

Save Glenthorne Farm from Housing:

21st February, 2009.

Glenthorne farm is 200 hectares of undulating hills, remnant Grey Box, ephemeral creek line running through a valley into the Field River, revegetation areas of valuable, locally indigenous seed bank plants from the Happy Valley Reservoir, heritage buildings dating back to 1839 and much, much more.

Glenthorne was first settled in 1839 by Major Thomas Suldham O'Halloran (ex British army) who later became South Australia's first Commissioner of Police. Glenthorne farm was visited during these times by Governor Gawler and the famous explorer Charles Sturt. After changing hands three times by 1913, the property was acquired from the Drew family by the Commonwealth of Australia for use as the No.9 Remount Depot, and used for the purpose of breeding horses for World War I. Mules were trained and sent to Papua New Guinea during World War II and by 1946 the remount station was closed. Munitions buildings exist on site today. In 1947 the property was transferred to the CSIRO for biochemistry and nutrition research and by 1996 the CSIRO was looking to sell off the property for housing to fund research elsewhere.

In 1996 the local residents with the assistance of Federal MP Susan Jeanes and others conducted public meetings and successfully lobbied the Federal Liberal Government to dispose of the property and a sale to the University of Adelaide was organised and executed. This transaction was specifically conducted via a Deed signed on the 28th of May 2001 by the State of South Australia (Premier; John Wayne Olsen), the University of Adelaide, the Winemakers Federation of Australia Inc and the Minister for Transport and Urban Planning, so as to preserve Glenthorne farm as open space and never allow it to ever be sold off for urban development in any form.

The original Deed of 28 May 2001 states **"The CSIRO has agreed to sell the Land on the undertaking of the State that the State will ensure that the Land will not be used for urban development and the State has given that undertaking"**. The Deed also states that if the University, after two years from the date of sale settlement, has been unable to secure the necessary consent and approvals for its plans, then the University must by written offer served on the State, **"offer to sell the Land to the nominated Minister for a purchase price of one dollar (\$1.00)"**. This offer to sell Glenthorne farm back to the State Government for \$1.00 was due in the second half of 2003.

To facilitate the May 2001 purchase, the State Government provided a grant of \$7.0 million of taxpayer's money to the University of Adelaide. The Deed has strict and wide reaching terms under which the University of Adelaide was required to develop an acceptable Concept Plan within 6 months of the settlement on the Contract for Sale.

The University took over control of the property by May 2001 with the initial Concept Plan being due for submission to the State Government by early December 2001. At the time of writing this brief we are still awaiting a suitable Concept Plan from the University of Adelaide that meets the terms of the Deed and is acceptable by the Government of South Australia i.e. **that does not include any urban development and meets all of the other terms and conditions such as buffer zones, community recreation areas and a 'facility which will encourage public use and enjoyment'**. The rights of the Winemakers Federation in the Deed have also been overlooked to date.

Over the past 7 or 8 years the University has submitted a number of Plans to the State Government which have all been rightly rejected by the Premier because they have included the intention to sell

off part of the property for housing to fund revegetation, education and research work both on the Glenthorne property and elsewhere. The University has failed to build partnerships with volunteer groups and others in the area and have allowed the heritage buildings to deteriorate with some collapsing since the University took over control of Glenthorne farm in 2001. Archaeologists were outraged when the heritage cool room's western wall collapsed in 2008 due to the University's neglect.

The residents both local and further a field, believe that Glenthorne farm is a special place with a special history that cannot and must not be sold off for housing under any circumstances. Glenthorne is special not only because of what is present on the property but also because of its situation in the landscape of the southern suburbs. Glenthorne lies across Main South Road from the Happy Valley Reservoir, where endangered woodland birds exist today. When Glenthorne farm is fully revegetated with locally native species of trees and shrubs, these endangered birds will not only have increased habitat and protection, but they will have a natural corridor to the Field River and the open space beyond to Hallett Cove as well as a link to the O'Halloran Hill Recreation Park to the north and on to Marino and other parks. Many of these species require solitude away from the housing in order to live and breed successfully yet the University plans to allow housing close to these revegetation areas, along one side of the Glenthorne valley, significantly reducing the planned revegetation's research value and reducing its value as a draw card for international visitors and scientists as an example of world's best practice habitat restoration.

In October 2008 the University of Adelaide conducted two Community Information Days at the O'Halloran Hill TAFE College, with the last being held on Saturday, October 18th. In conjunction with these information days, the University issued a survey form and information brochure to local residents in the week beginning Monday 6th October 2008. The Friends of Glenthorne hold major concerns over the format of this survey form and brochure, the information contained within it, the lack of alternative funding options other than housing and the timing of the closure of the survey period. The brochure and survey form **did not** mention details of the obligation given to the CSIRO (Federal Government) and others by the University of Adelaide and the State Government in May 2001, that urban development would never be considered, let alone put up as the main viable funding option. If housing was considered suitable, it would have been acted upon 12 years earlier. It wasn't considered suitable and there were good reasons both then and now why housing or any other urban development should never be considered or approved on Glenthorne land.

