



Public Forum and General Meeting Thursday 5 September 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

Apologies

Paul Acfield, Sandy Ball, Mayor Claire Boan (Port Adelaide/Enfield), Chris Farran, Shelley Harington, Eric Jolly, Johnathon Pope, Andrea Rankin, John Roberts, Geoff Short, Peter Watson, Julie Whitehead

Public Forum

The housing crisis in South Australia and the western suburbs: How should governments and community respond?

Guest speaker: Dr Greg Ogle (Senior Policy Officer and Research Analyst, South Australian Council Of Social Services)

Greg works at the South Australian Council of Social Services (SACOSS) looking at policy responses to the symptoms of an unfair socio-economic system.

He has a PhD in political economy from the University of Adelaide and over 20 years' experience in policy and advocacy for various non-government organisations. Other areas of involvement include nine years campaigning work at The Wilderness Society.

For more on Greg's work, visit [Latest Posts – Greg Ogle's After Dinner Political Economy](#)

Greg will address the important issue of the housing crisis in South Australia, outlining the work and objectives of SACOSS and how community can help SACOSS meet its objectives.

'Affordable housing is the foundation of a decent life. In South Australia increasing numbers of people rent, but lack of available rental properties and unaffordable rents are now a major driver of poverty and homelessness.'

We need governments to 'listen to the people'.

Greg's presentation is on the WACRA website: <https://wacra.org.au/news-events/meetings/>

SACOSS have also created a YouTube video on this issue:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=I40U0ZdLGzc>

Q: Would Labor's election commitment (in the election they lost to Scott Morrison) to limit negative gearing have made much difference?

A: It would have helped a little (and to change the current mentality that housing is an investment rather than a human right), but in reality most investors buy existing properties, so in that sense it wouldn't have addressed the supply issue which is the fundamental problem.

Q: How many people support the SACOSS position? Have you looked at how we can convince the wider community to tax those that can afford to pay the tax so social houses can be built?

A: It is a thankless task trying to run a campaign arguing for more taxes. Governments always frame the debate around tax cuts – not what services will be lost. So it is still very difficult to get traction. SA doesn't have the level of wealth other states do, but they're the easy targets – noting that tax evasion is an industry which will just figure out another loophole. So it becomes a game of 'whack a mole'. Taxation therefore doesn't give the funding needed. Another thing required is to educate the population re what the wealth distribution is so they are more realistic about 'struggling'. The Greens have been helpful in focusing on

housing issues which threatened the ALP base. They also got the social housing accelerator fund established.

Q: Do you have a comment around the smaller number of people per house exacerbating the supply issue?

A: The problem is from a whole range of things, but the reality is that it is not changing so expecting people to go back to how they were living 20 years ago is not practical. More supply is needed closer to transport and not concreting over our best agricultural land.

Q: Why not build over all the massive carparks so cars have shade and people have transit/lifestyle orientated living?

A: Engineering not the problem. Must be economics? Council regulations, zoning? Not sure.

Q: Can we do more modular self-contained units that could be moved around to help people sleeping rough?

A: Shelter SA are working on modular housing. New legislation recently approved for communal living can help this as well (eg allowing modular units or 'granny flats' in backyards to be leased separately. Caution is making sure we are not building future slums. Also energy efficiency. They need to be done well. Shipping containers a few years ago were going to be the answer to everything.

Q: Once a social project is finished how is it determined who moves in?

A: Very long waiting list. Major problem is that it is now a welfare measure only for those really marginalised and in a high needs category. So people need to have multiple problems, not just a bit light on cash. People with just low income are not progressing in the queue.

Q: Any prospect for state-funded process that creates public not welfare housing?

A: Now there is a very small chance, after many years of governments thinking the market would sort itself out. So not any time soon, but there has been a quantum shift from social governance to neoliberalism and now swinging back to some extent.

Q: How to avoid the social sinkhole?

A: Splitting out social housing makes it harder to provide support services, etc. Partly more housing will help, and more funding to make sure they get the support. Very difficult.

Q: Renewal SA and the effectiveness of this organisation?

A: Renewal SA has had different iterations – some disastrous with profit motives. Now under the one minister to do development, as splitting the housing and development function was a disaster. Remains to be seen if this fixes the issue.

Q: How can the community help with the work SACOSS does?

A: Suggest speaking at local government as it is important they have a clear understanding what role they can play. Local councils need to be on board.

