

OFFICIAL

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
LAID ON THE TABLE**

16 Oct 2024



**Government
of South Australia**

Parks and Wilderness Council 2023-24 Annual Report

DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

Level 9, 81-95 Waymouth Street, Adelaide SA 5000

www.environment.sa.gov.au

Contact phone number: **08 8204 1910**

Contact email: ParksandWildernessCouncil@sa.gov.au

ISSN: **2208-5845**

Date approved by Council: 21.08.2024

Date presented to Minister:

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT for the Parks and Wilderness Council

To: The Hon Dr Susan Close
Minister for Climate, Environment and Water

This annual report will be presented to Parliament to meet the statutory reporting requirements of *Public Sector Act 2009*, the Public Sector Regulations 2019, the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1987*, section 19D of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* and the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular *PC013 Annual Reporting*.

This report is verified to be accurate for the purposes of annual reporting to the Parliament of South Australia.

Submitted on behalf of the Parks and Wilderness Council by:

Vicki-Jo Russell AM

Presiding Member

Date 19 September 2024

Signature



(L-R) Duncan Mackenzie, Mike Bossley, Vicki-Jo Russell (presiding member), Natasha Davis, Shaun de Bruyn, Anita Nedosyko, Mike Williams (DEW ex-officio) Bill McIntosh (Absent: Pauline McKenzie).

From the Presiding Member

It is a pleasure to report on a productive year for the Parks and Wilderness Council (Council).

The year commenced with a workshop of Council and Dept. of Environment and Water (DEW) directors to develop a strategic plan ensuring the Council would meet its statutory and strategic priorities over the coming term. At this workshop the members also defined a set of values to guide our approach ensuring we work effectively and respectfully as a Council to deliver our important role.

In addition to the Council's statutory functions, strategic directions set by the Deputy Premier over the Council's term saw the Council take a role to oversee: an update of the National Wilderness Inventory in South Australia; options for protecting ecologically important outback areas such as Goyder Lagoon, the Kallakoopah Creek region and the Coongie Lakes Ramsar site; a review of the State's performance to increase comprehensive, adequate and representative protection for regional ecosystems; preparation of a new management plan under the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary Act 2005 and support for the completion of a strategy to guide land-based reserve acquisition to expand and enhance South Australia's protected area system.

Other strategic priorities identified for advice by the Council included the Biodiversity Act legislative reform process, emerging opportunities to integrate First Nation's knowledge, culture and practice into protected area management in the State and tourism strategy and initiatives to maximise benefits and ensure sustainability.

An offsite meeting was held in August at the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary as a prelude to the Management Plan's review and another meeting was held in Clare in the Mid North in November 2023 which included site visits to Martindale Hall and the new land acquisition for future addition at World's End Gorge. On both occasions Council was grateful for the opportunity to meet staff and better understand the geographical and social context in which these sites are being managed.

I'd like to recognise the efforts of all the DEW staff that have contributed to and supported Council discussions. I'd also like to thank the members who have been passionate and diligent in their service to Council and for their never waning enthusiasm for South Australia's precious parks and places. I look forward to another impactful year ahead.

