



Community Alliance SA Inc
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Community Alliance
South Australia

The Hon. Jay Weatherill MP
Premier of South Australia
PO Box 102
Woodville
SA 5011

30 September 2014

Dear Premier

The Community Alliance SA continues to support the requests of the St Clair Reserve Residents' Association and the Cheltenham Park Residents' Association for the St Clair Reserve to be returned to the people of Woodville and retained as recreational open space. We all know that the St Clair Reserve was acquired as community land quite some time ago and has been well used by the residents ever since. The people within the community had good reason to believe the land was theirs and would remain so.

However, a former City of Charles Sturt Council thought otherwise and the infamous land swap was carried out, but not without significant opposition from the people of Woodville. The land swap and re-zoning of the St Clair Reserve land might have been legal but they were well and truly against the wishes of the local community. The land swap was an appalling failure of the planning system to perform as it should, as a mechanism for realising community aspirations and preferences with sustainable development.

The Community Alliance SA therefore supports the principles and intentions in Mayor Kirsten Alexander's letter to you dated 21st August 2014 (copy attached) regarding the reserve, and asks that you meet with the Mayor and representatives of the sporting and community organisations as she has requested on an urgent basis.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Matthews'.

Tom Matthews
President
Community Alliance SA
0429 337 453

www.communityalliancesa.org.au

We are an umbrella organisation representing resident and community

groups Dedicated to 'Putting the People back into Planning and Development' Our goal is a planning and development process that is accountable, transparent and sustainable, and that guarantees genuine community consultation

cc Mayor Kirsten Alexander – City of Charles Sturt

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21 August 2014

Office of the Mayor

Hon Jay Weatherill MP
Premier for South Australia
c/- PO Box 102
WOODVILLE SA 5011

Dear Premier

I write on behalf of the Residents of the City of Charles Sturt in relation to St Clair Reserve, and the advice that was recently received by Council from State Government agency Renewal SA, of their intention to ignore the will of the community and to progress the sale of this land, to the great detriment of our community.

After five years of trying to save this significant open space from development, residents and local sporting club representatives have asked me to write to you on their behalf to ask for a meeting with you, as their local Member of Parliament and their Premier, to find a resolution to this matter before it is too late and the opportunity is lost.

I have previously written to you and to Minister Rau on behalf of Council to highlight the memorial significance of this land, and to request a meeting with community representatives. A petition from over 3000 citizens was also tabled in Parliament in June 2013 asking for the land to be formally dedicated as a War Memorial Park and not re-zoned for housing.

In 1942 the community petitioned the council to acquire the land now known as St Clair Reserve in memory of those who sacrificed their lives in World War II. Immediately following the war, the land was acquired with the help of the State Government, and a shared use agreement was formed with the Woodville High School.

The local RSL sub-branch held dawn services there on ANZAC Day for many years, and the park was a much loved place of peaceful reflection for ex-servicemen and their families. It is the final resting place of the ashes of Cr Harry Guy (an ex-serviceman and member of the Woodville High Governing Council), and his wife. A plaque was also installed in the park, inscribed with the words "Garden of Remembrance 1939-1945". This plaque was apparently removed by persons unknown at some time prior to the land swap in 2009. It is now seventy years since the sacrifice of our service men and women in the Second World War.

In 1972 the ex-service community wrote to the council to ask that the white cross installed by the RSL in the park each year for ANZAC Day be replaced with a permanent white marble memorial cross. Although the Council did not proceed with this proposal, they did acknowledge the memorial significance of the reserve and stated that if there was to be a memorial, it should be erected in the St Clair Gardens.

In 2009 the State Government acquired the land through the now infamous St Clair land swap. Council, with a majority of ALP members, voted to give away the land despite significant community protest by hundreds of local residents.



The suburbs surrounding the reserve have an acute shortage of land for use as recreational open space. We understand that the State Government has a goal of increasing the participation of the community in active endeavours, and that the increasing obesity among the population is of great concern to your government. We also understand that your government is aware that there is a lack of playing fields to allow children in particular to participate in active healthy sport.

It is therefore most important that all of the St Clair Reserve land is retained as recreational open space and not developed for housing. To do so would severely impact on the future use of the site for sporting activities due to its proximity to adjoining residential development. This in turn would impact on the health and well-being of our growing community, and particularly on our children and young people.

There is a broadly held community view that this land should not be developed, for all of the reasons mentioned above, and that alternative land for housing can be found on disused or poorly utilised industrial land within the City of Charles Sturt.

I write on behalf of my community to request a meeting with yourself and members of the various sporting groups who use these facilities on a continuing basis, and members of the ex-service community.

Your attention to this matter at your earliest convenience would be appreciated. I await your urgent response, no later than the end of August, given the angst being caused in our community by the letter from Renewal SA.

Yours sincerely



Kirsten Alexander
Mayor

Cc: Meredith Edwards and Robin Chapman - Woodville High School
Adrian Moore - Vipers Football Club
Lou Tramontin - North West Soccer Club
Neville Messenger - Orion Tennis Club
Dave Jackson - West Magic Basketball Club
Benn McDonald - Woodville District Basketball Club Warriors
Neil Holton - Woodville Cricket Club
Helen Buvenic - Garville Netball Club
Casa Leisure - St Clair Recreation Centre
Bill Parry - Henley & Grange RSL
Warren Brown - Seaton Park RSL
Bob Bowell - West Croydon and Kilkenny RSL
Leni Brown - St Clair Reserve Residents Association
Trevor White - Cheltenham Park Residents Association Inc.