

PLANTING INDIGENOUS SPECIES POLICY

Description:

This policy states the Government of South Australia's commitment to the planting of indigenous native vegetation on Government managed land and projects.



**Government
of South Australia**

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Government of South Australia will give priority to the planting of indigenous species to:

- i) promote the use of plants adapted to the South Australian environment;
- ii) contribute to the conservation of native vegetation and biodiversity values; and
- iii) support Government strategies for the conservation of biodiversity.

This Policy can also assist in achieving the State Government's water-savings targets by encouraging the greater use of indigenous species adapted to South Australia's environment and are therefore less reliant on irrigation and watering.

For places of natural heritage significance, the implementation of this Policy should be part of a process that determines the desired conservation outcomes and future condition of the place. This process accords with the Australian Natural Heritage Charter.

The Policy links with other Government strategies and initiatives including NatureLinks and One Million Trees, and also complements the National Strategy for the Conservation of Biodiversity.

2. OBJECTIVE

Giving preference to the planting of appropriate indigenous species and actively implementing this policy can result in the following potential outcomes:

- encourage the planting of a diversity of indigenous species to retain regional landscape character and to improve landscape values lost due to human activity;
- contribute to the viability of ecosystems and species by maintaining the integrity of natural plant associations;
- reduce the need for and occurrence of watering, and the cost of maintaining plantings and gardens;
- reduce rising water tables, combat the spread of soil salinity and reclaim salt-affected areas;
- increase the potential for carbon sequestration, particularly in large scale planting situations;
- reduce the potential spread of introduced species of plants and weeds;
- demonstrate that South Australian indigenous species are suitable for horticultural and landscape use;
- encourage more community-based and commercial nurseries to collect and propagate local indigenous plant species; and
- reduce storm water pollution through decreased autumnal leaf fall and weed species in waterways.

3. BACKGROUND

The Department for Environment and Heritage adopted a Planting of Indigenous Species Policy in 2001 for areas within its operational accountability.

In November 2001, Cabinet agreed to the establishment of a Whole-of-Government Working Group to develop a policy that would have an active bias towards the planting of indigenous (local area) native plant species on State Government land, to maximise biodiversity and other values.

4. SCOPE

The Planting Indigenous Species Policy applies to:

- i) all land under the direct management of the Government of South Australia (including Crown and Freehold land managed through its Departments, enterprises and statutory authorities); and
- ii) Crown land to be transferred to other agencies for management as open space or green space; and
- iii) broad-scale restoration programs funded predominantly by the Government of South Australia on other lands within the State.

The Policy is to be applied in the above situations including rehabilitation, revegetation / restoration, and landscaping across South Australia in the built, rural, natural or open space environment.

While not directly applying to Crown land managed by Local Government agencies or lessees, the intent of the policy should be promoted with these managers to improve the biological conservation of South Australia's flora and fauna and to reduce the level of irrigation water use.

The implementation of the Policy may be varied where:

- 4.1. Crown land is used for commercial, research or educational enterprises based on non-indigenous or introduced species (eg. commercial plantations).
- 4.2. The heritage character of an area is important and may be adversely affected by the use of indigenous species (eg. post-settlement cultural sites).
- 4.3. Plantings reflect connections (through vegetation) with non-Australian regions (eg. Sister Cities, overseas partnerships, and immigration) or other indigenous communities (eg. Aboriginal bush food displays).
- 4.4. The area has a role to conserve and display non-indigenous or introduced species (eg botanic gardens, arboretum).
- 4.5. Sporting, recreational or public amenity areas that require introduced grass species for achievement of their purpose (eg turf, lawns).
- 4.6. Areas leased (or intended to be leased) for residential purposes, in which case the use of appropriate indigenous species is to be encouraged with lessees.

- 4.7. Areas where fire-breaks are required, and suitable indigenous species cannot be planted.
- 4.8. Areas where deciduous species are to be planted to promote energy conservation through optimising winter solar heating of buildings.
- 4.9. The Government of South Australia is not the owner of the land and occupation arrangements restrict landscaping options.

5. IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES

This Policy should be implemented in accordance with the following principles.

- 5.1. Locally indigenous seed and plants are to be used whenever possible. The collection of native plant seed in South Australia must comply with the provisions of Part 4 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*, and the *Native Vegetation Act 1991*.
- 5.2. Harvesting of seed and other propagules of indigenous species from areas of remnant vegetation should be done sustainably without adversely affecting the ecology of the collection site.
- 5.3. Planning for vegetation works should be undertaken well in advance to enable sufficient time for seed collection and / or propagation of local area plants in order to maintain the viability of existing vegetation.
- 5.4. Planning should incorporate, where appropriate, indigenous trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses to provide structural diversity and spacing to the planting, encourage a broad range of native fauna, and complement landscape and wildlife habitat goals.
- 5.5. Where indigenous plants or seed of the local area cannot be obtained, preference should be given to using plants of that indigenous species sourced from a nearby area. However, out-of-provenance plants or seed should not be introduced to a site where there is a risk of diminishing the genetic integrity of nearby remnant plant populations.
- 5.6. Indigenous plant species from other areas must be assessed for weed risk potential in the environment they are to be planted - recognising that some native species may have the potential for weediness outside of their normal habitat.
- 5.7. All plantings must be assessed for their suitability to the purpose and use of the area (particularly in urban situations) with due consideration of safety (eg. potential for shedding limbs or hard fruit, poisonous) and the impact on maintenance, surrounding landscapes and environments (including buildings, paved areas, roads, infrastructure etc).
- 5.8. Planting or direct seeding of indigenous species should not occur within areas of intact native vegetation in order to avoid detrimental impacts. Planting should therefore be undertaken on existing

cleared sites or within degraded vegetation where natural recruitment is unlikely to occur.

6. COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

This Policy is consistent with the Objects b) & e) of the *Native Vegetation Act 1991* for:

- (b) the conservation of the native vegetation of the State in order to prevent further reduction of biological diversity and further degradation of the land and its soil; and
- (e) the encouragement of the re-establishment of native vegetation in those parts of the State that have been cleared of native vegetation.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Policy is the responsibility of the Minister for Environment and Conservation and administered through the Department for Environment and Heritage.

The Policy is to be implemented by all Government Departments and agencies.

8. MANAGEMENT

Chief Executives of agencies are required to disseminate this Policy to all relevant staff.

Implementation instruments include:

- tenders involving landscaping and restoration works will specify (unless inappropriate) the use of locally indigenous species
- where introduced species are proposed, landscaping projects by Government agencies will provide an evaluation of the reasons for not using locally indigenous species;
- restoration programs funded predominantly by the Government of South Australia will, where possible, use local provenance for individual species, and include structural diversity in the planting's selected.

9. REFERENCES

Choosing species and their provenance

The reasons for choosing plants from the local provenance are well documented in Florabank's Guideline 5 and Guideline 10 available at: www.florabank.org.au/

Trees For Life have a searchable database for selecting different types of native plants (trees, scrubs, groundcovers, grasses, etc) for 41 different provenances within South Australia: www.treesforlife.org.au/SpeciesLists/species.html

Collecting native seed and propagation

Collecting native seed on public land is controlled by the provisions and permits of Part 4 (Conservation of Native Plants) of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*. Further information is available at:
www.environment.sa.gov.au/biodiversity/seed.html

Fact sheets on collecting and treating native plant seeds; and on some useful native plants in different environments can be obtained through Florabank (www.florabank.org.au/) and Primary Industries and Resources SA (www.pir.sa.gov.au/pages/agriculture/res_info/fsvegetation.htm)

Locating native plant suppliers

Commercial and community suppliers of native plants are located in many areas. Be sure to ask about the provenance of their stock and its suitability for planting the site in question. A Searchable database for suppliers in your area can be obtained through Florabank at:
www.florabank.org.au/

Indigenous street trees

Indigenous street trees suitable for urban applications are often difficult to locate. TREENET is an independent not-for profit organisation that coordinates trials of street trees in conjunction with Local Government. Details of street tree trials in South Australia can be obtained at:
<http://www.treenet.com.au/index.asp>

Fire-related planting

Fire-related planting guidelines can be obtained in the Country Fire Service (CFS) Fact Sheet 15 - Landscaping for Fire Protection & Fact Sheet 16 - Fire Retardant Plants. Other information is also available at
www.cfs.org.au

Weed potential

Weed potential of a species should be assessed before introduction into an area. The SA Animal and Plant Control Commission has developed an assessment sheet available at:
<http://sustainableresources.pir.sa.gov.au/dhtml/ss/section.php?sectID=61&templD=2>.

The following technical report can also assist this assessment: Virtue, J.G. and Melland, R.L. (2003). Technical report: *Weed risk assessment of twenty plant species used for revegetation or farm forestry in South Australia*. Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation, Adelaide, South Australia.

SA Urban Forest Biodiversity Program

Many useful links are available through the SA Urban Forest homepage at:
www.urbanforest.on.net/

Trees for Life

Two guides on planning for and establishing native plants are available at: www.treesforlife.org.au/planting/lhbooklet.pdf

Suppliers of local native seeds and seedlings for the Trees For Life scheme can be found at: www.treesforlife.org.au/order.html#suppliers

Nursery and Garden Industry Australia

Garden supply centres can find out what assistance is available to them via the "Flora for Fauna" site at: www.ngia.com.au/floraforfauna/

Bushcare

The Bushcare Program (<http://www.ea.gov.au/land/bushcare/>), as part of the Federal Government's Natural Heritage Trust (<http://www.nht.gov.au>), provides grants to community groups and other organisations to carry out environmental projects in restoration and native vegetation management. Contact the South Australian Bushcare Coordinator for more information.

Primary Industries and Resources SA – Sustainable Resources

An introduction to using indigenous species to benefit biodiversity is available at: www.pir.sa.gov.au/pages/sus_res/reveg/biodiversity.pdf

10. DEFINITIONS

Native species means a plant species that is indigenous to Australia or an external Territory (including the seabed of the coastal sea the continental shelf; economic zone or that was present in Australia or an external Territory before 1400. (Source: Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*)

Indigenous species or **vegetation** of South Australia means a plant or plants of a native plant species from their known natural ranges within South Australia. This includes South Australian vegetation currently present, documented as having been present in historical times or reasonably assumed to have been present in historical times by its occurrence in similar habitats or associations.

Introduced species are plants that are not indigenous to South Australia.

Local provenance (area) or **locally indigenous** means genetically-adapted to a particular locality. 'Local provenance' plants and seed naturally occurring in or nearby the locality are hence likely to have genetic characteristics specific to the locality. A particular indigenous species may have many provenances depending on the range of environments and conditions it is naturally found. Ideally local provenance plants should be sourced from the nearest remnant of that species (although this is not always possible or feasible), and without compromising its sustainability.

Biodiversity or **biological diversity** means the variability among living organisms from all sources (including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part) and includes:

- (a) diversity within species and between species; and
- (b) diversity of ecosystems

(Source: Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*)

For definitions of other terms used in this Policy, refer to the Australian Natural Heritage Charter 2nd edition:
<http://www.ahc.gov.au//infores/publications/anhc/pubs/charterfinal.pdf>