

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL PARKS
AND
WILDLIFE COUNCIL**

ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007



**Government
of South Australia**

**Parliament of South Australia
Laid on the table of the
House of Assembly
2nd Session 51st Parliament**

Annual Report of the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Council 2006-07

September 2007

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Hon Gail Gago MLC
Minister for Environment and Conservation
Parliament House
North Terrace
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear Minister

In accordance with the requirements of Section 19D of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*, I have pleasure in presenting the annual report of the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Council for the year ended 30 June 2007.

Dr Greg Ogle
Acting Presiding Member
South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Council

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SOUTH AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE COUNCIL

The South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Council (the Council) was established in 1996 under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* (the Act) as the State's peak advisory body on parks and wildlife.

This report is for the financial year 2006-07 and is presented to fulfil the requirements of section 19D of the Act.

FUNCTIONS

As per Section 19C (1)(a) of the Act, the functions of the Council are:

- (a) to provide advice to the Minister at the Minister's request or on its own initiative on any matter relating to the administration of this Act; and
- (b) such other functions as are set out in this Act.

Without limiting subsection (1)(a), the Council may advise the Minister on the following matters relating to the administration of this Act:

- (a) planning in relation to the management of reserves;
- (b) the conservation of wildlife;
- (c) funding (including matters relating to sponsorship) and the development and marketing of commercial activities;
- (d) community participation in the management of reserves and the conservation of wildlife;
- (e) the development of policy;
- (f) existing or proposed national or international agreements relating to the conservation of animals, plants and ecosystems;
- (g) the promotion (including public education) of the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources;
- (h) the Council's assessment of the performance of the department in administering this Act;
- (i) any other matter referred to the Council by the Minister or on which the Council believes it should advise the Minister.

The Council has no powers under the Act. It provides an independent view, has community-based representation and has a wide ranging brief.

MEMBERSHIP

Section 15 of the Act provides for the establishment and membership of the Council.

The Council comprises eight members, seven of whom are appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the Minister. The eighth member of the Council is the Director of National Parks and Wildlife, who is not entitled to vote at Council meetings. Each of the appointed members of the Council is a person who, in the opinion of the Minister, meets the standards stipulated by section 15 (4) of the Act for the appointment of members:

- (4) Of the appointed members–
 - (a) one must have qualifications or experience in the conservation of animals, plants and ecosystems;
 - (b) another must be a person selected by the Minister from a panel of two men and two women nominated by the Conservation Council of South Australia Incorporated;
 - (c) another must have qualifications or experience in the management of natural resources;
 - (d) another must have qualifications or experience in organising community involvement in the conservation of animals, plants or other natural resources;
 - (e) another must have qualifications or experience in a field of science that is relevant to the conservation of ecosystems and to the relationship of wildlife with its environment;
 - (f) each of the remaining two must have qualifications or experience in at least one of the following:
 - (i) ecologically based tourism; or
 - (ii) business management; or
 - (iii) financial management; or
 - (iv) marketing, being an area in which the other does not have qualifications or experience.

Each of the appointed members must be a person who has, in the opinion of the Minister, a commitment to the conservation of animals, plants and other natural resources. One of the appointed members of the Council will be appointed by the Governor, on the recommendation of the Minister, to be the presiding member of the Council.

Previous members of the Council were appointed for a term that expired on 9 February 2007:

Presiding Member

Dr Jane James 15(4)(f)(i): qualifications or experience ecologically based tourism

Members

Dr Greg Ogle 15(4)(b): selected by the Minister from a panel of two men and two women nominated by the Conservation Council of South Australia Incorporated

Mr Mervyn Lewis 15(4)(c): qualifications or experience in the management of natural resources

Ms Leanne Liddle 15(4)(d): qualifications or experience in organising community involvement in the conservation of animals, plants or other natural resources

Dr Sonia Kleindorfer 15(4)(e): qualifications or experience in a field of science that is relevant to the conservation of ecosystems and to the relationship of wildlife with its environment

Dr Ian Gould 15(4)(f)(ii): qualifications or experience in business management

Ms Mourilyan Nicholls 15(4)(a): qualifications or experience in the conservation of animals, plants and ecosystems

Mr Greg Leaman 15(3): Director of National Parks and Wildlife

The existing members of the Council were appointed on 8 March 2007 for a term to expire on 7 March 2009:

Members

Ms Mourilyan Nicholls 15(4)(a): qualifications or experience in the conservation of animals, plants and ecosystems

Dr Greg Ogle 15(4)(d): qualifications or experience in organising community involvement in the conservation of animals, plants or other natural resources

The existing members of the Council were appointed on 8 March 2007 for a term to expire on 7 March 2010:

