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18 Oct 2016

Wilderness Protection Act 1992

ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016



**Government
of South Australia**

Wilderness Protection Act 1992
Annual Report 2015-16

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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 section 11(1)(g) of the *Wilderness Protection Act 1992* (the Act) I am pleased to present this annual report which satisfies reporting requirements under the Act.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tim Goodes'.

Tim Goodes

**ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, WATER AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

23 September 2016

WILDERNESS PROTECTION ACT 1992 ANNUAL REPORT

This report is for the financial year 2015-16, and is presented in accordance with section 7 of the *Wilderness Protection Act 1992* (the Act).

OBJECTS OF THE WILDERNESS PROTECTION ACT

The Act provides for the protection of wilderness and the restoration of land to its condition before European colonisation. The intent of the Act is to provide strong protection for relatively unmodified environments against any form of negative impact by modern technological society. It establishes a management regime that aims to restore and conserve natural systems in the State to a condition prior to European colonisation. Land that meets the wilderness criteria to an extent sufficient to warrant such protection is usually, but not exclusively, remote from access and areas of settlement.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACT

The Act is under the control of the Minister administering the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. The Director of National Parks and Wildlife is responsible for the management of proclaimed areas and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) undertakes day to day management of proclaimed areas.

IDENTIFICATION OF LAND UNDER THE ACT

The Parks and Wilderness Council (the Council) is subject to certain statutory obligations relating to the identification, assessment and advice on wilderness protection areas and zones.

The wilderness criteria are described in section 3(2) of the Act as follows:

- (a) the land and its ecosystems must not have been affected, or must have been affected to only a minor extent, by modern technology;
- (b) the land and its ecosystems must not have been seriously affected by exotic animals or plants or other exotic organisms.

These criteria are derived from indicators of wilderness quality established by the Australian Government's *National Wilderness Inventory*.

The National Wilderness Inventory's wilderness quality data is a primary reference in the assessment process undertaken by the Council. In addition to this data, other biological and cultural information is considered in the assessment process.

CONSTITUTION OF LAND UNDER THE ACT

There are two classifications of protected areas under the Act: wilderness protection areas and wilderness protection zones. Wilderness protection areas receive the highest protection offered for land under State legislation. Such areas may be constituted over all or part of a reserve constituted under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*, Crown land, or over any other land with the owner's consent.

Wilderness protection zones are a secondary classification established as a mechanism for the introduction of a wilderness management framework over an existing mining tenement or areas for which future mining may be allowed with the approval of Parliament.

Under section 22(5) of the Act, the Minister may recommend to the Governor that identified land may be constituted as a wilderness protection area or zone:

- (a) (i) because it meets the wilderness criteria to a sufficient extent to justify its protection as wilderness under this Act; or
- (ii) to enable it to be restored to a condition that justifies its protection as wilderness under this Act; or
- (b) in order to provide a buffer zone to protect land of a kind referred to in paragraph (a); or
- (c) to enable the adoption of convenient boundaries for a wilderness protection area or wilderness protection zone.

the Minister may recommend to the Governor that he or she constitute the land as a wilderness protection area or wilderness protection zone under subsection (1) or alter the boundaries of an existing wilderness protection area or zone by adding the land to the area or zone under subsection (2).

ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Section 7(1) of the Act requires that the Minister must cause a report to be prepared annually setting out the following information:

- (a) the names and locations of the wilderness protection areas and wilderness protection zones constituted under this Act and the extent to which the wilderness criteria are met by each area and zone; and
- (b) the name or some other identification of the former reserves or parts of reserves that have been constituted as wilderness protection areas or zones; and
- (c) the extent of mining operations in wilderness protection zones; and
- (d) information as to the management of wilderness protection areas and zones and particulars of any activities to restore land and its ecosystems to their condition before European colonisation; and
- (e) a list of management plans adopted under this Act; and
- (f) the portions (if any) of wilderness protection areas or zones that the Minister has declared to be prohibited areas and the reasons for making those declarations; and
- (g) an account of money received and expended in relation to the management of wilderness protection areas and wilderness protection zones; and
- (h) in the case of wilderness protection zones, an account of the royalties (if any) received in respect of the mining tenements in force in those zones and the money expended by the Department of Mines and Energy in administering those mining tenements by an administrative unit of the Public Service.

That report follows. As required under section 7(2) of the Act, the report includes the Wilderness Code of Management (Appendix 1) that has been prepared and adopted in accordance with section 12 of the Act.

NAMES, LOCATIONS AND QUALITY OF WILDERNESS PROTECTION AREAS AND ZONES

The following information is provided in accordance with section 7(1)(a) of the Act. A map illustrating all Wilderness Protection Areas within South Australia is provided as Figure 1.

Billiatt Wilderness Protection Area

Location

The Billiatt Wilderness Protection Area, proclaimed on 24 July 2008, covers an area of 59,125 hectares comprising Sections 13 and 26-28, Hundred of Auld, Sections 14-19 and 21-30, Hundred of Billiatt, and Sections 42-45, 48, 49 and 53, Hundred of Kingsford. The wilderness protection area was excised from the Billiatt Conservation Park and is located approximately 30 kilometres north of Lameroo.

Wilderness Quality

Billiatt is a key component of a biological corridor connecting mallee areas in southern and eastern Australia. The area consists of large sand dunes dominated by mallee vegetation and open shrub land, which is in a relatively undisturbed condition and provides habitat for the fauna of the Murray Mallee Region. It also provides habitat for a number of nationally threatened birds.

Cape Bouguer Wilderness Protection Area

Location

Cape Bouguer Wilderness Protection Area, proclaimed on 15 October 1993, covers an area of 5,300 hectares comprising Allotment 150 of DP 38341, excised from the Kelly Hill Conservation Park. The area is on the southern coast of Kangaroo Island approximately 85 kilometres south-west of Kingscote.

