

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK REPORT

Port Willunga historical signage

May 2025

Introduction

The Port Willunga Heritage Sub-Committee of the National Trust of South Australia (Willunga branch) representative Mr Richard Forbes proposed council investigate opportunities to provide signage relating to the European historical significance of Port Willunga.

On 12 November 2024 Council resolved:

That Council:

- *Acknowledges Port Willunga as a port and area of historic significance*
- *Staff meet with representatives from the Port Willunga Heritage Sub-Committee and any other relevant party to discuss opportunities to provide, within existing budgets:*
 - *A sign and clearing work to showcase the Thomas Martin Homestead*
 - *A sign to showcase the Farm Cottage*
 - *A sign in the northern carpark on the wooden railings*
 - *A sign on the Jetty on the wooden railings*
 - *2 town signs on Port Road and The Esplanade identifying 'Historic Port Willunga – 1841*
 - *Discuss steps to recognise First Nations people in Linear Park.*

The project involves the installation of seven signs:

- four new historical information (interpretive) signs at the sites of important European buildings
- a replacement historical information (interpretive) sign at the Martin Barn site
- two town entrance signs at entry points to Port Willunga.

Community engagement purpose

This engagement related only to the five historical information signs and two town entry signs.

The purpose of engagement was to ensure stakeholders:

- are aware that Council acknowledges Port Willunga as a port and area of historic significance
- are aware of the proposal to install signage communicating the European historical sites in Port Willunga to celebrate Port Willunga's 175th anniversary in 2025
- have an opportunity to provide feedback on the signage content (historical information signs) and the location and design of the town entry signs, and to share with us any other information relevant to the project.

Engagement techniques

The engagement techniques included:

- Ward councillor and Mayor email
- Emails and reminders to key stakeholders
- Door knocking residents directly impacted by town entry signage
- Onsite corflute signage

- Posters and hardcopy information at Aldinga Library and Community Centre
- Your Say page with feedback tool
- Email to Your Say members with an interest in built heritage and/or Port Willunga, Aldinga or Aldinga Beach
- Email to Port Willunga coastal trail project followers (adjacent project)

Summary of community engagement outcomes

Engagement was open between the 5 May and 25 May 2025.

Engaged stakeholders included directly affected residents and holiday home owners, local community and special interests groups, Your Say Onkaparinga subscribers, users of the Aldinga Library and Aldinga Community Centre, and visitors to the various signage locations.

Overall, the engagement achieved meaningful participation and broad awareness, with feedback directly influencing the historical interpretive sign content and the design and location of the town entry signs.

Participation

Your Say Onkaparinga page visitors: 431

Contributions received via Your Say: 25

Contributions received via email: 2

Discussions with households (door knocking): 4

Phone calls: 4

Sentiment

Themes that emerged from feedback across the Your Say, door knocking, emails and phone calls included:

Historical interpretive signs

- General positive comments: 13
- Lack of Kaurna/Aboriginal/pre-colonial acknowledgement and/or information: 9
- Too much signage already/signage clutter: 3
- Too much information on the signs/signs too large: 2
- No mention of Star of Greece: 2

Town entry signs

- Don't like the design/suggestions to improve the design: 11
- General positive comments: 7
- Port Willunga is no longer a working port: 4
- Lack of Kurna/Aboriginal/pre-colonial acknowledgement: 3
- Don't put up town entry signs/not needed: 3
- Proximity to busy intersection a concern: 2

Next steps

Our next step will be to finalise the signage designs using the community feedback, and manufacture and install ahead of the 175th anniversary in September 2025.

