



# Newsletter

Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc.



Winter 2003

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## Planet Ark Day a great success

The weather was perfect. the winter sun beamed benevolently from a cloudless sky and a brisk south-easterly kept everyone on the move — well, almost everyone.

Never have we welcomed so many supporters to a tree planting day in Stirling Park. It was reminiscent of the very early days when community enthusiasm at having saved the Park from development brought everyone out to share in the first round of revegetation.

Now, thirteen years later, on Planet Ark Day 2003, we had 82 in our planting group — 52 adults, 20 children and 10 Green Corps.

We were not used to having to organise such a large contingent of eager planters, but by and large our pre-arranged system of matching prepared planting zones to the coloured boxes of seedlings worked out well.

Although some unprepared areas were inadvertently planted, prompt follow-up spraying by council staff ensured that these young plants will not be stifled by weeds.

A wider variety of species and in greater numbers were planted on this occasion (see the chart on the next page). Nearly 3000 trees and shrubs were planted, including Acacia, Banksia, Calistemon, Callitris, Eucalypts,

Hakea, Leptospermum and Melaleuca.

Thirsty sedges such as *Carex* and *Gahnia* found a new home in the swampy areas. In a year or two these wetlands will be frog heaven (if not already).

500 Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*) were planted in the sloping north-western section of Stirling Park, where pines were removed a couple of years ago. These Banksias were the greatest number of plants of a single species. When they reach maturity in a few year's time that once bare patch of sloping ground will be a spectacle of native colour.

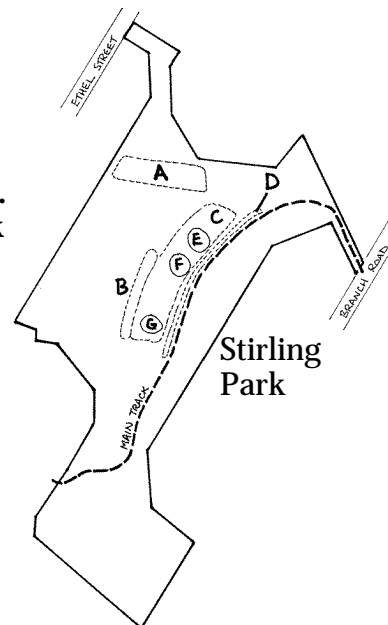
To all our members and other supporters who participated in this successful day we extend our sincere thanks. As you walk through the Park in the years to come, you can take justifiable pride in having played a part in creating all that new growth — and in helping to bring back the bush.



## Planet Ark National Tree Day 27 July 2003. Indigenous species planted in Stirling Park

(after G. Williams, 2003)

- Area A: NW corner slope (ex-pine clearance).  
 Area B: Edge strip of western revegetation zone.  
 Area C: General drainage precinct.  
 Area D: Edge of main track  
 Area E: Top swale  
 Area F: Centre swale.  
 Area G: Bottom swale.



Botanic name	Common name	AHC stock	FoSLP stock	Areas planted
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood	60	50	ABCD
<i>Acacia retinodes</i>	Swamp Wattle	90	50	C
<i>Allocasuarina muelleriana</i>	Slaty Sheoak	80		AB
<i>Banksia marginata</i>	Silver Banksia	500		A
<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	SA Christmas Bush	150		AB
<i>Calistemon sieberi</i>	River Bottlebrush	150		EG
<i>Callitris rhomboidea</i>	Oyster Bay Pine	100		AB
<i>Carex appresa</i>	Tall Sedge	300		F
<i>Carex tereticaulis</i>	Sedge	300		F
<i>Eucalyptus dalrympleana</i>	Mountain gum	30		EFG
<i>Eucalyptus cosmophylla</i>	Cup Gum	110		D
<i>Eucalyptus obliqua</i>	Messmate Stringybark	200		A
<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i> ssp. <i>viminalis</i>	Manna gum	50		A
<i>Gahnia sieberiana</i>	Red-fruit Saw-sedge	120		EFG
<i>Hakea carinata</i>	Erect Hakea	120		AB
<i>Leptospermum continentale</i>	Prickly Tea-tree	180	50	ABC
<i>Leptospermum lanigerum</i>	Woolly Tea-tree		50	EFG
<i>Melaleuca decussata</i>	Totem poles	60		C
<i>Acacia myrtifolia</i>	Myrtle Wattle		100	D
<i>Acacia pycnantha</i>	Golden Wattle		50	B
<i>Pultenea daphnoides</i>	Large-leaf Bush Pea		40	A
Total from each source		2600	390	
Total plants			2990	

## What is Planet Ark?

*In its own words:*

'Planet Ark is a wholly Australian organisation that works to help people reduce their day to day impact on the environment — at home, at work and within the community.

