Online Commentary Via YourSay

How should natural resources be managed in South Australia?

Check out the Discussion Paper, the Executive Summary and the Frequently Asked Questions and have your say on how you believe natural resources should be managed to help us shape the new Landscape South Australia Bill.

Comments

Herbie Glacken
15 Oct 2018

There is a massive wolf problem in the Pastoral properties throughout SA. There needs to be a minimum standard set by ALL Pastoral Station Owners whether it be tourism, mining or livestock. We need to have a minimum standard of at least 1000 ground baits per year per property and not rely on aerial baiting programs alone. If there was a minimum compulsory standard then we will be a step closer to minimising the risks that livestock owners face daily.

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Herbie Glacken
15 Oct 2018

There is a massive wild dog problem in the Pastoral Properties throughout SA. There needs to be a minimum standard set by ALL Pastoral Station Owners whether it be tourism, mining or livestock. We need to have a minimum standard of at least 1000 ground baits per year per property and not rely on aerial baiting programs alone. If there was a minimum compulsory standard then we will be a step closer to to minimising the risks that livestock owners face daily.

Neil Collins
15 Oct 2018

The new Landscape South Australia Bill is an opportunity for a review of the current process and keep the good and improve the parts not working as well as they could. I really support the process the Minister has undertaken with independent consultants talking to people all round the state. Its a good start.

Points Summary:

Enabling greater leadership by Aboriginal peoples
Having been associated with Aboriginal groups managing their own lands the reform aims are encouraging
• SA has the only full Aboriginal Board in Australia and it is a model that other first nations around the world can see works and should not be lost. A change without good reason that the first Nations people see is real sends the wrong message
• Have Aboriginal representation on all Boards and a way of these leaders getting together with other program areas (health, employment, community programs) regularly to help the Ministers chart direction would be to the Government and communities advantage
• All Landscape Boards need an achievable Aboriginal employment target as part of Boards measurable targets and have a long term employment strategy with Board programs
• Getting on country is one of the biggest issues for Aboriginal groups and cost effective support options are needed. Use lateral thinking. Local, interstate, international models exist to achieve this in a cost effective way
• There is a need for a long term strategy with many partners – no one can fund it all to support Aboriginal landholders and Nations achieve what they want on the ground
• Support cultural links to land as part of managing natural resource issues
• Inter-generational knowledge transfer is a legitimate use of LANDSCAPE resources
Resilient communities;
• There is a need for a long term strategy with many partners – no one can fund it all as the Minister has shown with the Cleland redevelopment. No one will give funds to government – let the Boards have their own budget at arm’s length from the Department so they can chase down partners and NGO support for programs.
• The issue with the NRM process when it came under government and lost independent Boards was the loss of autonomy and “can do today” because of the red tape and bureaucratic ways of government. Set the direction, have sensible monitoring tools (ie $30000 for Auditing costs for each Board in 2014 was a ridiculous waste given the budget size) and give them their budget to manage and use as a kick start to get other funds in.
• An independent Board head (really think about what the title should be to give it status) will have more status to talk directly to industry heads.
• Let the Boards look for the opportunities and be flexible and dynamic – keeping the Minister informed so there are no surprises.
• By all means have Board members elected but have the skill base required as prerequisites to ensure considered decisions on natural resource issues and community involvement are made.
• We are losing the inter-generational battle. How many of our children know why we need to look after the land? Give them a real voice at the table (as a board member or sponsored by a Board member) and as part of an education alliance. Having the environment in the psychic of the next generation of leaders and environmental outcomes will be part of the normal risk management of doing business.

Vibrant biodiversity and sustainable economy:
• This is a real opportunity to link all natural resource environmental legislation to the Landscape program and make it clearer for the community so there is really a streamlined program for getting projects going
• Link university biodiversity research supported by 3 tiers of government to Board outcomes that reflect state and national biodiversity outcomes
• LANDSCAPE Boards can have a landscape overview about a sustainable economy based on a vibrant biodiversity if the right skills are represented on the board.
• It will be much better ecologically and economically if cross regional funding can be undertaken for high priority landscape programs
• Enable landscape natural resource links to sister programs in Australia and Internationally to flourish (as with sister city programs for local government)
• Really ensure that NGOs and the Boards have the support to work together to develop a landscape with resilience to climate change.

More detail on points:

Enabling greater leadership by Aboriginal peoples
SA has the only full Aboriginal Board in Australia and it is a model that other first nations around the world can see works and should not be lost. Aboriginal representation on all Boards and a way of these leaders getting together regularly to help the Minister chart direction would be to the Governments advantage and issues can discussed early. It is a privileged for all members of the Boards to be there so if any member does not meet their obligations deal with this through governance and support – not through changes in regulation.

Work with Aboriginal communities to get on ground and employment outcomes. Get local employment going, look at some of the groups working in industry and looking after land around Australia and see the common threads. Employment in real jobs, training that lead to that employment that has both skill and mentoring backup, managing their own businesses and learning to contract, being accountable and having access to work sites, integration of other programs, understanding of external issues that may affect performance.

There is a need for a long term strategy with many partners – no one can fund it all to support Aboriginal landholders and Nations to achieve what they want to achieve on the ground. Without a long term employment strategy the current knowledge will be lost as the intergenerational knowledge is dying out, people can’t get out on county, and as with other parts of society the link to the land is going.

The AW NRM region used to have an Aboriginal employment target and the support team had to report on their progress to achieve this target. This should be across all regions and “unless you can measure it you can’t meet a target” needs to be part of the new LANDSCAPE approach. It doesn’t need to be a large target to start with but it needs to be there or things wont change.

Why do we need to spend so much of the limited funding available on leases of new cars when with links to TAFE we could have older cars fixed by TAFE courses, certified as road worthy and out there being used and put funds where they are really needed - to employ people and provide materials.

There are great examples around SA and Australia and First Nations around the world of really good work done and where good work can be done if the right support is given. (ie see work done in the far west coast of SA, on the Coorong, up on the Murray River, IPA programs in the APY Lands, in the mountain ranges of Queensland, the blue mountains, on the barrier reef, Vancouver Island biosphere, Bolivia floating reed communities)

Resilient communities;

The issue with the NRM process when it came under a government department and not independent Boards filled with local expertise was the loss of autonomy and “can do today” because of the red tape and bureaucratic ways of government. It is a safer way to tie things up in red tape but if you really want a change let the people linked
to the earth get on with it and have the LANDSCAPE Act there to advise and find ways to achieve what the community wants.

The Boards need energy and the “can do” people there to help the LANDSCAPE process. You want dynamic people there who know their time is not wasted as busy people have too much to do to be on a Board that does little. Not saying this is the case now – there is a need to take a calculated risk, give the Boards the right governance tools and have some mandatory reporting requirements and then let the Boards achieve the outcomes their way and support them. While it is good to have advice – knowledge builds from many sources and government advice should be just that – advice to consider.

Look for the opportunities and be flexible and dynamic. (ie where is the Twiggy Forrest Aboriginal employment program in NRM in SA?) BHP funds many programs – where is a coordinated approach to linking them to employment programs for the long term in natural resource landscape management that will help them meet their rehabilitation and offset targets.

While it is good to have advice – knowledge builds from many sources and government advice should be just that – advice to consider.

We are losing the inter-generational environmental battle. How many of our children know why we need to look after the land? There are shining examples of youth doing good work to support sustainable programs but where is their voice – how will the reforms give them a real voice – not just linked to the charity of a board but a real voice at the table and part of an education alliance to get the environment back into the psychic of the next generation of leaders so the environmental outcomes are part of the risk management of doing business.

The Boards need to be able to take up matters with the Minister independently of the support network they have – not through that network. In this way the Minister gets the message direct (as hard as it maybe to receive) and both parties can work towards bettering the natural resource issues of the state.

Let the Boards get links to funders and have this as a measurable requirement. An independent Board head (really think about what the title should be to give it status) will have more status to industry heads.

Vibrant biodiversity and environmental change;

A lot of work has been done by existing Boards in this area. Plans are there – they may need some more consultation but issues appear more about implementation and priorities on limited budgets than actual plan direction.
It is strongly recommended that if any review is to be done then do it in parallel and at a fixed budget and timeline or nothing will happen while the review occurs and communities will be further disenfranchised.

thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Neil Collins

Lee Williams

15 Oct 2018

I hope all contributors to this reform look back in many years to come, with the destination in sight and the journey manageable.

we all need to take responsibility for how we impact our landscape. Owners, managers, observers and rule makers and community. In my conversations about the reform over the last couple of months. ONE big hurdle, compliance..came up time and time again.... same names, same issues..(as it has done for years.) This reform MUST address this. No-one person/company or agency should be able to blatantly disregard the rules, and not be made accountable. no-one should be able to pay their way out of non compliance. We all should be following the same rule book. 

Little gains, and great efforts from many can be compromised by a few. This is really important, many of our vulnerable and endangered species (including hard working humans)need our commitment to continue, and thrive, or become extinct, or see hard earnt money/income/levies/taxes wasted because we didn't put enough effort into effective compliance. Lets support and encourage all South Aussies to enjoy our landscape and environment, whether directly on ground or as decision makers. I agree with all contributors, we all want it to be nurtured and enhanced well into the future, good leadership and clear direction, precise goals and a bit of reflection along the way, to address any "fix ups" necessary. Minister Speirs and to all present and future new board members, current and future department staff, and the future Minister of the day, please sort the compliance backlog!!! this needs to happen to go forward.

Lee Williams

Landscape Reform Team > Lee Williams

08 Aug 2018

Thanks for your useful feedback Lee which will be taken into account. It’s good to hear you have booked in to attend a community forum session next month to further share your views. We look forward to seeing you there.
Gayl Males

15 Oct 2018

There have been some amazing, well thought out and considered comments on the proposed changes and it is great that people have taken the opportunity to have their say. Many of these comments question how the new Boards will be elected - and maybe we should ask at what cost - and that questions if those with vested or business/commercial interests and are well known in the community because of their high profile will be elected. Will the bigger picture be the focus, or will they be elected on platforms that suit their own purposes.

People are not bound by where they physically live but also have a strong interest in where they have other connections - with particular national parks or conservation areas, they may visit regularly the same region, they may own or rent holiday houses, or they travel long distances to participate in conservation activities, for example. What opportunities will they have for input?

Protecting our biodiversity, and in particular our threatened plant and animal species, should be a priority - extinction is forever and sadly Australia leads the way in losing species. Natural habitat retention and protection is critical, and supporting land managers to provide corridors must be encouraged, and opportunities to live with our unique wildlife must be encouraged even when there are issues - find solutions that work rather than, for example, burying wombats alive or shooting/poisoning eagles. Do we want our children and their children to only see native animals in wildlife parks or a few protected, isolated conservation zones. Without enough natural habitat more animals will continue to become endangered or go extinct.

I trust that the big picture of natural resource management will consider biodiversity protection, climate change, what currently works under the existing system with plenty of positive interaction from NRM staff with the community with their knowledge and commitment, and tweak those areas needing more work. I hope the proposed Boards won’t just look at their local issues but interact with each other so that landscape management really is a single entity across the whole state, as many issues cannot be simply managed by arbitrarily drawn boundaries.

Thank you for giving concerned people the opportunity to have their say on this important issue.
There are many areas of concern within this reform. The intent of increasing the landscape scale focus and fostering a autonomous and decentralised local delivery arm for encouraging sustainable environmental management is a good one. However the current proposal is structural change for changes sake. The current model of the NRM Boards, that are locally based and private land focused, and the Department of Environment and Water, which is state and public land focused working together as one delivery organisation has had significant landscape scale outcomes for the Northern and Yorke Region. It has resulted in a unified approach to managing Pest and Weed populations across boundaries, developed landscape scale restoration projects and created a one stop shop for the community to engage in environmental management issues and enquiries. The centralisation of administration was a significant downfall of this amalgamation, but this could be ratified without the complete re-design of the system. The current NRM Boards do undertake regular, thorough and transparent strategic and business planning and this has not been acknowledged. The current board members are currently local community members, who are appointed by the minister but do nominate from the community they wish to represent. To undertake elections for this type of role will be costly and engagement by the community will be low.

I work with a number of sustainable agriculture and landcare groups and the amalgamated model has significantly improved the ease of engaging with the NRM board. There is a new hub of environmental and sustainable agriculture groups that has been created in Clare and this would not have been possible without the unified delivery model that has been operated for the past few years. Landscape scale restoration projects are now working on both National Parks and adjoining private land to significantly improve the outcomes of these projects. By separating the agencies again the cross boundary network that has been established will be threatened.

