

# SEAL BAY CONSERVATION PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

AMENDMENT TO PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

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Kangaroo Island

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Resource Conservation and Management Group  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

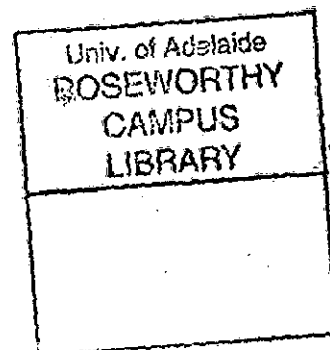
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31 JAN 1996



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**This plan of management has been prepared and  
adopted in pursuance of section 38 of the  
National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1972-81**

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## FOREWORD

Seal Bay Conservation Park (700 ha) is located on the south-central coast of Kangaroo Island, South Australia. It is particularly important in that it supports the third largest known breeding colony of Australian sea-lions (*Neophoca cinerea*). The sea-lion colony first received legal protection in 1954 and a reserve at Seal Bay was proclaimed in 1967. There continues to be strong scientific interest in the conservation of sea-lions and the park is recognised internationally for its success in managing visitor access, without obvious detriment to the sea-lions, despite the close proximity of large numbers of people.

A plan of management for the park was formally adopted in 1977 and has served as the basis for park management since that time. The objectives of management outlined in the plan have, by now, been largely achieved. None-the-less, the 1977 plan is still valid in most respects.

The plan predicted that visitor numbers would "continue to increase with the expansion of tourism in general on the Island". This has indeed proved to be the case; 74,000 persons visited Seal Bay in 1991. As a consequence, strategies need to evolve to ensure that while visitors continue to enjoy a high quality experience, the sea-lion colony remains secure.

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* recognises that, due to changing circumstances, some aspects of park management plans will become redundant over time. Plans will, as a consequence, need to be amended and the Act include provisions to facilitate formal changes to previously adopted plans.

In the particular situation at Seal Bay, guided tours were introduced in 1987; structured visitation has ensured that minimal disturbance to the sea-lion colony takes place while all visitors are given good information about the significance of these marine mammals. Temporary accommodation (installed some years ago) for guides and for visitor reception has now outlived its usefulness and needs to be replaced. The numbers of visitors to Seal Bay is now such that more permanent facilities, compatible with the landscape values and environmental qualities of the locality, are justified. An amendment to the plan of management is required to enable permanent facilities to be constructed to replace the present temporary ones.

This document discusses the proposal to build more adequate visitor reception facilities at Seal Bay. Once design sketch plans are available, opportunities will be made available for public viewing and comment.

This draft amendment to the plan of management will be on public exhibition for a period of two (2) months from the date of gazettal.

**Public involvement in the planning process is provided for in the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972.**

**Your comments are welcome.**

Written submissions and any further enquiries should be referred to:

