

## Link to South Australia's Strategic Plan Objectives

Proper management of the state's natural assets will strengthen South Australia's reputation for being clean, green and sustainable, and contribute towards the achievement of the following targets:

### Objective 1: Growing Prosperity

<b>Tourism industry</b>	Increase visitor expenditure in South Australia's tourism industry from \$3.4 billion in 2001 to \$5.0 billion by 2008 by increasing visitor numbers and length of stay and, more importantly, by increasing tourist spending. (T1.13)
<b>Strategic infrastructure</b>	Increase investment in strategic areas of infrastructure, such as transport, ports and energy to support and achieve the targets in South Australia's Strategic Plan. (T1.16)

### Objective 2: Improving Wellbeing

<b>Quality of life</b>	Improve Adelaide's quality of life ranking on the William M. Mercer Quality of Life index to be in the top 20 cities in the world within 10 years. (T2.1)
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### Objective 3: Attaining Sustainability

<b>The River Murray</b>	Increase environmental flows by 500 GL in the Murray-Darling and major tributaries by 2008 as a first step towards improving sustainability in the Murray-Darling Basin, with a longer-term target to reach 1500 GL by 2018. (T3.1)
<b>Land biodiversity</b>	Have five well-established biodiversity corridors linking public and private lands across the state by 2010. (T3.4)
<b>Marine biodiversity</b>	Create 19 Marine Protected Areas by 2010. (T3.5)
<b>Native vegetation</b>	Any clearance of native vegetation being offset by significant biodiversity benefit by 2005. (T3.6)
	Integrate native vegetation/biodiversity management in South Australia's eight Natural Resource Management regional plans by 2010. (T3.7)
	Lose no species. (T3.8)

### Objective 5: Building Communities

<b>Regional Infrastructure:</b>	Build and maintain infrastructure to develop and support sustainable communities in regions. (T5.11)
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## Background

South Australia's natural assets underpin quality of life by providing clean air, water and arable land. They generate income and support pastoralism, agriculture, large commercial and recreational fisheries, aquaculture, tourism and human settlements. The state's native flora and fauna is among the most diverse and unique in the world.

The State Government's responsibilities for natural assets encompass managing the state's public lands, including most of its coastline and river banks and reserves; providing leadership in legislation, policy and programs to protect, manage and use natural assets and developing and implementing interstate and national agreements on natural assets.

More than 20% of the state has been set aside primarily for conservation. Twenty million hectares are now protected in the reserve system and a further half a million hectares are protected by over 1200 voluntary heritage agreements with private landowners. A network of marine protected areas is under development.

The level of soil loss to wind erosion has significantly declined due to changed farming practices and land rehabilitation schemes. A healthy River Murray is essential to the future viability of the state and the river now has greater protection thanks to the *River Murray Act 2003*. Many government policies and programs now focus on the water requirements of rivers, streams and wetlands and partnership programs have been established between the three spheres of government and the community to lead towards sustainable use and development of natural resources.

*The Natural Resources Management Act 2004* (NRM Act) sets up an integrated scheme for administering the use and management of natural resources across South Australia. The integrated administrative arrangements under the Act replace, in a staged process, the currently separate arrangements that are in place for water, soil, and animal and plant control. This integrated system continues to provide for community participation with the State Government as well as the local government sector and the Australian Government.

## Challenges and Opportunities

### Overview

There are significant issues and challenges confronting communities, industry and governments that, unless met, will diminish the condition of the state's natural physical assets, productivity and quality of life. These include:

- salinity levels in the River Murray
- soil productivity and soil loss that still occur during extreme weather events
- increasing development along the coastline and semi-urban regions
- impacts of climate change on biodiversity
- water use and quality issues
- increasing land use intensity
- dryland salinity

Management of natural assets requires a long-term view as many of the problems faced today were set in train by historical land management decisions and actions, and are exacerbated by some current management practices.

### Natural Resources Management

The provision of areas of appropriate quality habitat provides the basis for healthy, functioning ecosystems. Native habitat also provides a source of unique genetic material that has as yet untapped potential for future innovation and development.

The Upper South East Dryland Salinity and Flood Management Program was developed in the early 1990's to address community concerns about dryland salinity, waterlogging and ecosystem fragmentation and degradation. Measures adopted to address these concerns include drainage, saltland agronomy, revegetation and wetland management.

The Mount Lofty Ranges are one of the state's most important natural, social and economic regions; supplying over 60% of Adelaide's water, producing over \$240 million pa of farm gate value in agricultural produce, housing 85,000 people and containing considerable areas of diverse vegetation with many threatened plants and animals. The special natural features of the region, and the many activities in the area have created a complex environment with a large range of conflicting land uses and development pressure, that needs careful management.

The South Australian Government recognises that economic development needs to be sustainable.

Regional NRM investment strategies will identify specific projects and relevant funding sources to address issues at the local level, within a framework for ensuring that local decisions are consistent with state-wide and national priorities and policies.

### Strategic Priorities

- Implement the new integrated NRM Framework.
- Develop an integrated spatial system to provide an information/knowledge database on natural resources, including soil, water and vegetation.
- Ensure the restoration and sustainable management of the Mount Lofty Ranges.