Survey forms and information brochures were received by residents in the week preceding the Community Information Days, with some residents receiving their forms as late as Friday the 10th of October, only 4 days prior to the first Information Day. The survey period closed on 22nd October, 2008, only 15 days after the residents received first notice of the survey and many had even less time to consider their options or obtain further information about Glenthorne farm. Very few individuals have ever set foot onto the Glenthorne farm property due to the ongoing security and secrecy, so the survey was presented to a public that was not equipped with the full facts and had limited experience on the property. The timing allowed little community discussion of the history of Glenthorne farm, including the heritage buildings dating back to 1839, the importance of the site to local biodiversity, with its links to the Happy Valley Reservoir where endangered birds live, the strength of opinion against all of the housing options following a similar petition back in 1997 where over 95% of residents signed up to stop housing and the lack of time prevented the consideration of other funding options. Many funding options have since been raised but discounted by the University.

The local residents were made to feel guilty in October 2008. If they did not approve one of the housing options, as stated in the University's own brochure, "**the Woodland Recovery Initiative will not proceed**". Question 9 of the survey form gave four options, three involving housing, with the 4th being, "I do not want any of these options to go ahead", effectively forcing the participant to vote against the Woodland Recovery Initiative. This Woodland Recovery Initiative is extremely important to the birds of the Mt Lofty Ranges, but the cost of it should not be housing on Glenthorne farm and the southern residents should not have been put in this position in order to coerce a vote in favour of the University's housing plans.

The University has plans to sell a third of the land at Glenthorne for 950 houses in order to fund an optimistic plan to revegetate 3 times the current amount of natural vegetation already in the Mt Lofty Ranges. This plan is being presented in times of unprecedented global economic turmoil and the plan intends to generate over \$100 million. Despite well intentioned objectives, no costing figures have ever been presented for public scrutiny, FULL details of the results of the October 2008 community survey have never been released, yet the public is expected to trust a University that openly states that it is willing to break a '**no urban development**' promise made almost 10 years ago. There have been no details presented explaining how much money will be raised from housing, the costs of the development, the sustainability of the housing nor anything about how the University will safeguard the funds raised from selling land, which was paid for using taxpayer money. We simply can't allow housing and at the same time trust the University.

The Deed of 2001 states that "**the Business Plan must provide details of..... (clause 21.3.6) the income and expenditure of the Project for the period of eighteen (18) months ending on 30 June in the year prior to the year to which the Business Plan relates**", yet none of this information has been provided by the University of Adelaide to the public.

In 2004 the Premier Mike Rann signed a further Deed which extended the time within which the University is required to submit the Concept Plan to 30 December 2005 or earlier. Still the community waits for a plan to be presented that meets the Deed's requirements of no housing.

The Friends of Glenthorne know that the main environmental asset of the property is the creek line that flows through the property from north to south, filling a number of dams along the way. The creek line flows through a valley which is the perfect setting for revegetation and the valley will one day become a protected sanctuary for endangered birds and animals, if the voice of the people is acted upon. It is already a wonderful place for wildlife, yet the University of Adelaide is willing to put housing along one side of the Glenthorne valley in order to raise the revenue they believe is needed. The location of this housing would effectively ruin the valley as a protected site for endangered birds and animals, yet the University wants to put housing there to save birds elsewhere in the Adelaide Hills. This all sounds contradictory and sacrifices the important biodiversity of the south, which resides right next door to Glenthorne farm in the Happy Valley Reservoir and would readily move straight in.

The people of 2009 should not allow the history of the past, the natural heritage of the local area and the promise in the form of the May 2001 Deed to be cast aside for housing, no matter what the excuse put forward by the University of Adelaide.

The Friends of Glenthorne Inc have objectives that have stood since the group's incorporation back in 1998.

- To preserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage assets of the property for perpetuity.
- To maintain integrity of current agreements and legislation at State and Local Government levels that ensures long term certainty for maintaining the area as open space.
- To assist with formulating a long term vision for the establishment of an Integrated Management Plan for the property.
- To participate in Community awareness and public education programs about the development of Glenthorne farm.

Following the University of Adelaide's October 2008 survey, limited results were issued by the University in a media statement, stating that the community supported the housing options. The Friends understand that only 44% or less of those that responded to the biased survey chose one of the three housing options. Even though less than 50% of respondents stated that they supported housing, the Friends believe that the biased format of the information brochure and the survey form were such that a **much lower percentage of the Community in fact supports housing** and that in reality **the overwhelming majority wish that the entire property is revegetated** to support local biodiversity and that housing development will be forever banned.

In recent weeks a petition has been circulating throughout the local area and already hundreds of supporters have signed to protect Glenthorne farm. We urge you to sign this petition that simply wants to **"ensure that the Government maintains its commitment to no urban development on the Glenthorne site"**, so that the threat of housing on Glenthorne is extinguished for all time.

Please sign our petition and encourage your family and friends to sign and please return it to:

Alan Burns

**C/- Friends of Glenthorne Inc,
22 Westall Way,**

Sheidow Park S.A. 5158, before the end of February, 2009 so that it can be presented to State Parliament in early March 2009.

The Friends of Glenthorne Inc. can be contacted as follows.

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Thank you for your support.

Alan Burns.