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

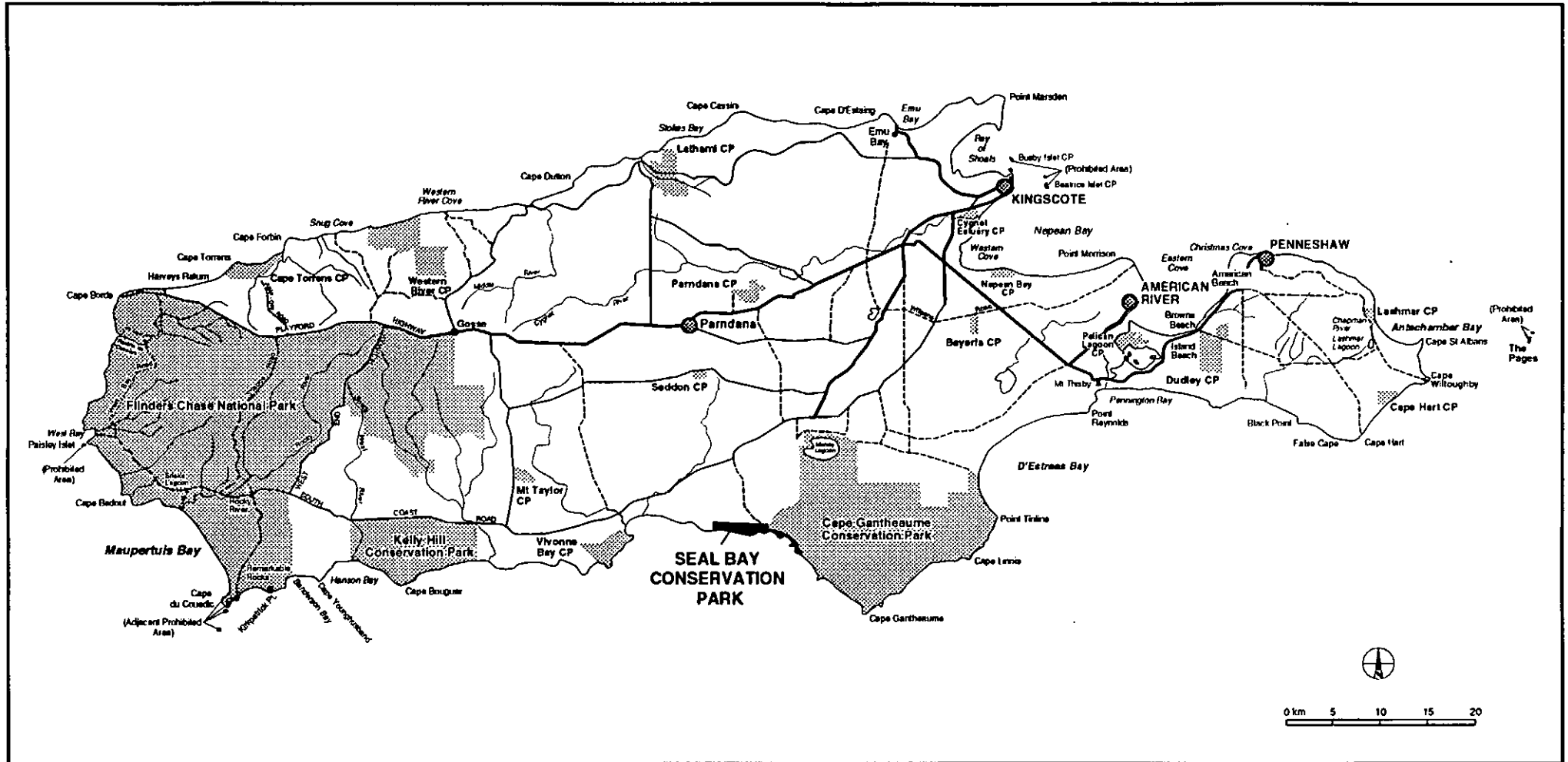
### 1.1 The Planning Process

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1972* provides the authority by which the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources controls and manages all reserves in South Australia that are proclaimed under the Act.

Section 38 of the Act states that plans of management are required for all reserves. Plans should include proposals for the management and improvement of reserves and indicate the means by which relevant objectives of the Act are to be achieved.

Section 37 lists ten objectives which the Minister, Chief Executive Officer and Director "shall have regard to" in managing reserves:

1. The preservation and management of wildlife
2. The preservation of historic sites, objects and structures of historic or scientific interest within reserves.
3. The preservation of features of geographical, natural or scenic interest.
4. The destruction of dangerous weeds and the eradication or control of noxious weeds and exotic plants.
5. The control of vermin and exotic animals.
6. The control of eradication of disease of animals and vegetation.
7. The prevention and suppression of bushfires and other hazards.
8. The encouragement of public use and enjoyment of reserves and education in, and a proper understanding and recognition of, their purpose and significance.
9. In relation to managing a regional reserve - to permit the utilization of natural resources while conserving wildlife.
10. Generally the promotion of the public interest.



