

# Strategy for Protected and Conserved Land Areas in South Australia

Community consultation report



**Government  
of South Australia**

Department for  
Environment and Water

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# Project background

In 2012, the Conserving Nature 2012-2020 strategy was adopted by the South Australian Government to guide the establishment of protected areas in South Australia.

Following the expiration of that strategy, the Department for Environment and Water (the department) has been working closely with the Parks and Wilderness Council (the council) and other key stakeholders to develop the Strategy for Protected and Conserved Land Areas in South Australia (the strategy). This updated strategy will ensure that new additions to the state's reserve system are carefully targeted to enhance biodiversity and improve the long-term sustainability of our environment.

To help develop the Strategy for Protected and Conserved Land Areas in South Australia, the department and Parks and Wilderness Council hosted three workshops in 2024. The first, held in May 2024, involved key stakeholders from across the protected area sector, with attendance from Landscape Boards, Conservation Council SA, Friends of Parks SA, Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation, and various other eNGOs and private conservation partners. The second, held in June 2024 with internal Department subject matter experts, further developed the strategy. The final workshop with key stakeholders was held November 2024, where updated strategic outcomes were explored in detail.

## Community consultation

### Background

The department sought community feedback on the draft strategy to help ensure a range of ideas and interests were considered in shaping how our protected and conserved areas are expanded and enhanced into the future.

From the 4th to 31st of August 2025, the department hosted a YourSAy consultation, where the community were invited to provide their feedback via an online survey or written submission. During the community consultation period, the department and council met to discuss additional feedback internally.

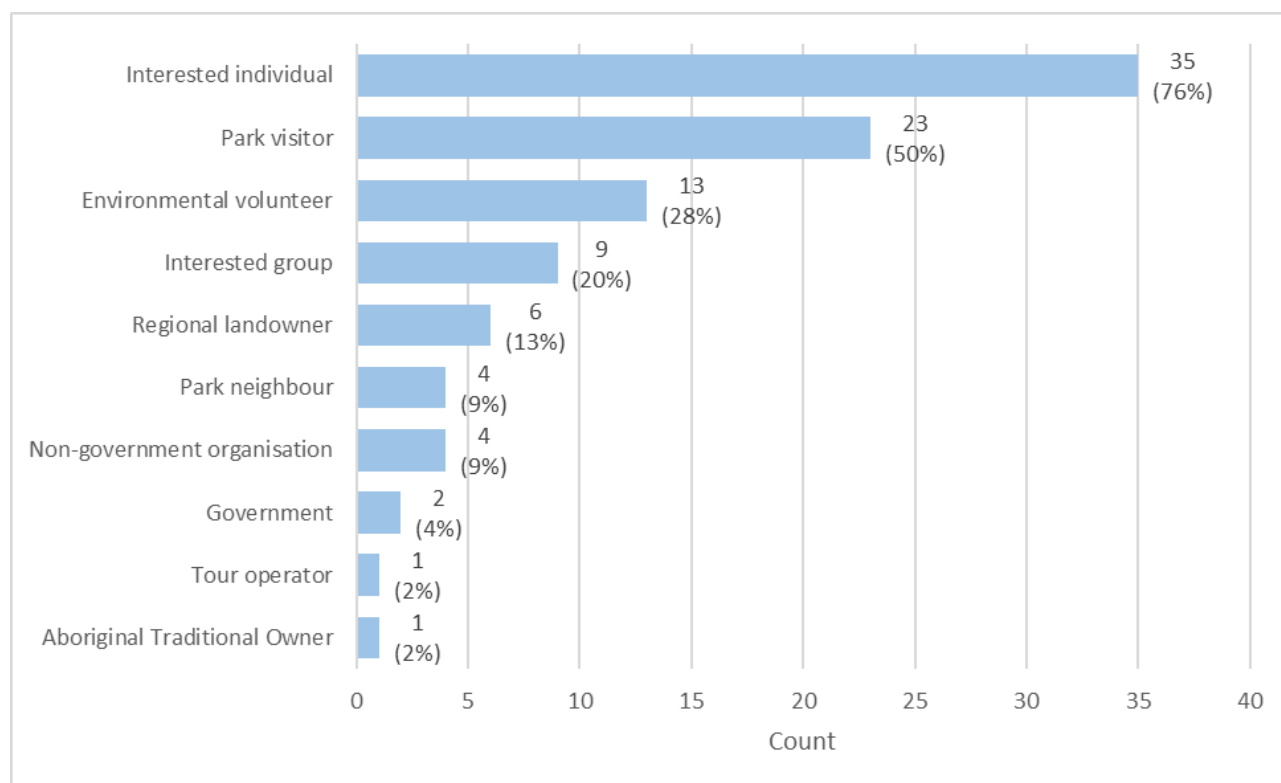
This feedback has been collated and used in the development of the final strategy.

### Responses

#### Surveys

We received 46 survey submissions. Figure 1 provides a snapshot of the interest groups that the survey responders represent (noting that responders could select more than one interest group).