Wilderness Quality

The area is significant for its expanse of untracked native vegetation, and for its biological diversity. The coastal landscape, with its unspoilt sweeping bays, is scenically outstanding. Wilderness quality is recorded as high over the entire area, except in the south-western corner where the only evidence of modern technology is a walking trail that follows the South West River to the coast. This trail provides an opportunity for visitors to observe native flora and fauna, access the coast and experience the wilderness. Management policies under the Act ensure that public use of the track is compatible with the protection of the wilderness quality of the environment.

Cape Gantheaume Wilderness Protection Area

Location

Cape Gantheaume Wilderness Protection Area, proclaimed on 15 October 1993, covers an area of 20,100 hectares comprising Section 52, Hundred of Seddon, Sections 66-67, 100-101 Hundred of Macgillivray, Sections 258, 277-279 and 375, Hundred of Haines. The area was excised from the Cape Gantheaume Conservation Park and is located on the southern coast of Kangaroo Island approximately 40 kilometres south-west of Kingscote.

Wilderness Quality

The area is prime coastal wilderness with high ecological and aesthetic integrity. It is undulating country that has an excellent cover of mallee vegetation and diverse coastal landscapes with high scenic and habitat value. Wilderness quality is evaluated as high in all of the wilderness protection area except for a narrow strip on the east coast where it is affected to a minor extent by the presence of a rough track along the eastern coastline. The management

provisions of the Act will ensure that the impacts of this track on wilderness quality will be minimised. There is no evidence elsewhere in the wilderness protection area of the impacts of modern technology and no feral animals or pest plants have been recorded.

Cape Torrens Wilderness Protection Area

Location

Cape Torrens Wilderness Protection Area, proclaimed on 15 October 1993, covers an area of 940 hectares comprising Sections 10 and 12, Hundred of Borda, and Allotment 100 of Deposited Plan 31584, formerly the Cape Torrens Conservation Park. The area is located on the north-western coast of Kangaroo Island, eight kilometres west of Western River Wilderness Protection Area, and approximately 12 kilometres east of Cape Borda.

Wilderness Quality

The area is outstanding for the biological integrity of its native forest and woodland, and for its wild coastal scenery. It also contains habitat for the endangered Glossy Black-cockatoo. The wilderness quality of Cape Torrens Wilderness Protection Area is recorded as high, as it is undisturbed by structures and impacts of modern technology. There are no internal tracks and the vegetation is virtually pristine.

Danggali Wilderness Protection Area

Location

The Danggali Wilderness Protection Area, proclaimed on 28 May 2009, covers an area of 202,815 hectares comprising Sections 729 and 730, Out of Hundreds (Chowilla), and Allotment 100 of Deposited Plan 78460. The Wilderness Protection Area was excised from the Danggali Conservation Park and is located on the western edge of the Murray Darling Basin approximately 70 kilometres north of Renmark.

Wilderness Quality

As part of one of the largest relatively intact natural areas in the southern pastoral zone of Australia, the wilderness quality within Danggali substantially contributes as a core protected area. The large size and relatively undisturbed condition of the Wilderness Protection Area provides highly significant habitat for the fauna of the Danggali area. In particular Danggali has a rich diversity of bats, with at least 10 species having been recorded.

Hambidge Wilderness Protection Area

Location

Hambidge Wilderness Protection Area, proclaimed on 30 September 2004, is located on the Eyre Peninsula, approximately 140 kilometres from Port Lincoln and 15 kilometres from Lock. The 37,900 hectare reserve was originally Hambidge Conservation Park under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. The reserve comprises Section 7, Hundred of Hambidge, Section 35, Hundred of Palkagee, and Section 364, Out of Hundreds (Kimba).

Wilderness Quality

This area comprises an extensive system of parallel dunes with ridges (6 to 12 metres in height) running north west to south east. Clay pans are scattered throughout the inter-dunal area. Vegetation comprises a low mallee scrub association dominated by *Eucalyptus dumosa*, *E socialis*, *E oleosa*, *E incrassata*, *E calycogona*, *Melaleuca uncinata*, and *M lanceolata* with an understory comprising *Santalum acuminatum*, *Triodia*, *Hibbertia*, *Baeckia*, *Boronia* and *Dodonaea* species. The area is home to a wide variety of mallee birds, including the endangered malleefowl, vulnerable blue-winged parrot, and the rare chestnut quail-thrush, and shy heathwren. Visitors occasionally enter the reserve to visit Prominent Hill.

Hincks Wilderness Protection Area

Location

Hincks Wilderness Protection Area, proclaimed on 30 September 2004, is located on the Eyre Peninsula, approximately 85 kilometres from Port Lincoln and 35 kilometres from Lock. The 66,650 hectare reserve was excised from the Hincks Conservation Park and comprises Sections 2 and 3, Hundred of Hincks, Sections 11-14, Hundred of Nicholls, Sections 46-48, Hundred of Tooligie, Section 25, Hundred of Murlong, and Section 365, Out of Hundreds (Kimba).

Wilderness Quality

Originally set aside as a flora and fauna reserve in 1941, it is one of the largest expanses of mallee on Eyre Peninsula. The area has recorded 420 species of vascular plants including 28 orchids. Of the 420 species, 91 (including four species of orchid) had not previously been recorded on any other reserve in South Australia. The wilderness protection area is dominated by mallee, with a small portion covered by forest, woodland, or scrubland. Visitors occasionally travel through the reserve or camp on the North-South Track.

Investigator Group Wilderness Protection Area

Location

Investigator Group Wilderness Protection Area, proclaimed on 25 August 2011, is located off the west coast of South Australia, approximately 25 to 70 kilometres south-west of Elliston township. The 440 hectare reserve was originally part of the Investigator Group Conservation Park under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. The reserve comprises Ward Islands, Top-Gallant Isles, Pearson Isles, Veteran Isles and Dorothee Island, all to the low water mark. Of this land, the Investigator Group Wilderness Protection Area excludes Allotment 1 of Deposited Plan 19499 out of Hundreds (Elliston) (Pearson Isles), which is land held by Australian Maritime Safety Authority for lighthouse purposes.