Sign-off

Officer who prepared the document

Name: Lisa Kemp

Position title: Community Engagement Advisor

Reviewed by

Name: Dale Sutton

Position title: Team Leader Engagement, Grants and Events

Date: 30 May 2025

Approved by

Name: Bobbie-Jean Stevens

Position title: Manager Communication and Engagement

Date: 13 June 2025

Appendix 1 – Detailed engagement outcomes

Engagement techniques

Technique	Reach
Ward councillor email	2 elected members and Mayor
Door knocking residents directly impacted by town entry signage	4 households spoken with 5 'sorry we missed you' flyers left
Emails to stakeholders Reminder email to stakeholders	6 community groups (7 email addresses)
Email to Your Say members with an interest in built heritage and/or Port Willunga, Aldinga or Aldinga Beach	675 Your Say members
Email to Port Willunga coastal trail project followers	195 Your Say members
Onsite corflute signage	Unknown
Posters and hardcopy information at Aldinga Library and Aldinga Community Centre	Unknown
Your Say page with feedback tool	431 page visitors

Summary of community engagement outcomes

Engagement was open between the 5 May and 25 May 2025.

Engagement highlights



431 Your Say
page visitors



25 Your Say
contributions



2 email
contributions



4 households
spoken with

Overall sentiment

We received 35 contributions through the community engagement via:

- Your Say Onkaparinga: 25
- discussions with households (door knocking): 4
- phone calls: 4
- emails: 2

Feedback on historical information signs

Throughout the engagement we made it clear that the design, layout and colours of the signage are fixed to comply with council's approved brand, however feedback on other elements such as proposed text and photographs was welcome.

Twenty-two people provided feedback about the historical information signs.

Themes from the feedback are provided in table 1 below.

Table 1 – Themes from feedback on historical information signs

Theme	Count
General positive comments <i>"I like them"</i> <i>"Great idea"</i>	13
Lack of Kurna/Aboriginal/pre-colonial acknowledgement and/or information <i>"Please include an Acknowledgement of Kurna Country and Kurna peoples on each sign."</i> <i>"Will there be reference to first nations people who lived in the area prior to colonisation?"</i>	9
Too much signage/signage clutter <i>"enough with all the road and traffic signs in this special area!!"</i> <i>"Other signs need to be removed as there are already too many and they're ruining the look of township and beach views."</i>	3
Too much information on the signs/signs too large <i>"Dimensions too wide, due to the amount of information, so please reduce the volume, at least those within the reserve."</i>	2
No mention of Star of Greece <i>"Just wondering why 'The Star of Greece' naming-signage cannot / is not being used."</i>	2

In addition to the above, some specific comments were received regarding the signage design, and the accuracy of information and the use of photographs.

All verbatim comments via Your Say Onkaparinga regarding the historical information signs can be viewed in Appendix 2 and the email submissions are provided in Appendix 4.

Feedback on town entry signs

Nineteen people provided feedback about the historical information signs.

Themes from the feedback are provided in table 2 below.

Table 2 – Themes from feedback on town entry signs

Theme	Count
Don't like the design/suggestions to improve the design <i>"Both signs - so unattractive"</i> <i>"am not a fan of the artwork-layout of the Port Willunga sign"</i>	11
General positive comments <i>"Great idea. Like the modern look of the signs."</i> <i>"I value the concept of a town entry sign on Port Road"</i>	7
Port Willunga is no longer a working port <i>"A working port since 1841" suggests that it's still a working port, which it isn't."</i>	4
Lack of Kaurna/Aboriginal/pre-colonial acknowledgement <i>"On both signs, there is no acknowledgement of the Kaurna name for the area"</i>	3
Don't put up signs/not needed <i>"cannot see any value in these signs. they are not required and do not fit the vibe of the area"</i> <i>"Avoid entry signs"</i>	3
Proximity to busy intersection a concern	2

All verbatim comments via Your Say Onkaparinga regarding the town entry signs can be viewed in Appendix 3 and the email submissions are provided in Appendix 4.

Your Say feedback

Online feedback was received via Your Say Onkaparinga from 25 people from the following suburbs/townships:

- 12 (48 per cent) from Port Willunga
- 7 (28 per cent) from nearby Aldinga, Moana, and Willunga
- 3 (12 per cent) from Happy Valley, McLaren Vale and Morphett Vale
- 3 (12 per cent) from people living outside of the Onkaparinga council area.

Door knocking feedback on town entry signs

Residents immediately adjacent to the proposed locations of the town entry sign were sent a letter and door knocked on the afternoon of 12 May 2025.

