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# President's letter

In my first letter as President I would like to welcome our new committee members and thank our immediate past President Jim Daly, retiring committee members, and continuing committee members for their efforts. There can be no doubt that our Park Lands would have been significantly diminished if not for the previous committee's efforts and the support of the Association's membership and other Park Lands protectors.

I hope that members who were not able to attend the AGM will forward ideas and suggestions to the committee, and I thank members who put their recommendations forward, including: advocacy for resting areas which regularly suffer from high impact events; applauding positive outcomes; following up on the RAH/Railyards Hospital proposal; addressing car-parking issues; and taking a leadership role in the formation of a South Australian coalition of Protectors of Public Lands.

The Adelaide Park Lands remain in clear and present danger. State Heritage nominations of Adelaide's Park Lands have been languishing, unprocessed for decades (in one instance for 23 years), and the Adelaide Oval and Surrounds nomination joined them more than half a decade ago. The failure to process

nominations for these sites and act upon requests for emergency protection seems inexcusable, particularly in light of these sites' potential World Heritage values.

The Government, having originally come into office with a stated intention of protection, has proven to be a serious threat to the integrity and conservation of the Park Lands. The Coast to Coast Light Rail (Tram) Extension Project has resulted in the destruction of trees at Bonython Park and the western end of North Terrace, and long-term alienations are proposed. Premier Rann's 'million trees' seem to be turning into a million broken promises. The Government's leavings along North Terrace—dismal drifts of wood chips instead of significant red gums and historic plantings—is not 'protection' in anyone's language, and the annihilation of several trees is stated to have been carried out for the purpose of facilitating access to the 'Marjorie Jackson-Nelson Hospital'.

The area of alienated Park Lands north of the Newmarket Hotel (proposed for conversion from railyards to hospital) is extremely significant. It was painted by William Light (*The Commencement of Colonization in South Australia, 1837*) and was the site of the 'Colonial Camp' occupied by William Light, South Australia's first Surveyor-General and founder of the City of Adelaide, James Hurtle Fisher, first Resident Commissioner, and the Survey and Land Office during Light's survey of the City of Adelaide and its Park Lands. This area has long been identified as high priority for return to Park Land, and clearly identified as such in the Council's Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy and more recently in that area's Community Land Management Plan.

In a few short years (2011–2012) South Australia will celebrate the 175th anniversary of Light's founding of the City of Adelaide. Current Government and Opposition proposals would taint the foundation anniversary of Adelaide and its Park Lands with massive constructions on Park Lands and ill-conceived alienations. Nevertheless, the Government has done us the service of



placing it beyond doubt that large areas are no longer required for the railways' use, and the Opposition's proposals for the existing Royal Adelaide Hospital include options for some return of Park Lands. This is welcome news, and in the lead up to the forthcoming State election it places within our reach an unparalleled opportunity for restoring Light's 'Park grounds'. Rather than further alienations, the site of Light's camp and its vistas are worth reclaiming.

The late John Dowie, whose renowned sculptures grace the dedicated Park Lands of the City of Adelaide, stated in his foreword for *Colonial Architecture in South Australia* (1980):

'History is like the wake of a ship. It stretches back, revealing the way we have come, and it indicates to us where we are going. A people without history is one without any sense of direction ... it is easy to see around us that our own destruction of our civic heritage approaches that of a major war ... the pressures of developers remain, to say nothing of the whims of politicians.'

It is time to get the restoration of William Light's remarkable 'Adelaide Park' back on course.

**Kelly Henderson**

## ISSUES ON THE TABLE

World Heritage listing

Land grabs at RAH site, railway yards and for tram extensions

Biodiversity survey

Heritage listing of 1889 Arbor Day plantings

Adelaide Bowling Club's activities

Hurtle Square redevelopment

Britannia intersection land grab

Dying elms and other trees

SACA car park push and expansionist ambitions

Alienated Park Lands

Flood mitigation works

Watering regime during drought

Front cover: Flowering pear blossoms in Wita Wirra (Park 18), August 2006.

Photo taken by Gunta Groves.

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31 July 2009

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# 2009 AGM ushers in a new year

**The 2009 APPA Annual General Meeting heralded a number of changes for the coming year, as well as a guest talk by Graeme Hopkins, Director of Fifth Creek Studio, regarding the evolution of the SA Water site into an urban forest.**

Graeme Hopkins described the people of Adelaide as being 'isolated from our place in the ecosystem', and spoke of the need to reintegrate, which is what the proposal for the SA Water site intends to facilitate. He pointed out that, with regard to the city's grid layout, the SA Water site should logically be part of the Park Lands; this was the chance to reclaim it as such.