'We were set up 12 years ago as a not-for-profit foundation by former Wimbledon champ Pat Cash and international charity campaigner Jon Dee. Our strength lies in the councils, companies, schools, media outlets and individuals who support our push to bring about real and positive environmental change.'

National Tree Day 2003 is a nationwide event organised by Planet Ark in sponsorship with Toyota and the AMP Foundation.

In 2002, 225,000 volunteers participated on National Tree Day. Two million trees were planted at nearly 3000 sites around Australia.'

# Fauna survey in Woorabinda

Last February the SA Herpetology Group from the SA Museum conducted a 3-day survey of Woorabinda's ground-dwelling animals. The aim of the study was to 'survey the mammals, reptiles and amphibians...and provide recommendations to the Friends of Stirling Linear Park regarding management of this fauna'.

The survey report states:

'Four reptile, two frog and three native terrestrial mammals species were captured during the survey. Both the Garden Skink (*Lampropholis guichenoti*) and Three-toed Earless Skink, were very common, with over 50 and over 20 captures respectively. Likewise the House Mouse was also very prevalent, where in excess of 20 mice were captured across the survey. Both Possum species and the Water Rat were observed whilst spotlighting. Other reptile species that have been noted in the area include the Red-bellied Black Snake (*Pseudechis porphyriacus*) and the Eastern Brown Snake (*Pseudonaja textilis*). Mammal species previously noted in the area include the Echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*) and Southern Brown Bandicoot (*Isodon obesulus*).'

Some selected comments from the report:

'Whilst only a relatively low diversity of reptiles was found during the survey, it would be expected that further survey work would locate other species, such as the Sleepy Lizard (*Tiliqua rugosa*) and the Eastern Bluetongue (*Tiliqua scincoides*). Both of these species would be more active, and thus more easily observed, during early, rather than late, summer. If further reptile survey is conducted, it is recommended that November may be a more suitable time. Nonetheless, the high number of Garden Skinks (*Lampropholis guichenoti*) found augurs well for the health of the ecosystem, as they are an important prey item for Pygmy Copperheads, as well as a number of bird species.'

Disappointingly, the survey found no trace of Southern Brown Bandicoots in Woorabinda although these animals have been anecdotally reported elsewhere in the Park...

'This species may be using the introduced Blackberry (*Rubus* sp.) for cover and as a food source. It is recommended that if blackberries are being removed, they should be done so over a period of years whilst simultaneously being replaced with suitable native species. Further survey work, specifically targeting this species, is recommended.'

A pleasing result of the survey was the capture of a Pygmy Copperhead,

'...formerly rated as Vulnerable under the NPWS Act (1973). Some authors (eg Read and Bedford 1991, Cogger *et al* 1993) believe the species to be under threat from habitat loss and the impact of feral animals in the Adelaide Hills. Interestingly, the one sub adult captured was found in an open mowed area, sheltering under the only piece of habitat (a log) to be found in the immediate vicinity. Prime habitat for this species is areas with a near closed canopy and a dense heath or bracken understorey (Cogger *et al* 1993). Bearing this in mind, it is recommended that revegetation efforts in Woorabinda Reserve / Stirling Linear Park include locally provenanced plants in both the overstorey and understorey. A suitable array of plants for drier areas (ie not in riparian / wetland areas)... will benefit both the Pygmy Copperhead, as well as other reptile species.'

The study group only discovered two of the six frog species found in the Mt. Lofty Ranges: the Brown

Froglet and the Brown Toadlet. However the latter discovery was significant:

'The Brown Toadlet is believed to have become less abundant in recent times (Walker 1999). Toadlets are generally found singularly or in low numbers under rocks and logs and breed in grassy areas beside creeks. To find a specimen at the time of year that the survey was conducted was very pleasing.'