Wilderness Quality

Investigator Group Wilderness Protection Area has a high degree of intactness, free from the human impacts associated with land clearing and introduced plants and animals. It contains important haul-out areas for the Australian sea lion and Long-nosed fur seal. Notable birds found on the islands include white faced storm petrels, cape barren geese and mutton birds which breed on the island. In particular, the Pearson Island Black-footed Rock-wallaby is of conservation significance.

Memory Cove Wilderness Protection Area

Location

Memory Cove Wilderness Protection Area, proclaimed on 30 September 2004, is located on the Eyre Peninsula, approximately 25 kilometres south of Port Lincoln. The 8,940 hectare reserve extends to low water mark and includes Little Island, Lewis Island, Hopkins Island, Smith Island and Williams Island. It was formerly part of the Lincoln National Park. The reserve comprises the following parcels of land:

- Sections 6, 12, 13, 22 and 23, Hundred of Flinders;
- Allotments 1, 2, 4 and 6 of Deposited Plan 64397, Hundred of Flinders;
- Allotment 102 of Deposited Plan 64387, Out of Hundreds (Lincoln);
- Sections 873 (Little Island), 874 (Lewis Island), 875 (Smith Island), and 876 (Hopkins Island), Out of Hundreds (Lincoln);
- Allotments 17, 18, 19, and 21 of Deposited Plan 35926, Out of Hundreds (Lincoln); and
- Allotment 2 of Deposited Plan 19500 (Williams Island), Out of Hundreds (Lincoln).

Wilderness Quality

Over 210 species of native flora have been recorded within Memory Cove Wilderness Protection Area, including seven species of conservation significance. The reserve also has a significant cultural history. Prior to European settlement two groups of Aboriginal people, the Barngarla and the Nauo groups, occupied the area. In 1802, Matthew Flinders sailed the coast in the *Investigator*, and during this expedition seven of his crew and the ship's master drowned when their cutter capsized during their search for fresh water. Entry to Memory Cove Wilderness Protection Area is regulated by a locked gate within the adjoining Lincoln National Park. A maximum of 15 vehicles per day are permitted entry. Yachts and boats regularly anchor in the sheltered waters at Memory Cove and Williams Island and recreational fishing is often undertaken at Memory Cove Wilderness Protection Area. Camping is permitted at the camp ground.

Nullarbor Wilderness Protection Area

Location

Nullarbor Wilderness Protection Area, proclaimed on 6 June 2013, is located in the far west of South Australia, adjacent to the State's border with Western Australia. The 894,245 hectare reserve was originally part of the Nullarbor National Park and Nullarbor Regional Reserve under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. The reserve comprises Allotments 21 and 22 of Deposited Plan 89720 and D31597 A10.

Wilderness Quality

Nullarbor Wilderness Protection Area protects the iconic Nullarbor Plain, with its open, flat plains and spectacular Bunda Cliffs. When connected to the Great Australian Bight Marine Park, it creates a land and sea conservation estate of global significance. The reserve also conserves one of the world's largest semi-arid karst environments and provides habitat for around 390 species of plant and 160 species of animal, including threatened species such as the slender-billed thornbill, Australian bustard and Nullarbor daisy. The Nullarbor has long been a popular tourist destination, providing opportunities to experience the overland journey of southern Australia and to observe migrating whales in the Great Australian Bight.

Nuyts Archipelago Wilderness Protection Area

Location

Nuyts Archipelago Wilderness Protection Area, proclaimed on 25 August 2011, is located off the west coast of South Australia, around 10 to 75 kilometres south-west of Ceduna township. The 2,460 hectare reserve was originally part of the Nuyts Archipelago Conservation Park, under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*, and one island (Evans Island) was unalienated Crown land. The reserve comprises Purdie Islands, Lound Island, Goat Island, Lacy Islands, Evans Island, Lilliput Island, Franklin Islands, Blefuscu Island, Egg Island, Freeling Island, Smooth Island, Dog Island, West Island, St Francis Island, Masillon Island, Fenelon Island and Hart Island, all to the low water mark. Of this land, the Nuyts Archipelago Wilderness Protection Area excludes Allotment 1 of Deposited Plan 19501, Out of Hundreds (Nuyts) (Evans Island) and Section 220, Out of Hundreds (Nuyts) (St Francis Island), which is land held by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority for lighthouse purposes.

Wilderness Quality

Nuyts Archipelago Wilderness Protection Area provides important island habitat for species such as the Stick-Nest Rat and Brush-Tailed Bettong (which are part of re-introduction programs) and species such as the carpet python and the Nuyts Archipelago subspecies of the southern brown bandicoot. Other notable species breeding on the island include the Australian

sea-lion and mutton birds. The islands' remoteness from the mainland provides an important and secure refuge for vulnerable wildlife and small mammals free from introduced predators.

Ravine des Casoars Wilderness Protection Area

Location

The Ravine des Casoars Wilderness Protection Area, proclaimed on 15 October 1993, covers an area of 41,360 hectares comprising Section 11, Hundred of Borda, Section 64, Hundred of Gosse, and Allotments 50 and 52 of Deposited Plan 38340. The Wilderness Protection Area was excised from the Flinders Chase National Park and is located at the north-western end of Kangaroo Island approximately 40 kilometres west of Parndana, the nearest town, and approximately 90 kilometres west of Kingscote.

Wilderness Quality

The extensive woodlands and forests are virtually pristine. The area contains several complete natural drainage systems, from watershed to their discharge at sea. Wilderness quality is recorded as high over the entire area except where it is reduced in a narrow north-south band by the presence of Shackle Road, an unsealed public access road. The vegetation is biologically intact and many endemic plants are present.