He explained that the SA Water site is already a meeting point of three different plant communities, granting the opportunity to encourage the growth of natural flora without needing to remove or replace too much vegetation. In addition, because of the sloping geography, the site has issues with stormwater run-off and flooding, especially on the southern side. By converting part of the site into a wetland as the proposal intends, the water can be filtered of pollutants via natural systems and then used as a resource for the Park Lands. In addition, there are multiple routes to the site for pedestrians and cyclists, and the added possibility of the tramline means that the forest will be easily accessible for visiting and viewing.

The future park is intended to be non-irrigated, only using irrigation from the wetlands and recycling the stormwater during very dry times. Building up the area for wildlife also means urban habitats can begin to be reintegrated back into the Park Lands. The plan was accepted early this year, with plans to proceed late 2009 or early 2010. However, Graeme Hopkins

*Right: Past President Jimmy Daly with Graeme Hopkins, Director of Fifth Creek Studio.*

*Photo taken by Gunta Groves.*

warns that with the tramline, the Clipsal site development and the surrounding businesses, the park design should be revisited and could take a different role than the current design suggests.

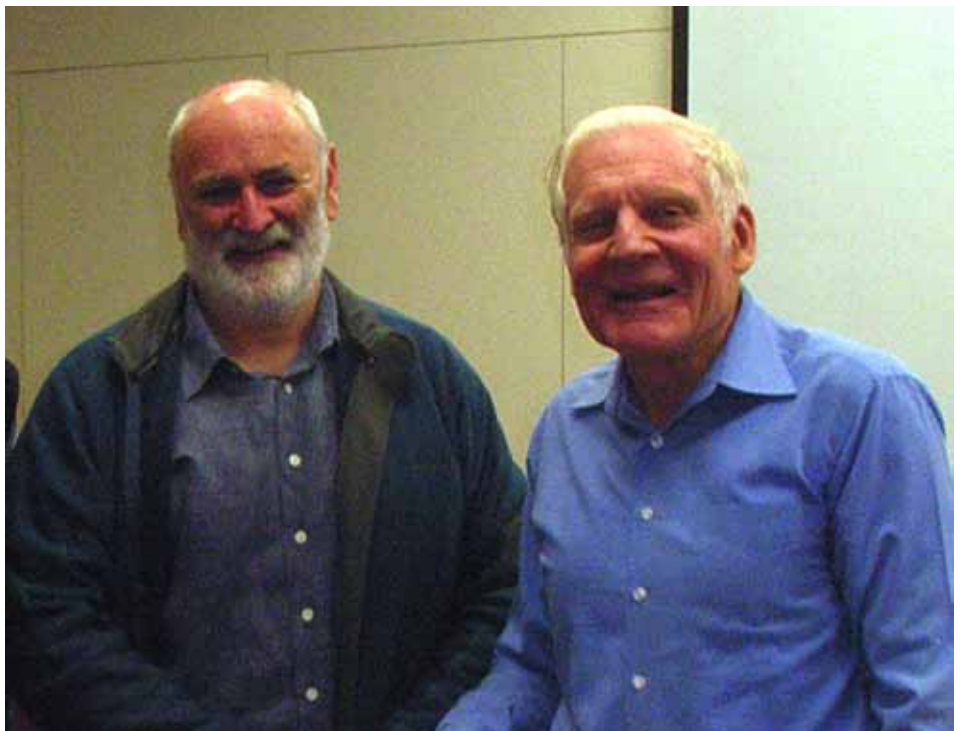
The members of APPA were then addressed by retiring President Jim Daly, who reflected upon events and issues over the past year, including: Victoria Park; the railyards' return to the Park Lands; the leasing of Park Lands for less than their worth; the development of APPA's own Park Land Vision Statement; the Park Land finally making the National Heritage list; and the encouragement of younger people, particularly students, to become members of APPA. He also raised the ongoing topics of the stormwater project in the South Park Lands, the Glenelg-Adelaide pipeline and the removal of trees for the new tramline, and finished by affirming the challenge of the year to come: that of the Community Land Management Plan for Park 26, which involves the issue of car-parking and development of the riverbanks.