I am concerned by the proposed boundary changes for the Northern and Yorke Region. Although not specified in any of the documentation, a significant issue for a consultation process, it was mentioned at the engagement session held in Clare that the northern and southern boundaries for the NY region are under proposal to moved. It was suggested that the southern boundary may move to remove the Clare and Gilbert Valley Council area and/or the Wakefield Regional Council to make the Adelaide Plains region more substantial. These two council areas make up the majority of the population of the Northern and Yorke and as such would have significant impacts on the functionality of the Northern and Yorke Region. The town of Clare is also a significant regional centre that if removed from the region would have a major impact on recruitment and engagement in the future board activities. On the northern boundary, to remove the town of Port Augusta and its coastline would not make logical sense for either the Arid Lands or the NY region, the issues faced in this proposed region align to those of the NY region, not those faced by...
Arid Lands.
There have been many significant outcomes from our local NRM Board/DEWNR over the past 5 years and I feel that the documentation supporting the LandscapeSA reform does not acknowledge the work undertaken by the staff and community and undermines their actions of the past 5+yrs. There appears to be a focus on creating a new model of delivery rather than on review and modification of the current model which is starting to function well in our region after significant change in governance and delivery. Review and modification of programs and their delivery model is always a good process if undertaken with engaged stakeholders; change for the sake of change with undermining of past practices and lack of clarity around proposals and desired objectives has the potential to cost significantly both financially and in lost staff and communities.

**Ruth Sommerville**

15 Oct 2018

There will be confusion created by the name and resulting website due to a similarly branded SA based organisation, The Master Landscapers of SA

**Landscape Reform Team > Ruth Sommerville**

15 Oct 2018

Many thanks for pointing this out to us Ruth. We will ensure our communications and engagement team are aware.

**Sara Hourez**

15 Oct 2018

My experience with our local Natural Resources Management Board has been positive. There has been enthusiastic community involvement and wide community support for its broad range of successful projects. Many of these projects involved private landowners, local organisations and businesses, while others, such as Kangaroo Island Community Education, recently won a national award 'Best Regional School' by presenting their very successful partnership in their nomination. NRM projects have been embraced by the KI community in general and every annual report supports this statement. The only difficulty I have had was with the intimate involvement created between KI Natural Resources Management Board and Department of Environment and Water, the intertwining of resources, and the 'contractual' arrangements between the two entities.
Landscape SA offers to separate the two entities, providing clear delineation and thus, the community is able to determine, identify and recognise the valuable contribution both make, in very different ways, in the protecting our environment be it agricultural or natural.

Focus:
It is good to see that the discussion paper outlines the need for continued focus on bio-security (weeds, feral animals, diseases); re-vegetation; improving soil quality and water resources although marine pests, over-abundant native animals, habitat management, and innovation in farming practices are not mentioned. Bio-security is particularly important as once compromised, a very expensive operation to reverse.

It is important to mention that unfortunately KI is already losing, due to funding delays and government red-tape, the very people who have the expert skills and abilities to lead and advise. In addition to this, when families leave a remote and isolated location the whole community suffers, economically and socially.

Management Plan:
KI Natural Resources Management Board recently went through a thorough and extensive community consultation process to produce its regional management plan. A thorough document, The Plan provides not only evidence of extensive consultation but a comprehensive guide to locally identified priorities. This is a valuable and useful document not mentioned, nor referred to, in the discussion paper.

Climate Change:
Climate is mentioned three times in the 30 page document, that is, ‘climate change’, ‘changing climate’ and ‘climatic changes’. This implies ignorance or at least, shortsightedness.

Statements:
Many of the statements made in the discussion paper are misleading as they are not supported by evidence, for example, the section - ‘Why is reform necessary?’ implies NRM work to date didn’t target issues, didn’t have partnerships, was unsuccessful, and failed to apply ‘best available scientific, traditional and local knowledge along with a clear understanding of the community’s aspirations..’ This is clearly incorrect and somewhat disingenuous.

Evidence:
In other sections, such as ‘community-led landscape management’, there are statements promising ‘greater’, ‘simpler’, ‘more substantial’, ‘more focus’, ‘less money spent’ which are influential words but there is no evidence to support that care and due diligence was ever missing in the first place. This weakens the argument for the discussion paper.
Distance from government:
Distance from government is stressed throughout the discussion paper so how will this work for Kangaroo Island? Currently there is intimate involvement and administrative cross-over with DEW as KINRMB does not employ staff. As KI levy funding is so low, some $385k pa, how will this work effectively without increasing state supplementation? How will this iconic location, one of the national’s huge environmental draw cards, be supported?

Board Membership:
I have some concerns regarding the proposed membership of the Landscape Boards. If an election process is undertaken then there is a distinct possibility that a person may campaign and be elected on a platform. This means that the collaborative and efficient operation of any NRM Board, as was my experience on Kangaroo Island, may be compromised by single issues.

It is unclear whether Board Members must be residents, and thus whether local knowledge along with skills, abilities and expertise, will be a prerequisite in the acceptance of nominations. There is a real possibility of non-residents having a major say in Board decisions.

General Comments:
I note that when the environment is mentioned it is consistently last in the phrase ‘economic, social and environmental’ as if the environment doesn’t underpin all economic activity.

Engagement:
I wrote to the organisers and requested the local community forum be held outside of business hours so that more community members could be involved. Short notice aside, I also noticed that all the community forums right across the state were held from 2 - 5pm on a weekday effectively disenfranchising the majority of community members. This is not engagement.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments.

Gayl Males > Sara Hourez

15 Oct 2018

Very well said, Sara. You’ve hit the nail on the head on most of the points raised.

Landscape Reform Team > Sara Hourez

15 Oct 2018
This is all really great feedback Sara - thanks for taking the time to provide this level of detail. Just to clarify the concern you raise with regard to engagement, we listened to the community who asked for forums out of business hours and arranged two new larger sessions (Marion and Grange) in the evening, we also held our youth community forum on a Saturday. While we recognise not all the times and dates would have suited everyone we did our best to be inclusive of the large number of people across the state interested in the reforms. Again, thanks for taking the time to provide your input - it is much appreciated.

**Rose Dow**

14 Oct 2018

NRM Education

I like many on this forum have had a long association with NRM Education as a Dept of Education teacher. I have outlined in detail how NRM education has benefited the schools and communities where I have worked and live in a more detailed email to the comments section.

I have seen how engaging and empowering it is for schools to have experienced expert KESAB and NRM staff in their classrooms. Over the past 10 years I have also benefited from the training NRM Education staff have provided teachers. This training has meant instead of one off lessons delivered by NRM Education staff once every year, teachers have been trained to develop units of work and embed education for sustainability into their curriculum. As a classroom teacher I have benefited from quality resources produced by NRM staff and also materials teachers in classrooms have collaboratively produced with NRM Ed support.

The schools where I have taught over the past 10 years have become AuSSI-SA schools and developed a School Environment Development Plan. The AuSSI model is most effective and NRM Education staff have supported and resourced schools to put their sustainability vision into practice. The effectiveness of this support is considerable and the statements from the 330 current 2017 AuSSI-SA schools provide great evidence of their success.

I’ve also participated in grant applications and sought funding for resource development. These include Ant, Water Macro-Invertebrates, Butterfly Garden and Fungi resources. Last year with the support of a NRM AMLR Community Grant I with my local Our Patch group invited lead ecologist Sapphire McMullan Fisher to run a series of fungi workshops and events. In mid winter we hosted over 100 for a public talk and an Education Forum with 50 participants was held. ABC, Behind the News filmed Vale Park Primary students’ with Sapphire sharing the amazing qualities fungi have with a national audience school audience. A teachers PD was run and promoted
by NRM Education and Fungi Forays were hosted at our Wildflower Walk at Vale Park. From the interest generated, two fungi kits for schools to borrow were produced by NRM Ed. Further workshops with Sapphire were organised this year by the Murray Darling Basin NRM community members. None of this would have been possible without funding and the many partnerships that have been fostered and encouraged over many years with NRM Education and Natural Resources Adelaide and Mt Lofty.

With the knowledge, training, support networks and lots of experimenting Vale Park our Patch is now sharing their woodland successes with other groups across the state. A range of valuable brochures sponsored by Natural Resources AMLR and Walkerville Council provide information on native plants to inform the community and local school students. Understanding more about the inter-relationships between, soil, fungi, plants and animals has been integral to the success of the Our Patch sites we have at Vale Park and Gilberton.

With the successful reintroduction of native orchids and understory native plants we are also noticing an increase in biodiversity especially native insects and birds. The guided planting of a range of local native plants under remnant eucalypts has improved food sources and protection for native animals.

Students at our local schools of Walkerville and Vale Park are also involved in building on our success through their water investigations and boosting biodiversity within their school and local communities. Through an NRM Ed grant students have planned and planted a Butterfly garden within the school. Through partnerships with the local Vale Park Our Patch they have extended their involvement into the local community by planting additional native gardens. These are being monitored and students are noticing the effects of weather and what strategies they can put into place so their gardens have a good chance of surviving. The students are wanting to boost biodiversity in their community and are proud of what they’ve already achieved.

We have noticed this year more small woodland birds visiting gardens near the river. Birds like the Grey Fantail, Eastern Spinebill and Golden Whistlers that have been rarely spotted for decades in our inner city gardens. We believe local flowering gardens and native planting areas (like our VPOP patches, and the Billabong at St Peters) where a diversity of local native plants are being grown are acting as a refuge for a number of Adelaide Hills woodland birds. As the climate changes, our seasons are dryer and there are increased fires (controlled burns and bushfires) we would be wise to support the trailing and monitoring of plant, animal and fungi biodiversity within our regions. To loose even more of our local fauna and flora would be sad reflection on our state and our priorities.

An investment in NRM Education and all this small group has already accomplished is such great value. The networks and partnerships they have established are
impacting schools and their communities around the state. For the young people in our schools who look to the future and want to be part of the solution there is much to be done together. NRM Education invests in the future by encouraging student voices to be heard and giving them opportunities to plan and take wise actions at home, school and the broader community. Landscaping SA would be wise to generously fund NRM Education so they can continue with the empowering work they do from which we all ultimately benefit.

Rose Dow

14 Oct 2018

I too am coming to the discussion late. Unfortunately I wasn’t able to get to any of the discussion forums. I do however appreciate the opportunity to have my say. As stated in your forward, South Australia’s unique natural resources underpin our communities, our economy, our well-being and our way of life, and we all have a responsibility to be stewards of our precious natural assets. We would be wise to ensure the new Landscape South Australia Bill has provisions that protect our land and water systems and continue to restore them to benefit all South Australians into the future.

It is my concern when reading the Reform Executive Summary that although increased participation, transparency and responsiveness are being promoted there does not seem to be overarching policies in place with identified outcomes. It seems the nine landscape boards will operate independently, yet share major ecosystems within our state. I’m interested to know what the guiding principals are that will ensure there will be vibrant biodiversity, a sustainable economy and resilient communities. How will we know if soil and water quality improves, there is a reduction of pest animal and weed species and if there is an improvement in land and water biodiversity?

What measures, assessments, trials and monitoring will be put in place? If there are not monitoring and assessment procedures enacted by all nine boards how will there be the effective management of the states natural resources? As Paul Gibbs states we already have qualified people with a solid grasp of what is happening to our land and water systems and the life that depends on them. It makes a great deal of sense to draw on the experience and partnerships already existing many through NRM. Our schools have a current emphasis on STEM, Science, Mathematics, Engineering and Technology. Students are graduating from our universities with science degrees with the skills to monitor and assess soil and water health impacting on the health of our farmland and landscapes more broadly. What a great investment for our future to have South Australians working together to improve our land and water systems and doing the research, monitoring and trialing that are so required.
If we are to be leaders in the fields of climate adaptation, clean food production, land and water health our scientists, ecologists, researchers, farming and tourism businesses need employment opportunities. The future benefits to both our regional and urban communities will be significant with the capacity for us to export expertise, research and know how nationally and internationally.

Unfortunately as stated by others too there is no mention of climate change in this Natural Resources Reform Executive summary or how our state can mitigate against it. The Farmers Federation policy from 2017 states the following. The National Farmers Federation recognises that climate change poses a significant challenge for Australian farmers. As a nation, we must act to ensure that our economy is well placed to cost efficiently reduce our national greenhouse gas emissions profile.

On the 27th of September, South Australian was officially declared in drought. “For months farmers across the state have reported some of the driest conditions in recent memory, many destocking and prematurely cutting crops while others face water and feed shortages.” Sept 27th ABC online.

As we are dependent on our land and water systems it seems critical to me that climate change policy and actions to address and reduce its effects are included in the new Landscaping Bill.

As a volunteer who has given a great deal of voluntary time to my local Our Patch, Landcare and Friends of Parks Groups this has only happened because of the guidance, support and expertise or trained National Parks or NRM staff. Together we’ve accomplished a great deal but I’m concerned that without the staff who oversee programs, state priorities, regional targets, guidelines, training and support to groups like ours we will struggle to consolidate, grow and improve local biodiversity and weed control into the future.