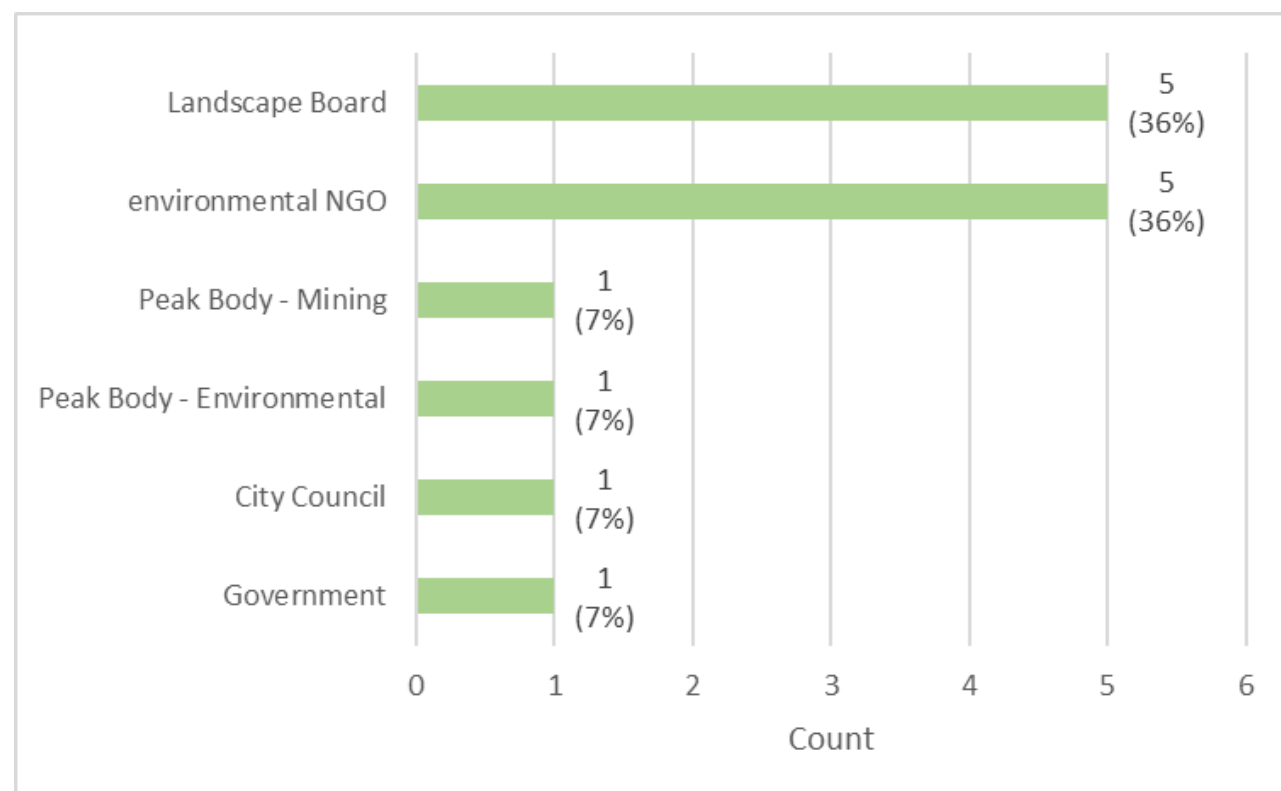
Figure 1: Survey respondent - Interest Group



## Written submissions

We received 16 written submissions from a variety of organisations. Figure 2 provides a snapshot of the types of organisation that each submission came from.

Figure 2: Submission respondent – Type of organisation



# Consultation results

## Quantitative Data

### What we asked

The survey asked 6 questions to gauge the community's support for the strategy, each goal and its supporting strategic priorities, and the enabling actions (refer to Appendix A for the survey questions).

We asked an additional question to understand if responders found the survey helped them to provide feedback on the strategy

### What we heard and how we responded

At a glance, the survey found that **78%** of respondents **support the strategy** (see Figure 3).

- **83% support Goal 1** and the supporting strategic priorities (see Figure 4)
- **87% support Goal 2** and the supporting strategic priorities (see Figure 5)
- **81% support Goal 3** and the supporting strategic priorities (see Figure 6)
- **74% support Goal 4** and the supporting strategic priorities (see Figure 7)
- **76% support the enabling actions** (see Figure 8)

In terms of survey value, **78% agreed** that the **survey helped to provide feedback**.

Refer to the figures below for a more detailed summary of how people responded.