Presiding Member

Dr Jane James 15(4)(f)(i): qualifications or experience ecologically based tourism

Members

Ms Vicki-Jo Russell AM 15(4)(b): selected by the Minister from a panel of two men and two women nominated by the Conservation Council of South Australia Incorporated

Mr Charles Jackson 15(4)(c): qualifications or experience in the management of natural resources

Dr Megan Lewis	15(4)(e): qualifications or experience in a field of science that is relevant to the conservation of ecosystems and to the relationship of wildlife with its environment
Mr Keith Yates	15(4)(f)(ii): qualifications or experience in business management
Mr Greg Leaman	15(3): Director of National Parks and Wildlife

The Council acknowledges the involvement of outgoing members Dr Ian Gould, Dr Sonia Kleindorfer, Ms Leanne Liddle and Mr Mervyn Lewis and expresses appreciation for their contributions to the Council.

ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Member	14/08/ 2006	16/10/ 2006	04/12/ 2006	Member	02/04/ 2007	28/05/ 2007
Dr Jane James	✓	✓	✓	Dr Jane James	✓	✓
Dr Greg Ogle	✓	✓	✓	Dr Greg Ogle	✓	✓
Ms Millie Nicholls	✓	✓	✓	Ms Millie Nicholls	✓	✓
Mr Mervyn Lewis	✓	✓	✓	Ms Vicki-Jo Russell	✓	✓
Ms Leanne Liddle		✓	✓	Mr Charles Jackson	✓	✓
Dr Sonia Kleindorfer	✓	✓	✓	Dr Megan Lewis	✓	✓
Dr Ian Gould	✓		✓	Mr Keith Yates	✓	✓
Director, National Parks and Wildlife	✓	✓	✓	Director, National Parks and Wildlife	✓	✓

Attended meeting ✓

ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL

Five meetings were held during the course of the year.

The Council provides advice to the Minister on issues that may be referred by the Minister or on which it feels it should comment independently as a community representative organisation.

Council members have an ongoing interest in a number of areas for which they continue to discuss and monitor progress.

PLANS AND OBJECTIVES

Strategic Priorities

The Council regularly provides advice to the Minister for Environment and Conservation on reserve management plans, reserve policies, wildlife policies, and the Wildlife Conservation Fund.

In addition, the Council established the following strategic priorities for advice to the Minister. The new Council will be revising its strategic priorities during 2007-08.

1. Biodiversity Strategy

As a key stakeholder, Council continued to contribute to the development of *No Species Loss – a Biodiversity Strategy for South Australia*.

No Species Loss aims to promote strategic thinking about biodiversity protection, conservation and sustainable management whilst encouraging ownership, engagement, partnerships and innovative solutions to the problem of declining biodiversity in South Australia.

2. Park Management Effectiveness Project

In 2005-06 DEH commenced a project to develop park management effectiveness measures. DEH has determined that aligning management effectiveness measures with management plans will enable DEH to develop a framework and methodology by which meaningful measures can be integrated with the objectives and strategies for the management of a park.

The Council will continue to work with DEH to develop the project, which will provide a means for both evaluating the effectiveness of management but also reviewing and reporting against management plans.

The Council is particularly interested in exploring issues relating to monitoring and evaluation, conservation and sustainable use by various users (e.g. researchers, visitors, general public, commercial tourism operators, mining companies), and linkages with social, economic and environmental outcomes.

3. Resourcing and Profile of Parks

The Council will provide advice to the Minister on how understanding, support and sustainable use of parks can be increased.

The Council will continue to examine ways to increase the resourcing and profile of parks, through linkages with social, economic and environmental outcomes, and through exploring the potential for using park management planning as a means for determining priorities and objectives for funding.

4. Review of the Reserve Classification System

The Council will continue to be kept informed and contribute to the review of the reserve classification system, with updates being provided at each meeting of the Council. Council will provide advice to the Minister on the review.

OPERATIONS AND INITIATIVES 2006-07

The Council has provided the Minister with advice on a number of major issues. In 2006-07 notable achievements were:

Planning and Management of Reserves

Reserve management planning

The Council reviewed public submissions on the following draft reserve management plans and recommended them for adoption:

- Anstey Hill Recreation Park
- Totness Recreation Park
- Deep Creek and Talisker Conservation Parks – Amendment
- Carpenter Rocks Conservation Park and Bucks Lake Game Reserve
- Mallee Parks of Central Eyre Peninsula
- Conservation Parks of Lower Eyre Peninsula
- Stipiturus Conservation Park
- Porter Scrub Conservation Park

The Council noted regular updates of the 2006-07 Reserve Management Planning Program from Mr Jason Irving, Manager Policy and Planning in DEH, and reviewed and endorsed a draft DEH reserve management planning policy. Council commended DEH for sustaining a high level of quality and output of management plans over the last three years and improving its consultative processes.

