

# Friends of Willunga Basin inc.

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The Editor  
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Friends of Willunga Basin are very supportive of the proposal of the City of Onkaparinga to develop walkable neighbourhoods ("The Face of New Suburbia" Southern Times 29/7/09). Walkable neighbourhoods are also promoted in the State Government's Draft 30 year plan, also out for consultation. FOWB will be considering these draft plans at our next meetings. Although we acknowledge the concerns of some that higher densities and mixed use may promote ghettos of crime and disadvantage, the experience of other countries is very reassuring. Members of our Committee have spent time in such walkable neighbourhoods in Europe, and found them to be wonderful places to live, especially for smaller households and ageing populations – something we clearly face.

There are 4 main reasons for our support for this style of planning: awareness of Peak Oil, the inevitable move to a low carbon future, the protection of agricultural land from sprawl and protection of our magnificent Willunga Basin tourism assets. A stunning attribute (often insufficiently appreciated) is the close proximity of our beautiful (and still fairly unspoilt) southern coast & beaches and the vineyards and open space of the Willunga Basin. This sense of open space must not be lost!

The issue of 'Peak Oil' has temporarily gone off many people's radar with the economic crisis, but with economic recovery and the rate of development in China and India it is inevitable that we will soon enough be exposed to very high fuel prices again, prices which will continue to soar within surprisingly few years. There is good evidence that the point of peak oil production has already passed, decline has already commenced. Our planners must not work on assumptions that car dependant fringe development is still appropriate.

Friends of Willunga Basin also note their great concern at rural land purchases by developers around McLaren Vale, outside the present Urban Boundary ("Vineyard Buy-Up", Southern Times 29/7/09). The people of Willunga Basin have repeatedly seen the views of locals ignored in favour of developers in the past, and fear that the strong local support for maintaining village character of our rural townships will again be overridden. We need a potent message to be sent to State Government from our region to support this view, and commend the actions of Robert Brokenshire MP for his Willunga Basin Protection Bill.

David Gill, Secretary FOWB