Figure 3: Support for the strategy

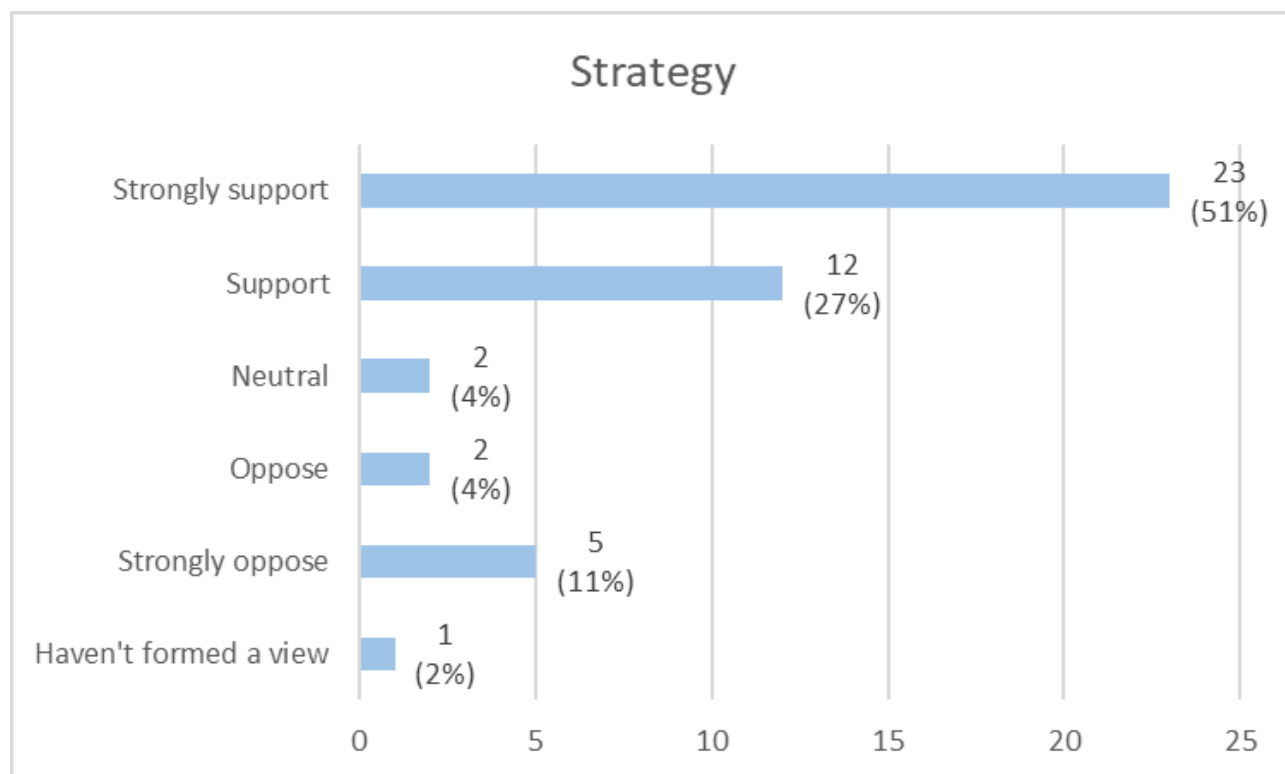


Figure 4: Support for Goal 1 and supporting strategic priorities

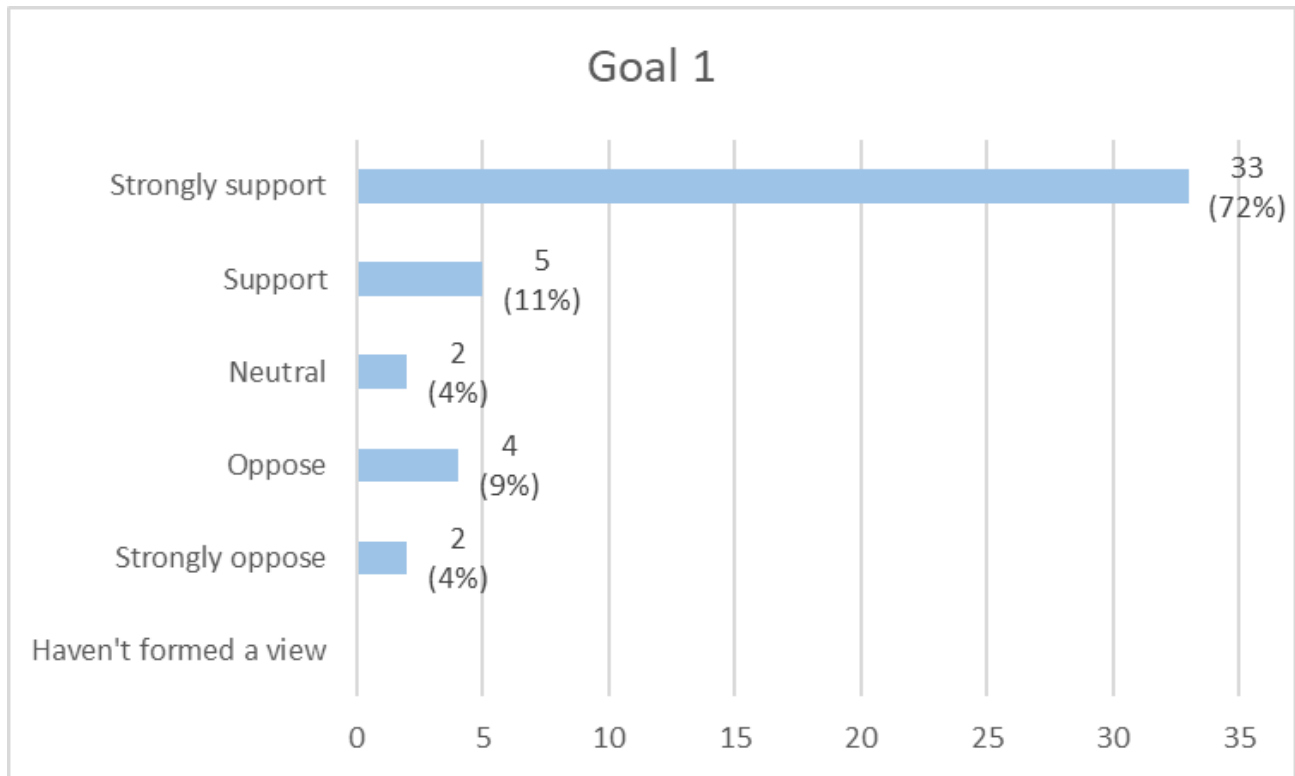


Figure 5: Support for Goal 2 and supporting strategic priorities

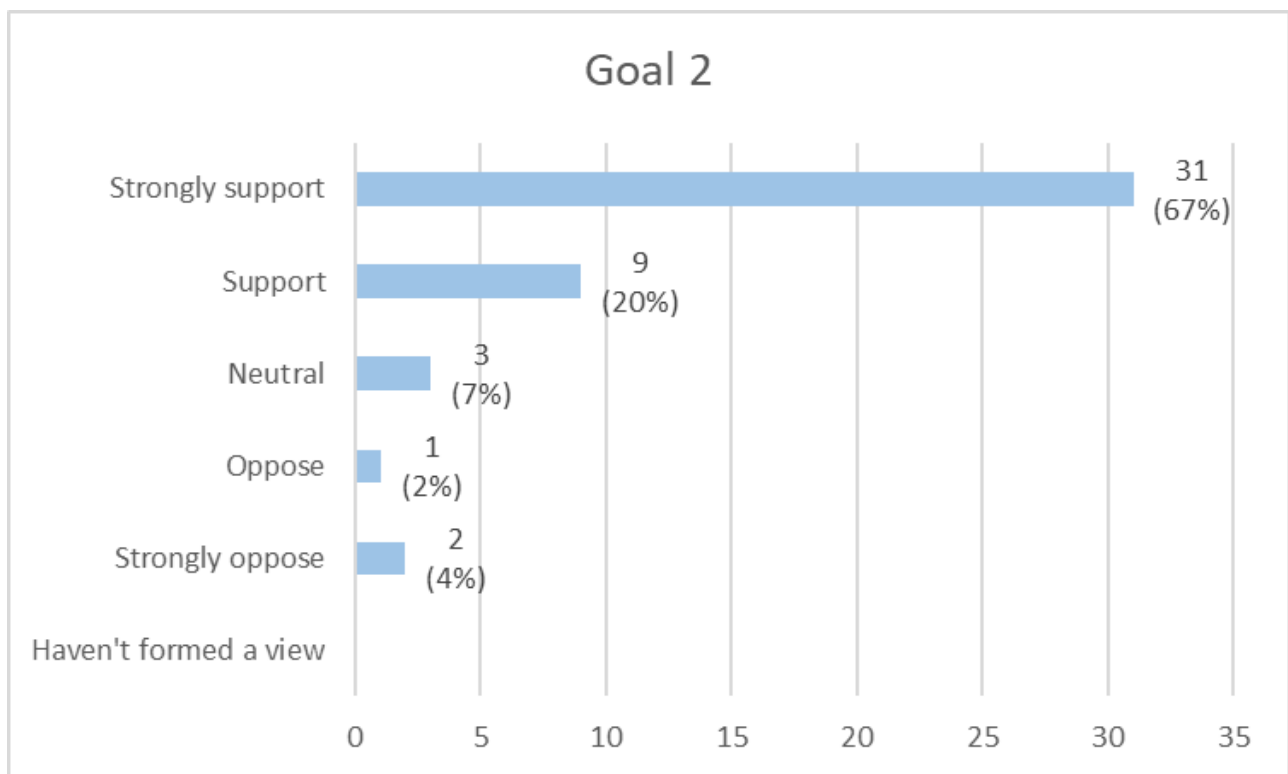


Figure 6: Support for Goal 3 and supporting strategic priorities

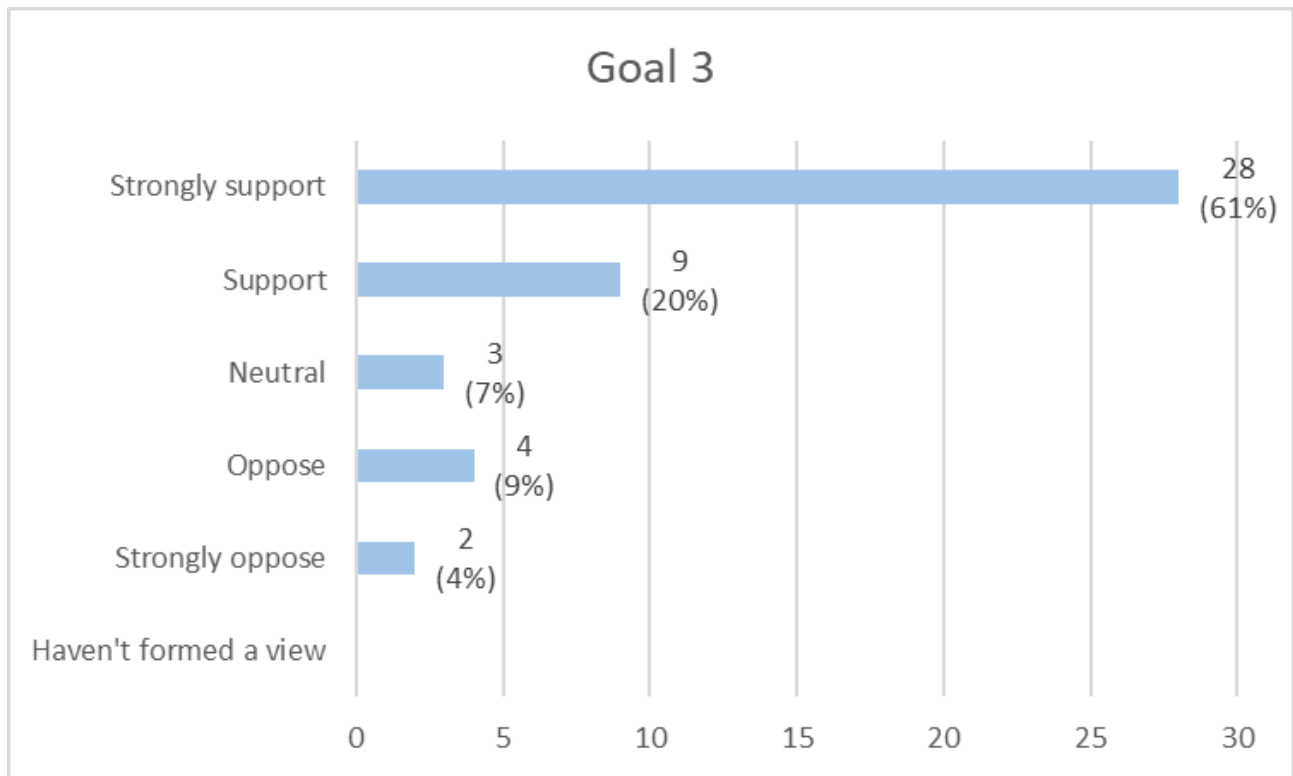


Figure 7: Support for Goal 4 and supporting strategic priorities

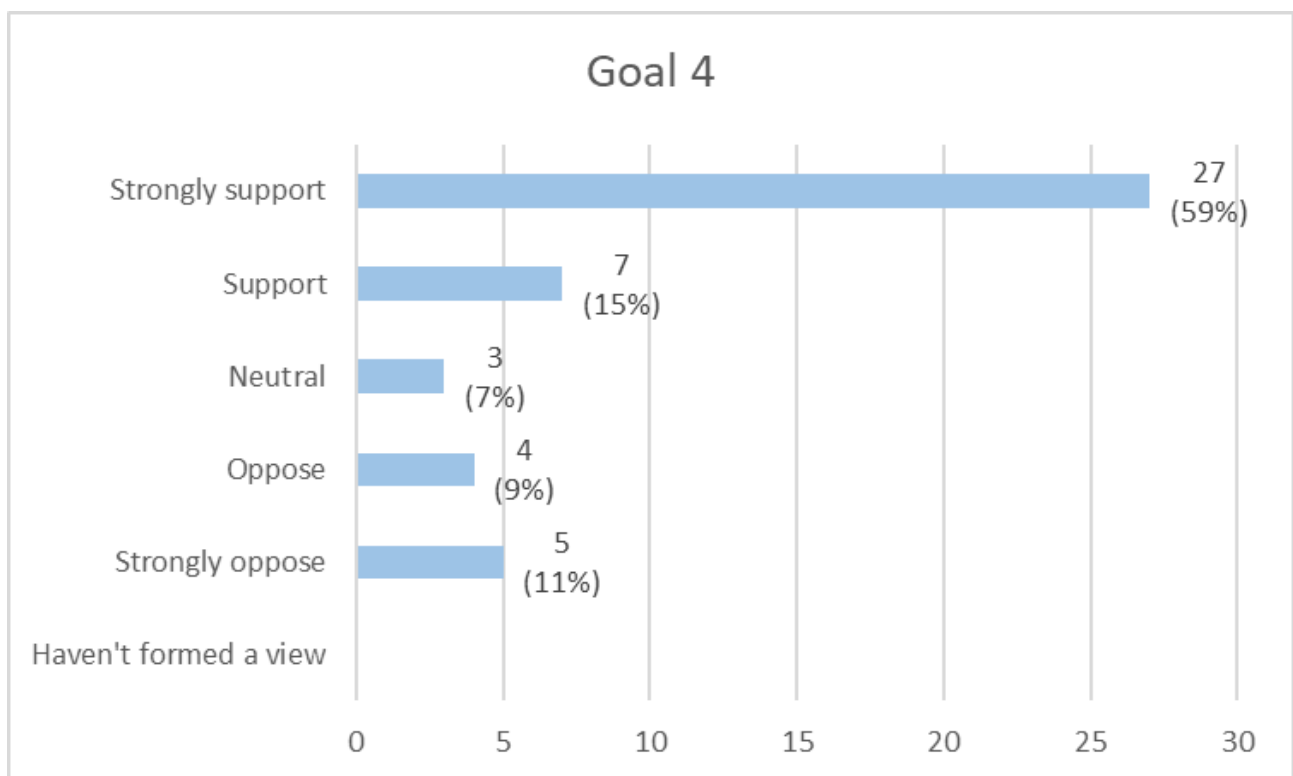