Esplanade location

Advanced notice of door knocking letters were sent to five houses adjacent to the proposed location of the sign on the western side of the Esplanade near Anchor Terrace. Four of these letters

were unable to be delivered. Of these, one household was spoken to on the 12 May and letters were re-sent to alternative addresses for the other three, as well as 'sorry we missed you' flyers being left at the front doors. No contact was received from any of the three households.

One household on the Esplanade and one on Anchor Terrace were spoken to on 12 May.

- Neither of these households raised concerns about the sign, its location or obstruction to their ocean view.
- One of the households noted that Port Willunga is no longer a working port and suggested updating the wording to "A working port from 1841 to [date]".
- One of the households noted that it will be important for the sign to be made of materials that can withstand the high winds, salty air, etc of the area.
- Both households raised a letter they had recently received about planned tree planting in the area, and were referred to contact the person whose name is on the letter about their concerns.
- Both households were left with information about the Your Say page and the opportunity to provide further feedback either online or by getting in contact with the project lead.

Port Road location

Advanced notice of door knocking letters were sent to three houses adjacent to the proposed location of the sign on the southern side of Port Road, west of the intersection with Bowering Hill Road.

Of these, one household (on the southern side of the road) was spoken to on 12 May 2025 and 'sorry we missed you' flyers were left in the letterboxes of the other two houses (on the northern side of the road). While on site it was determined that it was also appropriate to speak to another household on the southern side of the road close to the proposed location of the sign.

Two households on the southern side of Port Road were spoken to on 12 May 2025.

- Both raised concerns about the high level of accidents and near misses at the intersection and the need to keep clutter and distractions near the intersection to a minimum.
- Both households suggested the sign would be better located east of the intersection, on the section of Port Road where the pine trees are.
- One of the households also noted the lack of information regarding indigenous history on any of the signs. They suggested wording "A working port on Kurna land" or similar could be added to the town entry signs.
- Both said they like the wood/timber aspect of the sign but are less sure about the metal/coloured aspects.

Feedback received by other means

Emails from Friends of Port Willunga

Two emails were received from representatives of the Friends of Port Willunga group. One of the emails provided detailed feedback and the second email offered support for the comments provided in the first.

Key themes of feedback provided:

- Disappointment that Friends of Port Willunga were not consulted prior to broader community engagement.
- Dissatisfaction with the design with the historical information signs.
- Dissatisfaction with the design, scale and materials of the town entry signs.
- Highlighting Port Willunga has not been a working port for more than 100 years.
- Highlighting the lack of First Nations history and recommending signs be designed so that information about this can be added later.
- Requesting council meet with a graphic designer known to them to discuss alternative sign designs.

The full emails from Friends of Port Willunga can be viewed in Appendix 4.

Phone calls

Four phone calls were received about the project during the community engagement period. Two from a Friends of Port Willunga representative, and two from local residents of Port Willunga.

Sentiment from the Friends of Port Willunga phone calls is reflected in their email submission – refer Appendix 4.

Feedback from the other two phone calls included:

- General support for the project: 2
- Suggestions to improve the town entry sign design: 1
- Request to reinstate a missing state government sign featuring the Star of Greece: 1
- Suggestion to share the project information in a local publication: 1

Evaluation

Reach and awareness

Of the 870 emails sent to Your Say members, 526 (60 per cent) were opened. Fifty per cent of people who provided feedback on the engagement process through the Your Say survey reported they heard about the engagement through an Your Say email.

Seven emails were sent to identified key stakeholders on the day engagement opened, including Friends of Port Willunga, National Trust of South Australia, Friends of Willunga Basin and Aldinga Bay Residents Association. Of these seven emails, four were opened.

During the engagement period the Your Say Onkaparinga project page received 558 visits from 431 visitors. Of these visits, 43 per cent lasted at least one active minute (attention index), and 27 per cent of visits had at least two actions performed (e.g. downloading a document or clicking through to another page, known as the active index). The attention index and active index provide an indication of higher levels of engagement by page visitors.

Participation

Twenty-five feedback contributions were received through Your Say as well as one email contribution. The percentage of visits to the Your Say page where a contribution was made was almost four per cent.

