



Landcare Association of South Australia Inc

A member of the National Landcare Network

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2023 Independent Review of the Landscape South Australia Act 2019

This submission is provided by Dr Eleanor Pratt, Executive Officer, on behalf of the Landcare Association of South Australia.

- 1) The Landscape Act was formed to address four particular outcomes, one of which is 'empowering the community and landowners'. From our experience working with Landcare community groups and landholders around the state, activities and projects to empower the community and landowners are not executed equally across the state. We surmise that this is likely due to differences in resourcing for the different regions, rather than a lack of dedication to this important goal. We expand on this issue in point 7 of this submission.
- 2) Part 1 - Division 2: 7 – Objects and principles
 - a) Page 24 - The three additional objectives and principles included in the Landscape Act are important inclusions. However, the phrasing in the Act in Objective 1b to 'support the interests of Aboriginal peoples' should be reworded to set a stronger intention for collaboration and empowerment of Aboriginal people to care for their own interests and Country.
 - b) Page 24 - The wording of Objective 1d - 'promotes, protects and conserves biodiversity' - should be reworded similarly to Objective 1c, including the action of actively restoring biodiversity, in addition to preserving current biodiversity levels or speaking in the passive tone of 'promoting' biodiversity.
- 3) Part 2 – Division 2
The Landcare Association of South Australia (LASA) supports the model of decentralised decision-making and priority-setting, recognising that it is important for each region to determine their own specific priorities, projects and actions.
- 4) Part 2 – Division 2 – Subdivision 5: 25 – Functions of boards (general)
While the functions outlined for the regional boards are comprehensive, there is an overall lack of provision for consultation and collaboration with the community.
 - a) Page 38 - Function 1bi specifies that regional landscape boards are required 'to prepare a regional landscape plan and (where relevant) water allocation plans'. There is however, no mention of the process by which these plans should be developed. To maximise the benefits of the decentralised model and ensure that the plans are regionally specific and relevant, the community must be consulted and involved in the development of these plans. It is also crucial that other key stakeholders such as environmental NGOs (for example the South Australia Nature Alliance), Aboriginal people and organisations, and relevant peak bodies are involved in the development of regional plans.
 - b) Page 38 - Function 1c states that regional landscape boards are required 'to promote public awareness and understanding' through 'educational initiatives with respect to natural resources management'. It is important that the public are not only made aware of natural resources management, but also supported to become involved themselves.



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Landcare and other environmental community groups are an important contributor to sustainable land management efforts around South Australia, assisting landscape boards to reach many of their outlined objectives. While several landscape boards do provide support to community groups and their projects, this must also be included in their legislated functions in order to successfully achieve the intended outcomes of the Landscape Act, namely 'empowering the community and landowners'.

- c) Page 39 - Function 1h states that regional landscape boards are required 'to facilitate an understanding of, and to provide information to landowners...'. As outlined under point 4b above, it is crucial that landowners are not only given information and an understanding of natural resources management issues but are also supported to engage in sustainable land management themselves. This is critically important to the success of regional landscape boards, who will not achieve their objectives if they are only working on public land, without the assistance and/or cooperation of landowners.
- 5) Part 2 – Division 2 – Subdivision 6: 26 – Green Adelaide Board (priority areas)
 - a) Page 40 - Green Adelaide have been very supportive of Landcare and other environmental community groups in their efforts to actively contribute to biodiversity and sustainable land management in metropolitan Adelaide. While their outlined seven key priorities are all very important, we note that 'controlling pest animals and plants' does not encompass the management of issues relating to pet animals, primarily free-roaming pet cats. The current legislation around this issue – the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 – offers no support to the community for the management of free-roaming pet cats and is a noted issue for many Landcare groups and Landcarers. It is important that Green Adelaide (and the regional landscape boards) are empowered to take action against this issue in order to protect efforts to conserve and promote biodiversity.
- 6) Part 3: 44 – State Landscape Strategy
 - a) Page 52 – Point 1 states that 'The Minister must prepare and maintain a plan to be called the *State Landscape Strategy*'. As outlined under point 4a in this submission, there is no stipulation that this strategy should be developed through a consultative and collaborative process with key stakeholders such as environmental NGOs (for example the South Australia Nature Alliance), Aboriginal people and organisations, relevant peak bodies and community groups.
- 7) Part 5 – Landscape and water levies

In our dealings with regional landscape boards and Green Adelaide, it has become obvious that funding is not equally or equitably distributed between the landscape boards. There are obvious differences in staffing capacity between Green Adelaide and regional landscape boards, specifically in regard to the size of the volunteer engagement and support teams. As such, environmental community groups and landholders in metropolitan Adelaide and the areas close to Adelaide have access to many more opportunities for training and support, than regional and



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rural communities do. An example of this is that Landcare and similar groups are able to access free insurance through Green Adelaide, the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board and the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board. However, in the more remote regions, many Landcare SA member groups cannot receive the free insurance cover that their metropolitan counterparts can. This is despite all regional landscape boards theoretically offering the same insurance cover to community groups. In regions currently not offering, or offering inconsistent insurance cover, the landscape boards have cited that they do not have the staffing capacity to deliver insurance to the groups.

To ensure that all regions of South Australia are equally well supported to deliver projects led by landscape boards and the communities, it is important that funding is equitably distributed among the regional landscape boards and Green Adelaide. This must take into account the unique financial challenges faced by rural and regional communities in our state.