Already under the previous government environment jobs were cut significantly. It seems to me there is no better time for us to invest in our natural environment. We would be wise to seek, as you are, the guidance of those who have a vested interest in the health of our state’s natural resources. Long-term environmental and economic decisions are required so our biodiversity thrives and our farming businesses survive. Without healthy and resilient water and land systems all of our communities will suffer, urban, regional and pastoral. The legislation put in place now has the potential to do a great deal of good, but also long term damage.

Thank you for providing South Australians the opportunity to contribute to this forum.
Alex Lourie

13 Oct 2018

Natural Resource Centres do a great job educating us, local residents, about environment and I would like the government to continue funding them and even increase their funding. During this year me and my family participated in many events organised by Willunga Environment Centre and I believe it is highly important to teach people and especially young generation to care about our nature and creating in all of us a sense of belonging, connection and responsibility for the environment we live in.

anonymous respect

10 Oct 2018

Since the Crown land Management Act 2009 (CLM Act) conditions were placed on all South Australian Councils in relation to the care, control and management of dedicated land under the Crown Land Management Act 2009. This was suppose to be updated the schedules and items of councils Community Land Management Plan (CLMP). The CLM Act states "... management plan must be consistent with any relevant regional NRM plan adopted under the Natural Resources Management Act 2004".

Therefore, you have erected a misleading and intimidating Landscape SA Act, as there is no evidence the CLM Act is being amended to reflect the above and this would be deliberate to remove environmental responsibilities the government hated for so long.

Debra Simmons

09 Oct 2018

I would like to participate in a 'magnet fishing' competition along the banks of the Murray River each year. Prizes for biggest - weirdest - oldest etc... catch could be offered and towns along the river could offer bankside attractions. A TV show could be made from funny or interesting things that happened during the event, that were filmed by participants and a prize could also be offered for the favourite.
anonymous respect

09 Oct 2018

Comment deleted as it does not comply with our Community Guidelines. https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/community-guidelines

YourSAY Admin

anonymous respect > anonymous respect

10 Oct 2018

The Social license to be here in existence is a real issue for the government and corporate industry in Australia, isn't it.

Paul Maraun

09 Oct 2018

I only ask one thing. If we have to have these levies taxes whatever at least have the courtesy to tell us what OUR money is being used for. I am totally sick of the NRM/ESL funds disappearing into some amorphous fund somewhere and no accountability from the Government or the organisation.

Richard STOTT

08 Oct 2018

The NRM is just duplicating roles that already exist. Farmers are paying a levy on grain produced and wool and animals. These levies pay for research done by the GRDC, Dept. Primary Industries and many more organisations. I think this Board and The NRM should be dissolved and we go back to the days before jobs were created that are not needed. Soil health and other aspects of keeping our farms healthy is in farmers best interest. The land-Care and Greening Australia planted our denuded areas.
Robert Lawrence

06 Oct 2018

Regarding: Grassroots Grants program
Having been involved with grants administration in two universities, having been on selection committees for a granting scheme for a NGO and having won an Envirofund grant and a Citizen Science grant, I would like to give my perspective on the proposed scheme.

Grants are important as a means of giving incentive to people in the community to get involved in the environment and to provide financial support to make projects more effective. A grant can get a new project started or make a huge difference to an existing project. It is important that grants end up making a real contribution toward a larger vision. Funding should reflect the environmental benefit. Projects for the on-ground protection of rare species would generally be more important than a large project in a degraded urban area.

The boundaries between regions become irrelevant with grants. Many in the city have passion for areas far and wide. People should be able to apply for grants beyond where they reside or even hold property. Likewise, they should be able to vote for a proposal outside of their area. For example, I wanted to vote for a project on Kangaroo Island recently because it was the most effective proposal I knew of, but was not eligible to vote. A whole range of projects could be worth funding, including on-ground pest-control, monitoring, citizen science, education and community engagement.

Somebody complained, at the workshop I attended, about the difficulties of ethics approval. Such things can't really be compromised. Some projects need to be managed through institutions or NGOs with adequate funding to cover the administration. Thus, universities and NGOs would need to be eligible to apply, possibly depending on having a community partner.

The distribution of grant funds should not be a reflection of the skill of the applicants. The significance needs to be taken into account. Significance could be the long-term benefit of controlling or eradicating a pest, increasing the viability of threatened species or communities or increasing community awareness and involvement in landscape management.

Landscape Reform Team > Robert Lawrence

08 Oct 2018
This is really helpful and well considered feedback Robert - thank you. Thanks also for coming along to the Marion community forum last week, we trust you found it useful. All of the advice you have provided will be given further consideration.

Robert Lawrence

05 Oct 2018

Regarding: Electing board members and community engagement

The hard thing to conceive is how to have a process for the community to select its representatives and for the community to be engaged with the management of landscapes. I see the two could happen together.

The really difficult aspect of democracy is for the people eligible to vote getting to know the candidates well enough to choose who they want to vote for. The one-paragraph approach used for selecting board members, such as for the RAA or building societies, is quite inadequate from a voter’s perspective. The ideal way to get to know candidates is to see what they say and how they perform while discussing the issues. There needs to be an open forum in which people do get involved. This could be in social media or a printed newsletter. This way people could see who they would like to have speaking on their behalf. I guess people might need to be invited to comment on controversial issues. This would not just happen. A team of people would need to be employed to facilitate discussions and keep them moving on different topics and in different regions.

One of the things that came out of the discussion at the workshop at Marion was that people are not bound by where they live. People may live in the city and have a property in the hills or near the Murray. Others travel to the Flinders to treat Wheel Cactus. Some visit Kangaroo Island to do conservation work. These people should be able to have a say in what happens in the regions where they work or volunteer. We want to have a say about threatening processes such as goats in arid lands, moss-rock extraction in the eastern side of the Lofty Ranges and the grazing impact of over-abundant kangaroos across the Adelaide hills. While I live in the city, the biodiversity of the city does not matter as much to me as that of the surrounding area, including the adjacent ocean that we have a great impact on. So all South Australians should be eligible to vote for board members in any region that interests them.

A measure of whether landscape management is being effective is the degree to which moss-rock extraction and its impact is documented and controlled. This would be a great issue to kick off a discussion to involve the community. There are people who have felt that they have been silenced on this issue. Making this issue public would bring people out to have their say and could change the way that community engagement is done in this state.
Michela Skipp

05 Oct 2018

I think we should have a focus on continuing to develop a strong and robust recycling system for the state. Having recently finished my research project I found a lot of Australian’s lack an understanding of what can and can’t be recycled and how to present recyclables. Recycling contamination has been minimized through education programs in schools which has definitely been an effective strategy. I would really like to see a continued push to get more businesses on board with better waste management programs.

Managing the global commons is one of the most important environmental issues facing Australia. It is also particularly relevant to managing climate change as a large portion of emissions comes from these industries. Being a developed nation, Australia has a large impact on the climate through the carbon and methane emissions into the atmosphere. Society will have to make some major changes to mitigate the impacts of climate change in the energy and industrial and mining sectors.

I believe recycling and being smarter about how we use resources will help alleviate climate change and aid in the transition to a circular economy. The major problem with the current economy is we end up with an absurd amount of wasted resources which are not recycled and continue to consume more resources. I think it is very important to resource the global commons more sustainably and to use those resources much more carefully.

I commend the NRM board on all their hard work and particularly NRM education has been a very valuable contribution to my current understanding and knowledge of the environment having been involved in the YEC program.

Landscape Reform Team > Michela Skipp

08 Oct 2018

Hi Michela, thanks for your feedback regarding the state’s recycling system. You will be interested to know that the State Government, through the agency Green Industries SA, is supporting South Australia’s work in recycling and resource recovery and transitioning the state to a more circular economy. Green Industries SA is focussing on measures to build the resilience and capabilities of our local industry through infrastructure investment, market development, education, innovation and procurement. Some of the programs being supported through Green Industries SA address many of the topics you have raised. These include:
• Infrastructure grants for local government and industry to maintain and build the capacity of South Australia’s recycling systems and reprocessing infrastructure.
• Market development grants to stimulate an increase in the quality and market demand for recyclable materials and recycled content products.
• Support for a state-wide education campaign to maintain the community’s faith in the recycling process and help to reduce contamination levels through consistent messages which will ensure better quality recyclable material enters the recycling system.
• A Business Sustainability Program which helps businesses understand and support the transition towards a more circular economy. Financial assistance is available to individual businesses and industry groups requiring specialist expertise in the areas of resource efficiency (materials, energy and water), waste management and lean production.

For further information, please visit www.greenindustries.sa.gov.au. On this site you will also find a copy of South Australia’s Waste Strategy 2015-2020, which may be of interest.

Thanks for taking the time to provide your feedback.

Melinda Brindle

04 Oct 2018

Sorry, I’m coming to this discussion late, but I would like to support the great work of the Adelaide and Mt Lofty NRM in the support and advocacy of the Living Smart program across SA in 2016, 2017, 2018. The NRM worked closely with sections of SA Govt. to develop the training modules that were the foundations of education provided to communities, with the support of local government councils and a group of committed facilitators. Living Smart is an integrated and holistic training program - including water, waste, transport, energy, and more - promoting sustainable living and helping people to achieve this in their own homes & communities. I would not like to see the new arrangements lose this ability to provide integrated and holistic community education and support. The type of education is very important in our changing world.

Landscape Reform Team > Melinda Brindle

10 Oct 2018

Hi Melinda. Thank you for sharing this reflection. Adelaide and Mt Lofty NRM have piloted and delivered a growing number of programs in this arena, so its great to see...
that it is appreciated and being offered by the community as a tactic that is wanted into the future.

**Julie Jordan**

04 Oct 2018

I wish to comment in support of the valuable contribution that the Willunga Environment Centre makes in the Fleurieu region. They provide a wide range of activities for all age groups and act as a resource and provider for many community projects and activities. Any changes to the system must see the continued funding of this valuable community centre.

**Coast Protection Board**

04 Oct 2018

Coast Protection Board submission on Natural Resources Management reform (Landscape SA), September 2018.

Shortcomings and issues with the NRM system

- The localism of the old district arrangements for soils and pest plants and animals were lost and not regained by the regional arrangements.
- The integration of regional staff from boards and government, driven by budget constraints, was seen as a government takeover – the sentiment was partly driven by board and board-staff ownership and a reluctance to embrace a different arrangement.
- Farmers felt that they had lost traditional services when NRM was created. Coincidently, the state was withdrawing from its agricultural extension services.
- The planning and accountability arrangements were overly bureaucratic and difficult to navigate and understand.
- Loss of funding was attributed to NRM even though this was a government budget choice.
- The city-country divide was seen to be exaggerated by the NRM arrangements.
- Local government opposition to the levy promoted discord and antagonism.
- Not enough emphasis was given to the provision of extension staff at the local or district level.
- Some NR functions have not been integrated into the NRM model.

Not all of the complaints and concerns are attributable to the NRM arrangements and not all of these shortcomings are universal. Some relate to shifts in government policy – governments no longer funding agricultural production extension activities
and other services now seen for private rather than public good. Some are attributable to local circumstance. The reduction in funding to natural resource management at both a state and Commonwealth level is independent of NRM arrangements. The broader cultural issue of city-rural division is driven by many factors and this plays out in an antagonism towards government generally.

Strengths of the NRM system
• Has operated for 14 years and slowly improved over time.
• Board members are generally respected and trusted in their communities.
• There are many practical achievements and successes.
• Water planning has progressed, and difficult water resource management issues tackled.
• The system has been accountable in terms of money spent and work done.
• Integrated NR planning provides the basis to make choices and set priorities.
• Unlike most other government services, a distributed staff presence has been maintained against many pressures.

There has been much to be positive about in the NRM system despite the bad press it has received over time. The challenge will be to retain the good and confront the shortcomings in the new arrangements.

Coastal Protection considerations in the new model

When NRM was established in 2004, a decision was made to retain the Coast Protection Act 1972 and to continue with a centralised Coast Protection Board. To begin with, NRM boards were preoccupied with establishment and other issues of priority. However, over time NRM boards began to integrate coastal management into their planning and recognised the special role of the Coast Protection Board. This arrangement has worked reasonably well with NRM Boards working with local government on coastal management issues and jointly funding works. The Coast Protection Board, in concert with the department, has been able to fulfil a leadership role with policy advice, specialised technical support and expertise, and providing strategic leadership on state-wide issues.

In a resource-constrained environment there is no room for duplication or overlap in function. Clarity of role and responsibility are essential. As the new Landscape model evolves there is a strong argument to retain the best features of the old and fashion them into the new.