The election of committee members saw half the previous committee's retirement, including Peter Austin,

Gunta Groves, Mike Hudson, Stephanie Johnston and John Underwood. Continuing committee members are Olivia Franco, Ian Gilfillan, Philip Groves, David Plumridge and Michael Sando, while new members Rod Hartley, Luciana Larkin, Kyle Penick and Kelly Russ will be completing the committee of ten for the next year.

Other issues raised at the AGM were headed by approval of the members to increase the membership fee by \$5 for all categories except for the single concession category (with the hope of encouraging students in particular to become members). Additional topics brought up by members included: resting areas that suffer regularly from events such as the Garden of Unearthly Delights; appreciation of positive outcomes and changes such as the relocation of Carnevale to the showgrounds; the threat of negation to the long-awaited priority return of railyard alienations; collaborating with individual Councils to address Park Lands car-parking issues; and exploring the possibility of a formation of a South Australian coalition of Protectors of Public Lands.

*Kelly Russ*







# Parklands preservation catches on

**APPA's significant efforts to prevent a permanent corporate entertainment complex being built in Victoria Park came to the attention of some country residents who are concerned about loss of parkland in and around Naracoorte. Now there is a chance that the slow whittling away of Naracoorte's public land will be stopped by a dedicated group of parkland preservationists.**

We are looking for ways to prevent further loss of parks for what we see as short-term gain. Over the last ten years, the Naracoorte Lucindale Council has sold or attempted to dispose of a number of significant pieces of community land:

- A community-owned caravan park located in the parklands between the town centre and the swimming lake—approximately 5 hectares were sold to developers for a bargain price.
- Market Square, a small park in the heart of the town, was attempted to be sold to develop low-cost housing.
- Sections of the Memorial Parklands facing roadways were sold for housing blocks.
- Substantial areas of forest reserve have been set aside for a future housing development; the areas have not been replanted after the trees had been harvested.

Additionally, there have been other, less significant sales.

Currently, the Council has just finished a process of public consultation regarding a proposition to enable a private school to establish playgrounds and other structures on a section of Memorial Parklands. This created considerable opposition from the public. It appears the school will now seek approval to build on privately owned land adjoining the parklands.

Country towns have the difficulty of having a community that is part urban and part rural. Some people tend to have a different perspective on the importance of parks and for people living out of town the need of town folk for areas for passive recreation is often overlooked.

A result of the community concern has been the formation of a Naracoorte Parklands Preservation Association. Modelled on the Adelaide Park Lands Preservation Association, the initial group of thirteen people elected a provisional committee and undertook the spade work to set up an association. Only late in April was the final step of incorporation achieved.

An Annual General Meeting has now been held. Until incorporation, others interested in joining were asked to hold off. At the AGM a group of twenty-five people attended. Office-bearers and a full committee were readily obtained. This core group is now signing up further members and at the time of printing the membership had climbed to above fifty—and

as yet there has not been any publicity sought in the local press.

The Association shares similar goals to APPA. It is heartened by having the private school now indicating they will not be seeking to put structures on community land, but not unexpectedly there are other issues emerging. The baseball club has applied to build a storage shed cum club rooms in the open space of the Memorial Parklands. However, not all news has been bad. In the plans for re-development of the disused railway yards it is proposed to set aside land to extend the recreational corridor alongside the Naracoorte Creek.

We look forward to continuing our positive relationship with APPA and appreciate the opportunity to speak through this newsletter. As both groups have like goals and a membership of determined citizens, we look forward to sharing future struggles and successes.

*John Flynn*

*Naracoorte Parklands  
Preservation Association*

## Correction

In the March 2009 issue, a date of 1836 was incorrect on p 5. The sentence should have been: 'Fact: Park Lands were painted on William Light's watercolour sketch map of the site of Adelaide, circa 7 February 1837.'



# Hundreds of trees gone

To its credit, on 16 February 2009, the City of Adelaide Development Assessment Panel (DAP) rejected the application by the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI) to remove twenty-five significant trees from the Park Lands. They are part of the veritable forest of trees and shrubs now removed for the tramway extension to the Entertainment Centre.

Despite the DAP's rejection, the Development Assessment Commission later approved the application and, once again, because the State Government declared the project to be a 'major' government initiative, nothing is allowed to get in its way.

