

FRIENDS OF THE HEYSEN AND OTHER WALKING TRAILS INC

21st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Meeting held on 28th March 2008 at Woodville Bowling Club, Oval Ave, Woodville South.

- 1. Present:** 42 in attendance. See attached list.
Special guests: Patron Warren and Bunty Bonython, and Honorary members.
Apologies: 14 apologies received. See attached list.
- 2. Minutes of 2007 AGM:** Distributed. Moved Julian Monfries, seconded Bob Randall that the minutes present a true and correct record. Carried.
- 3. President's Report:** President Simon Cameron spoke on our vision of developing and promoting the Heysen Trail as a world class walking experience. Simon's theme enunciated at last years AGM was fever – and from our membership of around 700 people we have been able to call on a pool of about 100 volunteers to assist in reaching that vision feverishly.

Maintenance – our bread and butter activity

- new standards for marking of trails have been introduced. We started to implement these in 2007 and we hope to have the task completed this year
- we have completed a survey of huts in the northern stretches

Membership and marketing – ably led by Robert Alcock

- The Heysen Trail Friendly towns initiative was successfully trialled in Melrose
- Cape Jervis trailhead was installed at the Sealink terminal
- Books have been installed in the huts for feedback from users
- Heysen trail log books were completed
- Continuing development of our website

Walking – continuing to keep us financially stable

- we ran a walk leader training day
- more walks were introduced and we have managed to put more walkers on the trail
- the “End-to-End 2” and “End-to-End 3” groups continue northwards with the E2E2 group expecting to complete the trail this year
- we have introduced overseas adventures to our program

Other Trails

- We have commenced the process of establishing a new trail to be known as the “George Driscoll Sea to Summit Trail” which will run from the sea at Kingston Park to Mt Lofty summit
- Following an informal request from SARTI we have offered assistance to the Terry Lavendar Federation Trail project which runs from Murray Bridge to Clare

Ongoing DEH involvement

- In June, DEH released their long awaited Strategic Plan. It seeks to:
 - promote the Heysen Trail as SA's premier long distance walking experience
 - broaden the opportunities for its use
 - maintain a high standard of management of the trail

Simon expects this feverish activity to continue through 2008 with

- a project to install water tanks on the trail (17 sites identified so far)
- development of a new on-line booking system
- extension of the Heysen Trail Friendly towns initiative to other towns
- improvements to the existing hut facilities along the trail.

Not everything we have attempted has been successful. Simon reflected on

- our failure to establish a greening committee
- the failure to fill a vacancy that existed on Council throughout 2007 and in particular the failure to improve the gender imbalance that exists on Council. The impending retirement of Claire Randall from Council will see no female representation at all.

4. Treasurer's Report: John Wilson presented report of a successful year's operations.

John reminded the meeting that the surplus in 2006 of \$28250 incorporated an 'unrealised profit' of \$11000 being unsold stock of Push the Bush. The profit for 2007 of \$9751 is more like what we should expect in a normal year.

The biggest difference in Income came mainly through a drop in Profit from Sales. This was inflated in 2006 because of the large amount of sponsorship received for Push the Bush plus the initial surge of sales of that publication in 2006. Our increased walking activities generated more income for us in 2007 than in 2006.

Our expenditure increased by about \$10000 made up of an increase in Office Expenditure (due to new equipment – cash register, safe etc plus expenses involved in performing a general cleanup) and Promotions (brochures, signage, etc promoting both the Heysen Trail and also the Friends movement itself).

Our assets have exceeded \$100,000 for the first time which includes over \$14000 of stock comprised mainly of copies of Push the Bush.

A new expenditure item "Trail Awareness" has been identified (\$1772 in 2007) reflecting the increased activity of the Marketing committee.

Maintenance expenditure on basic materials and expenses continued in the main to be reimbursed by DEH (\$6749). Our expenses for Trail maintenance amounted to \$2016. We need to be aware that in addition DEH spent about \$400,000 on the trail.

5. Maintenance Report: Maintenance Coordinator Gavin Campbell reminded the meeting that the original purpose of the Friends was for maintenance of the trail.

- A small group has been set up in Victor Harbor along the lines of the Burra group.
- We are trying to set up a similar group in Pt Augusta.
- A program of hut maintenance has been initiated with all huts in the north having been visited and identified problems fixed. This work will be done again this year.
- Thanks to all Section Leaders and volunteer workers for the job they do, continuing to provide tireless and loving care for the trail.
- DEH, the managers of the Trail, put a deal of time and money into improvement and provision of amenities along the Trail.

6. Election of Officers:

- Vice President: No nominations received. Council to attempt to fill. Thanks were given to Julian Monfries for filling this role for the last 12 months. Simon appreciated his help in assisting in a smooth transition.
- Treasurer: John Wilson. One Nomination.
- Secretary: Peter Wynen. One nomination.

Council Members:

Continuing Members: Ray Blight, Cliff Walsh, Robert Alcock

Renominating Members: Bob Randall, Gavin Campbell, Jerry Foster, Jim Alvey, David Beaton

New Nominations: Julian Monfries, David Rattray.

Retiring Member: Thanks were given to Claire Randall for her involvement with the Council.

7. **Auditor:** Peter Hall nominated by John Wilson. Seconded David Beaton. Carried.

8. **Honorary Members:** No nominations.

9. **Any Other Business:**

Water tanks:

A question was asked about whether our proposed water tanks policy indicates a change of heart on the part of DEH. Simon explained that DEH are very supportive of the trail. They are hoping to establish 4 iconic sections of the trail as first class walking experiences – including huts.

DEH have accepted our offer to supply tanks. Costings etc. are still up in the air. We are awaiting the DEH management plan. We are getting the ball rolling – it is expected that the tanks will be part of a modular tank/verandah/hut system. If we start with the tanks, the verandah and huts will follow.

10. **Meeting concluded at 8.05pm.**

Guest Speaker: Tim Noonan (ABC891) gave a description of his recent experience walking the Kokoda Trail. He started by contrasting the random nature of the Kokoda trail with the more formalised structure of the Heysen trail. He had sat next to Warren Bartlett (CEO of the 4 year old Kokoda Track Authority) on the flight to Pt Moresby. On the flight home, he was seated next to a young Japanese man who knew nothing about the significance of the trail to Australia and after a brief explanation by Tim of the fighting between Japanese and Australian troops, paused for a minute and asked “So, who won?”

Tim was at the site of the Isuarava Battle with a number of veterans from the 39th battalion and 2/14th association on its 65th anniversary. He showed a brief 10 minute video of his trek, which showed some of the difficulties encountered. Tim spoke of the unexpected outpouring of emotion at the end of the trek. All in all an extremely satisfying experience which ended up being more than he thought it would.

As a number of the Friends were currently in training for this trek, a number of questions were asked from the floor regarding the amount of training done and other matters of a practical nature.

Tim kindly remained and answered various other questions during the supper that followed the meeting.