It is hard to see an alternative to having centralised state-wide coastal management policy and technical capacity. A board may not be essential although there is considerable value in a single-focus authority that has a degree of independence from the departmental bureaucracy of government. Green Adelaide could be given the Coast Protection Board role, but it is additional to its metropolitan focus and inevitably will be an add-on rather than the first priority. Green Adelaide as it
proposed could take on a metropolitan coastal coordination role for integrating coastal management across Councils, but the highly technical domain of sand management should be left to a government agency with the required expertise, support and direct line to a Minister.

As the Landscape model develops, one could expect all coastal landscape boards to have a coastal dimension but not to the same degree as Green Adelaide where metropolitan beaches are a much more significant part of the community landscape. The relationship with local government is crucial for many reasons not the least being that councils often have care and control of many coastal reserves.

To conclude, there is a very strong argument to retain a centralised technical and policy capacity that covers the entire state and supports the new Landscape arrangements. There is also a sound basis to continue with a centralised coastal authority. It does not need to be the Coast Protection Board but there does need to be an authority that has those functions as a primary emphasis.

**Landscape Reform Team**

03 Oct 2018

The closing date for submissions is fast approaching with less than two weeks left to go! Thanks to everyone for your continued feedback through this discussion forum. Please keep sending through your thoughts - all input is in the process of being considered.

**Rod McKenzie**

03 Oct 2018

I have an interest in sustainability and believe that our human presence on the earth can only be sustainable if we are educated about how to live sustainably. I hear many comments about the various coloured bins and their use which suggests that many people of the older generation failed in this area. SA is something of a national leader in the support of EFS through the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative. The support provided by NRM Education and Kesab is vital to the continuation of this facet of education in SA.

NRM Education must be expanded and the Dept of Education directed to realign its curriculum delivery so that all students are equipped to understand and be prepared to live sustainable lives at home work and play. This should be a compulsory unit for all students and our young people should participate fully in the transition to a sustainable society and economy and the repair of past mistakes.
Landscape Reform Team > Rod McKenzie

04 Oct 2018

Thanks Rod for your input and support for the continuation of NRM Education programs. We have received overwhelming support and much positive feedback about NRM Education and will be taking this all into further consideration. Your advice is much appreciated.

Nicky Page

29 Sep 2018

I’m writing in support of the immeasurably valuable contribution that the Willunga Environment Centre makes in the Fleurieu region. Their activities are far too numerous to mention here, but suffice to say that they act as a resource and enabler for many, many community projects and activities which would be much less likely to happen without the support of the centre. The multiplier effect of any money invested in the Centre by the NRM would be extraordinary. But it would probably cost as much to investigate and calculate as to simply continue the core funding which adds so much to the environmental and community health of the region.

Landscape Reform Team > Nicky Page

04 Oct 2018

Hi Nicky, thanks so much for taking the time to provide your feedback. It’s great to hear how valued the centre in Willunga is.

Dominica Thomson

24 Sep 2018

I have had the pleasure of being involved with NRM within the education setting for many years. I have been involved in grants for butterfly gardens, incursions, excursions and much more. NRM educators have supported me to write SEMPs and have delivered workshops to support teachers understanding of what they do and how the school I’m working at can be directly involved. The educators work is invaluable to support schools become more sustainable. I really hope the reforms keep the inclusion of NRM educators and allow them flexibility within their roles to allow them to contextualise their work to the schools they are involved with.
Landscape Reform Team > Dominica Thomson

26 Sep 2018

Thank you for your comments Domenica. We have received a lot of comments regarding education which will all be taken into further consideration. We appreciate you taking the time to provide your input.

Prue Coulls

14 Sep 2018

We have been living and operating a small business in the SA Arid Lands for nearly 30 years. Our comments on the discussion paper are as landowners and small business representatives of South Australia’s $6.7B Tourism Industry. We are also passionate about our State’s Natural and Built Heritage.

We have emailed and posted our comments, giving here only a summary.

We think that the new Act needs to address the following:
- both community elected and Government appointed Board members should be selected from all community representatives. It needs to recognise that tourism in the SA Arid Lands has increased exponentially and needs representation on the Board
- that all community members are aware of and can contribute to Plans. To achieve this all stakeholders should be contacted directly.
- that all community members can effectively contribute to Landscape Plans by giving equal value to each sector of the community
- balanced decision making, meaning that decisions do not benefit primary producers exclusively
- that land and water levies are consistent and equitable; that water levies be based on usage and that all users contribute
- that all users of a bore are responsible for the maintenance of the bore, not just the landowner.
- that management of pests is based on scientific evidence not just on the demands of one sector of the community. And we think reference to ‘wild dogs’ (= dingoes) is not only a poor but extremely biased example of a ‘pest’ and it should be removed from such documents as the Discussion Paper until it is proven that they damage the environment as a whole. (It would be more appropriate to use ‘Rabbit’ or ‘Cat’ as an example.)
Landscape Reform Team > Prue Coulls

14 Sep 2018

Thanks for raising these issues Prue. Your more extensive emailed comments have also been received and will be taken into account. We greatly appreciate the time you have taken to consider the proposed reforms.

Julie Fiedler

11 Sep 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Landscapes SA consultation. I am writing on behalf of Horse SA, a non-profit organisation working with and for horse owners, in this case on land care and related activities. Many comments for the Landscapes SA reform were previously recorded through the opportunity provided at a public meeting in Mt Barker. Further comments are below:

To give greater recognition within the plan to a) climate change b) recreational use of landscapes e.g. trails and c) the improvement of services or small landholders.

RECREATIONAL TRAILS: With some 6000K or more in South Australia, trails provide a unique opportunity for residents to connect with nature in a low impact way, with many trail users contributing back into environmental management through this means. These and related recreational activities to be given greater recognition going forward, and for the volunteers and their work.

Secondly, small landholders have a much higher turn-over of land ownership than traditional farmers. Often the property owners work off-site to gain the primary income and whilst may be highly educated, it is often not in land management related areas. It is therefore important for Landscapes SA to ensure that there are agricultural specialists amongst staff skill sets across the regions, who can provide relevant free advice for landholders. These skill sets to include native and introduced grasses, weed control, farm animal nutrition, animal health & welfare, water conservation, storage and reticulation, small property planning & biosecurity. Whilst the biodiversity and related specialists are also still required, it is to ensure that the knowledge base for small property management is also balanced out.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute and we look forward to working with Landscapes SA in the future.
Hi Julie and thanks for your feedback on behalf of Horse SA. We trust you found the Mt Barker community engagement session useful. The additional comments you have provided above will be further considered. Your interest in the proposed reforms is appreciated.

Carol Cornish
09 Sep 2018

I have been involved with NRM for many years within the school sector. It has established its place in working with schools to protect and care for the environment- developing students as environmental leaders and giving grants that facilitate student voice and agency. I too wonder why it is necessary to change the name and operations of the regions. NRM grants in two schools have recently established outdoor learning areas with native plants that have added aesthetics and environmental benefits to both schools and their wider community. The support received by the NRM staff have supported the entire process of these projects and they visit and consult with staff and students - providing ongoing advice and resources. Their knowledge of the local area and the people living and working in these regions is vital to their roles and in the way they provide resources and support. I am curious about why the hills regions are to be centralised in the city and wonder if the day to day operations if the officers will be reduced and trimmed back as a result. This would indeed be a step backwards. The NRM is much valued in schools and we would like this to continue, especially as the demands in education increase and there is an ever pressing need to foster student agency in and for the environment.

Landscape Reform Team > Carol Cornish
10 Sep 2018

Thanks so much for your comments Carol. It’s great to hear about your positive experience in relation to the NRM education program. We’ve been receiving a lot of useful input regarding NRM education and are going to be taking it all into further consideration. Thanks for taking the time to share your thoughts.
Jane Humphrey

08 Sep 2018

Hello, I am wondering if the NRM Act 179 & 181 (1) refers to livestock. If it does not it should. Livestock is not native, left to wonder in and out of areas they are suppose to be contained in, can have significant impact on neighbouring crops, loss of income for the farmer, and native vegetation and growth areas. There needs to be some clear definition of the responsibilities that livestock owners have over their livestock and their responsibility of the impact their wondering livestock has to neighbours and the natural environment.

Landscape Reform Team > Jane Humphrey

10 Sep 2018

Hi Jane thanks for your comments and query in relation to livestock. Certain species of livestock are captured under section 179 and 181 (1) of the NRM Act. To view the full list please refer to Class 5 in the consolidated list of Declarations of Animals and Plants which can be found on the following website: http://pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds_and_pest_animals

If you have any issues with accessing the document referred to above please don’t hesitate to contact us via email at LandscapeReform@sa.gov.au

The Barossa Council

06 Sep 2018

The Barossa Council has been fortunate to host a number of NRM programs in association with the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board that have delivered successful engagement with local communities, namely

• NRM Education
• Natural Resource Centres
• Land Management Program

There is a potential that the new landscape governance framework (splitting the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM region in to three) may diminish the success of these programs, as there will be a reduction in the revenue generated from the smaller, more rural Plains and Valleys region.

As a member of the Gawler River Flood Management Authority, Council fully supports the need to have stormwater management and flood management...
addressed in a more holistic manner. At present, there is a clear lack of leadership in the management of watercourses, leaving it up to local councils to work through the issue of gaining access to private land holdings in order to address regional flood mitigation works. The GRFMA actions in response to the 2016 flood of the Gawler River demonstrates the frustration in coordinating a solution with the support of Federal, State and private interests. There is a clear need for leadership, and having a single entity with responsibility would help achieve this.

Council considers that there is an opportunity to further consolidate the management of natural resources by incorporating the management of coastal protection and native vegetation. In addition, a ‘one stop’ approach to natural resource management would be welcomed, particularly in relation to the interconnection with the planning system.

There is an opportunity with the reforms of both the Planning and NRM systems to introduce a ‘Resource Consent’ thereby reducing the potential number of approvals that are needed for the ‘use’ and ‘management’ of land within the State. The Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act remains ‘metro-centric’, hence there is a need to acknowledge that the long term management of land within our regional areas plays a significant role in the State’s economic prosperity.

The current regime of ‘referrals’ for certain development types could be streamlined with the introduction of a ‘Resource Consent’ that encompasses existing natural resource licensing and approval requirements. In addition, the current ambiguity of when an activity on land constitutes ‘development’ or a ‘water affecting activity’ needs to be addressed. The ability for councils to undertake operational works needs to be exempted from approvals through a more streamlined process.

Objects and Principles:
It is worth highlighting that the Objects and Principles of the current Act provide a sound base for the management of our natural resources, and should not necessarily be lost by introducing new legislation.

Council considers that the requirement for decision-making processes to integrate economic, environmental, social and equity considerations, and to treat the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity as fundamental to the management of our natural resources. It also considers that the duty to act responsibly in the management of the State’s natural resources for the present and future generations is paramount to any environmental legislation.

The Government should be encouraged to retain the essence of the Objects and Principles in the new Landscape SA Act.
Planning Reform:
The previous State Government commenced the reform of the State Planning System, which received bipartisan support.

A provision in the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act allow groups of councils to enter into Planning Agreements with the Minister for Planning. A Planning Agreement is a long-term arrangement that allows for planning functions to be delegated to the regional groupings of councils, subject to agreed performance measures and targets. Once established the Joint Planning Board is responsible for the preparation and amendment of the Regional Plan.

The Joint Planning Arrangements pilot project (of which the Barossa region participated) identified that in addition to planning functions, there are other potential local and state government functions that can be delegated to a Joint Planning Board. Those regions participating in the pilot project have acknowledge the opportunity for NRM Boards to be a partner in the new planning arrangements.

Given the NRM Reform, is there an opportunity to streamline the number of governance frameworks that exist? Is there value is councils establishing a Joint Planning Board and having a Landscape Board in the same locality, each preparing a regional level plan? Could there be better efficiency in having one board that prepares one regional plan encompassing land use and land management requirements.

If this is not achievable, provision should be made in the Landscape SA Act to allow for a Landscape Board to delegate either planning or operational functions to a Joint Planning Board.

**Landscape Reform Team > The Barossa Council**

06 Sep 2018

Thank you for this input. A number of important issues have been raised which will be given further thought, including the query in relation to streamlining governance frameworks. Thanks again, the Council’s interest in the reforms is much appreciated.

**Dale Sutton**

29 Aug 2018

I am supportive of the work the NRM teams have been doing and would be keen to see this continue in some form into the future. I think the partnerships the NRM
teams have formed with councils have been a great collaboration between the state and local government.

I understand the need for a levy to enable this work to continue, however this should NOT be collected via council rates because it creates a false impression of where our money is going. For transparency the state government should collect their own levies.

**Landscape Reform Team > Dale Sutton**

29 Aug 2018

It’s good to hear this positive feedback Dale - thank you.

Your comments regarding the levy have also been noted and will be given further consideration. Thanks for your input.

