

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
LAID ON THE TABLE**

13 November 2012

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE
COUNCIL**

ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012



**Government
of South Australia**

National Parks and Wildlife Council
Annual Report 2011-12

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September 2012

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Hon Paul Caica
Minister for Sustainability Environment and Conservation
Parliament House
North Terrace
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear Minister

In accordance with the requirements of the *Public Sector Act 2009* and section 19(d) of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*, I have pleasure in presenting the annual report of the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Council for the year ended 30 June 2012.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill McIntosh'.

Bill McIntosh
PRESIDING MEMBER
NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE COUNCIL

PLANS AND OBJECTIVES

The South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Council provides expert advice to the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation (the Minister) on a broad range of protected area and wildlife management issues, in accordance with the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* (the Act). The Council set the following seven strategic priorities for 2011-12:

Park Management

- **Priority 1: Reserve Management Planning.** To review and provide advice on Reserve Management Plans and the effectiveness of reserve management plans.
- **Priority 2: Visitor Strategy.** To provide strategic input into the development and implementation of the Visitor Strategy, *People and Parks*, including providing direction for innovative and sustainable recreation and tourism in parks, and monitoring community and stakeholder engagement outcomes.

Nature Conservation

- **Priority 3: Protected Areas.** To provide advice on *Conserving Nature 2012 – 2020: A strategy for establishing a system of protected areas in South Australia*. To assist with the identification of priority bioregions and establishment of broad reservation and policy targets.
- **Priority 4: Protected Areas on Private Lands.** To provide advice to the Minister and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on the legislative and policy framework for, and implementation of, the Protected Areas on Private Lands Strategy.
- **Priority 5: Prioritising Biodiversity Outcomes.** To provide policy advice to assist with the development of priority biodiversity conservation outcomes and to identify partnership opportunities.
- **Priority 6: Climate Change.** To provide advice to the Minister and DENR on mitigating the effects of climate change on the State's reserves and wildlife.

Policy Development

- **Priority 7: National Parks and Wildlife Act Amendments.** To provide advice to the Minister and DENR on the development of the proposed legislative and policy framework, and on the proposed amendments to the Act.

Council discussed its strategic priorities with the Minister at its August 2011 meeting and particular focus was given to Protected Areas on Private Lands; the Reserve Management Planning Review; and climate change / carbon initiatives.

The activities and responsibilities of the National Parks and Wildlife Council contribute to four targets in *South Australia's Strategic Plan 2011*:

- **Target 69: Lose no species:** Lose no species as a result of human impacts.
- **Target 72: Nature conservation:** Increase participation in nature conservation activities by 25% by 2015.
- **Target 30: Boards and Committees:** Increase the number of women on State Government Boards and committees to 50% on average by 2014, and maintain thereafter by ensuring that 50% of women are appointed, on average, each quarter.
- **Target 62: Climate change adaption:** Develop regional climate adaption plans in all State Government regions by 2016.

OPERATIONS AND INITIATIVES

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Over the past year, the Council has concentrated on its seven strategic priorities and these are summarised below. These priorities were considered in relation to the following key outcomes:

- Community Engagement;
- National Wildlife Corridors Plan;
- NatureLinks and partnerships; and
- Landscape scale, conservation and connectivity

Following discussion with the Minister, Council initiated a forum for representatives of the State's peak environmental bodies to network and discuss strategic directions and possible synergies. The Forum was held in November 2011 and identified a number of topics which are of strategic focus and common importance to each of the respective boards and committees. It was agreed that the peak bodies would endeavour to strengthen partnerships and improve communication between board members and Departmental support staff.

In this reporting period, the Council considered and provided a submission on the Draft State Natural Resource Management (NRM) Plan. Council also provided written advice to the Minister following Council meetings.

PRIORITY 1: RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

A key function of Council is to review and provide advice on park management plans that set the policy direction for managing parks. South Australia has over 300 national parks, conservation parks, regional reserves, game reserves, and recreation parks and 212 currently have adopted management plans, as at January 2012. During 2011-12 a number of plans were completed and reviewed by Council including:

- **Bimbowrie Conservation Park Management Plan.** Council provided advice on the draft Management Plan, public submissions and DENR responses. The Council also endorsed the Management Plan for forwarding to the Minister for adoption.
- **Ediacara Conservation Park Management Plan.** Council reviewed and endorsed the Ediacara Conservation Park Management Plan.

