

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
LAID ON THE TABLE**

26 November 2013

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE
COUNCIL**

ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013



**Government
of South Australia**

National Parks and Wildlife Council
Annual Report 2012-13

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Hon Ian Hunter MLC
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 National Parks and Wildlife Council for the year ended 30 June 2013.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, 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 strategic priorities for 2012-13.

Park Management

Strategy 1: Reserve Management Planning. To review and provide advice on reserve management plans and their effectiveness.

Strategy 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

Strategy 3: Protected Area Strategy. 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.

Strategy 4: Prioritising Biodiversity Outcomes. To provide policy advice to assist with the development of priority biodiversity conservation outcomes and to identify partnership opportunities.

Strategy 5: Climate Change. To provide advice to the Minister on mitigating the effects of climate change on the State's reserves and wildlife.

Policy Development

Strategy 6: National Parks and Wildlife Act Amendments. To provide advice to the Minister on the development of the proposed legislative and policy framework and on the proposed amendments to the Act.

The activities and responsibilities of the National Parks and Wildlife Council contribute to the following 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 62: Climate change adaptation:** Develop regional climate adaptation plans in all State Government regions by 2016.

HIGHLIGHTS, OPERATIONS AND INITIATIVES

Over the reporting year, the Council has concentrated on its strategic priorities and these are summarised below.

STRATEGY 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 217 have adopted management plans as at June 2013. During 2012-13 a number of plans were reviewed by Council including:

- **Bimbowrie Conservation Park Management Plan.** Council received the adopted Bimbowrie Conservation Park Management Plan, following considerations in early 2013 of submissions received as part of community consultation.
- **Ediacara Conservation Park Management Plan.** Council received the adopted Ediacara Conservation Park Management Plan, the submissions for which it had reviewed in early 2013.
- **Yellabinna Reserves Management Plan.** Council reviewed the Yellabinna Reserves Draft Management Plan and noted key changes resulting from the public submissions. Council supported the adoption of the planned rehabilitation of unused tracks and the encouragement of visitor use of appropriate camps and tracks.
- **Flinders Ranges National Park Management Plan.** Council received a briefing on the development of the draft Flinders Ranges National Park Management Plan, one of the larger more complex plans to be developed, and which is being developed in partnership with the Flinders Ranges National Park Co-Management board. Council noted issues to be addressed included effective engagement with the community, and adequately integrating tourism and the cultural heritage of the Adnyamathanha people.
- **Gawler Ranges National Park and Lake Gairdner National Park.** Council received a briefing on the development of the draft management plans for Gawler Ranges National Park and Lake Gairdner National Park, which will commence once the Lake Gairdner National Park Co-Management Board and Gawler Ranges National Park Advisory Committee are in place.
- **Mt Remarkable National Park Management Plan.** Council received public submissions on proposed amendments to the Mt Remarkable National Park Management Plan to incorporate provision for recreational cycling. Council advised the importance of adequate monitoring and compliance of park use.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A key concern for Council is the provision of an adequate and effective monitoring and evaluation framework for assessing management plans. Council received a briefing on the

proposed Natural Resources Management (NRM) Monitoring and Evaluation Framework as an integrated reporting system developed to facilitate NRM reporting within South Australia. Council noted global developments in this field and it will pursue the development of an effective management planning, monitoring and evaluation framework for parks.

STRATEGY 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 advice on the proposed 2013 National Parks Guide and noted the increased use of electronic media as an information distribution media. Council discussed other aspects of parks marketing including making comparisons to interstate and international parks systems. The use and value of GPS and mapping programs was discussed. Council noted that an appropriate budget is required to support the visitor strategy.

Review of the National Parks and Wildlife Consultative Committees

A briefing was provided to Council on the review of future arrangements for the National Parks and Wildlife Consultative Committees. Council acknowledged the existing overlap between consultative committees and NRM Boards and advised that future arrangements retain an emphasis on parks and efforts be made to keep expertise in the regions.

STRATEGY 3: PROTECTED AREAS STRATEGY

Council continued to provide advice throughout the development of *Conserving Nature 2012-2020: A strategy for establishing a system of protected areas in South Australia*. 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 reserve and policy targets.

A focus of Council’s advice was ensuring that the strategy considered adaptation to climate change and that it linked with national protected area policies. Council will play a key role in the ongoing monitoring of the strategy. Council noted the very important connection that needs to be made with private protected areas and Indigenous Protected Areas.