Western River Wilderness Protection Area

Location

Western River Wilderness Protection Area, proclaimed on 15 October 1993, covers an area of 2,470 hectares comprising of Sections 8, 47, 51, 65 and 66, Hundred of Gosse, and Allotment 1 of Deposited Plan 31609, formerly the Western River Conservation Park. The area is located on the north-western coast of Kangaroo Island, approximately 65 kilometres west of Kingscote and 30 kilometres north-west of Parndana.

Wilderness Quality

While there are some relatively minor impacts of modern technology, the area has distinctive wilderness attributes and warrants protection and restoration in accordance with the provisions of the Act. In addition to its rugged terrain and high coastal cliffs that are characteristic of the northern coast of Kangaroo Island, Western River Wilderness Protection Area is highly valued for the presence of habitat for the endangered Glossy Black-cockatoo. Plant species diversity is high and the vegetation exhibits a wide cross-section of Kangaroo Island vegetation. Few exotic plants occur in the wilderness protection area and these are largely confined to perimeter and internal access tracks. Management policies under the Act require that exotic plants and animals are controlled or eradicated and that management is directed towards enhancement of wilderness quality.

Yellabinna Wilderness Protection Area

Location

Yellabinna Wilderness Protection Area, proclaimed on 11 August 2005, is located approximately 100 kilometres north of Ceduna along Goog's Track. The approximately 500,700 hectare reserve was originally part of Yellabinna Regional Reserve, under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. The reserve comprises Allotment 101, of Deposited Plan 67929.

Wilderness Quality

Yellabinna Wilderness Protection Area forms a link between vegetation communities in south-eastern Western Australia and Eyre Peninsula in South Australia. Yellabinna Wilderness Protection Area contains a variety of woodland and scrubland communities dominated by *Eucalyptus* species or *Acacia* species over dunes and swales and small patches of diverse communities over rocky outcrops. A variety of threatened species have been recorded within

the reserve, with additional species considered likely to occur in the area. The enhanced protection of the reserve may encourage recreational activities such as camping, bush walking and wildlife observation.

Location of Wilderness Protection Areas

The location of wilderness protection areas within South Australia are shown in figure 1, as follows.

FIGURE 1 – WILDERNESS STATUS SOUTH AUSTRALIA

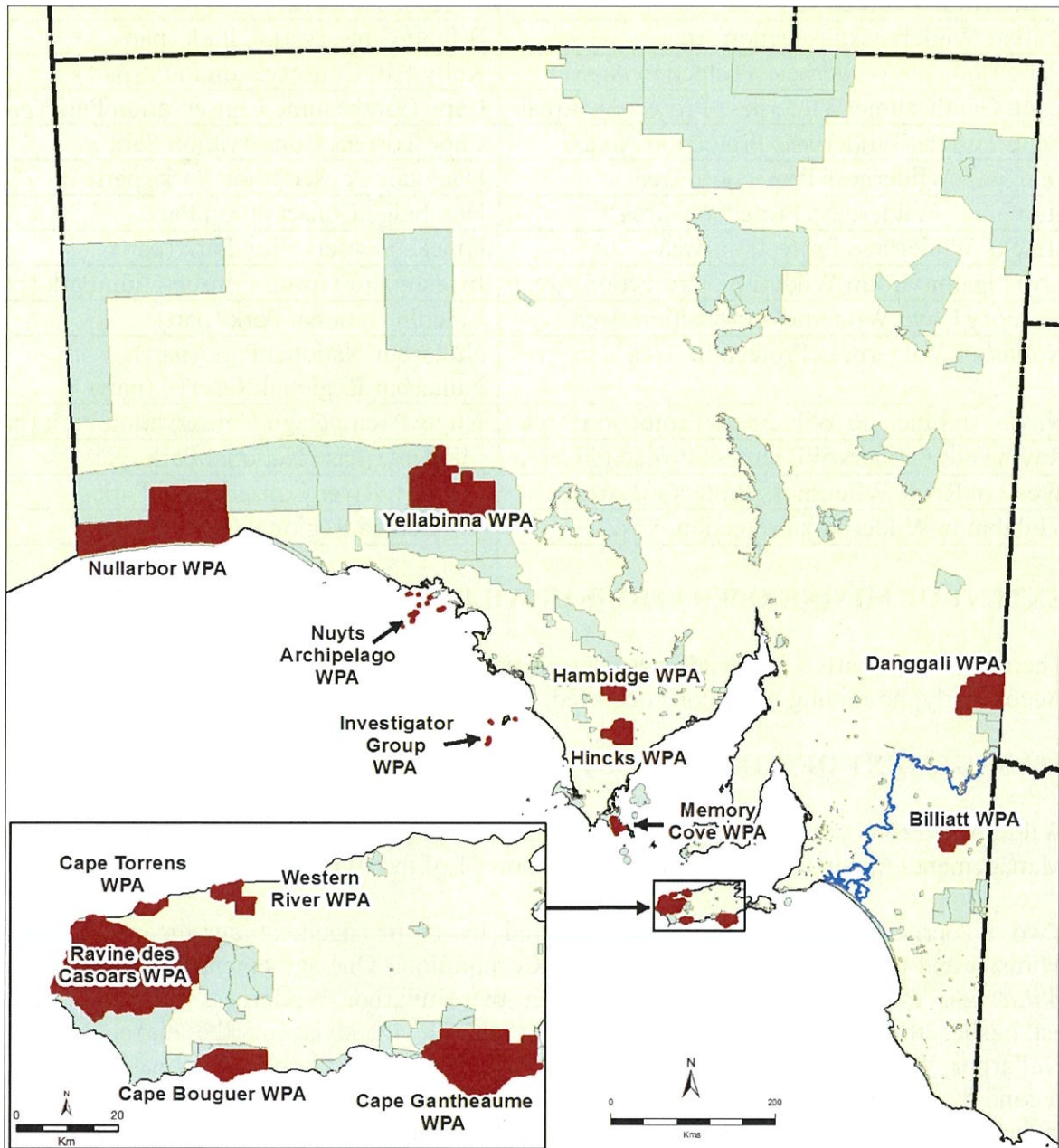


Figure 1
Wilderness Protection Areas
South Australia

Legend

- Reserve Types**
- Wilderness Protection Areas
 - All Other DEWNR Reserves

Produced by Protected Areas Unit
Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources
GPO Box 1047 Adelaide SA 5001
www.environment.sa.gov.au