- **Cape Gantheaume Fire Management Plan.** Council reviewed the analysis of submissions for the Cape Gantheaume Fire Management Plan, ensuring that all issues raised through the external consultation process were addressed appropriately. This Plan was endorsed by Council.
- **Alinytjara Wilurara Fire Management Strategy.** Council reviewed the proposed Fire Management Strategy and requested that information be provided on any linkages with the Regional Bushfire Prevention Plan.

Council also reviewed information provided on:

- the updated status of Arkaroola through the adoption of the *Arkaroola Protection Act 2012* and proposed listing on the State, National and World Heritage Registers.
- the new bushfire management arrangements for South Australia and provided advice to the Minister; and
- a revised Native Title and co-management arrangement across the State's protected areas.

Council worked with DENR to review the effectiveness of reserve management planning and to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for assessing management plans. The development of an evaluation framework will continue into the 2012-13 reporting period.

PRIORITY 2: VISITOR STRATEGY

Council provided strategic input into key issues raised as part of the development of *People and Parks – A Visitor Strategy for South Australia's National Parks, Marine Parks and Reserves*. This strategy will provide strategic direction for innovative and sustainable recreation and tourism in parks.

Council provided detailed comments on the draft Strategy to the Minister, including the need to have increased stakeholder engagement and partnership, to implement a review framework, and the importance of providing ongoing resources to ensure its successful implementation.

Council will assist DENR to increase stakeholder engagement and develop partnerships for implementing the Strategy, and will also play a key role in on-going monitoring once the Strategy is released.

PRIORITY 3: PROTECTED AREAS

Council provided advice throughout the development of *Conserving Nature 2012-2020: A strategy for establishing a system of protected areas in South Australia* (the Protected Areas Strategy). It was acknowledged that the intent of the Strategy is to provide strategic direction and priorities for expanding the protected area network on public, private and Aboriginal lands, and a State-wide landscape scale commitment to establishing protected areas, identifying priority bioregions, and establishing broad reservation and policy targets.

A focus of Council's advice was ensuring that the Strategy considered adaptation to climate change and that it linked with State and National protected area policies. Council will play a key role in on-going monitoring of the Strategy.

PRIORITY 4: PROTECTED AREAS ON PRIVATE LANDS

Council reviewed the Protected Areas on Private Land (PAPL) framework, which aims to provide legislative and policy mechanisms for establishing and managing protected areas on private lands. This framework is a new approach to reserve management, which has been pioneered by South Australia.

Council acknowledged the quantity and quality of public submissions to the PAPL discussion paper and provided advice to DENR and Minister on issues raised during public consultation. Council highlighted the importance of developing a contemporary and integrated framework that is suitable for all land owners, including corporations.

Council expressed strong support for this initiative and considers that it will provide options for supporting landowners to establish core areas for conservation that link with and strengthen the public protected area system and contribute to landscape level conservation efforts throughout the State.

Council will review and provide advice on individual PAPL applications and intends to play an active role in its implementation and review.

PRIORITY 5: PRIORITISING BIODIVERSITY OUTCOMES

Council supported the need to prioritise biodiversity conservation strategies based on the *No Species Loss* Strategy and other State and National initiatives.

During the reporting period Council:

- highlighted the need for a consistent approach to biodiversity strategies in the State,
- took an active leadership role in the *No Species Loss* mid-term review and will work closely with DENR throughout the implementation of the revised strategy,
- worked with DENR to identify gaps and develop a framework for biodiversity conservation. As part of this process, Council identified the need to further develop partnership opportunities to assist with delivery of the *NatureLinks* program and associated strategies, and
- considered information provided on the draft policy on the management of over-abundant and impact-causing wildlife and provided advice to DENR on issues raised during public consultation.

Council also considered recommendations provided by DENR on the 2012 Duck and Quail Open Season, and provided this advice to the Minister.

PRIORITY 6: CLIMATE CHANGE

Council explored opportunities regarding emerging funding initiatives including the *Carbon Farming* and *Clean Energy Future* funding initiatives. Council considered the *National Wildlife Corridor Plan*, *NatureLinks*, and the *Trans-Australia Eco-Link* as key components in addressing the impact of climate change.