STRATEGY 4: PRIORITISING BIODIVERSITY OUTCOMES

Council continued to support the need to prioritise biodiversity conservation strategies based on the *No Species Loss* strategy and other State and national initiatives.

No Species Loss Strategy

During the reporting period Council:

- complimented the Department for its work on the *No Species Loss* strategy and 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
- worked with DEWNR 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

Kangaroo Management

Council received a briefing on the draft Kangaroo Management Plan which was open to public consultation during the year.

2013 Duck and Quail Open Season

Council considered the conservation aspects of DEWNR recommendations on the 2013 Duck and Quail Open Season. Council advice included;

- the need to clearly define areas of public land on which hunting is allowed
- that DEWNR works with relevant stakeholders to improve hunting practices and standards, to reduce animal welfare concerns
- that DEWNR monitors and considers ecological, climatic and landscape factors in Open Season recommendations
- that the Duck and Quail Open Season Reference Panel revise its Terms of Reference to clarify its role and function.

STRATEGY 5: CLIMATE CHANGE

Council received a presentation from Professor Wayne Meyer, Professor of Natural Resource Science Adelaide University, on changing landscape usage and link to clean green food. Council noted key points including the need to achieve balance between land usage, production and conservation; climate change impact on conservation areas; and that regional capability will be increasingly limited.

STRATEGY 6: NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE ACT AMENDMENTS

Council continued to support initiatives to clarify and modernise the Act. It considered the proposed changes to the Act that allow for the modernisation of reserve management categories, defined objects of reserves and clarity of the provisions for co-management with traditional owners. Following public consultation in late 2012 on the *National Parks and Wildlife (Park and Reserve Categories and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2012*, Council provided advice on potential amendments to the Bill in light of public submissions received.

ROLE, LEGISLATION AND STRUCTURE

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

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 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 National Parks and Wildlife Act reserve system covers 20% of the State and forms part of the National Reserve System. The Council is committed to providing strategic advice on the development of policies for South Australia's protected areas.

FUNCTIONS OF THE NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE COUNCIL

The Act describes the functions of the 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

The 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 has no voting rights.

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 2013 Council membership was as follows:

Members	Appointed pursuant to the following section of the Act
Mr Bill McIntosh AM (Presiding Member)	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.
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.
vacant	15(4)(d): qualifications or experience in organising community involvement in the conservation of animals, plants or other natural resources.
vacant	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.

During the reporting period the term of one member expired and one member resigned. Council wish to thank Professor Suzanne Miller and Mr Steve Green for their contributions as members to the Council.

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 four general Council meetings were held during the 2012-13 financial year.

No special Council meetings were held during the 2012-13 financial year.

Attendance by appointed members at meetings:

Member	Meeting attendance	Comments
Mr Bill McIntosh	4	
Mr Doug Humann	4	
Ms Jill Woodlands	4	
Mr Steve Green	3	Term expired 23 June 2013
Prof Suzanne Miller	3	Resigned 5 June 2013
Ms Joanne Podoliak	3	
Ms Pauline Carr	3	
Mr Greg Leaman	3	

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

DEWNR provides support to the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Council by providing an Executive Officer and Secretary for administration and governance. Reporting on this matter is contained in the DEWNR Annual Report 2012-13.

MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

National Parks and Wildlife Council members (other than government employees) received the following sitting fee 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 DEWNR. Reporting on this matter is contained in the DEWNR Annual Report 2012-13.

Executive, administrative and project support were provided to the Council from existing DEWNR 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 DEWNR annual report 2012-2013:

- 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
- *Carers Recognition Act 1993*
- 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 DEWNR. Strategies to detect instances of fraud are reported in the DEWNR Annual Report 2012-13.

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.

URBAN DESIGN CHARTER

No events occurred in 2012-13 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 DEWNR administered entity, the Council participates and abides by the arrangements outlined in the DEWNR Freedom of Information regime. Reporting on this matter is available on the DEWNR 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* requires the 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 2012-13 financial year.

REGIONAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT STATEMENTS

The Council did not undertake any regional Impact Assessment Statements during the 2012-13 financial year.

RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

The Council acknowledges and respects the traditional custodians on whose ancestral lands it meets 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 Hon Paul Caica MP, former Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, and the Hon Ian Hunter, Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation. Council also acknowledges the substantial effort provided by DEWNR staff.