The report concluded with some sobering thoughts:

'In general terms, human impacts (such as the creation of unconsolidated trails), the presence of feral cats and foxes, and allowing dogs to walk in the Reserve unrestrained, would have a negative impact on native fauna. This would be most applicable to native mammals (such as the Southern Brown Bandicoot), and larger reptiles (such as Sleepy Lizards and Eastern Bluetongues). The smaller skinks and frogs are less likely to be affected by these negative impacts (which may in part explain their abundance). Future management of the Reserve should aim to minimise these impacts. Control of weeds, particularly in areas of good remnant vegetation, is also recommended (although see notes about the Southern Brown Bandicoot above). By controlling weeds, a good diversity of native plant species and a good diversity of habitat structures can be maintained, rather than a monoculture of weeds. This would ultimately benefit all native species in the area.'

The study and its recommendations will aid the formulation of the Management Plan for Stirling Park.

Friends and others wishing to view the complete report should contact Russell Seaman: 8398-0626.

*Terrestrial Vertebrate Survey of  
Woorabinda Reserve, Stirling Linear Park.  
February 2003 by Tim Milne.*

## If it looks like a duck, and it quacks like a duck, then...

Well of course — it's a duck.

But not all ducks are equal. Some imported species for instance are having a devastating effect on our indigenous ducks.

The Mallard for instance is such a duck, and breeds enthusiastically with our native Pacific Black. The offspring are hybrids, and these in turn breed with other hybrids and perhaps pure Pacific Blacks as well. Gradually the Mallard genes take over and most traces of the original pure-bred Black duck diminish, until perhaps another bird is added to Australia's sorry record of extinct species.

If we are to prevent this we have to view Mallards more realistically. They may be seen as just another variety of duck adding colour to our lakes (especially the male), but in reality they are slowly bringing about the destruction of the native Pacific Black duck.

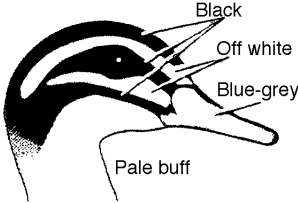
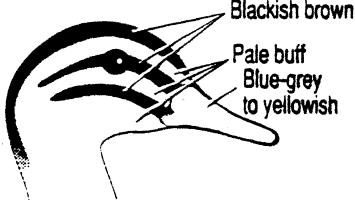
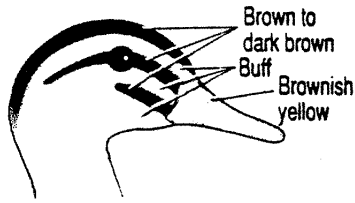
By diligent removal of these ferals it's possible that we can arrest the decline of our pure-bred Pacific Blacks.

Under SA's Animal and Plant Control Act, it is an offence to release Mallards into the wild, and local councils and communities are urged to remove them to a secure place where opportunities for interbreeding with indigenous birds are limited.

Unfortunately, our own Woorabinda Mallards are still at large (at the time of writing), having eluded several attempts at capture. It seems it is no easy thing to catch a duck. Mallards by all accounts are particularly elusive.

But the hunt goes on, and let's hope it's successful before the breeding season is in full swing.

### Identifying Black Duck/Mallard hybrids

			
	<b>Pure-bred Black Duck</b>	<b>Hybrid near Black Duck</b>	<b>Hybrid near Mallard</b>
<b>Wings</b>	Green speculum. No white edging.	Usually bluish-purple. Variable width white edging.	Purple-blue speculum edged white.
<b>Tail</b>	Dark, with narrow buff edging. centre tail never curled.	Pale edging. Centre tail rarely curled in male.	Obvious white to buff edge. Centre tail usually curled in males.
<b>Legs</b>	Greenish-brown with orange tinge.	Usually orange, with or without orange wash.	Orange

Source: Dept of Environment and Natural Resources, 1994.

### Recent Working Bees

Date	No. of volunteers	Area	Work done
1 June 03	13	Stirling Park	Cleared a large area of gorse.
13 July 03	4	Madurta Reserve	Cut and swabbed gorse and watsonia. Two pines ring-barked.
10 August 03	8	Hender Reserve	Removed longifolia and black wattle in southern section of the reserve.

