuller, Deidre Knight, Lara Lamnek and Andrea Rankin.

I am very proud of the work done by our elected members on the WACRA Committee, as well as others working in the background. They have done their best to advocate on behalf of WACRA members, as well as the wider community. Going forward, it will be important to focus on building closer relationships with other local community groups. Ultimately, united efforts amplify impact, empower individuals, and help create resilient communities.

In closing, I would like to thank the WACRA campaign team coordinators, as well as all Committee members, for their amazing work throughout the year. I also thank community members who brought important issues to our attention as well as those who made a contribution to our campaigns, submissions and projects. It has been a privilege to be part of this team, but I have to step back from an active role on the committee due to family reasons. However, I will continue to help in other ways.

Moved: Kate Denton

Seconded: Jim Douglas

Carried

WACRA thanks Marty for his impactful efforts over the year to Marty as Chair and leadership. We look forward to his ongoing involvement.

Jim Douglas moved a vote of thanks, all agreed.

Q: What is the mechanism for Marty's report being read?

A: We could do a truncated version in the next Messenger.

Supported.

Election of Officers

90% of current members of the executive have expressed interest in re-applying.

First we will confirm the membership of the Committee, then look at specific positions.

No nominations for chairperson

No nominations for vice chairperson

Theo Ellenbroek (Treasurer)

Andrea Rankin (Secretary/Minutes)

Don Lewis (Public Officer) has self-nominated as public officer. Accepted.

Carried by acclamation

Appointments to the Committee:

Kate Denton, Jim Douglas, Shelley Harington, Paul Laris, Geoff Short, Richard Smith, Julie Whitehead

Paul Laris moves that all these people are appointed to the management committee – by acclamation.

NOTE: People can be co-opted without holding a position on the committee. There are also some people who are ‘go-tos’ for information and support.

Refer to the WACRA website for the list of officers: <http://wacra.org.au/about/who-we-are/>

Acceptance of General Meeting minutes 7/12/23

See <https://wacra.org.au/news-events/meetings/>

Moved: Richard Smith

Seconded: Geoff Short

Carried

Update on My Tree Project

Deirdre Knight reporting

My Tree project – Lara Lamnek approached WACRA re workig with students to show them how to plant seeds etc. For the background to the project go to <https://wacra.org.au/my-tree-project/>

This year we have become more ambitious. We have four schools involved now, from November 2023 to July 2024.

We have worked with 475 students, to prepare 5,000 seedlings for planting.

Partnership with Fork Tree Project (Tim Jarvis): <https://www.theforktreeproject.com/>. Children may be able to go there to see where their plants end up.

Art component: we curated about 100 pieces of art. This year it will be much bigger, maybe 4x the amount.

Funding from CCS – \$3000, AAEE – \$2000, Railcare – \$5000.

We would like to hear your ideas and you are welcome to get involved.

Q: What is the possibility that school communities will visit the Fork Tree property, and who would fund it?

A: The schools would have to fund it. We are also talking to UniSA re student teachers providing curriculum links. We would then provide them with free membership of AAEE.

Q: Is there social media content? Maybe student teachers could assist with that as well.

A: Not yet. It’s a great idea.

No other business.

Signed, 

Paul Laris A/Chair

Authorised by WACRA PO Box 72 Henley Beach SA 5022; www.wacra.org.au and Facebook

Appendix 1: Nature Strip Forum – Friday 20 October 2023

Summary of small group discussions

Benefits

- Multiple benefits of nature strip projects
 - Community connection – especially sense of purpose/connection for elderly and isolated people
 - Biodiversity
 - Amenity
 - Council reputation
- Many positive flow-on effects.
- Double shading / cooling.
- Nature strips are a good opportunity for people not wanting to commit to long term volunteering as they are in front of their houses.

Leadership/governance

- Council/ LGA SA support important – informed by outcomes / ideas of today.
- Need better relationships between State and Local Governments.
- Funded positions to support.
- Invest in council staff to support residents.
- State Govt can do more!! (e.g. Department for Infrastructure and Transport)
- Need a person whose role it is to work with councils to improve tree planting along main roads and replace dead, damaged trees.
- Audits required for better data capture.
- Gap finding to transition to 'greener, cooler' spaces.

Inequality

- Evidence of success predominantly in middle income areas. Could this be researched?
- How to solve problem of expecting poorer councils to achieve these outcomes?
- Eastern suburbs tend to have more canopy cover – need extra support for low canopy cover suburbs.
- Need to get the verge info into CALD – Culturally and Linguistically Diverse groups.

