

## Woodgroup SA Inc History

The South Australian Woodgroup was formed in 1982 through the leadership and enthusiasm of Peter Carrigy. At that time he was a committee member of the Crafts Council of South Australia and, as a wood craftsman himself, convinced twelve other "woodies" there was a need in South Australia to raise the profile of wood and promote fine woodcraft.

The Woodgroup was formed with twenty founding members in 1983 and registered as an incorporated body on 27th March 1984. The members were primarily professional woodworkers, who were making a living from their crafts, woodworking teachers, tool specialists and miscellaneous craft workers. All had the common vision to "see greater acceptance of wood in South Australia". Other Woodworking groups were already established in other States. The early pioneering days of the Group were not easy, but the dedication of a few people laid good foundations.

Later, in 1995, it was felt the constitution was outdated and that the group needed to portray a more vibrant and professional community image. The constitution was reviewed and the logo revamped and we became officially known as WOODGROUP SA INC.

The Craft Council sponsored the first meetings which were held at their offices at the old Jam Factory on Payneham Rd, Stepney. The subsequent growth in membership necessitated moving to new premises. Our activities were moved to the North Adelaide School of Art in Stanley St, North Adelaide, then to the Parks Community facilities in Regency Park, to Goodwood High School, Goodwood, Sacred Heart College, Daw Park and presently the group operates out of the Thebarton Senior College at Torrensville. In latter years the group has sought facilities where general meetings and workshop facilities are combined allowing us to identify with a "home base".

In 1985, while a young and inexperienced club, it hosted the Second National Wood Conference. This was rated a great success, when leaders in the field of wood work and other associated aspects of wood came together from around Australia to share their knowledge. The key note speaker was Yoshio Akioka of Japan.

At that time, various galleries in and around Adelaide held Exhibitions featuring wood. The works of local and interstate people were exhibited, showing the public what wood workers were achieving. It provided the opportunity to promote fine woodcraft and gradually it became recognised as an art form in this State. Woodgroup SA has since hosted and organised several successful Exhibitions under its own banner featuring specific themes and timbers.

A Library, still operating today, was established from general revenue. It has grown in volume, and the wealth of knowledge it contains is a valuable resource for members.

As time moved on and numbers increased bringing more amateur and hobbyist craft people into the group, there came a need for practical sessions involving smaller groups with similar interests. Regional groups called Special Interest Groups (SIGs) were formed. Initially these included:

- Southern Turners, the oldest
- Toymendous, 1988
- Northern Turners, 1994
- - Western Woodworkers, 1995

These activities provided another opportunity for members to share their experiences, successes and problems and became more 'hands on' focused workshops. Three additional groups formed in 1998:

- Copper Coast Woodworkers
- Sculptors/Carvers
- Wood'n Things (dissolved 2007)

In 1999/2000 the Woodgroup faced some crucial decisions. It found that it was acting in contravention of the Associations Incorporation Act and was also in breach of the Income Tax Laws. The Tax Reform Agenda of the government of the day was an opportunity for the Woodgroup to review a range of issues including its aims and objectives, and in June 2000, Woodgroup members voted for an amended constitution. Based on its new aims, objectives and activities, the Australian Tax Office subsequently granted the Woodgroup exemption, as a "charitable organisation", from paying income tax. Their decision was based on the objectives and activities, which focused on "further education" and the assistance provided to community organisations providing support to those people in hardship and poverty. It also brought its activities into line with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act.

At the same time, through research and careful consideration, the Woodgroup decided that the costs, including financial, and volunteer time and effort, did not warrant it registering under the new Goods & Service Tax laws. The Woodgroup was well within thresholds set for participation in the new tax regime.

In 2000, after four years of promoting and developing the craft of scroll sawing in South Australia, South Oz Scrollers , a SIG for scroll saw enthusiasts, was formed. Also at this time, Woodgroup SA recognised a need for its expertise in providing community based skills training for recreational wood turners and scrollers. It delivered seven training workshops in the latter part of the year providing skills development opportunities to people interested in these crafts.

The Woodgroup grew to over 200 financial member in 2002. The SIG numbers increased to nine, with the formation of Southern Flinders Woodworkers. At the Timber and Working With Wood Show (TWWW Show) , the Woodgroup organised a state competition that included categories of woodturning, musical instruments, furniture, carving and sculpture and decorative woodwork. The overall theme was 'Wood Revisited: - A Second Chance'. The competition and associated exhibition was a huge success with over 150 entries. The standard of work was of an exceptional standard. An article by Les Miller

in the Australian Woodworker praised Woodgroup SA for '*a most spectacular and enjoyable experience for all lovers of woodwork*'.

The start of 2003 saw another three SIGs formed:

- Murrayland Turners
- Whyalla Woodies
- Limestone Coast Woodworkers

Membership approached 300 members, and the year's TWWW Show was another resounding success. This was supported with an exhibition called 'Wood Revealed', which attracted 129 exhibits across five categories.

In 2004, Woodgroup SA launched a website to provide an opportunity for members living outside of Adelaide to more easily communicate with the Woodgroup and its members, to share skills and ideas in an online forum, and to promote fine woodcraft to a greater audience.

In 2005, Riverland Woodworkers started and 2006 saw the introduction of Hills Woodworkers SIG.

Due to growth and a broader geographical representation of members a review of the organizational structure commenced in 2004 and a Steering Committee formed to draft a new structure which was subsequently adopted and implemented on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2007. In the process the Limestone Coast Woodworkers and Southern Flinders Woodworkers resolved not to join in the restructure and opted out of any future involvement. Under the restructure Woodgroup SA Inc was elevated to state association status and each of the former Special Interest Groups incorporated under the Association Incorporations Act of 1985 became a woodworking club

In meeting certain conditions of Woodgroup SA Inc the clubs became members of Woodgroup SA Inc and each provides at least one delegate to the Board of the state association. In return the Board undertakes to provide a range of services and coordinates statewide events to the benefit of its members. The eleven incorporated Clubs make up the membership of Woodgroup SA. One of the different features of the structure is that voting is the right of the Clubs, as its members, and therefore they are directly involved, through their delegates, in the decision making processes.