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NAMES OF FORMER RESERVES NOW WILDERNESS PROTECTION AREAS OR ZONES

Wilderness Protection Area	Former Reserve
Billiatt Wilderness Protection Area	Billiatt Conservation Park (part)
Cape Bouguer Wilderness Protection Area	Kelly Hill Conservation Park (part)
Cape Gantheaume Wilderness Protection Area	Cape Gantheaume Conservation Park (part)
Cape Torrens Wilderness Protection Area	Cape Torrens Conservation Park
Danggali Wilderness Protection Area	Danggali Conservation Park (part)
Hambidge Wilderness Protection Area	Hambidge Conservation Park
Hincks Wilderness Protection Area	Hincks Conservation Park (part)
Investigator Group Wilderness Protection Area	Investigator Group Conservation Park (part)
Memory Cove Wilderness Protection Area	Lincoln National Park (part)
Nullarbor Wilderness Protection Area	Nullarbor National Park (part) Nullarbor Regional Reserve (part)
Nuyts Archipelago Wilderness Protection Area	Nuyts Archipelago Conservation Park (part)
Ravine des Casoars Wilderness Protection Area	Flinders Chase National Park (part)
Western River Wilderness Protection Area	Western River Conservation Park
Yellabinna Wilderness Protection Area	Yellabinna Regional Reserve (part)

EXTENT OF MINING OPERATIONS IN WILDERNESS PROTECTION ZONES

There are currently no wilderness protection zones declared within South Australia. Accordingly, no mining operations occurred.

MANAGEMENT OF WILDERNESS PROTECTION AREAS AND ZONES

Wilderness Protection Areas (WPA) are managed in accordance with the Wilderness Code of Management (Appendix 1) as required by section 31 of the Act.

Two wilderness protection areas are covered by co-management agreements between the Minister and the Far West Coast Aboriginal Corporation. One agreement was signed under the *Wilderness Protection Act 1992* and is over the Nullarbor Wilderness Protection Area. It establishes the Nullarbor Parks Advisory Committee to advise on the management of the Nullarbor Wilderness Protection Area and the adjoining Nullarbor Regional Reserve. The second co-management agreement was signed under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* to co-manage the Yumbarra Conservation Park, whereby the park is now managed by the Yumbarra Conservation Park Co-management Board. This Board also has an advisory role over the remaining parks within the Far West Coast Native Title Determination Area, which includes the Yellabinna Wilderness Protection Area. In this reporting period, the Nullarbor Parks Advisory Committee and the Yumbarra Conservation Park Co-management Board continued the development of management plans for these parks and reserves.

During the reporting period, management activities for wilderness protection areas on Kangaroo Island included:

- A 66 hectare prescribed burn was conducted in the west block of Western River WPA in spring 2015.
- Track works were completed in Western River WPA to improve drainage management.

- An attempted prescribed burn was conducted in Ravine des Casaors WPA in autumn 2016. The objectives of this burn were not met.
- A 1.5 kilometre section of the existing Hanson Bay Hike walking trail within Cape Bouguer WPA was rerouted to achieve a more sustainable alignment which also enabled a reduced trail footprint. This existing trail will become part of the new Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail due to be opened in October 2016.
- The southern section of the Western River WPA was closed from July 2015 to June 2016 for feral animal control. Several small areas of *Acacia paradoxa* were burnt to improve goat eradication opportunities. Five feral goats were destroyed during this period. A Judas goat remains operational in the area and has not been sighted with feral goats since the last goat was destroyed in March 2016. No further feral goats have been detected since April 2016.
- Aerial control and feral goat monitoring operations were completed in April 2016. Aerial surveys were completed over historic feral goat habitat in Western River, Cape Torrens, Ravine Des Casaors, and Cape Bouguer WPAs. No feral goats were sighted during the aerial operations.
- Eastern Osprey surveys were completed around the Kangaroo Island coastline.
- Seasonal closures were gazetted for areas of Cape Torrens and Cape Gantheaume WPAs to protect nesting White-bellied Sea Eagles.
- A new Dutch ladder option was trialled on the Hanson Bay headland in Cape Bouguer WPA.
- The lookout at the end of the Waterfall Creek hike in Western River WPA was replaced to address public risk and minimize erosion.
- Fencing to protect revegetation (now mature) was removed at the Harvey's Return Campground in Ravine des Casaors WPA.
- Marine Park signs were installed at Bales Bay in Cape Gantheaume WPA and Harvey's Return in Ravine des Casaors WPA.
- Hooded Plover protection signs were installed at Bales Bay in Cape Gantheaume WPA.
- SARDI and DEWNR staff conducted research on Long-nosed Fur Seals at Cape Gantheaume WPA.

