

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
LAID ON THE TABLE**

16 Oct 2014

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE
COUNCIL**

ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014



**Government
of South Australia**

National Parks and Wildlife Council
Annual Report 2013-14

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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 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 2014.

Yours sincerely



Bill McIntosh
PRESIDING MEMBER
NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE COUNCIL

3 September 2014

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 National Parks and Wildlife Council set the following strategic priorities for 2013-14:

Strategy 1: Reserve management planning

Strategy 2: Promoting the conservation and management of wildlife

Strategy 3: Community engagement and public education

Strategy 4: Policy and administration.

In setting their work program, the Council aligns with the state-wide policies:

- *Conserving Nature 2012-2020: A strategy for establishing a system of protected areas in South Australia,*
- *People and Parks: A Visitor Strategy for South Australia's National Parks, Marine Parks and Reserves,* and
- *the State NRM Plan 2012-2017.*

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

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

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. As at 30 June 2014, 217 of these have adopted management plans.

During 2013-14 a number of plans were reviewed by Council and advice provided to the Minister on Management Plans and Plan amendments as follows:

- **Amendment to the Mount Remarkable National Park Management Plan.**

Council reviewed public submissions received on the Mount Remarkable National Park Management Plan Draft Amendment and considered the Department's proposed responses to these submissions. Council subsequently supported the adoption of the proposed final amendment by the Minister. Council advised the importance of adequate monitoring and compliance of park use following the integration of a cycling trail.

- **Coongie Lakes National Park Management Plan.**

Council reviewed public submissions received on the Coongie Lakes National Park Draft Management Plan and considered the Department's proposed responses to these submissions. Council subsequently supported the adoption of the proposed final plan by the Minister.

- **Eastern Eyre Peninsula Parks Management Plan.**

Council reviewed public submissions received on the Eastern Eyre Peninsula Parks Draft Management Plan and considered the Department's proposed responses to these submissions. Council subsequently supported the adoption of the proposed final plan by the Minister.

- **Alinytjara Wilurara Fire Management Plan.**

Council noted the adopted Alinytjara Wilurara Fire Management Plan.

- **South Para Collaborative Fire Management Plan.**

Council noted the adopted South Para Fire Management Plan.

STRATEGY 2: PROMOTING THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF WILDLIFE

During 2013-14 Council received advice on two key wildlife conservation approaches delivered by DEWNR.

No Species Loss strategy

Council continued to support the need to prioritise biodiversity conservation strategies to deliver on the states *No Species Loss* strategy, receiving an update from DEWNR on the 90 Day Change project titled "*Safeguard our landscapes*". Council will continue to explore opportunities to promote such initiatives throughout the community and in the development of their strategic plans.

Kangaroo Management

Council received advice from DEWNR and noted the 2014 Quota Report for Commercial Kangaroo Harvest in South Australia, under Section 60J Permit for harvesting protected animals.

STRATEGY 3: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

Throughout 2013-14 Council continued to explore opportunities for community education, engagement and participation in the management of reserves and the conservation of wildlife.

People and Parks – A Visitor Strategy for South Australia's National Parks, Marine Parks and Reserves

Council received an update on the *People and Parks – A Visitor Strategy for South Australia’s National Parks, Marine Parks and Reserves*. This strategy provides the strategic direction for innovative and sustainable recreation and tourism in parks. Council acknowledged the significant progress achieved against the planned implementation programme of the People and Parks Strategy. Of note was a recent Memorandum of Understanding developed between the Mountain Biking Foundation and DEWNR, to allow for greater access for bikes in parks in exchange for promotion, monitoring and adoption of tracks by bike clubs. Council emphasised the importance of baseline and on-going monitoring, to ensure the biodiversity assets are not compromised by cycling usage.

Nature Play

Council received a presentation on the recently launched Nature Play initiative. National Parks are considered to be fundamental to the delivery of the Nature Play initiative, providing open spaces and access to natural environments, wildlife and unstructured play opportunities. Council are supportive of the initiative and will continue to discuss ways in which they can actively support it.

