



22 January 2010

The General Manager

Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges NRM Board

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Dear Kym,

Re: Annual Review of the Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges NRM Board Investment Plan

As a Peak Body under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*, Conservation Council SA (Conservation SA) is pleased to make comment on these proposed amendments to the Business Plan of the Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges NRM Board NRM Board.

Conservation SA commends the AMLR NRM Board on its Draft Investment Plan 2010/11 - 2012/13. A key challenge for NRM Boards is in communicating to the broad community what their statutory obligations are, what they have been achieving and what they intend to invest in over the next year. The Board has clearly achieved this throughout this draft document. The provision of the 'Investment Plan Review Factsheet' was a useful means of summarising the Draft Investment Plan, although it may also have been worthwhile including more information as to the rationale for those changes. Importantly, such a fact sheet help demonstrate to the community that the Investment Plan also serves as an adaptive management tool as well as an engagement tool and is an illustration of the Board's learning and of the continuous improvement sought. Further, an executive summary of the Draft Investment Plan may be worth considering. This could summarise what has been achieved in the region, what the Board has learnt over the past year and how that has been reflected in changes in the Plan. This demonstrates that the Board is responsive, that the Plan is community-driven and the aim is for things to continually improve. It would also bring warmth and heart to the document as would the inclusion of short case studies demonstrating partnerships in action.

It would have been useful to include a feedback form to ensure community were aware of what specific feedback the Board was seeking and how that feedback would be utilised.

The Board is to be commended on initiatives such as the NRM Progress Forums held in October, the 'regional report cards' and the provision of information as to how the Board is tracking against the MATS. All of these initiatives contribute to the community's understanding of what has been happening in their region, what is intended in the future and what their role is.

As acknowledged in the Draft Investment Plan, 'partnerships and collaboration are vital to the successful implementation of both the Board's investment plan and the plans of ...partners'. Given that, it would be useful if the document outlined the Board's intended process for engaging partners and, in particular, what the criteria will be. Presumably, the processes will be outlined in the plans and documents that have been designed to support the implementation of the Investment Plan?

In order to obtain meaningful comment and the all-important 'buy-in' from the community early involvement is crucial. Therefore Conservation SA is supportive of the early involvement of the community when the Board is reviewing its Business Plan as well as seeking community feedback on proposed amendments. However, it is acknowledged that there is an on-going challenge to make such engagement opportunities as meaningful as possible.

Finally, Conservation SA appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Annual Review of the Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges NRM Board Business Plan and trusts these comments will be duly considered.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Pettett', written in a cursive style.

Julie Pettett

CEO