### Forthcoming Working Bees

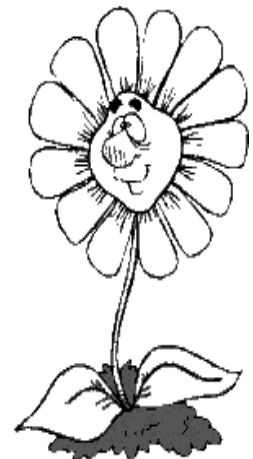
(Volunteers meet at 10am, 2nd Sunday of each month)

**14 September..... Woorabinda.....** meet at Woorabinda Drive entrance

**12 October..... Stirling Park.....** meet at Branch Road entrance.

**9 November..... Madurta Reserve.....** meet at Madurta Avenue, Aldgate.

**Phone Bob James (8339-1903) or David Ragless (8339-1038) for more details.**



# Woorabinda cottage neglected by Council

**M**embers will recall that your committee has pursued the issue of the Woorabinda stone cottage relentlessly since the building was abandoned some 2½ years ago and left to rot.

Two words sum up the AHC attitude towards this valuable community asset: irresponsible neglect.

It has been restated and reaffirmed at regular meetings of the Woorabinda Working Party (set up by Council to execute the Woorabinda Master Plan recommendations) that Stage 3 of the Master Plan be placed before Council so that approval could be given for the refurbishment of the cottage. The Working Party had agreed that once refurbished, a suitable tenant be sought for the cottage and that the cost of the refurbishment be recovered over six or seven years

from the rent.

So far, the issue still has not been put before the Council, and the building has remained empty and neglected. Vandals have struck, the roof leaks, and rats and possums have taken up residence.

While this community asset deteriorates, nearby residents have just cause to be concerned. Derelict property only invites vandals into their neighbourhood — reducing over time the quality of their locality and its desirability as a good place to live.

It is time for the wider community (not just the Friends of Stirling Linear Park) to demand some answers from the AHC.

## Family Cabin removed

**I**n late June, work started on the removal of another lakeside derelict — the Family Cabin. This structure had served its occupants well in the days when the Woorabinda campsite hosted families and children under various FACS programs. But in recent years it has stood forlornly in an advancing state of decay — visited only by wandering possums, rats, blackbirds, vandals and other pests.

There had been talk of its refurbishment — even its use as a meeting lodge for adventurers about to set off on a trek through the Stirling Linear Park wilderness. A morning's convivial stirrup cup of fortifying beverage served on the balcony (with a good view of wildfowl etc) was thought to be a good idea and a brilliant tourist attraction.

Fortunately common sense intervened and it was decided the Family Cabin had to go. That was two years ago... and we patiently waited.

Until the 17th June, when early morning regulars to Woorabinda were startled to see that the main entrance gate had been completely removed and that a wide track had been gouged into the bank leading to the Family Cabin. The bench seat donated by Mr. John Weightman had also been removed. Enquiries to Council revealed that a wide track was necessary to enable access (so we were told) of a semi-trailer. We were not told that a caterpillar-tracked front-end loader was also to be used in the demolition work. But as this was a private contract, we probably would not have been privy to that information anyway. Why such heavy machinery was needed for the demolition of a reasonably lightweight timber-framed building is a mystery.

Except for initially not keeping us informed about the date of the operation, Council has been a model of cooperation. Mr. Weightman's bench had been removed for safety, and we were reassured that it would be replaced level with the track in its original position. By 7th August, a small section of the bank had been removed to locate the seat alongside the

track, which had earlier been smoothed over and surfaced with dolomite. A timber retaining wall has also been added to minimise erosion around the new notice board shelter

The demolition itself would have won our praise but for the shards of broken glass left on the ground. With a little more care the contractors could have avoided this.

On the downside, the entrance to Woorabinda remained wide open to traffic longer than necessary. The gates were not replaced until the end of July. Recently a trail bike was observed tearing through Stirling Park, having gained easy entrance from Woorabinda Drive.

The main thing is that we are at last free of the unsightly Cabin, and the lakescape looks the better for it. All in all, the job was carried out reasonably professionally, and we now have a lovely virgin patch of ground to propagate with native vegetation (once the glass is cleared up). The site will be part of the demonstration native garden reported elsewhere in this newsletter.

## Phytophthora in the garden

An interesting information sheet recently came our way from the SA Environment Department. It offers some cautionary advice for the hygienic handling of seedlings and potting mixes etc.

Phytophthora, the deadly root-rotting fungus, can be spread by using infected tools, soil, nursery stock and footwear.