Council acknowledged that South Australia is at the forefront of these initiatives.

PRIORITY 7: NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE ACT AMENDMENTS

Council supported initiatives to clarify and modernise the Act. It considered the proposed changes to the Act, that allow for the modernisation of reserve management categories, define the objects of reserves, and clarify provisions for co-management with traditional owners.

Council were consulted during the Act amendment process and provided advice on the development of a consultation strategy. Council highlighted the need to provide clear and consistent messages to the community and other stakeholders regarding the intent of the reserve management revisions.

ROLE, LEGISLATION AND STRUCTURE

The National Parks and Wildlife Council is established under section 15 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*.

OBJECT OF THE NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE ACT

The object of the Act is to provide for the establishment and management of reserves for public benefit and enjoyment; to provide for the conservation of wildlife in a natural environment; and for other purposes.

ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

The National Parks and Wildlife Council is South Australia's peak advisory body on the management of the State's parks and wildlife.

The Council is responsible for advising the Minister and DENR on all aspects of protected area and wildlife management, including:

- Planning in relation to the management of reserves and wildlife conservation;
- Promotion of reserves and community participation; and
- Developing protected area policy.

The South Australian protected area system covers almost 29% of the State and forms part of the National Reserve System. The Council is committed to providing leadership through advising on the development of policies for South Australia's protected areas.

FUNCTIONS OF THE NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE COUNCIL

Section 19C of the Act describes the functions of the Council.

19C (1) The functions of the Council are:

- (a) to provide advice to the Minister at the Minister's request or on its own initiative on any matter relating to the administration of this Act; and
- (b) such other functions as are set out in this Act.

19C (2) Without limiting subsection (1)(a), Council may advise the Minister on the following matters relating to the administration of this Act:

- (a) planning in relation to the management of reserves;
- (b) the conservation of wildlife;
- (c) funding (including matters relating to sponsorship) and the development and marketing of commercial activities;
- (d) community participation in the management of reserves and the conservation of wildlife;
- (e) the development of policy;
- (f) existing or proposed national or international agreements relating to the conservation of animals, plants and ecosystems;
- (g) the promotion (including public education) of the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources;
- (h) the Council's assessment of the performance of the department in administering this Act;
- (i) any other matter referred to the Council by the Minister or on which the Council believes it should advise the Minister.

While Council has no powers under the Act, it has community-based representation, a wide ranging brief, and provides independent, expert advice to the Minister.

MEMBERSHIP

Council is made up of eight members, seven of whom are appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the Minister. The eighth member of the Council is the Director of National Parks and Wildlife, who is not entitled to vote at Council meetings.

Each of the appointed members of the Council is a person who, in the opinion of the Minister, meets the standards stipulated by section 15(4) of the Act for the appointment of members. As at 30 June 2012 Council membership was as follows:

Presiding Member	Appointed pursuant to the following section of the Act
Mr Bill McIntosh AM	15(4)(c): qualification or experience in the management of natural resources. 15(7): appointed by the Governor, on the recommendation of the Minister, to be the presiding member of the Council.
Member	
Mr Doug Humann	15(4)(a): qualifications or experience in the conservation of animals, plants and ecosystems.
Ms Jill Woodlands	15(4)(b): selected by the Minister from a panel of two men and two women nominated by the Conservation Council of South Australia.
Mr Steve Green	15(4)(d): qualifications or experience in organising community involvement in the conservation of animals, plants or other natural resources.
Professor Suzanne Miller	15(4)(e): qualifications or experience in a field of science that is relevant to the conservation of ecosystems and to the relationship of wildlife with its environment.

Ms Joanne Podoliak	15(4)(f)(i): qualifications or experience in ecologically based tourism.
Ms Pauline Carr	15(4)(f)(iii): qualifications or experience in financial management.
Mr Greg Leaman	15(3): the Director of National Parks and Wildlife.

In addition to the above requirements, each of the appointed members must be a person who has, in the opinion of the Minister, a commitment to the conservation of animals, plants and other natural resources.

During the reporting period the former Presiding Member resigned and two members' terms expired. Council wish to thank Dr Anthony Fleming, Ms Vicki-Jo Russell and Mr Richard Mills for their significant commitments and contributions to the Council over the terms of their membership.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Section 19(e) of the Act provides for the establishment of advisory committees to advise the Minister on any matter relating to the administration of the Act. This provision was not required in this reporting period.