The DTEI prepared a vegetation survey which was attached to the application to the DAP. This survey revealed that over 200 trees and shrubs, including the twenty-five significant trees, were to be lost. Quite a few mature trees were to be lost from the long-alienated SA Water site, which suffered on two fronts: loss of mature trees and loss of 3500 square metres of Park

Lands. In April, an anonymous and concerned member of the public passed on the information to APPA that the true number of trees and shrubs to be removed was 500. This was alluded to by Patrick Conlon when he was reported in the *City Messenger* (by Adam Todd, 9 April, p 7) as saying that 'hundreds of other trees and plants ... were also set to go'. This same article reported that 'twenty-nine significant trees would be lopped'.

A worrying aspect of this situation is the seemingly small regard that government has for the loss of trees and shrubs, some of which were very old and most of which had had a significant economic investment in their care. Rather than follow the previously set principle that requires car lanes to be sacrificed in favour of accommodating the tramline, the government turned that on its head and said that existing car lanes should be kept, the road widened to accommodate the tramline, Park Lands area was to be lost forever, and hundreds of trees and shrubs ripped out.

Even the Public Works Committee, when interrogating Rod Hook, Manuel Delgado and Angelo Lanzilli of the DTEI about the project, did not concern itself with the implications for the Park Lands or its trees. The Committee, consisting of Ms V Ciccarello, Mr TR Kenyon, Mr M Pengilly and the Hon PL White, did not ask a single question about the loss of Park Lands and its trees. The thirty-page submission by the DTEI to the Committee set the scene by using the word 'tree' just three times. In passing, Mr Delgado made much of avoiding 150-year-old carob trees: 'We have been very careful not to have any impact on those', he was recorded as saying (Hansard, 3 December 2008). And that care should have extended to at least the twenty-five (and possibly twenty-nine) significant trees, and another five that were significant in size and age but considered insignificant because they were just old olives!

Loss of Park Lands and loss of mature trees can never be compensated for by slick media statements claiming that for every tree chopped down '... "we will be planting one hundred more"' (Patrick Conlon reported in the *City Messenger*, *ibid*). Equally disingenuous was Mr Conlon's assertion that "'Nothing is greener than public transport" ...'. I have news for Mr Conlon: Park Lands are greener, in every sense of the word.

*Gunta Groves*

*Left: A job well done! Just the aromatics remained of the felled eucalypts along the western end of North Terrace.*

*Photo taken by Gunta Groves, 17 April 2009.*



# ACC matters raised at AGM

A number of important issues were raised at the 2009 AGM which related to Adelaide City Council activities. As an Adelaide City Councillor, I would like to add the following points to the discussion:

- I do not support the retention of the horse trials jumps in the Park Lands on a permanent basis. Whilst the event itself is a good use of the Park Lands, it is totally against my principles to allow permanent structures, many of which are quite unsightly and some of which present serious hazards to park users.
- The Garden of Unearthly Delights (GoUD) is a very popular event, albeit one that probably runs too long. Council supports this kind of activity in its efforts to make the city vibrant and a more attractive place for people of all ages and interests. This year the event was conducted well and, at the conclusion, the park was left in a clean and tidy state. Grass remediation took place immediately and was done by the Council at the full cost of the event organiser.
- Botanic Park, which plays host to WOMAdeLaide, is not technically a part of the Park Lands and is in the care and control of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, which is not subject to Adelaide City Council control. Incidentally, the same applies to the Adelaide Zoo.
- The fencing of public Park Lands for events is a matter of concern to me but for practical reasons some events have to be confined and access restricted, particularly if the event is to be licensed for the sale of alcohol.
- Council has used every effort to identify and nurture significant and other vulnerable Park Land trees. It must be remembered that Council, just like the rest of us, is under strict rationing of the use of Murray water with no concessions being allowed by the State Government. Much of the water has to be used to maintain essential event areas such as Bonython, Elder, Rymill and Rundle Parks. Other water is being trucked in, including some recycled water bought from Mawson Lakes, but the action of trucking water in is potentially damaging to trees and of course very costly.
- Council is fairly strict about parking on Park Lands and, apart from parking at the Adelaide Oval, allows parking only for Park Lands activities, although I admit that more work needs to be done on this problem. One notable exception is the Royal Show where failure of Unley Council to require the showgrounds to provide its own parking results in the Park Lands being used.
- Parking along Greenhill and Fullarton Roads is the responsibility of the Unley and Burnside Councils to control.