**Dan Bailey**

27 Aug 2018

To the reform team, I have read the Executive Summary, the Discussion Paper and the Frequently Asked Questions and it’s great to see that you are taking the opportunity for people to make comments, but I do wonder how much of this feedback will be realistically put into the reform?

I am an ecologist with 2 decades of experience in ecology and working with landholders and implement compliance related work under the NRM act and various other environmental acts. As a compliance officer, it always worries me when Acts are opened up and changed as they are usually changed for personal gain e.g. farming, hunting, business incentives. With a long-term interest in biodiversity and land management of the State, the NRM act was bought in by the Liberal Gov originally and has been a strong legislative requirement for farmers for decades to help provide management and guidelines.

Why Rebadge and reform the program that has had millions of dollars invested into programs, engagement and building a name and identity around NRM to change it to the Landscapes Act (backwards thinking)?

As stated in the Discussion Paper: There are parts of the Natural Resources Management Act 2004 that have worked well and should be retained and other parts that are over-complicated and have impeded good, local, on-the-ground management that should be removed, amended or simplified. Can you explain what
part are over-complicated and have impeded good, local, on-the-ground management that should be removed, amended or simplified?

Both Federal and State governments have spent Billions of dollars on bringing the NRM boards, local NGO’s and DEWNR now DEW together to work at a more landscape scale. Why would you change this and introduce something new when it is not broken?

Having struggled for years doing compliance under these various act and trying to get landholders to understand their management requirements and enforcing legislation where needed, I can see this heading for another native vegetation act fail, where all of the act’s regulations and powers will be stripped or dulled down as per its new name.

Compliance is education and why change a name that is now part of most schools, local government organisations and been a vital part of our kids learning to help provide better choices around natural resource management into the future. Go ask school kids and the public what landscape management is?

**Landscape Reform Team > Dan Bailey**

28 Aug 2018

Thanks for your input Dan. Please be assured that all comments and feedback will be carefully considered before any changes are made to the legislation. The government has acknowledged that the current NRM Act brought with it some positive change and benefits but with the passing of time and gradual centralisation it believes the system is not delivering quite what it should. Therefore a more simple and accessible system for natural resources that empowers regional communities and decentralises decision making is the main aim of the reforms. You have raised some interesting points which will be taken into further account. Thanks again for your input.

**Sharon Zivkovic**

26 Aug 2018

In 2017 I was honoured to be invited to contribute a chapter to the book “Envisioning futures for environmental and sustainability education” - the final volume in the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development series: https://transformativelearning.nl/2017/02/27/envisioning-futures-for-environmental-and-sustainability-education-now-available/

This book highlights that education has progressed from nature education, to environmental education, to sustainability education and a now we have a combined
environmental and sustainability education focus. I am therefore quite concerned that Green Adelaide is going to have nature education as a priority.

**Landscape Reform Team > Sharon Zivkovic**

28 Aug 2018

Hello Sharon and thanks for joining the conversation. This matter was also raised at one of the recent community forum sessions. Your feedback is appreciated and will be taken into further consideration.

**Ron Blacker**

23 Aug 2018

On many situations in many different schools in the state I have been ably supported by education officers from the NRM and this has always improved the environmental learning of the students and resulted in benefits to the environments of the communities. At present a group of teachers at Port Elliot Primary School are working with Education Officer Rob Wallace to improve the school environment for biodiversity and student learning opportunities. We have been able to win a grant and as a result many positive environmental and learning benefits are occurring. We are also working in partnership with Rob, The Alexandrina Council and local groups to make a local flora arboretum in nearby Waterport Reserve. Without NRM Education Officer assistance this ongoing program of improvement for our area will be less effective. Rob has also provided many resources and has presented to a staff meeting of the use of outdoor grounds to aid in the students’ learning. I believe it is vital that the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board and Education Program remains a priority.

The Environment to sustain us into the future needs to be the number one priority. It concerns me greatly that allowing personal interest groups to take charge of Environmental policy is a very dangerous, counter-productive method whereby financial short-term interests become more important than the landscape and gradual deterioration of the environment occurs. Huge amounts have been done in the past by the NRM to allow for gradual improvement which in turn allows for more financial, cultural and community benefits. This must not be allowed to collapse due to political and negative vested interest opinions or greed.
Michael Phillips

22 Aug 2018

Why are forums held only during business hours? At least one evening or weekend session would enable more people to participate.

Landscape Reform Team > Michael Phillips

22 Aug 2018

Hi Michael. We understand that not everyone can attend sessions during business hours so you might be pleased to know we have arranged two sessions that will commence at 6pm (Marion on 30 August and Grange on 6 September). There are still spots available at both of these sessions so please register to attend if you can. Thanks for your interest in the reforms.

Landscape Reform Team

22 Aug 2018

Please note that tomorrow’s community forum session at Glenunga has been expanded to enable more people to attend. Spots are still available so if you are interested in attending please register via the community forums and workshops page on this site.

Tanya Taverner

21 Aug 2018

Sue,

Regarding your comments on the Cormorant, whilst they are obviously self-serving. I must reply to your assertion about the amount of fish and the inability to crab e.g. Honestly, you are concerned about the amount of fish these birds eat.. do you think they put them in the freezer for later? are they over-eating and cannot fly? Are you not more concerned with the over-fishing, the raping of the oceans, etc., all in the quest of making money. Unbelievable...just to let you know Sue IT is bigger than just you or I.

Sue Oldfield > Tanya Taverner

21 Aug 2018
Im not sure what you mean by inability to crab, I didn’t mention anything about that! While 1 bird eats 500g per small & juvenile fish per day (do the math on how much over 1000 birds eat in just 1 location per year) You cant tell me that with the large numbers we now have that they are not having an effect on the fish stocks. I totally understand the fishing industry. Maybe you don’t like eating seafood! I believe with such large numbers they should be culled!

**Landscape Reform Team**

17 Aug 2018

It’s encouraging to see how much interest the proposed reforms have been generating over the last month. Thanks everyone for joining the conversation and providing your feedback.

Just a reminder that there are still spots available at the upcoming regional community forum sessions and some of the metropolitan sessions including Grange and Marion. If you are able to make it to a session please book your place as soon as you can and if further sessions can be arranged, they will be announced on this site. Don’t forget that submissions are welcome via this discussion forum, email or letter.

Thanks again everyone.

**Julia Peacock**

16 Aug 2018

The Nature Conservation Society of SA would like to provide the feedback that the planned number of community workshops in the Adelaide region is insufficient. We’re encouraging our members and supporters to be engaged in this reform but it is difficult if sessions are booked out.

The geographic spread of the sessions also seems uneven, with western and south/south eastern locations only at present, so we would suggest additional sessions be scheduled for central Adelaide as well as northern and eastern locations. The timing of these sessions could be following the release of the separate discussion paper on “Green Adelaide” which is foreshadowed on page 17 of the Discussion Paper, so that community members can respond more specifically to the proposed priorities for that body, as well as to the reform proposal in general.

Yours sincerely,

Julia Peacock
Robyn Wood > Julia Peacock

16 Aug 2018

I agree, I have tried to register with the Mawson Lakes and Mt Barker sessions and they are both full. I am on the wait list but don’t expect anything to come of it, I would expect people who have booked and then can’t go to just not turn up and not bother to formally cancel.

Stephen Fuller

15 Aug 2018

I have an interest in sustainability and believe that our human presence on the earth can only be sustainable if we are educated about how to live sustainably. Education for Sustainability (or Education for Sustainable Development) is the developed method for educating our people in this respect. SA is something of a national leader in the support of EfS in the pre-tertiary education systems through the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative. The support provided by NRM Education and Kesab is vital to the continuation of this facet of education in SA. To in any way degrade these services will compromise what is already an incomplete educational aspiration.

In my opinion, NRM Education must be expanded and the Dept of Education directed to realign its curriculum delivery so that all students are equipped to understand and be prepared to live sustainable lives at home work and play. The succession of mistakes that humanity has made over the past 200 years must be corrected and key to this is equipping our young people to participate fully in the transition to a sustainable society and economy and the repair of past mistakes. Without a knowledgeable and engaged population we are doomed to repeat past mistakes and be incapable of developing the innovative solutions required for our current problems.

If Nature Education as your reform paper calls it omits the full range of topics, processes of engagement and skills development through applied critical thinking that is involved in EfS then you will be selling our students short and will be repeating the mistakes of the past.

Our care for nature comes from within following the development of an emotional and intellectual appreciation of our place in nature and our dependency on its health. Our people must be fully equipped to critique and reform our approach to resource consumption and our impact on our "Landscapes" so that we can wisely and
sustainably manage our natural resources. To do otherwise is to condemn our children to live in a degraded dying Landscape.

**Landscape Reform Team > Stephen Fuller**

16 Aug 2018

Thanks for your comments Stephen. We have been receiving lots of valuable input in relation to NRM Education and will definitely be taking all of the feedback into consideration. Your interest in this matter is much appreciated

**Robyn Wood > Stephen Fuller**

16 Aug 2018

Totally agree Steve, I am concerned that the environment and education about the environment will be left in a worse state after this review

**Jenni McGlennon**

15 Aug 2018

Can you tell us when the Green Adelaide Discussion Paper will be released? And will this be out for consultation?

**Landscape Reform Team > Jenni McGlennon**

16 Aug 2018

Hi Jenni. Thanks for your interest in Green Adelaide. A Green Adelaide discussion paper and a series of FAQs are currently being developed and will be published here on YourSAy for consultation in the near future. In the meantime, if you can, we encourage you to attend one of the community forum sessions to further have your say.

**Kym McKay > Jenni McGlennon**

17 Aug 2018

yep no response from response team, establishes that you really not about wide and full consultation with all stakeholders, Reform Team probably all the same NRM spin Drs of past.
seems i posted in wrong box, should have been below in mine

Kym McKay

15 Aug 2018

There needs to be another community session in the Western Council area one at Grange is too far removed from other Council areas that have the Torrens running through them, Given the millions of dollars pillaged out of those Council areas with the NRM Levy you are diluting the opportunity for wider feedback. Are you really seeking extensive feedback or just doing a snow job to tick the box "we consulted"?

Landscape Reform Team > Kym McKay

17 Aug 2018

Hi Kym, we are doing our best to hold as many forums across the state as we can given that there is such a wide range of people involved and interested in natural resources. All of your posts have been noted and if any additional sessions are able to be arranged then further advice will be provided on this site. We understand not everyone will be able to attend a local forum so we are also asking people to provide written feedback about the proposed reforms. Comments received through this online discussion forum will be taken into consideration and input is also welcomed through email or letter. Thank you for your interest.

Kym McKay

15 Aug 2018

Thank goodness this bureaucratic Greens Zealots Led Dept is being disbanded, The NRM boarded on a dictatorship, bullied land owners, its board meetings were a junket for attendance fees. The Board squandered NRM Levies on personal airy fairy whims. The River Torrens is a disgrace even though the Board trots out old chestnuts like “Oh we did breakout Creek” and Have Trash Racks, from the millions plundered in levies from the Councils along the Torrens hardly anything over the last 16 years has been done except in the Post Card Picture zone of the CBD. The NRM has been a major impediment to this States progress, I only hope this inst just a re branding of a dictatorship and hope it is purged from the Top Public Servants and its appointed cronies. Bring on the Changes ASAP
Deb Downes  
14 Aug 2018  

To Everyone,  
Given the comments about a “Tough Budget”, with the Department responsible for the Environment clearly singled out as having to “provide” a significant amount of savings, I think we can say goodbye to responsible management of National Parks and Resources in this state, for the foreseeable future.  

To not adequately consider Climate Change is ridiculous.  

What we have is a bunch of “Motherhood Statements” designed to take us back into ancient history as far as natural resource management is concerned.  

Very disappointing. But, even worse, given the said Climate Change, it will be extremely difficult to salvage anything once these idiots have moved on. I feel very sad for our younger generations.

Patricia Rogers  
11 Aug 2018  

To the reform team,  
I am extremely concerned regarding the plan to open our valuable reservoirs to the public for recreational water activities. The Reservoirs that provides Adelaide with it’s drinking water.  
What will be the impact upon the water levels in our reservoirs which are at present still below 50% and the enormous cost if accidental or deliberate contamination occurs.  
It is extremely simplistic to declare that water may be extracted from the Murray River to “top up” the reservoirs. That will lead to lower environmental flows. Our wonderful beaches are the places where we can enjoy many varied and pleasurable water activities, not our valuable reservoirs that provides the state with it’s drinking water.  
The impact upon our Australian fauna and flora in the reserves surrounding the reservoirs ie Happy Valley Reservoir Reserve, which is at present protected from the public, is to easily dismissed.  
Society has had a very detrimental impact upon our Australian fauna and flora and we don’t have to totally extinguish their habitat in these very unique safe areas, just to provide “ a domain for pleasurable activities ”.  
Patricia Rogers.
13 Aug 2018

Hi Patricia and thanks for your comments. The issue of opening the reservoirs actually falls under another government election commitment which is the creation of Glenthorne National Park. Your feedback has been forwarded to the team that is working on this commitment. Feel free to head to https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/reservoirs where you can further have your say on this matter. Your input is valuable and will help to inform the way our reservoirs will be opened and managed in to the future. Thanks again, we appreciate the time you have taken to share your concerns.