Review of the reserve classification system

The Council was briefed by Mr Jason Irving, Manager Policy and Planning, DEH on the review of the existing reserve categories under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* and the proposed new system of reserve categories. Council received a DEH analysis of the 132 submissions received on the review and reaffirmed its support for the direction of the review and its progression given the wide consultation and significant interest and comment.

Park management effectiveness

The Council received regular updates on the progress of the Park Management Effectiveness Project. Council supported the aims and principle of developing an outcomes-based model for the project. Council looks forward to receiving a final report on the project for advice to the Minister in 2007-08.

Resourcing and profiling of parks

The Council discussed ways this strategic priority could be progressed, including the potential for schools to sponsor or 'adopt' National Parks. Council also discussed the idea of a 'National Parks Day' initiative to increase school student involvement and understanding of park issues.

The Council commended DEH for producing high quality materials to raise the profile of parks in the community.

Indigenous Land Use Agreements and parks

The Council was briefed by Mr Peter Hall, Principal Negotiator ILUA Negotiating Team, and Dr Keri Rain, Solicitor, from the Attorney-General's Department on ILUA negotiations affecting parks. Council affirmed its support for co-management agreements and ILUAs in parks provided they are adequately resourced, address concerns of all parties involved and do not compromise the conservation values of parks.

Exploration and mining in the Yellabinna Region

The Council was briefed by Mr Jason Irving, A/Manager Land Management on the discovery of the Jacinth and Ambrosia mineral sands prospects by Iluka Resources Limited in Yellabinna Regional Reserve. Council recognised that this is a significant development for the reserve system and will continue to provide advice to the Minister on this project, particularly in relation to the development of a draft management plan for the reserve.

Marine Protected Areas

The Council was briefed on the Marine Parks Bill and made a detailed submission on the Bill as part of the consultation process. In discussing the Marine Parks Bill, Council also suggested complementary amendments to the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* that could be considered at some future time.

DEH visitor management and Ikara interpretive project

The Council received a briefing on the directions in visitor management in parks, including the development of a DEH Trails Strategy and the development of a number of visitor management policies, including policies on cycling in parks, rock climbing in parks, and commercial tour operators. Council looks forward to receiving these policies for advice in the near future.

The Council also received a briefing from Mr Grahame Hearne, Manager, Interpretation and Information, DEH on the development of the Department's Strategic Interpretation Plan 2007-2011, which seeks to improve the interpretation messages for visitors to South Australia's parks and reserves.

The Council was briefed on the Ikara (meaning “meeting place”) project. This project, undertaken at Old Wilpena Station in Flinders Ranges National Park, has been of immense importance to reconciliation in the region through its recognition of both European and Aboriginal heritage. Council commended the Ikara project as the outcome of a successful partnership with indigenous people.

Conservation of Wildlife

Biodiversity Strategy

The Council received regular briefings from Dr Graeme Moss (Biodiversity Strategy Planner, DEH) regarding the development and implementation of *No Species Loss – A Nature Conservation Strategy for South Australia*. Council received advice on the outcomes of community consultation on the draft strategy.

Nature Conservation Legislation Project

As a component of the No Species Loss Strategy, the Council received briefings on the development of and the formation of a Nature Conservation Legislation Reference Group. Dr Greg Ogle was nominated as the Council’s representative on the Reference Group, with Dr Megan Lewis as proxy.

Wildlife Conservation Fund

The Council endorsed the Wildlife Conservation Fund Grants Assessment Panel’s recommendation to the Minister for proposed research grants from the Wildlife Conservation Fund for 2006-07.

Two members of Council (Dr Kleindorfer and Ms Nicholls) were involved in the assessment process of the 2006-07 round of the Wildlife Conservation Fund Research Grants Program.

Kangaroo harvesting quota

Dr Glenn Shimmin (Abundant Species Ecologist, DEH) gave Council a detailed presentation on DEH’s proposal for the 2007 Kangaroo Harvesting Quota. Following detailed review, Council endorsed the DEH recommendations for the 2007 season for consideration by the Minister.

Duck and quail hunting season

Dr Glenn Shimmin (Abundant Species Ecologist, DEH) gave Council a detailed presentation on DEH’s proposal for the 2007 Duck and Quail Hunting Season.

The Council was briefed on the consultation process undertaken and the DEH recommendations for the 2007 season. The Council discussed the issues raised in the presentation, in particular the data used to compile recommendations.