During the reporting period, management activities for wilderness protection areas in the Eyre Peninsula and Alinytjara Wilurara regions included:

- A large scale mapping project was undertaken within Yellabinna WPA. Track rationalisation within the WPA was completed with special attention paid to risks for visitors and highly impacted areas. All informal campsites were identified with recommendations for management.
- Track rationalisation was undertaken over 54,456 hectares of the Nullarbor WPA. Over 92 kilometres of track closures were completed and 56 sites with identified risks were managed to improve public safety in the area. The project managed public safety issues, protected sensitive species/habitats and culturally significant areas, contained vehicle traffic, managed off-road vehicle damage and increased public education. The Nullarbor Parks Advisory Committee was involved in the project and provided input into track closures to protect culturally significant areas.
- Buffel Grass was mapped and controlled within both Nullarbor and Yellabinna WPAs.
- Within the Hincks WPA, 53 kilometres of overgrown and fire access tracks were reinstated. This was predominately across the north and north-west boundaries and east-west through the reserve on the Verran track.

- In autumn 2016, a prescribed burn was partially implemented within the Hincks WPA. Of the planned 1,000 hectare burn, 300 hectares was successfully implemented. The purpose of the burn was to limit the spread in the event of a wildfire in the reserve, and to reduce vegetation fuel loads in an area adjacent to some valuable old age class mallee.
- In autumn 2016, an 830 hectare prescribed burn was successfully implemented within Memory Cove WPA. The purpose of the burn was to break up and reduce vegetation fuel loads and to prevent broad scale wildfire reaching tracts of older age class vegetation in the WPA which provides vital habitat for two nationally listed species – Eyre Peninsula Southern Emu-wren and Annual Candles.
- Feral animal fox and rabbit control work was undertaken within Memory Cove WPA.
- Work to manage the western grey kangaroo, identified within the region as an abundant native species, was completed as a component of the Lincoln National Park (adjacent to Memory Cove WPA) landscape restoration project.
- Aerial surveillance including remote camera surveillance, was conducted over the Nuyts Archipelago, Investigator Group and Nullarbor WPAs. The data was used to compile surveys of flora and fauna within these regions.

During the reporting period, management activities for wilderness protection areas in the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin region included:

- A landscape scale goat and rabbit control program has continued to be undertaken in the Danggali WPA, through NRM levy funding – the Rangeland Connecting Landscapes program.
- A landscape scale recovery strategy for the greater Bookmark mallee area, including the Danggali WPA, continues to be developed for future management of the area under a banner of re-wilding (wild into wilderness).
- There is an ongoing program of dam rationalisation in the Danggali WPA to assist with reducing total grazing pressure, with additional dams no longer maintained, in line with the dam rationalisation plan for the area.
- A wildfire in April 2016 burnt approximately 850 hectares of the Danggali WPA.
- A project to maintain internal fire breaks within the Danggali WPA was undertaken in May 2016, utilising manual labour instead of mechanical means.
- The recovery and restoration program within the Billiatt WPA continued, this was initiated following a significant fire that occurred in 2014 and affected 90-95% of the WPA. Continuing activities included:
 - Consolidating and rehabilitating fire access tracks and fire breaks cleared during the fire (mainly adjacent to the WPA).
 - Surveys for remnant or surviving populations of threatened Mallee birds.
 - Monitoring and control of feral goats.
 - Vegetation surveys undertaken to monitor regeneration as well as track fuel accumulation.

MANAGEMENT PLANS ADOPTED

Section 31 of the Act requires that a plan of management, implementing the policies of the Code, be prepared for each wilderness protection area.

Wilderness Protection Area	Status of Management Plan	Adopted in
Billiatt Wilderness Protection Area	Adopted	2011
Cape Bouguer Wilderness Protection Area	Adopted	2000
Cape Gantheaume Wilderness Protection Area	Not yet available	
Cape Torrens Wilderness Protection Area	Adopted	2006
Danggali Wilderness Protection Area	Adopted	2011
Hambidge Wilderness Protection Area	Adopted	2007
Hincks Wilderness Protection Area	Adopted	2007
Investigator Group Wilderness Protection Area	Not yet available	
Memory Cove Wilderness Protection Area	Adopted	2005
Nullarbor Wilderness Protection Area	In development	
Nuyts Archipelago Wilderness Protection Area	Adopted	2006
Ravine des Casoars Wilderness Protection Area	Adopted	2000
Western River Wilderness Protection Area	Adopted	2006
Yellabinna Wilderness Protection Area	Adopted	2013

During the reporting period, work continued on the preparation of a draft management plan for the Nullarbor Wilderness Protection Area, and revising the management plan for the Yellabinna Wilderness Protection Area.

DECLARATION OF PROHIBITED AREAS

The Franklin Islands section of the Nuyts Archipelago Wilderness Protection Area was declared a Prohibited Area in 2012 in order to protect from disturbance the habitat of the Greater Stick-nest Rat and the Franklin Island subspecies of the Southern Brown Bandicoot. This declaration carried over to the Act the previous long-standing Prohibited Area status of the islands under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*.

There are no other portions of wilderness protection areas that have been declared prohibited areas.

EXPENDITURE ON MANAGEMENT OF WILDERNESS PROTECTION AREAS

Expenditure for on-ground management operations within wilderness protection areas is derived from estimates of money expended in undertaking reserve management operations within the region.

MONIES RECEIVED AND EXPENDED

Expense	Kangaroo Island	Eyre Peninsula / Alinytjara Wilurara	SA Murray-Darling Basin	Total
Vehicle Costs	\$3,000	\$25,000	\$15,000	\$43,000
Administration	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000
Staff Time	\$14,000	\$34,000 \$28,000*	\$110,000	\$186,000
Conservation Programs	\$3,000	\$15,000	\$0	\$18,000
Maintenance Consumables	\$4,000	\$1,500	\$0	\$5,500
Road Maintenance	\$5,000	\$75,000	\$0	\$80,000
Feral Animal Control	\$100,000	\$74,500	\$10,000	\$184,500
Abundance species management	\$0	\$2,500	\$0	\$2,500
Fire Management	\$60,000	\$40,000	\$10,000	\$110,000
Wildfire Recovery	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Bushfire Suppression	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
Compliance and Monitoring	\$0	\$16,000	\$0	\$16,000
Total Expenditure	\$189,000	\$311,500	\$157,000	\$657,500

*Aboriginal Labour hire and contractors

ROYALTIES RECEIVED IN WILDERNESS PROTECTION ZONES

There are currently no proclaimed wilderness protection zones within South Australia. Accordingly, no royalties were received during 2015-16.

MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Information relating to the following mandatory reporting requirements can be found in the DEWNR Annual Report 2015-16:

- Plans and objectives
- Operations and initiatives
- Role, legislation and structure
- Management of human resources
- Workforce diversity
- Executives
- Leave management
- Performance development
- Leadership and management development
- Employment opportunity programs
- Work health and safety and injury management
- Reporting against the *Carers Recognition Act 2005*
- Disability access and inclusion plans
- Asbestos management reporting in government buildings
- Government buildings energy (GBE) strategy
- Urban design charter

- Freedom of information – information statements
- *Whistleblowers Protection Act 1993*
- Regional impact assessment statements
- Public complaints
- Sustainability reporting

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEWNR would like to thank the Minister for the support and encouragement that it received over the year in relation to the operation and enforcement of the *Wilderness Protection Act 1992*.

APPENDIX 1 - WILDERNESS CODE OF MANAGEMENT

Section 12 of the Act stipulates the requirements for the Code of Management of Wilderness Protection Areas and Wilderness Protection Zones. The Code sets out policies that should be implemented in the management of wilderness protection areas and zones. The Code may be amended in accordance with the provisions of section 12 of the Act.

The Code of Management was adopted in 1993 and last updated in 2015. The Code is designed to maximise wilderness quality and prescribes principles for protecting habitat and managing visitors, scientific research and fire. It allows public use and enjoyment where compatible with conservation and promotes a 'tread lightly' ethic to visitors.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Code is the Wilderness Code of Management prescribed in the *Wilderness Protection Act 1992*.
- 1.2 Any terms used in this Code have the same meaning as those used in the Wilderness Protection Act 1992 and the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972.
- 1.3 A wilderness area means land constituted under the Wilderness Protection Act 1992 as a Wilderness Protection Area or Wilderness Protection Zone.

2. OBJECTIVES OF WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT

- 2.1 To maximise the naturalness and remoteness (i.e. the wilderness quality) of wilderness areas, and in particular:
 - (i) protect and, where practicable, enhance wilderness quality;
 - (ii) protect wildlife and ecological processes;
 - (iii) control and, where practicable, eradicate non-indigenous plants and animals;
 - (iv) protect geographical features;
 - (v) protect sites of scientific significance;
 - (vi) protect sites of historical significance;
 - (vii) protect sites of Aboriginal cultural significance;
 - (viii) provide for public use and enjoyment where compatible with maximising wilderness quality; and
 - (ix) promote public awareness of, and education in, the natural features of and proper use of wilderness protection areas and wilderness protection zones.

3. MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

3.1 General Principles

- (i) All management operations will be carried out in a manner consistent with maximisation of wilderness quality except where provided for in this Code (see 3.10).
- (ii) A Plan of Management will be prepared for a designated wilderness area as soon as practicable after the area's constitution. The Plan will provide clear direction for the protection and management of the wilderness area, in particular:
 - (a) proposals to achieve the management objectives;
 - (b) priorities for actions, including:
 - the removal of existing incompatible uses and/or structures except those permitted under this Code; and
 - appropriate rehabilitation to be undertaken following the removal of structures and incompatible uses;

- (c) recognition of the need to review management if indicated by results of monitoring and research;
 - (iii) No additional incompatible uses and/or structures will be permitted except those provided for in this Code.
 - (iv) Nothing in this Code derogates from any rights exercised in mining tenements in wilderness protection zones. In relation to mining operations in wilderness protection zones, environmental protection policies in section 5 of this Code will apply.
- 3.2 Access and Transport
- (i) The use of vessels, motorised or wheeled transport will be permitted only on prescribed access routes, and for emergency and essential management operations (see 3.10) when alternative measures which do not degrade the wilderness quality of an area are unavailable.
 - (ii) Access routes may be prescribed in a plan of management for use by vessels, motorised or wheeled transport in circumstances where this type of transport is essential for effective management.
 - (iii) Construction of vehicle or walking tracks will be permitted only where re-direction of existing access requires construction of alternative tracks or for management works to achieve objectives identified in a plan of management. The construction of vehicle tracks for specific operations as provided for under 3.6(vi), 3.10 and 5 may be permitted on the basis that they will be rehabilitated as soon as possible.
 - (iv) Vehicle and walking tracks that are not essential for management purposes as specified in 3.10, or for mining operations in wilderness protection zones (see 5) will be closed and rehabilitated as prescribed in a plan of management.
 - (v) Over-flying for recreational purposes under an altitude of 1500 metres above ground level will be prohibited.
 - (vi) The landing of aircraft will be prohibited, except by permission of the Director and for emergency and essential management operations. Helipads and airstrips that are identified as essential for emergencies and management operations will be maintained. All other strips or helipads will be rehabilitated as soon as possible or allowed to regenerate naturally.
- 3.3 Tourism
- (i) Commercial tours may be accommodated where their size and planned activities are compatible with maintenance of wilderness quality. Those permitted will have obtained a licence and will be conducted in accordance with licence conditions, the Visitor Management Strategy for the wilderness area (see 3.4), and the Minimum Impact Code (see 6.0). Tour groups will be monitored and regulated where necessary to prevent significant adverse impacts on wilderness quality and opportunities for solitude.
- 3.4 Recreation
- (i) The level and type of visitor use and visitor conduct will be managed in accordance with the objectives stated in section 2 of this Code.
 - (ii) A visitor management strategy that specifies an acceptable level and type of visitor use and visitor conduct will be included in the management plan for each wilderness area.
 - (iii) Visitor management strategies will include the promotion of the Minimum Impact Code and the distribution of any information about the wilderness values of particular wilderness areas.