Vicki-Jo Russell AM

Presiding Member

Parks and Wilderness Council

Contents

Overview: about the agency 5

 Our organisational structure 6

 Our Minister 6

 Our Executive Team 6

 Legislation administered by the agency 6

 Other related agencies (within the Minister’s area/s of responsibility)..... 7

The agency’s performance 8

 Agency specific objectives and performance 8

 Corporate performance summary 12

 Employment opportunity programs 12

 Agency performance management and development systems..... 13

 Work health, safety and return to work programs 13

Financial performance 15

 Financial performance at a glance 15

 Consultants disclosure 15

 Contractors disclosure 15

 Other financial information 16

 Other information 16

Risk management..... 17

 Fraud detected in the agency..... 17

 Strategies implemented to control and prevent fraud..... 17

 Public interest disclosure 17

Reporting required under any other act or regulation 17

 Reporting required under the *Carers’ Recognition Act 2005*..... 17

Public complaints..... 18

 Number of public complaints reported 18

 Additional Metrics..... 19

 Service Improvements 20

 Compliance Statement..... 20

Appendix: Audited financial statements 2023-24 21

Overview: about the agency

Our strategic focus

Our Purpose	The Parks and Wilderness Council provides strategic policy advice to the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water and advocacy for issues that improve environmental, social and economic opportunities for the State's parks and wildlife.
Our Vision	Protect, enhance and sustain South Australia's protected areas system for future generations. We will achieve this by working with sectors of the community and all levels of government to provide strategic and influential advice on management, legislation and policy impacting South Australia's protected area system.
Our Values	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respect (including inviting differing perspectives) 2. Open 3. Committed 4. Generous 5. Effective 6. Collaborative 7. Gumption: Boldness + Bravery 8. Robust (of approach, process, and information)
Our functions, objectives and deliverables	<p>The functions of the Parks and Wilderness Council are set out in s19C of the National Parks and Wildlife Act; to provide advice to the Minister, at the Minister's request, on any matter relating to the administration of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Parks and Wilderness Act 1972 • Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary Act 2005 • Marine Parks Act 2007 • Wilderness Protection Act 1992 <p>These Acts also contain a number of specific functions including the provision of advice regarding proposed park management plans or amendments to management plans, and advice regarding wilderness quality of land in the State.</p> <p>PWC have identified the following key objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ECOLOGY: Advancing the ecological integrity and connectivity of the State's protected area system as one of the cornerstones of South Australia's efforts to conserve nature. 2. PEOPLE: Connecting South Australians to impactful experiences and fostering their appreciation and support for a well-managed protected area system. 3. INVESTMENT: Supporting sustainable funding models for the protected area system.

Our organisational structure

The Parks and Wilderness Council was established on 15 January 2023, pursuant to the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*, and consists of the Director of National Parks and Wildlife and 8 other members appointed by the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water.

PWC Members for 2023-24 were

Ms Vicki-Jo Russell (PM) Term Ending 15 January 2026 Attended 4 Meetings

Dr Mike Bossley Term Ending 31 October 2025 Attended 4 Meetings

Ms Natasha Davis (Deputy PM) Term Ending 30 June 2026 Attended 4 Meetings

Mr Shaun de Bruyn Term Ending 31 October 2025 Attended 4 Meetings

Mr Duncan MacKenzie Term Ending 30 June 2026 Attended 4 Meetings

Mr Bill McIntosh Term Ending 31 October 2025 Attended 3 Meetings

Ms Pauline McKenzie Term Ending 31 October 2025 Attended 0 Meetings

Ms Anita Nedosyko Term Ending 31 October 2025 Attended 4 Meetings

Changes to the agency

During 2023-24 there were no changes to the Council's structure and objectives as a result of internal reviews or machinery of government changes.

Our Minister

The Department for Environment and Water is a portfolio agency of the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, the Hon Susan Close MP.

Our Executive Team

In accordance with Section 15(2) of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*, the Council consists of the Director of National Parks and Wildlife and 8 other members appointed by the Minister who collectively have, in the opinion of the Minister, the knowledge, skills and experience to enable the Council to carry out its functions effectively.

In accordance with section 14 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*, Mr Michael Williams in his role as Director National Parks and Wildlife SA is the ex-officio member of the Parks and Wilderness Council.

Legislation administered by the agency

Nil

Other related agencies (within the Minister's area/s of responsibility)

The Parks and Wilderness Council is supported by the Department for Environment and Water.

The agency's performance

Performance at a glance

During 2023-2024 the Parks and Wilderness Council met on four occasions, and provided strategic policy advice to the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water and advocacy for issues that improve environmental, social and economic opportunities for the State's parks and wildlife.