MEETINGS: GENERAL AND SPECIAL

A total of five general Council meetings were held during the 2011-12 financial year.

No special Council meetings were held during the 2011-12 financial year.

Attendance by appointed members at meetings:

Member	Meeting attendance	Comments
Mr Bill McIntosh	5	
Mr Doug Humann	2	Term began 15 December 2011
Ms Jill Woodlands	1	Term began 5 April 2012
Mr Steve Green	1	Term began 5 April 2012
Prof Suzanne Miller	3	
Ms Joanne Podoliak	5	
Ms Pauline Carr	4	
Mr Greg Leaman	4	
Dr Anthony Fleming	1	Resigned 17 October 2011
Ms Vicki-Jo Russell	4	Term ended 7 March 2012
Mr Richard Mills	3	Term ended 7 March 2012

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Policy Directorate, DENR provides support to the Council by providing an Executive Officer and Secretary for administration and governance. Reporting on this matter is contained in the DENR Annual Report 2011-12.

MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Council members (other than government employees) received the following remuneration as determined by the Minister:

- Chair: \$221 per four-hour session
- Member: \$177 per four-hour session

EMPLOYEE NUMBERS, GENDER AND STATUS

The Council has no staff of its own and utilises the services of DENR. Reporting on this matter is contained in the DENR Annual Report 2011-12.

Executive, administrative and project support were provided to the Council from existing DENR resources.

The gender balance of the Council is taken into consideration when members are appointed. During this reporting period, membership of Council was made up of four males and four females.

The following matters are also contained in the DENR annual report 2011-2012:

- Superannuation contribution by the Council
- Executives
- Leave Management
- Workforce Diversity
- Voluntary Flexible Working Arrangements
- Performance Development
- Leadership and Management Development
- Accredited Training Packages
- Employment Opportunity Programs
- Occupational Health and Safety and Injury Management
- Financial Performance
- Account Payment Performance
- Disability Action Plan
- Energy Efficiency Action Plan Report
- Greening of Government Operations Framework

CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Council did not enter into any contractual arrangements during this reporting period.

FRAUD

It is declared that there were no instances of fraud detected in the activities undertaken by the Council in this reporting period. Financial services are provided to the Council by DENR. Strategies to detect instances of fraud are reported in the DENR Annual Report 2011-12.

CONSULTANTS

The Council did not engage any consultants in this reporting period.

OVERSEAS TRAVEL

It is declared that no member of the Council has travelled overseas on Council business during this reporting period.

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT IN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

The Council does not own any non-residential buildings and is, therefore, not required to develop an asbestos risk reduction program.

URBAN DESIGN CHARTER

No events occurred in 2011-12 that required the Council to consider the principles of urban design contained in the South Australian Urban Design Charter.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – INFORMATION STATEMENTS

As a DENR administered entity, Council participates and abides by the arrangements outlined in the DENR Freedom of Information regime. Reporting on this matter is available on the DENR internet site. Please visit <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au> to view the FOI statement.

WHISTLEBLOWERS PROTECTION ACT 1993

Reporting requirements against *the Whistleblowers Protection Act 1993* require the National Parks and Wildlife Council to report on the number of occasions on which public interest information has been disclosed to a Responsible Officer of the agency. There were no disclosures made during the 2011-12 financial year.

REGIONAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT STATEMENTS

The Council did not undertake any regional Impact Assessment Statements during the 2011-12 financial year.

RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

The Council acknowledges and respects the traditional custodians on whose ancestral lands we meet and the land that it considers and protects. The Council acknowledges the Aboriginal people's deep feelings of attachment and relationship to country. In fulfilling its functions, the Council is aware of the cultural heritage of the traditional owners and strives to achieve mutually satisfying outcomes wherever these matters are concerned.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Council appreciates the support and encouragement it received over the past year from the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, the Hon Paul Caica MP.

The Council records its appreciation for the assistance provided by senior DENR staff, including the Chief Executive, Mr Allan Holmes, and Director of National Parks and Wildlife, Mr Greg Leaman. Council also records its appreciation to the Executive Officer, Ms Farlie Taylor (July – November 2011) and Executive Officer, Mr Neil Taylor (February – June 2012) and Secretary Ms Nicole Evans.