

The Nature of SA

Summary of Nature Conservation Sector's Feedback | January 2017

Reviews of the No Species Loss strategy 2007-2017 indicate that the sector's awareness of the strategy was high and it was seen as comprehensive and relevant, however over its tenure it had limited ability to influence or drive action for biodiversity conservation in the State.

Workshops with government and non-government conservation partners identified a number of necessary 'shifts' in our future approach to conservation including a need to:

- review the assumptions underlying some of our traditional conservation approaches given the extent of climate and landscape change that has and will yet occur;
- embed systems that foster continuous adaptive and shared learning;
- make greater investment in more inclusive and resilient governance structures;
- engage with and influence the State's narrative around the value of nature; and
- demonstrate what we know works and where it doesn't encourage innovation.

These shifts were explored with the State's environment sector over **12 months**, at **19 consultation sessions**, in **every NRM region** of the State, and involved over **400 individuals**.

The 'sector' appreciated the opportunity to **talk openly** about the challenges and to take time to review the way we do business. Many related to Richard Hobbs' **reflection on conservation loss and grief** and welcomed the opportunity to discuss. They recognised that many of the discussions facilitated by the Nature of SA project were also being held in the global **scientific and popular literature**.

The sector acknowledges that the scale of change to climate and landscape underway requires us to look at things differently and **plan for more change and uncertainty**. Funding, reporting, political, policy, legislative and risk management systems will need to create an environment where **new approaches** can be supported and trialled.

Protecting and sustainably **managing the valuable biodiversity assets** we have is as vital as ever and **existing practices** such as protecting and enhancing remnants, protected area management and landscape connectivity have a strong evidence base to show they will continue to work in future.

There remains a strong commitment to **threatened species conservation** especially where species have flagship or keystone value and that instead of adopting a blanket policy we need to choose the most effective conservation approach in each circumstance. Many in the sector recognised it was unlikely we would be able to prevent no species loss in future within the current paradigm.

We should honour the work that has gone before us as much of the natural wealth South Australians enjoy today is due to this effort.

The sector recognises the value of managing biodiversity assets in **novel ecosystems** including urban and agricultural especially in highly modified regions. In future, effort should be guided less by what is non native and more about a species' impact **in the landscape and likely outcomes for investment**.

The wealth and value of our existing biodiversity assets need to be **more visible** to the community particularly urban populations.

Feedback supported the urgent need to **strengthen the sector's** capacity, resilience and profile and to celebrate wins more to ensure it was supported sufficiently to meet the significant challenge and community's expectations.

Continuous **adaptive learning and knowledge** sharing are critical and systems need to be in place to achieve it.

Community do care about nature but this is not resulting in change or influence. The resources apportioned to environment do not match community concern or risk to the State and the sector needs to foster skills, programs, and resources to better mobilise community. The sector wants to offer its expertise, **engage with community around their values** and work **across government** to establish more shared goals.

A future biodiversity strategy must **position biodiversity** as vitally important to the State's future, provide a **high level state-wide framework** that regions can work through and **enable regions and partners** to successfully apply the shifts in their context.