The Council unanimously supported the closure of the duck-hunting season for all game species throughout 2007, and supported a restricted open season for quail, for consideration by the Minister. Council will continue to monitor the quail season and has requested further advice on the long-term sustainability of quail hunting.

Threatened Species Schedules Subcommittee

The Council met with Ms Penny Paton, Chair, Threatened Species Schedules Subcommittee of DEH, to discuss the reporting relationship of the Subcommittee to Council, following dissolution of the Wildlife Advisory Committee through which the Subcommittee previously reported.

The Council acknowledged the need for the work of the Subcommittee to continue, in assessing the status of taxa in South Australia, and commended the Subcommittee's many achievements to date, which include the development of assessment criteria to provide defensible justifications for recommended status listings in South Australia, and a full view of the species listed under Schedules.

The Council recommended that the Subcommittee be formalised within DEH, with specific terms of reference and membership, and that six-monthly updates on the Subcommittee's work be provided to Council through DEH.

RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

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

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

HUMAN RESOURCE MATTERS

Members of the Council received the following remuneration:

- Chair: \$160 per four-hour session.
- Member: \$140 per four-hour session.

The Council has no staff of its own and utilises the services of DEH. Reporting on this matter is contained in the DEH Annual Report 2006-07.

Staffing

Executive, administrative and project support are provided from existing DEH resources. The Executive Officer for the Council was Ms Leah Young and the Secretary for the Council was Ms Emma Coates.

Disability Action Plans

The members of the Council are aware of and abide by their obligations under the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the State *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*. Reporting on this matter is contained in the DEH Annual Report 2006-07.

Equal Opportunity Programs

The Council has no staff of its own and is serviced by staff of DEH. Members are aware of and abide by the equal opportunity policies and programs of DEH. Reporting on this matter may be viewed in the DEH Annual Report 2006-07.

Gender Reporting

The gender balance of the Council is always taken into consideration when members are appointed. Within the reporting period, the Council consisted of four male and four female members.

Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare

There were no incidents reported by the Council in the reporting period.

As a user of DEH facilities and equipment, the Council is aware of and abides by DEH's OHS&W policies. Reporting on this matter is contained in the DEH Annual Report 2006-07.

Use of Consultants

The Council did not engage any consultants in the reporting period.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Financial Performance of the Committee

The Council is not a corporate entity and has no funds of its own. As such, reporting on this matter is contained in the DEH Annual Report 2006-07.

Finance

The costs associated with the administration of the Council are met from within the existing resources of DEH. Members are paid sitting fees in accordance with the

determination from the Commissioner for Public Employment. The expenditure, including sitting fees, for the period of operation was \$14,647.

Account Payment Performance

DEH provides administrative resources for processing account payments for the Council. Reporting on this matter is contained in the DEH Annual Report 2006-07.

Contractual Arrangements

The Council did not enter any contractual arrangements exceeding \$4 million in value during the reporting period.

SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING

Triple Bottom Line Reporting

As a DEH administered entity, the Council uses the facilities and services of staff of DEH. Reporting to quantify environmental performance is contained in the DEH Annual Report 2006-07.

Energy Efficiency Action Plan Reports

The Council uses the facilities and services of the staff of DEH. Reporting on this matter is contained in the DEH Annual Report 2006-07.

OVERSEAS TRAVEL

It is declared that no member of the Council has travelled overseas on the business of the Council during the reporting period.

FRAUD

It is declared that there were no instances of fraud detected in the activities undertaken by the Council.

Financial services are provided to the Council by DEH. Strategies to detect instances of fraud are reported in the DEH Annual Report 2006-07.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

As a DEH administered entity, the Council participates and abides by the arrangements outlined in the DEH Freedom of Information regime. Reporting on this matter is contained in the DEH Annual Report 2006-07.

REGIONAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

The Council undertook no Regional Impact Assessment Statements in 2006-07.

URBAN DESIGN CHARTER

No events occurred in 2006-07 that required the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Council to consider the principles of urban design contained in the South Australian Urban Design Charter.

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT IN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

The South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Council does not own any non-residential buildings and therefore is not required to develop an asbestos risk reduction program.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Council appreciates the support and encouragement it has received over the past year from the Minister for Environment and Conservation, Hon Gail Gago MLC. The Council records its appreciation for the assistance provided by senior DEH staff, including the Chief Executive, Mr Allan Holmes and Director Natural and Cultural Heritage, Mr Greg Leaman. Council also records its appreciation to Executive Officer Ms Leah Young and the Secretary Ms Emma Coates.

The Council looks forward to a further year of challenge and achievement in 2007-08.