The leaflet advises that only potting mix bearing an Australian Standards mark and purchased from a NIASA-endorsed supplier (Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme Australia) be used. The mix should be stored on a hard dry surface or a plastic sheet. Potted plants should never be stored on the bare ground.

Seedlings and cuttings should also be obtained only from accredited suppliers, and stored off the ground at all times. A further precaution against the root-rot fungus is to dip cuttings in a dilute solution of sodium hypochlorite.

While tap water and rainwater are normally safe to use, water from dams and streams in high risk Phytophthora areas should be disinfected with 60ml pool chlorine per 100 litres of water.

Suitable disinfectants for cleaning pots, tools, footwear etc are:

- household bleach (1:4 with water),
- fungicides such as Phytoclean or Fongarid,
- Methylated spirits (undiluted).

The leaflet, plus other useful information about the identification and control of Phytophthora is available from Dept. for Environment and Heritage (8552-0306), the Nursery and Garden Industry of SA (NGISA) ph: 8372-6822, or through the website: <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/biodiversity/plantsand.html>.

## Waterwatch Announcement Waterwatch Community Workshop

**Tuesday, September 16th 2003  
10 am to 12 noon**

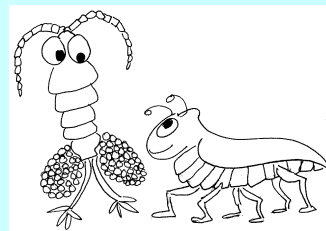
At Woorabinda Waterwatch Centre  
in the main building above the lake.

Learn about the role of macro-  
invertebrates in water quality  
testing.

Be fascinated by these strange  
little critturs that live in our  
water.

Our instructor will be a fresh  
water biologist from the Water  
Quality Centre.

To attend please phone Sheralee  
Cox at the Onkaparinga  
Waterwatch Network  
8370-1298.



## Bird hide vandalised again

Recently you would have noticed the re-appearance of graffiti in the Park. The bird hide was scrawled on three interior walls, with similar graffiti appearing on the rail crossing to Hender Reserve, and even on a tree trunk alongside the trail leading up from the crossing.

We had been lucky to have been free of this mindless activity for several months, but it was only a matter of time before the Park was struck again.

However we are pleased to report that one of our Friends, professional painter Paul Hannon, has volunteered to monitor the bird hide for graffiti and to repaint as needed.

We also photographed the bird hide graffiti 'tags' and provided the local police with the photos. The police say they have a better chance of tracing and prosecuting the offenders

when they are handed this kind of evidence. We have therefore decided to photograph any future graffiti appearing in the Park as soon as it occurs, and to continue supplying the police with these records.



## National Australia Bank in the Park

**T**hursday July 17 saw an enthusiastic group of NAB bank staff absorbing the environmental delights of Woorabinda and contributing some useful bush care along the way.

This was the latest in what has become an annual working bee by corporate identities anxious to polish up their green credentials.

Initiated and organised by Conservation Volunteers Australia, the working bees invite the companies to donate a day of their staff time to environmental good works. Volunteer employees are offered a choice of locations, but so far we have been fortunate in that Woorabinda appears to be high on the list of preferred venues.

Last year we had a group from MLC Financial Services. This year it was the turn of the National Australia Bank.

Supervised by CVA and accompanied by a Friends representative, the working bee party (six women and five men), spent most of the morning identifying macro-invertebrates and learning about the Waterwatch monitoring program that keeps an eye on the water quality of our catchments.

After lunch in the buildings (supplied by CVA), the

group got down to practical bush care. 400 trees were planted around the boardwalks and several gorse infestations along the dam wall and the southern tip of the lake were dealt with.

At the end of the day, the volunteers said they had thoroughly enjoyed themselves, with many expressing a wish to return next year.

Most of them however, had reservations about the abuses suffered by Woorabinda, and could not understand why such a pleasant and environmental resource does not get more support from the community. They suggested that more whipstick fencing should be continued along the length of the dam wall. They felt this would discourage access to the lake by dogs and people and allow more plants to regenerate. They were also especially critical about the amount of dog faeces fouling the lakeside paths, and were amazed at seeing so many dogs not on leads and out of control.

The group were asked to compile a report on the day's activities, with their own thoughts and suggestions about environmental and community issues concerning Woorabinda.