A strategic planning day was held in July 2023 to assist the new Council in developing a strategic framework to help guide their focus and efforts.

An offsite meeting was held in Clare in the Mid North in November 2023. Excursions to the new land acquisition at World's End Gorge, Martindale Hall and the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary were undertaken.

During this period, the Council reviewed, provided advice on, and/or endorsed four park management plans.

- Central Fleurieu Peninsula Management Plan
- West/Central Kangaroo Island Management Plan Amendments
- Eastern Kangaroo Island Management Plan
- Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary Management Plan

Contributed to the development of the draft South Australian Biodiversity Act.

Contributed to the development of a Wilderness Assessment Report for the far north east of the state.

Agency specific objectives and performance

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* provides that the Council may advise the Minister on any of the following matters:

- a) Planning in relation to the management of reserves
- b) The conservation of wildlife
- c) Funding (including matters relating to sponsorship) and the development and marketing of commercial activities
- d) Community participation in the management of reserves and the conservation of wildlife
- e) The development of policy
- f) Existing or proposed national or international agreements relating to the conservation of animals, plants and ecosystems
- g) The promotion (including public education) of the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources

Agency objectives	Indicators	Performance
<p>Providing advice in relation to delivery of the government’s key priorities</p>	<p>Operate under a strong governance framework and continue to develop the capacity of the Council to deliver its statutory and functional responsibilities.</p>	<p>The Parks and Wilderness Council correspond with the Minister/Deputy Premier regularly, reporting on issues discussed at PWC Meetings, providing advice and making recommendations. A formal letter is sent from the Presiding Member to the Minister/Deputy Premier after each meeting.</p> <p>Council kept itself informed about key government priorities and commitments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilderness Assessment Reporting • Acquisition of World’s End Gorge for future addition to the protected area system • SA Biodiversity Act development • Kangaroo Island Fire Management Planning

<p>The management of parks and wilderness protection areas</p>	<p>Support the development and review of park management plans.</p> <p>The Council’s specific roles and responsibilities in relation to the development and review of management plans are described in legislation.</p>	<p>The Parks and Wilderness Council have reviewed, provided advice and endorsed park management plans as required.</p> <p>These plans included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Central Fleurieu Peninsula Management Plan• West/Central Kangaroo Island Management Plan Amendments• Eastern Kangaroo Island Management Plan• Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary Management Plan (draft) <p>The Council have also participated in a review of the park management planning process in South Australia.</p>
--	--	--

<p>The establishment of wilderness protection areas</p>	<p>Council is responsible for assessing all land in the State to identify those parts of the State that meet the wilderness criteria to a sufficient extent to justify protection under the <i>Wilderness Protection Act 1992</i>, or that warrant restoration to a condition that justifies such protection.</p> <p>Council is responsible for reporting to the Minister on the results of its assessments and to make recommendations to the Minister as to what land in the State should be constituted as wilderness protection areas or wilderness protection zones.</p>	<p>The protected areas team have been developing a Wilderness Assessment Report focussing on the study areas listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kallakoopah Creek• Goyder Lagoon and• Coongie Lakes RAMSAR <p>These study areas have been assessed against the Wilderness Protection Act criteria and a series of recommendation have been developed based on the results.</p> <p>Throughout this process the Parks & Wilderness Council have provided feedback and suggestions on the process and are active in making recommendations on next steps.</p> <p>The Council also provide oversight on the completion of the state wilderness inventory.</p>
---	---	--

Corporate performance summary

Council met four times in the last financial year and provided advice to the Minister/Deputy Premier in line with their roles and responsibilities.

Employment opportunity programs

The Parks and Wilderness Council does not employ staff. The Council is supported by the Department for Environment and Water. The department's Annual Report for 2023-2024 reports on the department's employment opportunity programs.