I would be pleased to discuss any of these issues more fully with members. Please email me at <dplumrid@bigpond.net.au> or phone 8232 0515.

*David Plumridge*

## SAMSB shame at Pedal Prix

Among debris, advertisements and supposedly temporary infrastructure, the hundreds of Pedal Prix participants struggled to keep to their racing line in the wet conditions on Sunday 17 May 2009.

After seven months of mounting and demounting the V8 Supercar race and with all the money and resources at its disposal, the SA Motor Sport Board still couldn't get its act together enough to provide the Pedal Prix with clear space to practise and then run the event that is dear to the hearts of so many students and parents.

The large shade structure for the main grandstand still stood that Sunday, as did a large, partly demolished structure whose foundations had been dug out and left for anyone to fall into. Significant piles of girders from the pit and corporate entertainment building still sat in the

middle, obscuring all views of the event except what was happening right in front of you. Worse still, a prominent shipping container emblazoned with ads for Clipsal and Channel 7 was sited in the middle. What an advertising coup—a large captive audience of impressionable young minds as well as older onlookers having no option but to see the adverts for hours on end. Seeing as how advertising in the Park Lands is banned, this example of SAMSB contempt and Adelaide City Council seeming indifference is shameful, as is the lack of consideration by the SAMSB for other park users such as the Pedal Prix.

*Gunta Groves*

*Right: A token cone and useless bunting is all that stands between the crowds at the Pedal Prix and a series of deep holes containing metal fixings. Photo taken by Gunta Groves, 17 May 2009.*



*Above: A community event has to struggle because of SAMSB's ineptitude in removing 'temporary' infrastructure in a timely manner. The watching crowds have no option but to stare at the advertising left in Victoria Park.*

*Photo taken by Gunta Groves, 17 May 2009.*



## The webs they weave

During the course of Carol Whitelock's afternoon radio program on ABC 891 Adelaide on 30 April 2009, Family First Upper House member Robert Brokenshire suggested alternative uses for the SAJC-owned Cheltenham Racecourse, other than the high-density housing plan. One suggestion was that the South Australian Police Academy at Largs Bay be re-located to Cheltenham Park, rather than the planned new state-of-the-art Academy being built on the existing Largs Bay site. This would free up the Largs Bay site for housing development and allow for more of Cheltenham Park to be given over to stormwater capture, as Cheltenham Park is pivotal to such an exercise.

Minister Michael Wright (Minister for Racing et al) either called into the program or was contacted by the station for comment. Minister Wright said the government doesn't own the Cheltenham Racecourse, the SAJC does. He went on to say it

would be 'crazy' to build the Police Academy on land not owned by the government. What a revelation!

I seem to remember it was not that long ago that Minister Wright had no such reservations with the Rann Government's proposal for the building of a permanent corporate entertainment and pit building at Victoria Park, specifically for the commercial benefit of the SAJC and commercial motor-racing interests. Victoria Park is priceless community-owned Park Land. How refreshing it is to finally see a Rann Government Minister acknowledge that it would be crazy for the government to expend taxpayers' funds on land it does not own. Of course, unlike the Adelaide Park Lands, there is nothing preventing the government from acquiring the Cheltenham Racecourse. But that would take political will.

*Philip Groves*

## O-Bahn extension into city

Proposals to spend \$61 million of Federal funds to extend the O-Bahn bus service into the city should be watched very carefully by people who care about the Park Lands. While it seems likely that dedicated bus lanes will be confined to city streets, there is the remote possibility that the government might consider using the old tram corridor across Rymill Park, which would be a Park Lands disaster. As a City Councillor I would oppose this, but we all need to be vigilant.

*David Plumridge*

## Last and apparently least

**On the 2nd of May 2009, an article was released by Brad Crouch on AdelaideNow and in the Sunday Mail the next day regarding plans to build a new casino-hotel.**

The two preferred locations for the new casino are either the unused railyards in the west, near the Torrens Lake, or the old Royal Adelaide Hospital site in the east. According to the article, although SkyCity Adelaide hasn't commissioned any plans for a new casino, it is in negotiation with the State Government for relocation and two unnamed construction consortiums have earmarked both of these sites for the development of independent proposals to be presented to SkyCity.