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### Funding applications update

During past months, your committee has been active in submitting grant funding applications for Park projects.

We have applied for funding totalling \$14,018 for two projects:

- *To the Commonwealth Government Envirofund:*

A detailed revegetation plan for Woorabinda and Hender Reserves and a program of seed collection, propagation and planting in Madurta Reserve.

- *To the Catchment Care program of Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board:*

The redevelopment of the Woorabinda campsite gardens. This will involve weed eradication and control, seed collection, propagation, planting and signage. It is planned to develop a demonstration garden containing local indigenous plants. The garden will show that native species require little watering, are attractive in a garden environment and provide long term benefits to native wildlife and catchment management.

### **The Friends of Stirling Park has recently been upgraded to full membership of Friends of Parks Inc.**

Until now we have been an affiliated member. The new status is in recognition of the many hours of voluntary work contributed by the Friends in caring for the Park. Friends of Parks (FOP) is the umbrella organisation that coordinates all the Friends groups for South Australia's National Parks. As carers of a public reserve owned by a local rather than a State authority, we have never aspired to full membership of FOP. But now they think we deserve it. And who will argue with that?

### Public Fund donations

Since our Public Fund was opened we have received several kind donations. The balance of the Fund now stands at \$950. The committee offers grateful thanks to our generous benefactors and assures them that we have been carefully considering how best to spend the money. Several possibilities have been discussed. They include weed control, revegetation, pathway construction and building renovation. At present the most favoured proposal is to build a much-needed bridge over the creek in Stirling Park. This project has been on the 'back burner' for a long time, and regular readers will recall that although Council budgeted for it some years ago, it was crossed off the list in one of the many cost pruning exercises. The community will agree that it is long overdue and there's little doubt it will attract enthusiastic support from everyone who enjoys walking in the Park.

Our immediate concern is to ensure that the availability of funds and labour is equal to the task.

# AGM

Our Annual General Meeting  
will be held on  
**Sunday 26 October 2003**  
at 11am  
in the Woorabinda main building.  
Everyone welcome.  
Speaker to be announced.

Visit us at our website:  
<http://users.esc.net.au/~slp/>

Disclaimer: Contributors' views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the editor, the committee or the general membership of the Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc.  
Contributors to this issue include David Ragless, Lorri Ragless, Russell Seaman and Jack Benlow.

## Not a member yet?

The purpose and commitment of the Friends of Stirling Linear Park is to help restore the Park to natural bushland and to ensure its preservation as a public open space in perpetuity. If you share this vision, why not join us? Active participation in working bees etc, is entirely voluntary. Membership is open to anyone who has the best interests of the Park at heart. This newsletter is distributed quarterly to all members.



**Patron** Anita Aspinall

**Committee 2002/2003:**

David Ragless ( <i>Chair</i> ).....	8339 1038
Bob James ( <i>Dep.Chair, Working bees</i> ).....	8339 1903
Shirley Benlow ( <i>Secretary</i> ).....	8339 2218
John Allison ( <i>Treasurer</i> ).....	8339 1577
Kathy Bowman ( <i>Public Officer,</i> <i>Membership, website</i> ).....	8370 9177
Jack Benlow ( <i>Newsletter</i> ).....	8339 2218
Lorri Ragless ( <i>OWN representative</i> ) .....	8339 1038
Reece Pedler .....	8339 3658
Philip Hicks.....	8339 3156
Alistair McHenry.....	8339 5114
Russell Seaman.....	8398 0626
Nick Stevens.....	8339 8643
Neil Strong.....	8339 4085
Merilyn Browne.....	
Glenn Williams ( <i>Natural Resources AHC</i> ).....	8408 0400

## Affiliations

The Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc. is a Member of Friends of Parks Inc. We are also a Registered Landcare Group and a Member of both Greening Australia and Trees for Life.



## Friends of Stirling Linear Park — Membership application/renewal

I/we would like to join/renew membership of the Friends of Stirling Linear Park (strike out word not applicable).

\$..... membership fee is enclosed.

\$.....donation is included. Donations of \$2.00  
or more are tax-deductible. A separate  
receipt will be issued.

Membership fee for both  
individuals and family:  
1 year.....\$5.00  
5 years.....\$20.00

Name:.....

Address:.....

..... Phone:.....

**Please return to:** David Ragless, Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc., 6 Branch Rd, STIRLING SA 5152.