Engagement objective: 170 responses received from residents of Port Willunga (10% of the Aldinga-Port Willunga resident population aged over 18 years).

Fourteen (56 per cent) of the Your Say contributions received were from residents of Port Willunga or Aldinga. This falls below the target response rate of 170 responses from residents of Port Willunga or Aldinga.

Engagement objective: opportunity provided for key stakeholders to be engaged.

Direct emails were sent to six identified key stakeholders on 5 May and again on 12 May 2025.

Engagement objective: 80% of Your Say respondents report that it was easy to provide feedback, it was easy to find what they were looking for, information was clear and easy to understand and there was enough time to find out more and provide feedback.

Fourteen of the Your Say survey respondents chose to leave feedback about the engagement process.



86% (12 out of 14) said it was
easy to provide feedback



93% (13 out of 14) said
information was clear and easy to
understand



86% (12 out of 14) said it was
easy find what they were looking for



86% (12 out of 14) said
there was enough time to provide feedback

Appendix 2 – Verbatim comments from Your Say feedback on historical information signs

Please include an Acknowledgement of Kurna Country and Kurna peoples on each sign.
Minimize actual signs and include a QR code for the additional sites. One or two signs in carpark area ie near shelter at ramp to sticks, at north ramp near bins. (already has so much signage with hooded plover awareness. NO signs near cliffs, sand or one beach itself - keep natural beauty. avoid signs on bush areas like the old Inn. Info for this could be in the QR code. A QR code could also link to third party sites about Aboriginal uses of the area with out the History trust having to develop all this content. Important to include some non-colonial representation too.
As an older person I like the photos and the information but I do wonder why they're not using a QR code which takes you to this information. This is more common practice these days.
error in 3rd image : the 1st PtW jetty was NOT at the bottom of the wooden steps but some 250 metres north just north of the ramp where rubble from the original road to the jetty can be seen in the brown clay embankment (plus pile stumps at low water mark after a storm...). It is the 2nd jetty at the base of the steps. secondly, in the 5th picture re the Martin subdivision to create the PtW township: this was SOUTH of the creek NOT north!!
Would have thought there were artists residing in the local Port Willunga area who could have better captured the local character. But apparently you have decided to go with the less than inspiring 'Stratco/ Bunnings' off the shelf signage! Bland comes to mind!
Should there be an additional sign somewhere about the pre-colonial history of the area that came to be known as Port Willunga. You have the Towilla Yerta Reserve sign but no mention is made of history pre-1841 on that sign. Should there be an mention of the Kurna people who lived in the area before the Martins 'purchased' the land for their farm? Who did they purchase it from?
In general looks good, photos are great Dimensions too wide, due to the amount of information, so please reduce the volume, at least those within the reserve. Text on Martin Farm includes councils previous "undertakings" and does not include community work, better to be "ongoing". Neither is included in the Martin Barn text. Also text on Martin Farm includes the term "Dulil" A perhaps sensitive and important historical term that needs interpretation. It refers to an area up on the hill, and was the name of a butter produced there.