Betty Sue Smith

10 Aug 2018

Mr David Speirs
Minister for Environment and Water
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide, SA 5001

I have read the Executive Summary, the Discussion Paper and the Frequently Asked Questions. Thank you for the opportunity to make comments.

I am a biologist with 4 decades of experience in ecology and working with landholders. I have with a long-term interest in biodiversity and land management of the State.

Rebadge and reform the program if you must but please do not drag us back to the 1950s.

Back to Basics? Really? Sounds similar to a Local Council’s return to the 3Rs – roads, rates, and rubbish, with the new environmental equivalents of these 3Rs under the moniker of Landscapes SA being: soil quality, water management, weeds and pest animal control, and tree planting.

The basics listed are not enough anymore in the 21st Century. Here are a few looming issues with no, or just a passing, mention:

• Climate Change
• Climate Change
• Climate Change
• Drought proofing farm practices; taking drought as the norm, not the exception
• Land-based biodiversity and / or its management.
• The marine environment and its biodiversity.
• Reduced resilience to change in the natural systems
• Reduced resistance to change in our natural systems
• The fundamental issue of overabundant native animals
• Tree planting is not a substitute for ‘vibrant biodiversity’.
• The funding and expertise gap between current management of ecosystems and the passing mention of Rewilding.

Much of the documentation is about process (some might say busy work), not outcomes. Here are some process issues with which you will need to deal:
• Better boundaries for regions which encompass similar rainfalls, landscapes, agricultural industries, and issues.
• Loss of professional expertise and essential programs by recent defunding
• Gutting of the Environment portfolio
• The burnout of communities from previous iterations of like proposals
• The disillusionment of communities seeing busy-ness rather than progress in this proposal

I reserve the right to expand of the dot points above with specifics at a later date.

David Leach
09 Aug 2018

The info session in Mt Barker is booked out, are you going to move to a larger venue or run another session in Mount Barker???

Landscape Reform Team > David Leach
09 Aug 2018

Hi David, thanks for your message. Numbers for each forum are restricted to enable robust conversations as part of a structured facilitated session. Apologies that your preferred forum is full. However, you may like to consider signing up to the waitlist so that you can be contacted if any spots become available, alternatively if you can travel to Murray Bridge, Marion or Grange perhaps you can consider registering for one of these sessions. Please don’t hesitate to email us at landscapereform@sa.gov.au if you have any further queries about the sessions.

Lee Williams > David Leach
09 Aug 2018

Reform Team, if community engagement is requested, and forums are a part of that, it seems disappointing that people may be discouraged, and asked to go to another area. Locals are the best to identify local issues, as this reform is seen as necessary,
and travelling may not be an option for participants. can I ask what numbers are restricted to in each venue. this number of responses is surely a positive, as many times communities are less engaging,

David Leach > David Leach

09 Aug 2018

I have facilitated many community discussions and agree with others that directing me to another session 30kms away is less than optimal. We pay a couple of hundred dollars a year in NRM levies, for many years, are you all that busy that you can not run a second session in areas where there are interested.

Landscape Reform Team > David Leach

09 Aug 2018

It is definitely encouraging to see that there is a lot of interest in the proposed reforms and the community forums. We are doing our best to hold as many forums as we can across the state given the wide range of people involved in natural resources. While not everyone will be able to attend a community forum due to the scheduled times, or due to some of them reaching capacity (60 people per session) the forums are only one of the ways we are seeking feedback about the reforms. We welcome everyone’s input through this online discussion or through an email or letter. We have taken note of your concerns though and if additional sessions can be arranged then further advice will be posted on this site.

Sue Oldfield

08 Aug 2018

I am not sure if this is the correct place to go with this having previously sent an email to NRM with a phone call response which I appreciate but feel the issue needs to be addressed some other way.
I can only speak for the township of Pt Vincent & Stansbury but ask how & who can change a protected species to non protected. The people do not understand why the Cormorant (Shag) is classed as a protected species when there are such large numbers in these 2 towns & have been for many years, I understand there has not been a count of numbers also for many years!
These 2 towns alone are being bombarded of a night time with Cormorant excrement. The stench is appalling & unhygienic.
They sit on the oyster bed posts where the excrement has made the water that bad that oysters cannot be farmed for some days. In Stansbury they roost in the trees
where market days are held so then other resources are wasted as the CFS sometimes has to come in & hose the pavement off. The pontoons where people swim are covered in it. Cars get bombarded & if its not washed off quickly, effects the paint. The local Hotel windows, decking & roof get splattered with it. God forbid if they wanted to use rainwater or have solar panels. It would be a waste of money. The stench is off putting for customers especially summertime when windows are open. The Norfolk Pine trees are dying at the top.
Currently a permit is issued for local Progress to shoot which is aimed at scaring them away, with a small number able to be shot. Whilst some don’t agree with the shooting, such a small number have no impact & the scaring is only short lived. The cost of bullets having to be purchased is not ideal.
With such large numbers the amount of fish consumed is surely having an impact on fish stocks, its not just the fishermen depleting them! Surely they should not be protected species & there should be another way to bring them back to an acceptable level!

**Landscape Reform Team > Sue Oldfield**

16 Aug 2018

Hi Sue thanks for raising this issue. One of our teams is looking into this matter further. We’ll get back to you very shortly.

**Tanya Taverner > Sue Oldfield**

21 Aug 2018

Landscape Reform Team,

Are you serious when you write that one of your teams ‘are looking into it’? Are you going to report that the Cormorant are a health risk, and require management under a new classification, maybe from being protected to abundant? I suggest that the Department puts more effort and resources into ‘managing’ introduced species and the impact that human activities are having on the native fauna, wildlife and their ability to sustain/survive with diminishing habitat and food source.

**Landscape Reform Team > Sue Oldfield**

22 Aug 2018

Hi again Sue. The management of wildlife is definitely an important issue. The Department for Environment and Water actively promotes a “Living With Wildlife” approach to managing the interaction between humans and native animals by providing advice on appropriate ways to reduce the impacts.

Where there are problems with abundant birds, the destruction of the offending
birds is often a popular option of affected community members. This option can be contentious with people opposed to the destruction of native wildlife. Large scale destruction is expensive, time consuming and, on its own, not necessarily effective in reducing bird impacts. Little Corellas, an unprotected species, is an example that demonstrates that.

Any proposal to change the listing of a native animal, whether it be a common or threatened native animal, involves gathering of data and evidence to inform decision making. In the case of the Pied Cormorant there are no accurate population estimates for Pied Cormorants nor systematic monitoring programs in place.

Departmental officers continue to work collaboratively with the Yorke Peninsula Council to develop appropriate integrated management strategies that include non-lethal and lethal methods when required to manage Pied Cormorants at Stansbury and Port Vincent.

Paul Gibbs

07 Aug 2018

To Whom It May Concern.

I would like to have my say in relation to the changes being proposed to the Natural Resources Management Act.

Whilst it is clearly reasonable to review and modify any existing government outlay it is also important to base any action on the real evidence on what has and will be managed. We need to base our decisions on the objective truth of the environmental reality that is presented to us.

Equally important, is an assessment of those in our communities who actually have the qualifications, expertise and experience to advise these decisions. It is acknowledged in the rationale for changing the NRM Act that good work has been done and that some have a perception of being too close to government. By its very nature any organisation that is funded by government will have to work closely with government to be accountable for the limited funds it is charged to distribute.

I understand there is evidence presented by the University of Adelaide School of Biological Sciences/Ecological and Environmental Science that has made it clear that the loss of native plant habitat has been the single most destructive process to the long term sustainability of ecology and biological diversity of the wider Adelaide Hills catchment.
It is this that underpins the management of the preservation of our environmental inheritance.

The acceptance of this principle would then enable the progressive rehabilitation of our environment over the next fifty to one hundred years, which potentially would lead to the effective control of pest plants and animals as well as providing a basis for planning and implementing sustainable agriculture and major water management priorities.

The outstanding work of Professor David Paton AM and his Adelaide University team needs to be one of the authentic experts we call on in developing the Landscape South Australia Act. There are also many other qualified people who have a clear grasp of the situation and they need to be invited to present evidence that will inform government process and policy. Some of these people are currently engaged with the NRM and in addition to having qualifications, have significant experience in private enterprise and influencing local communities. Let’s not lose this expertise.

Whatever final decision is made by our government let it recognise what is really happening to our natural resources. To have a situation where, in 2018, the Adelaide Hills has less than 7% of its original flora and falling numbers of bird and mammals species is an indictment on ourselves as an informed society, and the new Act must recognise and address this.

Sincerely
Paul Gibbs
Dip T; B Ed

Chris Blaikie > Paul Gibbs

08 Oct 2018

Yes and not limited to the Adelaide Hills Region either.... Our whole state is an ongoing man-made disaster for its environment and ecology. The 'rules' that are supposed to provide some protection are not working or do not apply in too many cases (or are just not enforced).

Landscape Reform Team

07 Aug 2018

Due to high demand, those wanting to hear more about the government's proposed reforms to our natural resource management system can now register to attend two new Community Forums:
• Marion – 30 August (6-9pm) – Marion Cultural Centre
• Grange – 6 September (6-9pm) – Grange Golf Club

You can register on this site through the Community Forums and Workshops page (select Metropolitan Adelaide Community Forums). Please note that numbers for each forum are restricted to enable robust conversations as part of a structured facilitated session. If your preferred forum is full, please register your interest by signing up to the waitlist. We will seek to organise additional sessions as demand allows.

Lee Williams

06 Aug 2018

How should natural resources be managed in South Australia? Perhaps realistically, from many of the previous comments. Education is a focus, and it is a big part of consideration when making plans and implementing them. Goal setting of desired outcomes, and reaching those targets needs commitment. not just a financial commitment. The "natural" landscape is changing, and as a landholder of a farming property, would like to be able to hand over a farm, and a property that is full of native animals and vegetation, and agricultural practices that compliments the land, water and soil in our care. the regions in the state are all unique in their own way, and differ as much as the adjoining landholders in any region, with individual and contrasting views and ideas of land management, and natural resource management. The natural resource management in South Australia needs to compliment and work with border states as well. Not much point having rules and regulations that cannot meet desired outcomes, or meet the intended/desired outcome because of an imaginary boundary(border on a map. This is evident with feral deer in SA, and the different view of unconfined deer in Victoria. A pest vs a game resource. The impact of other commitments with interstate things like the MDB, having drains in the SE of South Australia funded for millions of $$, moving water around through many landholdings, with unknown longterm and potentially irreversible impact on soils, water, and biodiversity outcomes. The drains, implementation and ongoing effects may or may not secure desired outcomes for natural resources of South Australia. I look forward to the managing our landscapes event in our local area in September, and hope that when the reform is realised, landholders are encouraged and supported as they manage their properties into the future.

Landscape Reform Team > Lee Williams

08 Aug 2018
Thanks for your useful feedback Lee which will be taken into account. It’s good to hear you have booked in to attend a community forum session next month to further share your views. We look forward to seeing you there.

Barbara Randell

06 Aug 2018

I am a botanist with a long-term interest in the vegetation of South Australia, both within Adelaide and throughout arid areas. I have also been an active member of Friends of Parks for 25 years.

Over the years I have become very cynical about the efforts of governments to manage environments. Usually they are elected for 3-year terms, and hope to ‘fix’ problems within that time scale, and impress electors with their great results. Those of us in the field are well aware that the problems will barely be impacted by new approaches within any 3-year period.

That being said, I have read through the discussion paper. Like Peter Croft, I am dumbfounded to find that there is NO consideration being given to the major problem we are currently facing ie. Climate change. For there is no doubt that our climate is changing, whether or not we believe that human activity is contributing to that change. Climates have changed many times within geological eras, why should our time be any different? Surely one of the highest priorities of any new legislation dealing with the environment should be to assist soils, vegetation, water, primary producers, managers etc etc etc to be sustainable through the climate changes we are already encountering.

Another omission would appear to be any consideration of air quality.Maybe that will be left to Greening Adelaide to manage. But it’s effect is not restricted to Adelaide alone.

Also I see nothing about marine ecosystems. There are many parts of the state where management of this environment is a major concern.

One final note, at a practical level. I see that the Grassroots Grants will be managed co-operatively between the landscape boards. I am sure that virtually every Board could find grant applications that would take up all the $2million dollars available. There will need to be an independent decision maker to make sure that the Boards don’t have major disagreements about which applications get funded.