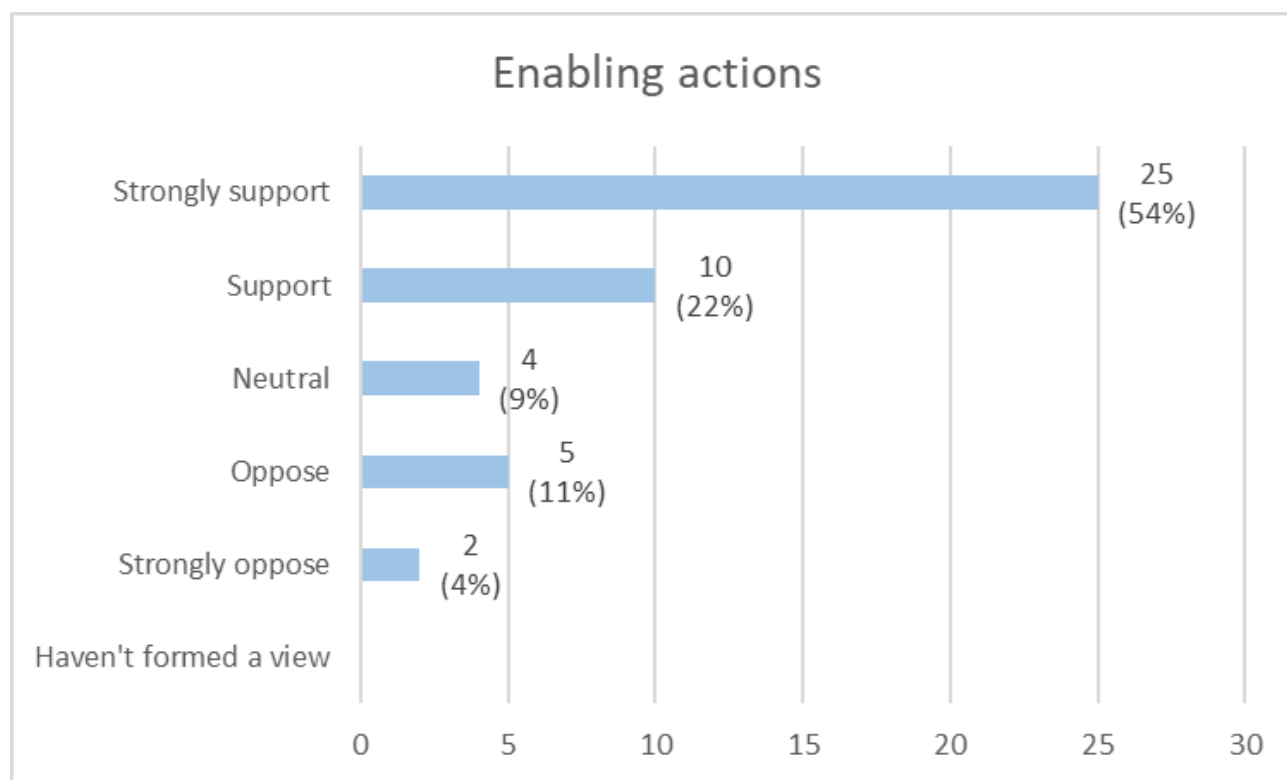


Figure 8: Support for enabling actions



## How we responded

The quantitative data provides a summary of how people perceived the strategy and its key strategic sections. For detailed recommendations, concerns and queries, the free-text questions and written submissions were able to provide more nuance.

## Qualitative Data

### What we asked

The survey asked 7 free-text questions that invited respondents to provide feedback on different elements of the strategy (refer to Appendix A for the survey questions). Additionally, people contributed written submissions to provide feedback at greater length.

### What we heard and how we responded

The department reviewed all free-text responses and written submissions, applying thematic coding to group them into 'category statements' (presented as "You said" in Table 1 overleaf). In deciding how to address each category statement, we considered its relevance to the strategy, its feasibility within the strategy's scope, and the frequency with which it was raised (with greater weight given to the most commonly raised points).

Table 1 provides a summary of this analysis, showing the category statements mentioned more than once. Appendix B contains the de-identified, verbatim responses to the long-form survey questions, but only where respondents consented to their answers being shared publicly. All other responses were still fully considered in the development of the strategy. Appendix C provides a summary of the written submissions.