#### Parks, Gardens and Tourism

South Australia's unique natural and cultural assets underpin much of the state's economic success. The natural and cultural environment is a key motivation for travel and tourism and makes a substantial contribution to some local economies by providing income and employment (including youth and Aboriginal employment). Many of South Australia's major nature-based tourism attributes are to be found in national parks and reserves. Research consistently shows visiting national parks is one of the major activities undertaken by holiday travellers.

There were approximately six million visits to South Australia (domestic, overnight and international for the 12 months ended September 2003), including more than 300,000 international visitors. South Australia's national parks and reserves attracted approximately 3.8 million visitors. Surveys show more than one third of all international visitors have a strong interest in and desire to experience our unique nature, landscapes and wildlife, particularly in its natural habitat, and 42% will visit a national park during their stay. International visitors participating in nature-based activities or who visit natural places, also spend more than the average for all visitors.

Some of Adelaide's significant tourism and recreational assets are the Adelaide, Mount Lofty and Wittunga Botanic Gardens. Tourism has become an economic mainstay in regional areas, such as Kangaroo Island (KI), the Flinders Ranges, Fleurieu Peninsula, Yorke Peninsula and Eyre Peninsula, where there are unique natural and cultural attractions.

Another significant tourism and recreational asset is the Heysen Trail. The Heysen Trail is the state's premier long-distance walking trail stretching 1200km over some of its best landscape from Cape Jervis to the heart of the Flinders Ranges. The trail gives people an insight into the diverse heritage, development and beauty of the state's many varied landscapes.

The protection of the environment is vital to the ongoing sustainability of the tourism industry and parks are the key to building sustainable nature-based tourism experiences. The challenge is to manage visitation in a manner that enables people to have a memorable and authentic experience. Quality visitor infrastructure such as roads, walking trails, car parks, campgrounds, accommodation, stairs and boardwalks are required to manage and develop the visitor potential of natural areas, while also managing the environmental impacts.

### Strategic Priorities

- Develop innovative and environmentally friendly infrastructure solutions in parks and reserves to maximise the benefits from increased tourism.
- Establish iconic sites for promoting and interpreting the conservation of natural and cultural heritage.
- Improve capacity to manage the state's network of parks and reserves in a sustainable way.

#### Biodiversity Corridors

The SASP proposes that five biodiversity corridors linking public and private lands be established across the state by 2010. The State Government is working with regional communities to establish the corridors and integrate biodiversity conservation with other natural resource management. Infrastructure investment associated with the establishment and future management of the corridors will be required. Three corridors have been identified to date:

- 'East meets West' – integrated biodiversity management across land and sea from Eyre Peninsula through the Great Victoria Desert and Nullarbor Plain to Western Australia
- 'Bounceback Extension' – an extension of the successful ecological restoration project to encompass biodiversity conservation on and off reserves from the Southern Flinders Ranges to the Gammon Ranges

- ‘Cape Borda to Barossa’ – integrated biodiversity management across Kangaroo Island, Backstairs Passage and the Mount Lofty Ranges.

### Strategic Priorities

- Attain sustainability and protect our natural environment through partnerships between the public and private sectors.
- Establish and maintain five biodiversity corridors.

#### Living Coast Strategy

Some of South Australia’s unique and precious resources are its coastal, estuarine and marine environments. These marine and estuarine waters are some of the most biologically diverse in the world and are also highly valuable resources supporting an array of activities from fisheries and aquaculture to shipping and mining.

There is a need for adequate environmental and planning frameworks to manage the increasing and often competing demands on the coastal, estuarine and marine environments arising from development and use.

The Living Coast Strategy addresses the government’s environmental policy commitments for coastal, estuarine and marine environments. It sets out the policy directions and framework that the State Government will be taking in the next five years to help protect and manage South Australia’s coastal, estuarine and marine areas for their conservation and sustainable use.

### Strategic Priority

- Implement the Living Coast Strategy to ensure the sustainable management of the state’s coastal assets.

## Projects

Project	Priority #	2005/6– 2009/10	2010/11– 2014/15	SASP Targets
Complete the drainage program in the Upper South East and the salt interception schemes along the River Murray (Loxton and Bookpurnong) <b>* Lead – State Government</b>	U/way	*		3.1
Develop and upgrade the state's key parks and public spaces through targeted investment in visitor infrastructure to promote and support tourism and recreation, while promoting sustainability objectives <b>Lead – State Government, local government</b>	U/way	*	*	1.13 6.2
Develop an integrated package of works to improve biodiversity and land management on lower Eyre Peninsula <b>Lead – State Government</b>	U/way	*		3.6
Implement the Living Coast Strategy including the metropolitan beach sand management plan <b>Lead - State Government, local government</b>	U/way	*	*	1.16
Develop appropriate infrastructure to protect and conserve five biodiversity corridors linking public and private lands across the state <b>Lead - State Government</b>	U/way	*	*	3.4 3.8
Upgrade roads and day visitor facilities to support sustainable touring in South Australia's outback and regional parks <b>Lead – State Government</b>	2	*	*	1.13
Promote development of tourism accommodation in regional areas to facilitate access to strategic tourism assets <b>Lead – private sector</b>	2	*	*	1.13

\* Lead – lead responsibility for promoting, developing and evaluating the project.

# Priority – preliminary rankings. Priority numbers do not represent a final commitment by the State Government or other lead entities. See the Delivering the Plan section for further details.



# Natural Assets