

A Response to the Draft Biodiversity Act of SA

This is from the perspective of an individual in one friends group of a conservation park.

Volunteers (not just us) put in vast hours of effort helping to ensure that generations to come have a place to watch, walk and enjoy the natural environment.

Our Park...

has varying degrees of intact and developing native (endemic) habitat.

It is adjacent to

- a functioning railway corridor
- an active quarry
- a shared trail 'maintained' by a council
- suburbia (houses border one side)

Our aim is to increase the biodiversity of the parks endemic (historically local) plants and by association it's endemic animals and organisms.

The group's current two main roles are to plant and nurture endemic seedlings species and control/eliminate (we wish) **pest** (the 'act' does not have a definition of a pest) species often referred to as **weeds** (any mention of weeds in the 'act'?) These invasive species interfere with the existing ecosystems and threaten to destroy them if given a free hand.

A Biodiversity Act should help us achieve our goal of increasing biodiversity.

While the act would presumably punish someone who tries to destroy the park, (and we applaud the harsher penalties) it doesn't do much to help us day to day. It appears we would be filling large amounts of paper work to get some things done.

The rail corridor houses many invasive plants and some of these are **NATIVE**. The draft act wants these protected !

The quarry has many invasive plants but the proposed act doesn't put any directive for the quarry owners to assist in our important mission.

Some adjoining and nearby properties have plant species eg Olives, which get into our park. How does the Act help us there?

Shouldn't the act encompass the whole gamut of biodiversity protection.

Rather than rush this act through, wouldn't it be better to have a more holistic approach to biodiversity. From the above we can also say

The act needs to address urban biodiversity

Leaving the responsibility of correcting the demise of biodiversity in metropolitan areas to councils and planning authorities is like waving a wand over the Blue Tongue lizards, the Musk Lorikeets in backyards, and making them disappear.

I suggest

- How about introducing targets for council to meet, that increase the endemic flora and fauna over entire council areas.
- All land within 3klm of a prescribed biodiverse area (conservation park etc) to be compelled to meet invasive weed (=impact causing in draft?) eradication targets (using prescribed methods).

While there are others aspects of the draft act that need further development, these few things could be looked at to make for a more overarching response to our habitat destruction.

Sincerely

Geoff Yeates
17 February 2025