Table 1: What we heard and how we responded

Strategy section	Theme	You said (category statement)	Response	Change to strategy?
Whole strategy	Scope	Confusion about if the strategy includes the management of parks	<p>The department has made the scope of the strategy clearer, including a description of what is meant by ‘expand and enhance’.</p> <p>We have edited the section, <i>What does this strategy do</i> (pg. 5), to articulate that park management is outside of scope (but will be considered during the implementation of the strategy) and have defined ‘expand’ and ‘enhance’.</p>	Y
		Seeking clarity about why marine parks aren’t included	<p>The department has made the scope of the strategy clearer.</p> <p>We have edited the section, <i>What does this strategy do</i> (pg. 2), to articulate why marine parks are outside of the strategy scope.</p>	Y
	Link to the National 30 by 30 Roadmap (the roadmap)	Seeking clarity on how the strategy aligns with the roadmap	<p>The department has made a clearer link to how the strategy will help deliver the roadmap.</p> <p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added a specific 30 by 30 Guiding principle (pg. 2) to confirm the strategy’s role in helping to achieve 30 by 30.</li> <li>Edited the <i>Introduction</i> (pg. 5) to clarify that, although the strategy will help to deliver 30 by 30 (up until 2030), it will remain in effect, and continue providing guidance for strategic expansion and enhancement, until 2035.</li> </ul>	Y

Strategy section	Theme	You said (category statement)	Response	Change to strategy?
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Edited the <i>Conserved Areas</i> section (pg. 10) to illustrate how conserved areas will be implemented (in line with the National approach)</li> <li>Edited the <i>CARRS Outcomes Assessment</i> section (pg. 12) to clarify that this new assessment aligns with criteria outlined in the roadmap.</li> </ul>	
		Suggestion to use the roadmap to better define protected and conserved areas and ensure alignment with the national approach	The department has used the roadmap to ensure accuracy and alignment in the description of what protected and conserved areas are, through edits to the <i>What are protected and conserved areas</i> section (pg. 7).	Y
	<b>Conservation recommendations</b>	Suggestion to include connectivity and nature corridors in the strategy	<p>Connectivity is key to developing a robust protected area system, and the department has added this into the strategy.</p> <p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added a section that highlights the importance of connectivity and protection at landscape scapes to the <i>Climate Change</i> section (pg. 16)</li> <li>Added a section that illustrates the role that conserved areas can play in enhancing connectivity in the <i>Why are protected and conserved areas important</i> section (pg. 11)</li> </ul>	Y
		Other recommendations (that are outside the scope of expanding and	We received a range of important suggestions for enhanced park and conservation management strategies, including Planting more native species, including trees and understories; Improving water management and storage;	N

Strategy section	Theme	You said (category statement)	Response	Change to strategy?
		enhancing protected and conserved areas)	<p>Building safe animal crossings, increase signage and investigate other options to minimise wildlife death on roads; Investing in fauna rescues; Implementing better hunting controls; Improving pest control.</p> <p>Although these suggestions sit outside the scope of the strategy, we acknowledge their importance and have passed them on to the relevant units within the department for consideration.</p>	
	<b>Priority land</b>	Suggestion to target specific locations/areas (that were identified in the survey/submission) that have key conservation, cultural and or recreation values	The department has noted these suggestions and will add them to a register for consideration in the implementation of this strategy.	N
	<b>First Nations perspective and engagement</b>	Suggestion to incorporate First Nations perspectives and recognition across the whole document	<p>Given their continued role in caring for Country, active land management and involvement with protected areas, First Nations perspectives should be embedded throughout strategy.</p> <p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added an <i>Acknowledgement of Country</i> (pg. ii) to the front of the document</li> <li>Added a <i>Guiding Principle</i> (pg. 2) specifically about incorporating First Nation's knowledge, expertise and aspirations for Country</li> <li>Edited the <i>Introduction</i> (pg. 4).</li> </ul>	Y

Strategy section	Theme	You said (category statement)	Response	Change to strategy?
		Suggestion that First Nations stakeholders should be engaged throughout the strategy's delivery	<p>There is a need for ongoing, meaningful engagement with First Nations groups and peoples throughout the strategy's life.</p> <p>The delivery of the following enabling action will help to achieve that: "Seek to better understand First Nations social, economic, and cultural aspirations for Country, and work with communities to support capacity and identify locations of cultural significance that require protection".</p>	N
	<b>CARRS perspective</b>	Suggestion to imbed the CARRS approach throughout the whole document	The department recognises the importance of the CARRS approach; however, CARRS is a single framework used to guide additions to the protected area system and therefore does not need to be further embedded throughout the document.	N
	<b>Concern about the survey</b>	Expressed concern that the survey was too limited.	<p>The department recognises the simplicity of the survey.</p> <p>The intention was to keep the survey succinct to invite participation, whilst providing free text responses where people could include more detailed responses.</p> <p>The department appreciates that this may have caused the survey to be over-simplified and hopes participants were able to use the free text sections to express their feedback and concerns more fully.</p>	N
	<b>Concern about the strategy</b>	Expressed concern about limiting the public's access to land across the state, with specific mention to 4X4 clubs and dogs/dog owners.	The department recognises that protected areas are important places for people to enjoy and recognises this was not adequately portrayed in the draft strategy.	Y