Chris Blaikie > Barbara Randell
08 Oct 2018

I very much agree but would like to add the most often ignored issues of light and noise pollution, both of which have impacts to the natural ecology in both marine and terrestrial environments.
If I could draw attention to a recent study 'Widely used marine seismic survey air gun operations negatively impact zooplankton' McCauley et al .....this is not something we should have been allowing in the Great Australian Bight.

Jo Gebhardt

03 Aug 2018

As part of the reform process I would like the current Operation staff sharing agreement between the Northern and Yorke NRM and Murray Darling Basin NRM boards for the Rangelands Group area reassessed. It is regarded by staff and group members as complex and difficult to work under. The Rangelands area should operate under one board, the MDB.
I also think the merger of DEWNR and NRM has not been a successful initiative. NRM is now perceived in the community as yet another government department which places it at arms length from the people it needs to be relating to.

Cheryl Zampin

03 Aug 2018

Landscape reform is a very important topic not only for the people but for the native fauna which reside in these areas. In QLD, landclearing is having a devastating impact on the wildlife with many species under threat of extinction.

In SA we are already encroaching on our wildlife however community education is wavering. Most are unaware species like koalas etc do live in suburbia like Elizabeth, Salisbury, Henley Beach, Flagstaff Hill etc.

The trees which they live in form part of the delicate ecosystem we have in SA. The trees needs these native animals, the water needs the trees, the trees need the soil and water. We are already seeing native animals die because the balance is being affected and we need to act NOW to change this.
If just one of these systems comes under threat, the whole ecosystem is affected.

We desperately need to focus on soil, our native flora and fauna and waterways to ensure they are healthy again or we will lose our lovely ecosystem.
To put it into perspective.....imagine Australia's iconic koala being extinct. Doesn't sit well does it! It’s all connected...water, flora and fauna. We MUST do something and FAST.

**Kate Washington**

03 Aug 2018

Kate Washington
Kitchen Garden and Environmental Educator

The current hands-on services and resources provided by the NRM Education Program is of high quality and incredibly effective at promoting environmental and sustainability education to primary schools. I am concerned that with the proposed changes and focus of Green Adelaide, we will lose this invaluable and unique resource.

I work across two different primary schools in the outer Adelaide area, and as a result have engaged with a number of different officers from the NRM Education program. I find all the individuals to have extensive expertise and experience in managing strong and impactful projects at this crucial level of our children’s development. Their unceasing support is delivered through onsite visits, working directly with students and assisting teachers and SSOs to deliver high quality programming that has lasting educational and environmental benefits to our youngest generation.

The fact that schools are not even mentioned in your discussion paper or executive summary was a very strong indicator that this unique service has not been considered extensively enough. This is a landmark service that South Australia should be recognised for and strengthening, rather than throwing the baby out with the bathwater in an attempt to re-badge it as 'nature education' and forcing a re-creation of something that already works incredibly well.

I am concerned that in this restructure, us educators and our students will lose our lifeline to this incredibly important resource and it will take many years to even come close to replacing it, let alone improve on. Please do not underestimate its value and disregard the good work of this Program in the changes to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and I will watch the development of this new legislation and affiliated changes closely.
Kind regards
Kate Washington
Landscape Reform Team

03 Aug 2018

Thanks everyone for your contributions so far and for getting involved in this discussion - there is some great feedback being provided. Next week marks the start of our community forums. Don’t forget to register if you haven’t already. The forums are another great way for everyone to have their say on the proposed reforms.

Melissa Priest

03 Aug 2018

Melissa Priest
Youth and Recreation Officer
City of Holdfast Bay

We currently have a great working partnership between NRM Education and the Cities of Marion, West Torrens and Holdfast Bay, to deliver three school garden professional development workshops across our three Council areas annually. This has been a really successful partnership for a number of reasons, including:
• Enabling the opportunity to offer free PD to teachers by utilising the expertise of NRM Ed staff and contacts, and within a very modest support budget provided by the three Councils.
• Showcasing what schools and early learning centres are achieving around our regions whether it is big or small scale projects and give educators the opportunity to make connections to provide each other with information on learning and successes and to support each other.
• Providing an avenue to promote opportunities available to schools and earning centre centres through each of our three Councils.
• Providing an avenue to promote opportunities available for schools through NRM Ed staff and resources.
We would really like to be able to continue with this great partnership into the future.

Peter Croft

03 Aug 2018

Mr David Speirs
Minister for Environment and Water
GPO Box 1047
I am responding to your invitation to comment on the Discussion paper “Managing our Landscapes: Conversations for Change”. Thank you for the invitation to do so.

I was surprised that the document did not start with the key issue for any land manager right now: the impact of climate change on landscapes in the future. The recent severe weather in the northern hemisphere (Sweden forest fires, Greece fires, Japan heatwaves and typhoons to name a few) has highlighted the changes taking place right now. We can reasonably expect that South Australia will experience more severe weather (bushfires, drought conditions and storms) to an increasing extent from now on across its landscapes. This coming summer is likely to be a testing time for South Australia. The future will be much more so.

With this in mind, I found the document read as a paper mainly concerned with process not outcome. As an example: the page (page 11) entitled “Benefits” outlines 12 benefits of the proposed changes and highlights process benefits (e.g. governance, agility, administration costs, system changes etc). While “Vibrant biodiversity” was mentioned on page 8 of the document, the document has scarcely any mention of biodiversity in the description of the proposed changes in the pages that follow. The need for well-funded monitoring of landscapes to check how they are responding to climate change does not rate a mention either.

My overall impression of the document is that it reads as a return to the system of pest control, soil conservation and water boards which existed in the 1990s and previously, albeit on a lower funding base.

I urge you to rethink the changes that you are making. In particular, I suggest that you:

• start from climate change adaptation as the key future driver of change to landscapes
• ensure that the arrangements for NRM functions reflect what is required to adapt to climate change with some success. That includes adequate monitoring and adaptation to climate change.
• upgrade the role of biodiversity management in your planning: it’s not just managing the pest plants and animals to achieve viable landscapes; it’s important that the ecosystems in the landscapes work.
• ensure that these functions are resourced appropriately. No one will thank the government in ten years time for chopping a few million dollars each year off the cost of NRM and Environment Departments only to find that the South Australian landscapes are not adapting to climate change and that farming businesses aren’t viable and the natural parts of our landscapes are declining.
I am happy to discuss these suggestions in more detail at your convenience.

Yours sincerely

Peter Croft

**Kate Hubmayer**

02 Aug 2018

The services that NRM Education has offered to schools and community groups over the past decade has been excellent. I have been involved with a number of school gardens, community gardens, community centres and native revegetation projects, and the support given by NRM Education has been broad and useful. This support has included hands-on help building a frog pond, excellent teaching resources, professional development and networking opportunities, small grants, a great website, weekly email newsletters and more. NRM Education has been the only government department which has offered such meaningful and useful support. Hugh Kneebone and his team have been fabulous. I hope their work will be able to continue under the new structure.

**Allan Sumner**

01 Aug 2018

Natural resources should be managed in South Australia in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples of interest. We need to decolonize the oppressive systems that continue the process of colonization in South Australia and to restructure the system to be more inclusive of Aboriginal people. 50,000 years of traditional knowledge and practices yet today, Aboriginal voices and participation are not being valued.

The "Managing our Landscapes Conversations for Change" publication talks of South Australian’s as being blessed with diverse, productive and stunning resources. I don’t see any Aboriginal people being blessed nor enjoying these resources. Most Aboriginal people have not experienced the privileges associated with economic viability nor have they had an opportunity in managing their own land. Once upon a time, Aboriginal people had complete control over their lands and waters. 50,000 years of traditional knowledge, but unfortunately, promises in forging strong, enduring and productive partnerships with Aboriginal nations are often seen as token gestures and the commitments to maintain these relationships often fade away due to inadequate funding allocations. It’s great to support landowners, growers, and pastoralists but what support is given to Aboriginal people whose lands
and waters were taken away. Where is their economic base and how can Aboriginal people move forward autonomously in managing their own affairs equally if they don’t have the infrastructure to work from?

My recommendations for Minister Spears

1. To provide adequate resources to assist in the establishment of an Aboriginal Natural Resource Center in South Australia.
   1.1 Build an Aboriginal Natural Resource Center that has the autonomy to speak on behalf of natural resources in South Australia, providing direction, offering projects and educational programs to Schools, Stakeholders, Land Owners, Growers, and Pastoralists.

2. Provide adequate resources to support the establishment of an Aboriginal Natural Resource Center to that will foster collaborative and close relationships directly with NRM boards/staff, Schools, Stakeholders, Land Owners, Growers, and Pastoralists.

My questions for Minister Spears

1. Will the minister offer a strategy in ensuring long-term employment for Aboriginal People in Natural Resources South Australia?

2. Will the minister consider the above recommendations in relation to NRM?

Thank you

Allan Sumner
Ngarrindjeri Kaurna Yankunytjatjara Representative
South Australia

**Landscape Reform Team > Allan Sumner**

03 Aug 2018

Thanks for your insightful feedback Allan, which will be used to help shape the reforms. Your comments and suggestions will most definitely be given further consideration. Thanks again for joining the conversation.

**Ida Moore**

01 Aug 2018

As a current Year 12 student, the NRM board has been an important part of my education. It has helped support my work with the environment from primary school, through teachers and NRM Education, and into my high school years, through the
Willunga Environment Centre and YACCA. I feel that while some of the reforms may benefit some parties, it excludes supporting people with expert knowledge in the environmental and sustainability sector, placing the focus on landholders without improving the land quality through expert advice and guidance, and most importantly, education. While the reforms boast making, "strong, enduring and productive partnerships with land managers, volunteer groups, industry experts, Aboriginal nations, other tiers of government and advocacy organisations to deliver practical, on-ground works that address local priorities," the only true experts are either private (thus having a significant bias depending on industry) or are volunteers, who could be paid employees in the NRM rather than giving advice for free only in available hours; so while this may empower community members, it also separates them from the unbiased opinions and advice of current NRM workers, who have highly specific qualifications. I aim to be part of the environmental and land management sector, and I find this very disempowering. While I know there are many job opportunities out there, the reforms will significantly reduce the job availability pool and the nature of the jobs regarding government land and natural resource management.

The "Landscape Boards" idea is a heavily simplified system compared to the NRM! It has no prerequisite for a knowledge base of the area, the natural environment, conservation or sustainability. It sets a low precedent for the goals for environmental preservation and action for local areas. A democracy even in a small region requires more people and more opinions to gain a wider view from the community. This sector is also an important industry; natural resource management requires strong qualifications and experience, not just being local.

While "a transparent system that draws a clear line of sight between funding sources and on-ground action" and increasing participation are positive values, reforms will not achieve this - especially by getting rid of NRM education, which will actually reduce the scope of landscape management and discourage young people from becoming involved. Building upon the existing system would be much more effective, perhaps by adding a "Landscape board" composed of community members and landholders to communicate with the NRM, and this could be effective in implementing the many plans of the NRM, and in the exchange of ideas from community and landholders to the experts to develop plans and increase the effectiveness of NRM and community efforts. Reforms will only weaken the system and reduce management effectiveness.

How should natural resources be managed in South Australia? With Natural Resources Management boards.

**Landscape Reform Team > Ida Moore**

02 Aug 2018

Thanks for your very thoughtful feedback and interest in the proposed reforms Ida. There are many issues which still require consideration and will be informed by the
engagement process - it is feedback such as yours which will be valuable in helping to shape the government’s new direction.

John Stafford

01 Aug 2018

The Roman emperor Nero has often been accused of fiddling while Rome burned. As a member of a Friends of Parks group and as a private rural land owner I often feel somewhat complicit with Nero in being totally irrelevant to the issues at hand.

In the conservation park under our group’s care I see trees that have succumbed to summer moisture stress or have blown over in winter. An inspection of the latter’s root systems reveals that there are no deep tap roots to access subsoil moisture in the summer nor to physically support the tree in winter.

Some 10km away on my own farming property this same scenario is repeated, only this time I can add further concerns. A gently sloping hillside that should be well drained is in fact a bog in winter and a swamp-inhabiting plant in Juncus is now invading the site. A recent attempt to run steers on the 60 acre property revealed that its stocking rate (if it has one) is way below what it was 40 years ago when managed as a dairy farm.

It seems to me that this is a classic landscape issue affecting both conservation and farming land. Are the soils becoming anaerobic and thereby facilitating the decay of tree tap roots, along with impairing natural soil structure and drainage? A very practical hands-on agency is surely needed to help resolve such soil issues.