In fact, the article presents the overriding issue as whether or not the RAH will be demolished or not. The Labor Party has its eye on the railyards for the site of a new hospital, and wants an entertainment centre in the east where the hospital was. The Liberals, on the other hand, would prefer to build the entertainment complex on the banks of the River Torrens and a stadium on the railyards, and upgrade the existing RAH. What Crouch never states is that both of these sites already belong to something: they belong to the Adelaide Park Lands. Both of these sites are marked for high priority return to the Park Lands and, in the railyards' case, have been for over ten years.

Some might say it's overly optimistic to expect both of these sites to be returned to the Park Lands, particularly given the State Government's jaundiced eye towards the Park Lands themselves (and particularly their usage). The disturbing thing about this article is the view that the Park Lands may as well not exist. Indeed, it seems to assume that, no matter what, both sites will (and perhaps even should) be used for construction sometime in the near future. What will be built where is only a matter of who wins the next State election.

Either way, the Park Lands lose.

*Kelly Russ*



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*Gunta Groves*

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## Gone and easily forgotten

Many buildings in the Park Lands deserve to be demolished. The buildings are usually of a low standard of construction, are not used at all or used inappropriately, and are an eyesore. They should not have been built in the first place.

Tuttangga (Park 17) has more than its fair share of various small buildings, usually associated with sport or community activities; some are still active while others are moribund. Many of the buildings could be demolished without the loss even being noticed. Such a building was the red brick veneer structure on the east side of Hutt Street, erected in the 1960s as public toilets and a sports shelter. I remember hockey being played there many years ago.

Five years ago, the Adelaide City Council's Park Lands Committee recommended the demolition of the building. Yet, every time the rumours circulated that it was to come down, someone found a temporary use for it and it stayed. Its last use was as a temporary depot for Park Lands workers, a gathering point for 'rough



sleepers', and a handy 'canvas' for graffitists.

Finally, in early February 2009, the building vanished and there is now a vista looking east into the Park Lands from Hutt Street.

I am looking eagerly towards seeing more vistas opened in other areas of the Park Lands, such as Victoria Park, where already the stables, shed, restaurant and betting ring have gone.

Just the mere removal of the running rails over the last few months was an immediate improvement to the sense of space.

*Gunta Groves*

*Above: Finally, the red brick building has been demolished and the vista opened from Hutt Street into Tuttangga (Park 17), showing off the grove of three mature Aleppo Pines (Pinus halepensis).*

*Photo taken by Gunta Groves.*

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**Method of payment**

- Cheque attached                       Money order attached

**OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION ARE TO ENSURE THAT:**

- the Park Lands are available for use by the general public
- the public, so far as practicable, has free and unrestricted access to the Park Lands
- the Park Lands are reserved as a place for public recreation, leisure and enjoyment
- alienated areas of the Park Lands are restored for recreational use, preferably as open space
- the open space character of the Park Lands as a place dividing the City of Adelaide from the suburbs is preserved
- the Park Lands are preserved and maintained in a manner that enhances their special place in the design of the City of Adelaide
- the amenity of the Park Lands is not impaired by inappropriate development of nearby lands
- the Park Lands are included on State, National and World Heritage lists.

I agree to be bound by the Constitution of the Association. Signature .....

Please make cheque/money order payable to: Adelaide Park Lands Preservation Association Inc (*not 'APPA'*)

Send to: Adelaide Park Lands Preservation Assoc Inc, PO Box 3040 Rundle Mall SA 5000

06/09

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*Secretary:* Olivia Franco  
*Treasurer:* Philip Groves

*Committee members:*  
Ian Gilfillan  
Rod Hartley  
Luciana Larkin  
Kyle Penick  
David Plumridge AM  
Kelly Russ  
Michael Sando

**Auditor**

David Carver, BK Partners

**Web administrator**

Kelly Russ

*'I would feel more  
optimistic about a bright  
future for man if he spent  
less time proving that he  
can outwit Nature and  
more time tasting her  
sweetness and respecting  
her seniority.'*

E.B. White (1899–1985)

**Contact**

**News, comments, articles and Web site suggestions:**

Kelly Russ (Newsletter Editor)  
PO Box 3040  
Rundle Mall SA 5000  
Telephone: 0411 647 306  
E-mail: k.a.russ@hotmail.com

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**Advertising:**

Olivia Franco (Secretary)  
Telephone: 0412 314 966

**Information about APPA:**

Kelly Henderson (President)  
Telephone: 0432 989 676

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