Educational events

To further the opportunity for public education around the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources, members of Council attended the following events. Mr McIntosh attended (as member) meetings of the State Bushfire Coordination Committee and the Quoll release in the Flinders Ranges National Park in May. Dr Munday represented the Council at the ‘Safeguard our landscapes’ meeting in September. Mr McIntosh was a speaker at the state Landcare conference held in November, with Dr Munday and Ms Woodlands also in attendance.

STRATEGY 4: POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

Permits to take protected animals

As required under Section 53A of the Act, the Council provided advice to the Minister in relation to an appeal of a decision to refuse a permit.

Native Vegetation Guidelines

Council reviewed and provided advice to the Native Vegetation Council on the Native Vegetation Guidelines for Ecological Prescribed Burns.

National Parks and Wildlife Act - Section 53A Review of Decision

Council considered an appeal under Section 53A of the Act following a decision by Department staff to refuse a permit to take Pernatty Knob-Tail Gecko from the wild. The Council upheld the original decision.

2014 Waterfowl and Quail Open Season

Council considered and advised the Minister on recommendations for quotas and management controls, for the operation of the 2014 Waterfowl and Quail Open Season. Council took an amended view to the Minister based on broad landscape trends and it encouraged that the Terms of Reference for the Stakeholder group were finalised well in advance of this years discussion.

ROLE, LEGISLATION AND STRUCTURE

The National Parks and Wildlife Council is established under section section 15 of 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 NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE COUNCIL

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
- 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 under Section 19C.

The functions of the Council are:

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 the 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 consists 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 requirements under section 15(4) of the Act for the appointment of members.

As at 30 June 2014 National Parks and Wildlife 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 AM	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.
Dr Bruce Munday	15(4)(d): qualifications or experience in organising community involvement in the conservation of animals, plants or other natural resources.
Dr Stephanie Williams	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 John Schutz	15(3): the Director of National Parks and Wildlife.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Section 19E 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 5 general Board meetings were held during the 2013-14 financial year.

A total of 0 special Board meetings were held during the 2013-14 financial year.

Attendance by appointed members at meetings:

Member	Meeting attendance	Comments
Mr Bill McIntosh AM (Presiding Member)	5	
Mr Doug Humann AM	5	
Ms Jill Woodlands	4	
Dr Bruce Munday	5	
Dr Stephanie Williams	1	Appointed 16 January 2014
Ms Joanne Podoliak	4	
Ms Pauline Carr	2	
Mr John Schutz	3	

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

DEWNR provides support to the Council by providing an Executive Officer and Secretary for administration and governance. Reporting on this matter is contained in the DEWNR Annual Report 2013-14.

During 2013-14 Council undertook a self performance assessment review. Six members took part in the assessment survey. Results revealed that the Council was achieving its objectives, with good governance, administration and support from DEWNR delegates.

MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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

- Chair: \$221 for 4 hours and \$55.50 per hour after that
- Member: \$177 for 4 hours and \$44.25 per hour after that

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 2013-14.

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 the Council was made up of four males and four females.

The following matters are contained in the DEWNR annual report 2013-14:

- Superannuation contribution by the National Parks and Wildlife Council
- Executives
- Leave Management
- Workforce Diversity
- Voluntary Flexible Working Arrangements

- Performance Development
- Leadership and Management Development
- Accredited Training Packages
- Employment Opportunity Programs
- Work Health and Safety and Injury Management
- Financial Performance
- Account Payment Performance
- *Carers Recognition Act 1993*
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plans
- 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 2013-14.

CONSULTANTS

The National Parks and Wildlife 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 National Parks and Wildlife Council business during this reporting period.

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT IN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

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

URBAN DESIGN CHARTER

No events occurred in 2013-14 that required the National Parks and Wildlife 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* require 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 2013-14 financial year.

REGIONAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT STATEMENTS

The Board did not undertake any regional Impact Assessment Statements during the 2013-14 financial year.

RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

The Council would like to acknowledge the land on which it meets is the traditional lands for the Kaurna people and that it respects their spiritual relationship with their country. The Council also acknowledges the Kaurna people as the custodians of the Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Kaurna people today.

In fulfilling its functions, the Council is cognisant of the cultural and natural heritage of traditional owners and strives to achieve positive outcomes wherever these matters are concerned.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Council would like to thank the Minister and staff of DEWNR for the support and encouragement that it has received over the year.