John Stafford

David Coulter

31 Jul 2018

Our early childhood Centre has been well supported by the NRM education program. The support has enabled community members and educators working together to receive practical knowledge and guidance in designing and planning improvements to the children’s outdoor learning environments.
**Margherita Campbell**  
31 Jul 2018  

NRM have been instrumental in supporting local schools in sustainability and environmental projects. Access to professional development, advice, leadership and networks have been absolutely necessary to ensure the educators and community members are up-to-date with their knowledge and action plans. This has also ensured that our children understand their continual responsibility in this area. Will this continue? Who will look after the website needed to ensure the information continues to be accessible? How will schools, child care centres and other institutions stay motivated if they cannot access the person with the knowledge and experience to share? We love Steve and Cally. Keep them in our neighbourhood!

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**Kristy Bennets**  
31 Jul 2018  

Not really sure if this falls under the umbrella of this discussion but I live in Richmond, a fairly industrial area and I would love to see more greenery within the suburb and in all suburbs for that matter. It's depressing looking out the window and seeing a factory right next to me. Of course, this is my choice but I foresee that if more investment was made into more dedicated areas for natural vegetation around this area it would improve local resistant health and atmosphere health. In particular, I would love to see a community garden here as well. This would bring a sense of community, help citizens have more access to natural areas they can walk to and not have to drive too far and further congesting the roads.

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**Landscape Reform Team > Kristy Bennets**  
02 Aug 2018  

Hi Kristy, thanks for your feedback. The issue you have raised definitely falls under the umbrella of this discussion and in particular relates to the government’s commitment to establish Green Adelaide which will deliver natural resource management functions in metropolitan Adelaide, focusing on enhancing the city’s urban ecology and investing in the natural environment to improve overall community wellbeing. Don’t forget to sign up for updates in order to see how Green Adelaide is shaped following feedback received through this engagement process. Thanks again for your input.
**Landscape Reform Team**

31 Jul 2018

Thanks to everyone who has been commenting on the NRM education programs. It’s great to hear how beneficial these programs are in ensuring our State’s younger generation are involved and connected to their local environment. Please continue to keep your feedback coming though.

**Glenys Perri**

30 Jul 2018

I would like to attend the discussion session but as I work 9-12 noon on a week day is not suitable. NRM has had a great influence in schools - education, revegetation and biodiversity is great but a lot needs to be done in regards to weed eradication, large scale native revegetation and financially backing amazing not for profits like ‘friends’ groups and Trees For Life. I live in the Blackwood area and we have some lovely parcels of native vegetation remaining but the amount of weeds is really disturbing

**Derek Walter > Glenys Perri**

01 Aug 2018

I think weeds are a huge issue for everyone at the moment. I think community groups need to step up, and help out in areas of communal benefit. I also think we need to stop expecting things to be done for us. This is one problem that has led the NRM levy to skyrocket, because as the community expects more and more to be done for nothing, the money has to flow from somewhere, and levies create an unequal movement of money from one place to another. If everybody helped out in their own region more, and even created work groups to move and help out in other regions, there would be less demand for the dollars that get caught up in red tape. Also, more money from the levies actually hitting the ground would be helpful.

**Mandy Hank**

30 Jul 2018

As an educator, the NRM education program has been most valuable in attempting to get a plan for our school to be sustainable and teach environmentally sound
practices to our senior secondary students. the NRM is the only service that appears to be available for schools to conduct thorough educational assistance.

Dolores Amos

30 Jul 2018

As a natural resource manager of 30yrs and an environmental educator at a R-12 school located on the Fleurieu Peninsula, I am a little concerned that through the proposed changes, learning communities will lose the valuable support of the NRM education team. These teams are an integral support of schools and vital in the education of landscape ecology and sustainable practices. NRM teams empower our youth with knowledge and together with schools, we inspire and give them confidence and a passion to become ethically minded citizens which assists them to make a positive impact at a local and global level.

I am also a little concerned that a large focus will be on Green Adelaide and the division of monies will be unfair. The name itself is not suitable - what does 'green' mean anyway? I suggest it is an old fashioned term and used as a derogatory at times. Why not something like Sustainable Adelaide or EcoAdelaide or the like.

I also comment here about the severe reduction of park rangers in recent times. These people are vital in hands-on action at a ground level and themselves have become a threatened species. I note in the blurb re proposed changes, the lack of the word, biodiversity. Caring for the biodiversity and ecological status of the state’s 'natural' areas is fundamental and support must be given to threatened species and protection of these areas.

I note the community forums are during business working hours and this reduces the capacity of some interested parties being able to attend, including myself. Can I suggest evening or weekend sessions?

Rebeka Probert > Dolores Amos

30 Jul 2018

I agree with the points above and will add my comments and thoughts shortly. I agree with offering a weekend slot for community discussion. 9am-12pm on a work day isn’t sufficient in being able to include and gain the voice of a fair group sample within these communities. I think this is a very important consideration moving forward.

Landscape Reform Team > Dolores Amos

31 Jul 2018
Hi Dolores and Rebeka, thanks for your helpful feedback. In terms of your concerns about the community forum session times, we appreciate the times allocated may not suit everyone. Unfortunately it’s just not possible to find a single time that meets the schedules of all participants, given the wide range of people involved in managing natural resources. While the forum times may not be suitable for everyone, the community forums are only one of the ways we are seeking feedback about the reforms. We welcome everyone’s input through this online discussion or through an email or letter (please refer to the ‘Get Involved’ section on the front page for more details). In the meantime your concerns have been noted. If additional sessions can be arranged then further advice will be posted on this site. Thanks again.

Derek Walter > Dolores Amos

01 Aug 2018

Re: Education. I’m unsure whether the Landscape South Australia Bill should be encumbered with the job of educating everyone in the State about the Environment. Surely there is enough awareness in schools now for them to seek out information on their own. Landscape SA should be used to liaise with the community and add local knowledge from different sources to the large amount of general knowledge already out there.

Landscape Reform Team

27 Jul 2018

Thanks everyone for joining the conversation and providing your input. The feedback provided is valuable and will be taken into further consideration. In the meantime, please don’t forget to register to attend one of our community forums and also sign up to stay informed and receive notification of updates.

Natalie Gentle

27 Jul 2018

As an educator, the NRM education program has been valuable in building capacity in young children to learn about natural environments and sustainable practices. I would like to see a program for early childhood and school aged children continue, as education of young children is an investment for future sustainable practices, which ensures that when these children reach adulthood, they are highly skilled in navigating waste systems, and hold a deeper understanding and connection to the natural environment. The NRM grant scheme has also been incredibly important in
setting up community based, sustainable initiatives, that improve the natural environments of education settings and encourage creative solutions to barriers relating to sustainability.

**Marcelle Muller > Natalie Gentle**

29 Jul 2018

As a teacher at. Climate change school, I feel it is our duty to teach sustainable practices as part of the Australian Curriculum so we need the NRM to continue their support.

**Elspeth McKinnon**

25 Jul 2018

As an educator of young children I have found the NRM Education Program to be highly valuable and I am extremely concerned that the streamlining of the management and abolishment of the board will mean an end or a vast reduction of a highly effective service. As educators we can be sometimes be expected to be a Jack of all trades and some may argue a master of none. The NRM Education team has not only worked with children but has also built the capacity of educators and our communities. With the support of NRM we have been able to go further and deeper with educating for sustainability. NRM has also supported the educational sector to work with other community groups such as KESAB and Reconciliation Australia.

**Landscape Reform Team > Elspeth McKinnon**

27 Jul 2018

Thanks for your input Elspeth in relation to the NRM Education Program, its great to hear how valuable you have found this program. Just wanted to follow up with you about what is happening with the Boards to make sure you have all the information. The existing eight NRM Boards will be abolished and replaced with nine Landscape SA Boards. The existing boundaries for the Boards are proposed to be largely unchanged except in the Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges region where they will be covered by Green Adelaide and two new Landscape Boards to serve the Hills and Fleurieu region and the Plains and Valleys region. Hope this was helpful. Thanks again for sharing your views. Your feedback will certainly be taken into account.
Derek Walter > Elspeth McKinnon

01 Aug 2018

I agree that the NRM has been able to get some high quality information into the community. As education has always been an important and necessary part of ensuring community programmes succeed, these have been invaluable to many groups. As a commercial farmer, though, it seems that a very small portion of this output is geared towards the people who care for the vast majority of the landscape (outside the metro area).

Di DeLaine

25 Jul 2018

I am concerned about the ability of some regions (of vast areas with a low population) as to how to fund their programs. There is a very real inequality between the regions in terms of funding resources from levies that needs to be addressed. In addition, soil quality and water management rely on robust natural ecosystems and native vegetation, yet native vegetation is not the key priority for NRM. Thirdly, the Boards having more community representation/focus is one thing, however the cost of supporting these boards does erode the regions of valuable funds for on ground works and community support from extension officers. I believe the state needs to cover the costs of running the boards, not the region's levies.

Gerry Thompson > Di DeLaine

30 Jul 2018

I agree. Some regions have natural landscapes with high conservation value, but a low population base from which to fund management of those resources. It would be better if those landscapes were recognised as of state or national importance and funded accordingly. I am thinking of the pastoral area and River Murray. It should not be an impost on landowners in those regions who are already struggling with the costs of production.

Di DeLaine > Di DeLaine

02 Aug 2018

Hi Gerry. Add the AW, Outback and EP regions to that mix!
Paul Turner

24 Jul 2018

As a Highbury resident close to the River Torrens Linear Park I am concerned about the attention given the River Torrens by the NRM (or is it more correct to say lack of attention). Having adequate funds is obviously the issue. In September 2016 we had the massive flood which caused considerable damage along the River. Some of the damage is still yet to be repaired. There are some "settling ponds" (Sedimentation basins?) which have been seriously damaged and no action has been taken to restore them. All of these ponds were put in for a reason but one major pond is now just a tributary of the River and others have been partially filled with silt build up thus limiting their effectiveness. Also many of the stormwater inlets with catch nets are poorly maintained - more often than not are so filled up with rubbish that they are almost ineffective. It seems that the original design was set up with oversight by the NRM but ongoing work has been hand-balled over to local Councils who do not seem to have funds required to adequately maintain the infrastructure. Is it a failure by the NRM, Councils or State Government or perhaps all due to lack of direction or interest?

Cheryl Zampin > Paul Turner

03 Aug 2018

Absolutely agree Paul. Linear Park is a haven for many native animals and native trees who rely on the creek bed for water.

I am concerned about the soil which feeds all of those elements as well as the ongoing litter which enters these waterways.

Steve Coombe

24 Jul 2018

The SAMDB was acknowledged as having one of the best community based systems in the country. They were the Local Action Planning groups; incorporated associations run by local volunteer landholders. From the mid-1980s they did remarkable works at moderate cost across the region. In 2011 it was shown that for every dollar received, eleven dollars of funding was leveraged for targeted ground works.

In 2018 these groups are a shadow of their former selves, de-staffing and, in some instances, closing down. The proposed changes will come too late for some.
First came the slash and burn of the Department for the Environment. Their focus fell on acquiring the Natural Resources Levy for survival. NRM staff became Department staff. Government pressed harder for returns and slashed again. So much administration piled up that the remaining staff spent their time attending to process rather than outcomes. The miracle is that these outcome oriented staff were able to achieve anything at all, but they did against the unrelenting pressure of paperwork.

Meanwhile, the once cooperative LAPs were set against each other competing for a diminishing pool of funding. Other groups were added to the list of bidders for the funds. Competing government programs were set up as well, further diluting the LAPs' access to funding for on ground works. Money was fed out piecemeal and later and later where once it was paid up front. The buffers that the LAPs had built up in the early days are now all but gone.

People with the core knowledge and the passion have traiked off and re-organised their lives. If the system is resuscitated a few may wander back for a look but I fear that two or more decades of capacity has been lost. Maybe the cynicism of the old will be washed away by the new wave of graduates, but for how long?

Working in the environmental industry is a tough gig. This new thrust makes many of the right noises at this end of the process but ultimately its success or failure will rely on trust.

Trust by government in the community to get good outcomes on ground.

Andrew Allanson > Steve Coombe

25 Jul 2018

Excellent comments Steve. As a member of a surviving LAP group, I have become incredibly frustrated. LAP began before the NRMs were set up. I remember attending a forum in Adelaide about the creation of NRMs; when I voiced my concerns about an extra layer of bureaucracy I was assured that NRM boards would be assisting LAP groups. History has shown this not to be true.

Whilst people are needed in offices to manage and be administrators of programs, there is a huge need for on-ground work - largely neglected at the moment. “You can't manage bushland from an office” seems apt at the moment.

Landscape Reform Team > Steve Coombe

25 Jul 2018

Thanks for joining the conversation Steve and Andrew and for sharing your comments on the Local Action Planning (LAP) Groups.
The LAP Groups have played an important role in providing support to volunteers and community groups across the SAMDB region and have made great contributions.

We would encourage you to come along to one of the community forums to have your say.

Thanks again for sharing your thoughts.