Just wondering why 'The Star of Greece' naming-signage cannot / is not being used. As I understand the reason for the name is because that is the name of an historical ship that sank off-near the coast - I would have thought this was a relevant part of our history?
I think signage is a great idea, thank you! Will there be reference to first nations people who lived in the area prior to colonisation?
I am disappointed to see that there has been no attempt to acknowledge Aboriginal history in this project. I have seen that the FAQ lists that a separate project to this end 'could' be considered, and my feedback is that this should have been included. Reading the signs, I want to know what does Dulil mean and in which dialect? How did Tom and Mary come to know this word, and why was it meaningful to them to choose it? Why was this site in particular settled, and who else was living there at the time? There are gaping holes in this narrative around the shapes of the people who were cut out of it. I was sad to learn recently that continual attempts to have Aboriginal sites of significance signposted to educate coastal visitors and protect the sites have been ignored. To see this project prioritized and Aboriginal coexistence dismissed in the proposed signage feels even more deeply disrespectful.
The signs are missing any mention of the original inhabitants of the area. There is history in this area spanning far, far beyond 175 years and its very short sighted that in 2025 there is no mention made of the Aboriginal custodians who never ceded their land. There must have been many horrific stories for those Aboriginal families who lived in the area, interacting with the colonists featured on your proposed signs who were at best forcibly removed from their homes. Imagine how horrible it will feel to the descendants of those people to see these signs which continue to completely erase their family and entire culture from history. The project money would be much better spent making an interpretive trail regarding the original Aboriginal inhabitants of the area and stories about their culture, spirituality and ways they interacted with the local environment. Much more relevant and interesting than 175 years of colonial settlement.
I think it is fantastic that historical signage is being redone at Port Willunga but I am concerned that there is no information or acknowledgement of First Nations history in this Upgrade. 175 years is something to celebrate for non-first nations people, but it marks a period of trauma and destruction for those who were here long before us. Please consult with First Nations people about this. Contacting Karl Telfer would be a starting point.
I think this would be a great idea if the council had the finances in which to do so, but since council is headed towards 145mil in debt council needs to stop with frivolous spending like this untill such time as the debt is paid off and without selling our public land in which to do so.

I like the historical information signs and well overdue. Other signs need to be removed as there are already to many and they're ruining the look of township and beach views. There doesn't seem to be however any information on the shipwrecks in the area ie the Star of Greece and the Ida? Also there is no First Nations history ... I would hope this will be included.
Great idea
Visuals are a key part of any signage. The photos of the jetty are all similar. I would value an image of the current well known jetty ruin - as a contrast, but also to add interest, it has been a ruin for a VERY long time. A colour image would also add interest.
To keep signage size to a minimum, the use of QR codes on signs linking to further information and photos might be helpful. On the signs: Name of site, relevant dates, brief significance/purpose of site with QR Code to find further information about the site.
I'm happy but this seems a space to say enough with all the road and traffic signs in this special area!! The beautiful avenue of pines on Port Rd is well loved, but now spoilt by excessive No Standing signs. A yellow line is enough!! The signs are also a hazard for cyclists wanting to get off the bitumen when 4WD monsters fly by!
I like the photos of the day to day life from the early days of the Port. It is important to tell the story of the people and their hard work to make SA a great place to live
good idea thanks
I like them.
Love them

Appendix 3 – Verbatim comments from Your Say feedback on town entry signs

Both signs. 1. "A working port since 1841" suggests that it's still a working port, which it isn't. 2. There are too many typefaces. (We graphic designers call that an alphabet soup.) 3. "Welcome to" in serif cursive typeface looks hackneyed. 4. "Port" and "Willunga" should be the same colour. Thanks.
Please include an Acknowledgement of Kaurna Country and Kaurna peoples on each sign.
Both signs - so unattractive - leave the place alone - you are destroying the whole reason everyone wants to go there - don't put up 2mtr high ugly signs. What- made them blue so they match the ocean? Only in summer!! In winter it's grey and stormy and even more beautiful. Stop sign posting the environment.
Avoid entry signs and definitely dislike the proposed aesthetic - it will date very quickly and is a not adding to the natural beauty of the place. Reduce human intervention.
On both signs, there is no acknowledgement of the Kaurna name for the area - I understand the name to be either Wirruwarrungga or Ruwarunga. Have local elders specifically been consulted about these signs? If not, they should be. Port Willunga was a place long before colonial times. The font for 'Port Willunga' is ok, but don't like the font style for the 'Welcome to' and 'Historic' and 'A working port since 1841'. Why do you only have the word PORT vertically on one of the posts - why not Willunga on another post? It's seems inaccurate to say 'a working port since 1841' because it stopped being one in 1915 when the jetty was irreparably damaged as it says on the Jetty Pylons sign.
Not too bad but I dont like them, needs further development
am not a fan of the artwork-layout of the Port Willunga sign - but that is more personal taste than antthing.
Great idea. Like the modern look of the signs.
cannot see any value in these signs. they are not required and do not fit the vibe of the area
As above. It needs to mention the people who loved in this place before European Settlement
None of them should be placed until such time as council debt is paid down or off. None of this should be done when council is in so much debt.