The following information should be used as a basis for monitoring the effectiveness of each strategy:

- a) the long-term limits of acceptable change for environmental (wilderness quality) and social (opportunities for wilderness dependent experiences) conditions within the wilderness area; and
 - b) change in environmental and social conditions within the wilderness area.
- (iv) Constructed walking tracks, signs, track markers and other management devices or structures will be used only for essential management operations (see 3.2(ii) and 3.10).
 - (v) Recreation will be in accordance with the Wilderness Regulations and the Minimum Impact Code.

3.5 Cultural Heritage

- (i) Places, sites and objects of significance to Aboriginal people are protected under State and Commonwealth Aboriginal heritage legislation.
- (ii) Access by Aboriginal people to their sites of significance and protection of these sites will, as far as possible, be by methods compatible with the maintenance of wilderness quality.
- (iii) Nothing in this Code prevents Aboriginal people from doing anything in relation to Aboriginal sites, objects or remains in accordance with Aboriginal tradition. Furthermore, this Code does not prevent the taking, by Aboriginal people, of native plants, protected animals, or the eggs of protected animals, in accordance with the relevant provisions in the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972.
- (iv) Sites of historic significance will be conserved, using access and methods compatible with maintenance of wilderness quality in the long-term.
- (v) Non-Aboriginal structures and artefacts that are of no historic significance, as determined by the relevant authority, will be removed or allowed to deteriorate naturally. Removal will not be undertaken if the only method of removal significantly reduces wilderness quality in the long-term.

3.6 Fire

- (i) Fire management will be based on continuing research into the fire history of the area, the relationships between fire and the natural communities occurring within the area, and on the maintenance of wilderness quality.
- (ii) Deliberately lit fires will be used only in emergency situations, and in essential management operations as listed in 3.10 and subject to (i) above.
- (iii) Other human caused fires should, where practicable, be extinguished consistent with maintenance of wilderness quality.
- (iv) Naturally caused fires will be extinguished when, in view of the direction, intensity and extent of the fire and the fire suppression techniques available, they pose a threat to human life and property, and to habitats requiring protection.
- (v) Where fire suppression action is required, the methods utilised will be, wherever possible, those which will have the least long-term impact on wilderness quality.
- (vi) The use of heavy machinery for fire suppression within a wilderness area will be prohibited except:
 - a) where it is considered to be the only way of preventing greater long-term loss of wilderness quality;
 - b) where specific machinery use techniques, that do not result in significant disturbance to the landscape or create a new access network, are considered the only feasible method of preventing long-term loss of wilderness quality;or

- c) to mitigate hazard to human life, where alternative measures which do not impact on the wilderness quality of the area are unavailable.
 - (vii) Wherever possible, fire management practices designed to protect land adjacent to or within a wilderness area will be conducted outside the wilderness area.
- 3.7 Research
- (i) Research that will contribute to the implementation of the objectives of wilderness management will be encouraged.
 - (ii) Research that will not affect wilderness quality and cannot be carried out elsewhere may be permitted.
 - (iii) Research not covered under (i) and (ii) will not be permitted.
- 3.8 Biological Conservation
- (i) Management of threatened species, communities and habitats will, as far as possible, be consistent with maintenance of wilderness quality.
 - (ii) Action will be taken to maintain and, where possible, restore natural processes, communities and habitats.
- 3.9 Non-indigenous Species
- (i) Non-indigenous species which significantly affect the wilderness quality of a wilderness area will be controlled or eradicated.
 - (ii) Action will be taken to prevent the establishment of non-indigenous species.
- 3.10 Emergency and Essential Management Operations
- (i) All emergency and essential management operations will be carried out with the least possible impact on wilderness quality.
 - (ii) Actions that cause short-term degradation of wilderness quality but are necessary for emergency and/or essential management operations will be permitted. The only specific situations acknowledged in this Code as possibly requiring such actions are:
 - control or eradication of non-indigenous species;
 - conservation of threatened species, communities and habitats;
 - protection of fire-sensitive species and communities;
 - management of visitor use;
 - management action or use of devices to mitigate hazard to human life;
 - restoration of natural processes, communities and habitats; and
 - research.

Where degradation has occurred as a result of these activities, rehabilitation will be undertaken as soon as practicable.

3.11 Wilderness Protection Zones

Protection of wilderness quality in wilderness protection zones will be negotiated with tenement holders on the basis of the environmental protection policies in section 5. Management undertakings will be incorporated in a plan of management.

4. EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

- 4.1 Close liaison with adjoining landholders and managers will be established to ensure that adverse impacts on the wilderness quality of an area resulting from activities outside that area are minimised or prevented.
- 4.2 Where a wilderness area does not comprise a whole catchment, close liaison with upstream landholders and relevant authorities will be established to encourage the maintenance of water quality and flow regimes as close as practicable to their natural state.

- 4.3 Wherever possible management activities essential to the maintenance of the wilderness quality of a wilderness area to be on land outside the wilderness area.

5. EXERCISE OF MINING RIGHTS IN WILDERNESS PROTECTION ZONES

The holder of a mining tenement shall:

- 5.1 Have regard to the provisions of the plan of management under section 31 of the Wilderness Protection Act 1992; and
- 5.2 In undertaking any operations:
- (i) protect native flora and fauna;
 - (ii) avoid the pollution of land, water and air;
 - (iii) avoid disturbance to known sites of natural, scientific, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural significance;
 - (iv) minimise the potential for wind and water erosion;
 - (v) avoid unnecessary track creation;
 - (vi) avoid introduction of non-indigenous species;
 - (vii) establish environmental monitoring and rehabilitation programs; and
 - (viii) upon completion of the operation remove or obliterate all structures and materials used in the carrying out of mining operations.