Motion: (Jim Douglas) That WACRA arranges to meet with the CEO and Mayor of Charles Sturt Council to discuss the importance of social housing and encourage their support, using data from Greg's presentation.

Seconded: Fernando Gonçalves

All in favour

Thanks to Greg Ogle for an excellent presentation and discussion.

General Meeting

Minutes of previous GM

Motion: That the minutes of the GM June 2024 be approved <https://wacra.org.au/news-events/meetings/>

Moved: Jim Douglas

Seconded: Paul Laris

All in favour

Treasurer's report

Bert Brown spoke to the tabled report.

Looking for more paid-up members. Thanks to Marty for the great newsletters to encourage people to join.

See Appendix 1 for more details.

Moved: Jim Douglas

Seconded: Fernando Gonçalves

All in favour

Government response to reform of the Coast Protection Board

Bert Brown reporting (as per report from Geoff Short)

ERDC – review structure. Nothing came of it. Around 30 different groups responded. No advice was given.

WACRA is still trying to apply pressure on government to take more responsible action.

They don't have the experts. WACRA needs to join other community groups for a louder voice.

See Appendix 2 for more details.

All in favour

Adelaide Beach Management Review update

Bert Brown reporting

Still mainly marketing paraphernalia but limited real information.

Another dredging trial with sand moving by barge to West Beach (if they can get a barge).

WACRA were promised involvement but have not had a good response.

Jim Douglas reported that works have now stopped in the replenishment of West Beach due to two plover nesting sites until the birds have fledged.

All in favour

City of Charles Sturt Community Emissions Reduction Project (CERP)

Kate Denton reporting

Kate gave a brief synopsis of what the CERP group are hoping to achieve and distributed flyers encouraging members to log on and look at the resources, plus do the survey (link below).

In early 2023, City of Charles Sturt community members began developing an Action Plan to support our community to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The Mission Possible Action Plan was finalised in July 2024 and is now available for public consultation: <https://emissionpossible.com.au/>

Repair Café: would we like one in the west?

Jim Douglas reporting

There are 10-15 cafés going but none in the western suburbs. A number of people have asked if council would assist in starting one up. They're great for recycling and helping people save \$.

Consider where it would be most appropriate? Could this initiative be combined with Port Adelaide/Enfield council?

Meeting closed 8:50pm

Thanks to all for coming.

Next meeting Thursday 5 December

Drinks and nibbles followed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Douglas".

Minutes signed off by Jim Douglas (Committee member)

Appendix 1: Treasurer's report

New treasurer: Shelley Harington

Signatories: Shelley Harington, Andrea Rankin, Theo Ellenbroek

Total money in bank account: \$3,548.27

Money for DWA (My Tree Project): \$3000, of which \$1116 is spent

DWA money left: \$1884

WACRA money (minus DWA money): \$1664.27

We also have a term deposit of approx. \$2000

We plan to organise a separate account with BankSA for monies that come from grants/special projects to create a clearer process.

We would like to hold a fundraising event sometime soon as we have yearly costs (insurance, other organisation membership renewals etc). Your ideas are welcome.

Another idea is to sell tickets via the People First initiative (People's Choice). We missed the deadline in 2024 but it will open again next year in June/July. All monies raised go to the registered organisation.

Membership

At a glance there are 21 membership renewals from June to September 2024. We are expecting more as we continue to remind the membership with renewal notices. The membership amount per year is \$20. This was agreed upon a couple of years ago but the website was not updated so some members have paid \$10 instead of \$20. This error is now rectified so future membership payments will be \$20 per year. Thanks to those who have paid. We need your financial support.

Appendix 2: Government response to ERDC recommendations

The Environment, Resources and Development Committee (ERDC) of Parliament published its 11 recommendations on reform of the Coast Protection Board in October 2021. DEW tabled its 'Progress Report' on implementation of the recommendations in November 2023 but did not publish the report or even send it to the 54 people who made submissions to the ERDC inquiry.

WACRA has seen the report and it is profoundly disappointing. Our recent interactions with Minister Close's office confirm that this is not a priority for the government and it is likely nothing will be advanced before the next State election in March 2026, almost five years since the ERDC's recommendations! Given the problematic state of the metropolitan and other coastlines and the purported role of the Board in 'Coast Protection', this is absolutely unacceptable. WACRA is working with other community groups to apply pressure on the government to take some responsible action on this issue.