- Major Sealed Road
- Major Unsealed Road
- Minor Unsealed Road
- ..... Track
- ~~~~~ River

Figure 1

**SEAL BAY CONSERVATION PARK  
Location Plan**

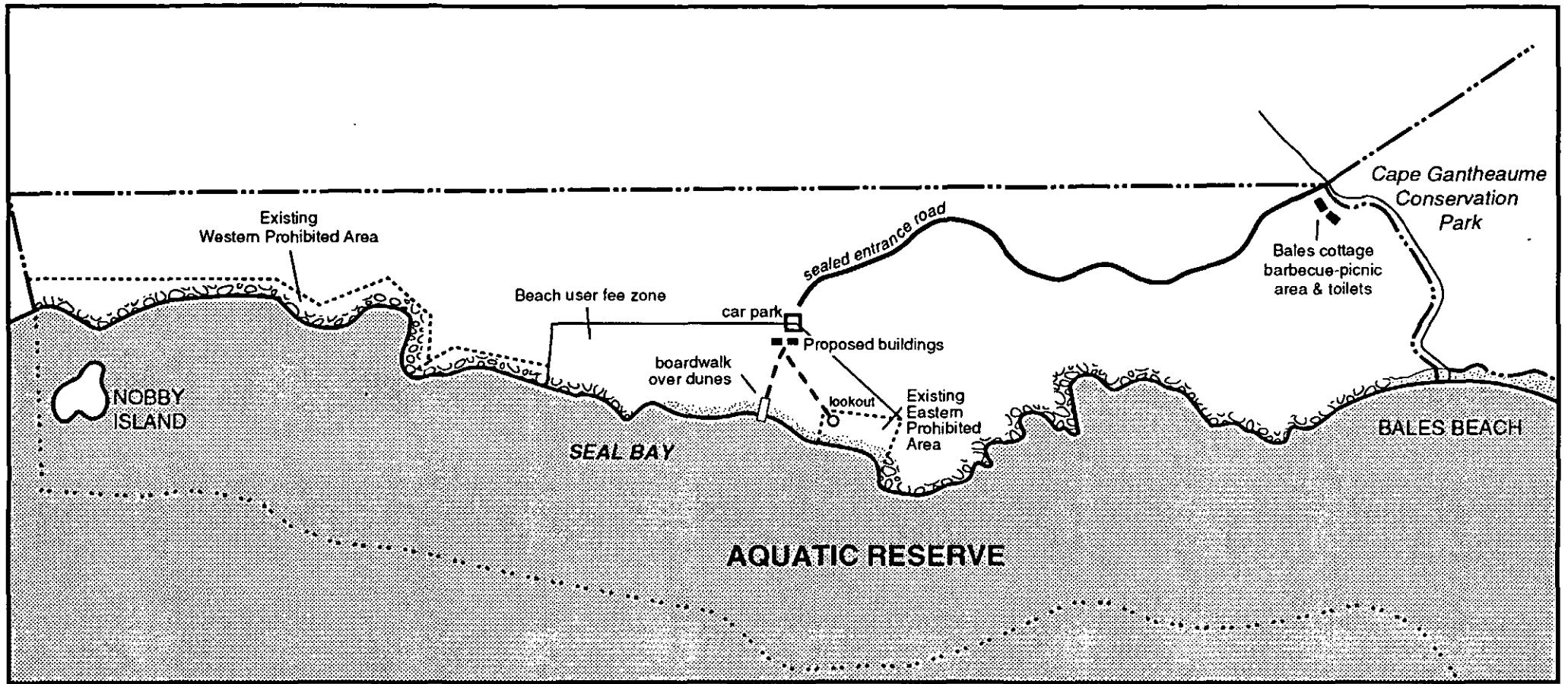




These objectives form the foundation for all management plans and have been duly considered in preparing this Amendment to the Plan of Management for Seal Bay Conservation Park. Section 38(2) of the Act recognises that plans of management will need to be amended from time to time; the process of preparation and public review is as follows:

- Upon completion of a draft amendment to a management plan, it must be announced in the Government Gazette and placed on public exhibition for a prescribed period. During this time, interested persons may make submissions on the amendment. The amendment, with all submissions, is then referred to the Reserves Advisory Committee who may make further comments or suggestions.
- The Minister, after considering all representations, may then adopt the amendment with or without any alterations. Notice of such official adoption is published in the Government Gazette and copies of the amendment are made available to the public.
- Once an amendment to a plan of management has been adopted, its provisions must be carried out in relation to the reserve in question and no operations may be undertaken unless they are in accordance with the amended plan.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Amendment to the Plan of Management**

The purpose of the amendment to the Plan of Management for Seal Bay Conservation Park is to facilitate the construction of visitor reception and staff accommodation buildings.



- |           |                 |   |   |
|-----------|-----------------|---|---|
| — · · · — | Park boundary   | - - - - -   | Prohibited Area boundary                                  |
| —         | Seal Road       | · · · · ·   | Aquatic Reserve<br>(under Fisheries Act, Dual Protection) |
| —         | Unsealed Road   |  | Rocks, cliff-face   |
| - - - - - | Sealed footways |  | Coastal dunes   |



0 500 1000 metres

Figure 2

**SEAL BAY CONSERVATION PARK  
Management Proposals**

## 2. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

This section of the Plan of Management (1977) identified a number of management objectives and prescribed strategies to achieve them. These objectives are governed by the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* and its attendant Regulations.

Objective 2 relates to the present proposal. The following section should be substituted for the equivalent section of the plan (pp 28, 29).

Objective 2: The improvement of public access to the Seal Bay colony, with provision of greater protection for the sea-lions.

The sea-lion colony at Seal Bay is one of the major attractions of Kangaroo Island, and of South Australia. Tourist numbers visiting the Bay have increased steadily over the years, without apparent effect on the colony to date.

A single point of access to the main beach was instigated as a result of the 1977 plan recommendations and sealed pathways and a boardwalk installed some years ago. This has effectively focussed (and substantially improved) visitor access and allowed fore-dune and cliff vegetation to recover. In addition, control of visitors is maintained by a system of guided tours, which not only enhances the tourist experience but ensures visitor safety and protection for the sea-lions.

Proposals for improved staff accommodation and visitor reception/information are depicted in Figure 2. The temporary caravan accommodation should be replaced by new, architecturally designed buildings that provide adequate office space for tour guides. Visitor information and shelter should be a major function of these structures and toilet facilities should be included.

The new buildings should be aesthetically pleasing and integrate with the landscape to minimise their visual intrusion. Their construction should, where feasible, utilise materials that are environmentally compatible with the visual amenity of the locality. Requirements for energy, water supply and effluent disposal should be handled in an environmentally sensitive manner. Disturbance to the site and to vegetation in the general area, should be kept to a minimum during construction.

The present access paths to both the main beach and the lookout should be maintained to a standard commensurate with the type and numbers of visitors using these areas.

The user-fee system enables an accurate count of visitor numbers to be kept, so that definite information is available should regulation of access be required at some future date. Monitoring of sea-lion numbers and behaviour should continue.

DONATION - 1982

