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To Whom It May Concern

Several comments in regards to the upcoming Biodiversity Act.
I note that this is a flagship policy for and part of the Deputy Premier's election promise.
I note also that currently the Premier is standing by his election promise to not introduce and new tariffs, taxes or levies.
This then lends itself to the obvious question of how will this be funded? For without suitable funding this is just more empty political spin.
We are in the midst of what is often described by many, including politicians, a climate emergency. Why is this an emergency? Mainly because of its impact on biodiversity, and that includes us. Will the world become less liveable for humans and the rest of the species that currently dwell on planet Earth? Unless something changes for the better then answer is a well documented YES.
This Biodiversity Act is an opportunity to do something positive to improve the lives of all that share this sate, country and planet. This can only be achieved if suitably funded. Empty words will have no positive impact. It is no longer adequate to reduce our impact, we must reverse it before we all perish. The Community Emergency Services Fund is funded by the tax payer of South Australia. It currently assists in the funding of some extremely valuable and worthwhile community services. Of interest is that there are no environmental, ecological or recognised primary responder animal rescue and rehabilitation. This means no expenditure is directed to biodiversity, its protection or rehabilitation. This situation is not sustainable and is now at odds to the well documented specific objectives of the Deputy Premier, and presumably the State Government as a whole.

Some specific points

1: The Biodiversity Act must be at least equivalent to other Acts including mining, pastoral, and even some urban development. I would suggest it needs to over-ride these other Acts otherwise it will have no power to make change for the better.

2: The Biodiversity Act cannot simply support preservation and conservation, it needs to address the urgent need to **repair and recover** large areas of the state. To do this requires a suitable funding model, not words. Currently the Emergency Services Levy has a funding line for the Department for Environment and Water to the sum of $13 million. The is a second line for 'other' to the sum of $10 million. While the details around this are limited surely biodiversity could benefit from some of this funding directly. The ESL is an annual funding source that could have some directed to the environment and biodiversity.

3: The Biodiversity Act makes comment relating to 'duty of care', without sufficient detail. Does this include an inspectorate / compliance function? This will have ongoing costs associated with it. Again, how this will be funded is not mentioned. Other implied costs relate to the establishment of a committee to review the status of species and ecosystems. How will this committee make decisions unless there is a data collection process. The State Herbariums and the SA Museum currently hold much of the biodiversity information for South Australia. Suitable funding is required to both maintain, and grow their respective collections. Any Biodiversity Act must address theses issues, and their funding.

Yours faithfully

Dr Ian Hough

Sent from Mail for Windows