Don't like this at all. It looks very cheap, clumsy and doesn't suit the historic aspect of the area. Too many different scripts and colours. A big NO from me on this
Great Idea
I value the concept of a town entry sign on Port Road - which is the way I have always travelled to Port Willunga.
Town entry sign at the commencement of the historic Aleppo Pine Avenue of Port Willunga (Port Road)
Love them
good idea thanks
I like them
Awesome

Appendix 4 – Emails from Friends of Port Willunga

From: "Friends of Port Willunga" <hello@friendsofportwillunga.org.au>
Sent: Sat, 24 May 2025 17:03:40 +0930
To: "Mail" <Mail@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au>
Subject: Port Willunga Historical Signage
Attachments: Historical signs feedback.pdf

You don't often get email from hello@friendsofportwillunga.org.au. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender's full email address and know the content is safe.

We, the committee of the Friends of Port Willunga, would like to express our concerns about plans for historical signage and new town signage. First, we're disappointed that we were not consulted on the project before it was released for public consultation, with the condition that design, colours and materials are fixed in accordance with Council branding. As a key community stakeholder, with a long history of engagement with the residents and property owners of Port Willunga, advocating on their behalf with local and State government, we reasonably expect to hear from Council on matters such as this.

It's our belief that the design of the interpretive signage lacks consideration for its place on the foreshore and the reserve. Port Willunga beach's natural beauty repeatedly earns it a place on lists of top beaches in Australia and abroad.. We at FOPW have for many years worked hard to preserve its distinctive character, resisting moves to make it conform to city-wide standards of a huge local government area that encompasses suburbs and neighbourhoods of vastly differing attributes and appearance. To request community and stakeholder feedback on designs that cannot be changed is disingenuous and disrespectful.

On the matter of the town entry signage, we would first point out that the phrase "a working port since 1841" is incorrect, given that it hasn't been a working port for more than 100 years. We also take issue with the design, scale and materials of the sign, and have sought input on this from Martin St resident and award-winning graphic designer John Nowland. We would like the opportunity to present an alternative town welcome sign to John's design.

We understand that the proposal for historical signage has been in response to representations from the National Trust to mark the 175th anniversary of white settlement. However, we believe that to ignore the presence of First Nations people at Port Willunga over many thousands of years is deeply regrettable and likely offensive to the Kaurna/Ngarrindjeri/Ramindjeri people. We're also aware that the process of including that First Nations history in interpretative signage will be an arduous and difficult task that would delay the project beyond the desired time line. We therefore strongly suggest that the current designs be adapted to allow for later addition of panels to cover the First Nations history. To that end, we urge Council to consider John Nowland's designs for interpretive signage commissioned by the City of Onkaparinga several years ago.

We understand that the leaders of this project were unaware of Mr Nowland's earlier work, but having been made aware of it, we urge Council to consider departing from the generic designs proposed. Mr Nowland's 40+ years of experience are evident in signs that are responsive to place in the choice of colours, materials and execution and a clarity, finesse and beauty that is so lacking in Council's current

designs. Using separate panels to make the information more approachable and legible, they sit lightly on the landscape and could easily be adapted to include First Nations history at a later date.

The fact that Mr Nowland has graciously agreed to give of his time to consult on the work is a precious opportunity to create a beautiful legacy for residents and visitors to Port Willunga. We urge Council to seize this opportunity.

Deborah Bogle

FRIENDS OF PORT WILLUNGA (PDF of this letter attached)



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sat, 24 May 2025 18:34:29 +0930
To: "Willunga Friends of Port" <hello@friendsofportwillunga.org.au>
Cc: "Mail" <Mail@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Port Willunga Historical Signage

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender's full email address and know the content is safe.

Here here!

As Chair of Friends of Port Willunga I support Deborah Bogle's submission attached, which has been drafted in consultation with myself and members of the FOPW committee and circulated to the broader membership.

Stephanie Johnston
Chair of the Friends of Port Willunga