

THE TRAILWALKER

MARCH 1994

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF
THE HEYSEN TRAIL AND OTHER WALKING TRAILS INC.

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SPECIAL EDITION

MARCH 1994

FOR MEMBERS

TRAIL WALKER

SPECIAL PRESIDENTS REPORT by Colin Edwards

At the end of last year, your Council submitted a proposal to the incoming Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing, John Oswald, that the Friends' be appointed Trustees of the Heysen Trail. As the Trail was completed 6 years ahead of schedule (according to the Department's Press Releases) with substantial assistance from the Friends', it is considered that the time was appropriate for such action. The proposal is summarised in the section opposite titled *Our Aim*. The idea is not a new one; the Appalachian Trail in the U.S.A., and the Bibulman Track in Western Australia are run on similar lines and are successful also in attracting corporate funding in the form of sponsorships.

Our proposal, whilst having qualified support from the Minister for the Environment, David Wotton, was rejected as only an "interesting concept" without debate by John Oswald. A day after receiving this information we were informed by the Office of Recreation, Sport and Racing, that funding for the Friends' was to be severely cut far beyond any previous suggestion. As a consequence Mike Fretwell's contract with the Friends as Administrative Officer and Trails Coordinator would cease to be funded after 28 February, 1994.

If that was not enough, the letter continued by informing us that the Trail has notionally now been divided into four parts and that it appears three Project Officers under Andrew Moylan have been appointed to carry out Mike's part time duties full time! In future all volunteers carrying out maintenance would report and be controlled by them! We will not accept this! It is a backward step and we do not wish to be told by bureaucrats how to work on the Trail!

We have written back to the Minister respectfully asking him to review (a) his decision on trusteeship and, (b) his department's attitude towards the Friends'. In addition we have asked for a meeting with the Minister to discuss our proposal.

At their meeting on 23 February, 1994, Council resolved a number of issues. They were:
(a) To continue Mike's contract; at least to its current expiry date of 30 June, 1994. (b) To inform the Minister that all requests for volunteers to work on the Trails will continue to be coordinated by the Friends' Trail Coordinator; attempts to "short circuit" this by the department's officers would not be tolerated. (c) To issue a special edition of *Trailwalker* for members only to inform them of the current position.

In short it will be business as usual while the Friends' executive and members lobby their local members of parliament and cabinet ministers.; the Friends' various activities continues!

It was also agreed that this subject should be raised and a verbal statement given on the situation during general business of the Annual General Meeting; to be held as previously advised on 18 March, 1994.

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THE FRIENDS CONSTITUTION

The objects of the Friends' as contained in the constitution (Section 2) are;

(a) to promote public awareness and usage of the Heysen Trail and other walking trails in South Australia;

(b) to assist and advise in the development and maintenance of the walking trails of South Australia;

(c) to ensure that the rights and interests of recreational walkers are preserved and that access to walking trails and other walking areas is protected;

(d) to promote an awareness of environmental responsibilities on and adjacent to walking trails; and

(e) to make representations and submissions to appropriate Government Departments, local authorities, semi-Government bodies and non-government organisations on any matter concerning recreational walkers and walking trails.

OUR AIM

The marking of the Heysen Trail has been completed six years ahead of schedule. However, there remains much to be done to ensure that the Trail flourishes and becomes a world class Walking Trail with appropriate facilities. At the same time, it is imperative that the ongoing necessary maintenance and development programme does not become a drain on the taxpayers of this State.

To ensure the future of the priceless resource of the Trail, and to maintain the standard of work already undertaken, for the benefit of the population of South Australia and for our increasingly important Tourism industry, we consider that now is an appropriate time to review and, where necessary, revise management direction and procedures away from bureaucratic control. Such a review would enable the administration, maintenance and development of the Heysen Trail to continue on a more effective and cost efficient basis. Our aim is to initiate discussion on, and seek concurrence with, the concept that the Friends', under agreed specific conditions, be given full trusteeship of the Heysen Trail.

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We are sending a copy of our Trusteeship Proposal to all members of State Parliament who have electorates situated along the Heysen Trail.

WHAT CAN YOU DO

Your support for the Friends' at this time is crucial. Please show support; by writing to your local member of Parliament or/ and to the following Ministers protesting against the funding cuts for the Friends'.

(a) Hon, John Oswald, A.U.A., M.P.S., J.P., M.P.,
Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing,
Level 10, 55 Grenfell Street, (GPO Box 667) Adelaide, 5001
Telephone 294 6711 Fax. 294 9712

(b) Hon. David C. Wotton, M.P.
Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources,
GPO BOX 1047, Adelaide, 5001.
Telephone 339 5077 Fax. 339 6817

Other related organisations are supporting us by writing to the Ministers, and to their local members of parliament.

Any suggestions you may have on who, and how, we can lobby effectively would also be appreciated.

If you are asked to work on the Trail by a departmental officer, please ask the person to contact the Friends' Trails Coordinator who will then contact you and others required to perform the maintenance duties.

Shortly we intend issuing statements to the press in the form of *Press Releases*.

Above all, please promote the Heysen Trail and the Friends'; explain what we do, and what the Trail means to you, as well as the benefits it provides to the general public.

Contact numbers

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