Agency performance management and development systems

Performance management and development system	Performance
Reviews of terms of reference every 12 months.	The Terms of Reference are to be reviewed at the August 2024 meeting.
Meeting attendance records.	A record of meeting attendance is kept with the minutes of each meeting.
The Parks and Wilderness Council will meet a minimum of four times per year, including at least one off-site meeting at a location to be determined by the Council. The Minister or the Presiding Member may direct the Council to meet more regularly.	In 2023-24 the Council met on 4 occasions including an off-site meeting in the Yorke and Mid North region and an excursion to the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary.

Work health, safety and return to work programs

Program name	Performance
The Council abides by the relevant health and safety policies and procedures that have been adopted by the Department for Environment and Water to meet whole of Government and legislative requirements.	Reporting on this matter is contained within the Department for Environment and Water Annual Report 2023-24.

Workplace injury claims	Current year 2023-24	Past year 2022-23	% Change (+ / -)
Total new workplace injury claims	0	0	0%
Fatalities	0	0	0%
Seriously injured workers*	0	0	0%
Significant injuries (where lost time exceeds a working week, expressed as frequency rate per 1000 FTE)	0	0	0%

*number of claimants assessed during the reporting period as having a whole person impairment of 30% or more under the Return to Work Act 2014 (Part 2 Division 5)

Work health and safety regulations	Current year 2023-24	Past year 2022-23	% Change (+ / -)
Number of notifiable incidents (<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2012, Part 3</i>)	0	0	0%
Number of provisional improvement, improvement and prohibition notices (<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2012 Sections 90, 191 and 195</i>)	0	0	0%

Return to work costs**	Current year 2023-24	Past year 2022-23	% Change (+ / -)
Total gross workers compensation expenditure (\$)	0	0	0%
Income support payments – gross (\$)	0	0	0%

**before third party recovery

Data for previous years is available at: [Parks and Wilderness Council Annual Report Data - Dataset - data.sa.gov.au](https://data.sa.gov.au/dataset/parks-and-wilderness-council-annual-report-data)

Executive employment in the agency

N/A

Financial performance

Financial performance at a glance

The Parks and Wilderness Council is a statutory body; it is not a corporate entity and has no funds of its own. Reporting on this matter is contained in the DEW Annual Report 2023-24.

The costs associated with the administration of the Council are met from within existing DEW resources. Members are remunerated in accordance with the Cabinet approved Remuneration Framework.

Consultants disclosure

The following is a summary of external consultants that have been engaged by the agency, the nature of work undertaken, and the actual payments made for the work undertaken during the financial year.

Consultancies with a contract value below \$10,000 each

Consultancies	Purpose	\$ Actual payment
NA		

Consultancies with a contract value above \$10,000 each

Consultancies	Purpose	\$ Actual payment
NA		

Data for previous years is available at: [Parks and Wilderness Council Annual Report Data - Dataset - data.sa.gov.au](https://data.sa.gov.au/dataset/parks-and-wilderness-council-annual-report-data)

See also the [Consolidated Financial Report of the Department of Treasury and Finance](#) for total value of consultancy contracts across the South Australian Public Sector.

Contractors disclosure

The following is a summary of external contractors that have been engaged by the agency, the nature of work undertaken, and the actual payments made for work undertaken during the financial year.

Contractors with a contract value below \$10,000

Contractors	Purpose	\$ Actual payment
NA	0	0

Contractors with a contract value above \$10,000 each

Contractors	Purpose	\$ Actual payment
NA		

Data for previous years is available at: [Parks and Wilderness Council Annual Report Data - Dataset - data.sa.gov.au](#)

The details of South Australian Government-awarded contracts for goods, services, and works are displayed on the SA Tenders and Contracts website. [View the agency list of contracts.](#)

The website also provides details of [across government contracts.](#)

Other financial information

Nil to Report

Other information

Nil to Report

Risk management

Fraud detected in the agency

Category/nature of fraud	Number of instances
There were no instances of fraud detected in the activities undertaken by the Parks and Wilderness Council during this reporting period.	0

NB: Fraud reported includes actual and reasonably suspected incidents of fraud.