Capacity building

- Need better education/training for community & council staff to help guide enthusiasts to activate multiple objectives
 - Biodiversity
 - Cooling
 - Education
 - Community development
 - Other.
- Develop community facilities to support enthusiasts, e.g. free mulch depot, propagation teams, recyclable materials, bricks for paths.
- Community helping community – permits – plant selections.
- Ask residents to be involved with policy and procedure and bringing in other residents.
- Community is key, needs a community driver for long-term success. Good council/community relationships take time but are crucial!

Incentives/incentive programs

- I like the idea of incentives for residents, e.g. Mayors Garden Award and Golden Gnome.
- Co-contribution vs free models, which are more successful?

- Unley needs more funds in incentive scheme if books out after 48 hrs.

Marketing

- Better marketing of the benefits of supporting verge gardens, e.g. signs with QR codes for verge gardens – link to information resources.
- Promoting of importance of nature strips as habitat, cooling, BSUD, WSUD.

Plant selection/biodiversity

- Education for residents to maintain vegetation off the footpath area – obscuring vehicle sight lines. Prickly/invasive plant species.
- Species selection biased towards local plants and fauna support. Exotic selections to support local biodiversity.
- Saltbush underutilised.
- Need more work to remove weeds and increase native plant diversity along Torrens Linear Park to increase habitat for smaller birds, reduce noisy miners.
- Council parks could have more plant diversity especially lower storey, e.g. MJ McInerny Reserve – near fence
- Encourage native species as much as possible.
- Transition monoculture to diversity.

Design/infrastructure

- Incorporating tree inlets to benefit nature strips.
- Signage on nature strips.
- Tree inlet/leafy wells are currently being installed to nature strips for benefit of street trees and landscaping whilst reducing storm water runoff.
- How can the urban streetscape be re-imagined, increasing greening / verge opportunities and reducing conflict with demands on our nature strips i.e. kerbside bin collection.
- Some newer land division areas install footpaths immediately behind kerb, resulting in properties landscaping down to footpath.

Application process

- Great idea from other councils to provide landscaping guides on their websites and make the process easier for residents.
- Keen to investigate a more streamline process/incentives for landscaping nature strips.
- Keep permits simple and friendly and supportive.
- Reduce ‘red tape’ of applications – encourages more people to be involved.
- Move to online vs paper forms.
- Provide easy to access resources and guides for residents/applicants.
- How can nature strip redevelopment be standardised across councils for ease of applying and knowing what can/can’t be done?
- Good to see electronic forms – we will consider – everyone to have equal access.

Challenges

- Red tape.
- Lack of knowledge of local plants and access.
- Physical challenges of preparing the site.
- More work and cost for council staff.
- Developers of new estates need to be more accountable for “greening” from the start
- Differing views internally (council) on how nature strips should be managed.
- Same faces! A need to engage with other areas of council, e.g. open space, community engagement, engineering.

- Need to help isolated verges so more people do their verge and create corridors.

Questions

- 1160 kms of road verge in Onkaparinga Council. If an average of 2 metres width for a verge, that equals some 230 hectares of verge that can be regreened. Soil built within and moisture captured and held. Dollar implications? Councils?
- Everyone seems on board – are there any councils that restrict verge gardens?
- How will we incorporate 3/30/300 principle (UK) into Urban Greening Strategy? i.e. you should be able to see 3 trees from home, with 30% canopy cover in your area, and live within 300m of green space.

Inspiration

- Great to hear what other councils are doing and I'm keen to bring these ideas back to discuss with my team 😊
- Approaching nature strips in a positive way.
- Nurture the great stuff that can happen instead of being stymied by risk.
- Trusting residents.
- Sense of community connection is important to success.
- Inspired by:
 - Community engagement possibilities
 - Diversity of community
 - Mental health improvement
 - Scott Bailey – Rail Care
 - Andrew King – Water Sensitive
 - Biodiversity – Support and Development
 - Intergenerational opportunities for engagement
 - Friendship stories
 - Sharing of knowledge and experience
 - Potential for the elderly to safely stay in their home for longer
 - Mitigate head maps
 - Improved council policy – more needed! Uniformity needed! Permit policy??
 - Heartened to hear State Government wants to work with councils
 - Improved health outcomes
 - Green Adelaide – Bringing People and Nature Together 😊
 - Adopt a Fruit Tree – Yes please!
 - City of Onkaparinga!! Great Work!
 - Janet Willoughby – AMAZING!