Strategy section	Theme	You said (category statement)	Response	Change to strategy?
			<p>We have rewritten the <i>Introduction</i> (pg. 4) to clarify that protected areas will remain important places for people to visit, enjoy, and engage in recreation.</p> <p>The department also acknowledges that depending on the conservation or heritage values, protected areas and their supporting management plans may limit access and the types of recreational activity, to ensure the long-term survival and protection of these important values.</p>	
		Expressed concern about the department having interest in private land	<p>The involvement of private lands in South Australia's protected area estate was not clearly described in the draft strategy.</p> <p>We have updated the <i>What are Protected Areas</i> section (pg. 7) to clarify the role private protected areas play, and that any addition of private land to the private protected area estate through voluntary agreements.</p>	Y
		Expressed concern that the strategy is legally binding or will impact the statutory process for adding land to the protected area estate	<p>The department wants to confirm that the strategy provides strategic guidance only (refer to <i>the What does this strategy do?</i> section (pg. 5)).</p> <p>It is not a statutory document (not legally binding) and will not impact any statutory processes.</p>	N
		Expressed concern that the funding and resources to effectively manage the parks are lacking	<p>The department acknowledges that the draft strategy did not discuss how the department would consider funding and resources available for effective park management.</p> <p>We have edited the section <i>What does this strategy do?</i> (pg. 5) to articulate that by setting a clear vision and direction, the strategy will help the department to use resources</p>	Y

Strategy section	Theme	You said (category statement)	Response	Change to strategy?
			more strategically; and confirm that the implementation of the strategy will consider the need for adequate resourcing to support effective park management and conservation outcomes.	
Specific sections	CARRS outcomes assessment	Supportive of the new CARRS outcomes assessment	Noted.	N
		Suggestion to provide clarity around if / when the outcomes assessment will be available for the rest of the state (not just the agricultural zone).	<p>The department recognises that this was not clear in the draft strategy.</p> <p>We have edited the <i>CARRS Outcomes Approach</i> section (pg. 13) to articulate that: the outcomes assessment should be used when available, the outcomes assessment will be made available for the whole state by early 2028, and; when it is made available, it will supersede the geographic approach.</p>	Y
		Suggestion to enable data sharing (updated CARRS assessment) between government and other stakeholders, or to use the data in different ways	<p>Data sharing is pivotal to ensuring transparency, alignment across the sector, and encouraging the best possible conservation outcomes. The data, methodology and map outputs have been made publicly available. The department encourages those in the sector to use this data to run different assessments.</p> <p>We have added the links to these resources in the new callout box under the section <i>Status of South Australian protected and future priorities</i> (pg. 12)</p>	Y
	Goal 1	Suggestion to edit G1 to be “ <b>Prioritise</b> areas that protect <b>significant</b>	The department has implemented this suggested edit.	Y

Strategy section	Theme	You said (category statement)	Response	Change to strategy?
		biodiversity and conservation values”		
	<b>Goal 2</b>	Suggestion to use Traditional Knowledge and up to date scientific knowledge to better respond to climate change	<p>Responding to climate change requires a dynamic response.</p> <p>We have added Strategic Priority 2.3 (pg. 20) to illustrate that we will adapt our understanding and decision-making (using Traditional Knowledge and scientific knowledge) to ensure resilience throughout the life of this strategy.</p>	Y
	<b>Goal 3</b>	Suggestion that conservation should always come first	This sentiment is captured within the section titled How will this strategy operate: “The outcomes of the strategy will be influenced by and seek to achieve community aspirations and intergenerational equity, but its highest priority is to protect, conserve, and where possible, improve biodiversity.” (pg. 8).	N
	<b>Goal 4</b>	Suggestion that there needs to be better supports for private landholders	<p>The intention of the following enabling actions is to identify and help deliver the support that is needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene a biennial forum with private land conservation partners and the philanthropy sector to discuss priorities and coordinate action.</li> <li>• Develop options for an expanded suite of private land covenants for improving conservation outcomes</li> <li>• Work with the Australian Government to implement trials that test tools, frameworks, and policy settings in support of Conserved Areas in South Australia.</li> </ul>	Y

Strategy section	Theme	You said (category statement)	Response	Change to strategy?
			We have updated the supporting text to Strategic Priority 4.1 to better demonstrate this (pg. 22).	
	Enabling actions	Expressed support for the First Nations specific Enabling Action	This enabling action is particularly important.  We have moved this enabling action to the top of the list, to emphasize its importance in the delivery of the strategy.	Y
		Expressed support for the:  Crown Land audit, biennial forum, investment framework, expanded suite of covenants	Noted.	N
		Suggestion to establish a dedicated land acquisition fund that partners with the Australian Government's funding opportunities (as part of the Investment Framework enabling action)	The department has noted this suggestion for consideration as part of the investment framework enabling action.	N
		Suggestion to adopt enhanced protection conservation covenants (as part of the Conservation Covenants enabling action)	The department has noted this suggestion for consideration as part of the conservation covenants enabling action.	N



Strategy section	Theme	You said (category statement)	Response	Change to strategy?
		Suggestion to add an enabling action to reform legislation of protected areas in South Australia (in line with what other states and territories are doing).	Although this suggestion sits outside the scope of the strategy, the department acknowledges its importance and have noted it for consideration.	N

# Appendices

Appendix A – Survey questions

Appendix B – Survey responses – verbatim

Appendix C – Submission responses – summary



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