Strategies implemented to control and prevent fraud

Strategies to detect instances of fraud are reported in the Department for Environment and Water Annual Report 2023-24.

Data for previous years is available at: [Parks and Wilderness Council Annual Report Data - Dataset - data.sa.gov.au](#)

Public interest disclosure

Number of occasions on which public interest information has been disclosed to a responsible officer of the agency under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018*:

0

Data for previous years is available at: [Parks and Wilderness Council Annual Report Data - Dataset - data.sa.gov.au](#)

Note: Disclosure of public interest information was previously reported under the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 1993* and repealed by the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018* on 1/7/2019.

Reporting required under any other act or regulation

There are no specific reporting requirements required under any other Act or Regulation for the Parks and Wilderness Council.

Reporting required under the *Carers' Recognition Act 2005*

N/A

Public complaints

Number of public complaints reported

Reporting on the number of complaints received is mandated. If your agency does not have an approved set of complaint categories in place, please use the complaint categories in the table below.

Complaint categories	Sub-categories	Example	Number of Complaints 2023-24
Professional behaviour	Staff attitude	Failure to demonstrate values such as empathy, respect, fairness, courtesy, extra mile; cultural competency	0
Professional behaviour	Staff competency	Failure to action service request; poorly informed decisions; incorrect or incomplete service provided	0
Professional behaviour	Staff knowledge	Lack of service specific knowledge; incomplete or out-of-date knowledge	0
Communication	Communication quality	Inadequate, delayed or absent communication with customer	0
Communication	Confidentiality	Customer's confidentiality or privacy not respected; information shared incorrectly	0
Service delivery	Systems/technology	System offline; inaccessible to customer; incorrect result/information provided; poor system design	0
Service delivery	Access to services	Service difficult to find; location poor; facilities/ environment poor standard; not accessible to customers with disabilities	0
Service delivery	Process	Processing error; incorrect process used; delay in processing application; process not customer responsive	0
Policy	Policy application	Incorrect policy interpretation; incorrect policy applied; conflicting policy advice given	0

Complaint categories	Sub-categories	Example	Number of Complaints 2023-24
Policy	Policy content	Policy content difficult to understand; policy unreasonable or disadvantages customer	0
Service quality	Information	Incorrect, incomplete, out-dated or inadequate information; not fit for purpose	0
Service quality	Access to information	Information difficult to understand, hard to find or difficult to use; not plain English	0
Service quality	Timeliness	Lack of staff punctuality; excessive waiting times (outside of service standard); timelines not met	0
Service quality	Safety	Maintenance; personal or family safety; duty of care not shown; poor security service/ premises; poor cleanliness	0
Service quality	Service responsiveness	Service design doesn't meet customer needs; poor service fit with customer expectations	0
No case to answer	No case to answer	Third party; customer misunderstanding; redirected to another agency; insufficient information to investigate	0
		Total	0

Additional Metrics	Total
Number of positive feedback comments	0
Number of negative feedback comments	0
Total number of feedback comments	0
% complaints resolved within policy timeframes	0

Data for previous years is available at: [Parks and Wilderness Council Annual Report Data - Dataset - data.sa.gov.au](https://data.sa.gov.au/dataset/parks-and-wilderness-council-annual-report-data)

Service Improvements

No complaints have been received or acted upon.

Compliance Statement

The Parks and Wilderness Council is compliant with Premier and Cabinet Circular 039 – complaint management in the South Australian public sector	Y
The Parks and Wilderness Council has communicated the content of PC 039 and the agency’s related complaints policies and procedures to employees.	Y

Appendix: Audited financial statements 2023-24

Financial services are provided to the Parks and Wilderness Council by the Department for Environment and Water. Finances are audited annually as part of the Department's financial statements.

Annual report information (including financial statements) is available on the Department for Environment and Water website.