Biodiversity Act – Comments from the Mid Torrens Catchment Group, Inc.

[redacted]

Comments offered at the MTCG meeting Monday, 22nd January 2024, on the DEW Discussion Paper:

1. The SA Threatened Species categories and criteria should be revised for compatibility with Federal categories and IUCN definitions (Topic 5).

2. Define how to measure and value Biodiversity. The wording sounds nice, but the terms must be defined, with measurable targets to restore biodiversity and reliable resourcing.

3. Volunteers are expected to restore ecosystems for threatened species, so expert professionals should be provided to direct volunteers and landholders to do skilled environmental work (Topic 8).

4. The "engagement" with First Nations and with landholders should be more than being heard, rather we should have "partnerships" with incentives defined for specific on-ground restoration.

5. How would this Biodiversity Act relate to other acts, like Native Vegetation Act (poorly protecting biodiversity), National Parks and Wildlife Act (for Threatened Species Protection in parks), and the Environmental Protection Act 1993 ie. EPA (weak & ineffective for Biodiversity)? (Topic 6).

6. Bioregional monitoring sites should be identified as reference sites with long-term monitoring (Topic 7).

7. Reinstate the Biological Survey Unit to follow up the previous survey sites and to survey new sites.

8. Identify private properties with high biodiversity value, and list actions to improve biodiversity on damaged land.

9. What incentives can be used to achieve successful restoration and to create realistic offsets?

10. We need another discussion paper with more information on measurable targets, resourcing, species lists and ecosystems of concern, regulation, enforcement/incentives and actions.

11. South Australia desperately needs additional protection covenants besides Heritage Agreements so that landholders have more options in the protection of their native vegetation and revegetation sites (similar to other states eg Victoria). This would result in more biodiversity areas being protected in SA.

12. The compliance capacity in the Native Vegetation Unit at DEW needs to be significantly increased in resources and staff. For over the last five years, it has been totally inadequate to deal with the numerous vegetation clearance cases that have occurred. It has got to a stage where it feels pointless notifying the Native Veg Unit as they are so under staffed

(Footnote: The Discussion Paper uses up too much colour printing and wasted page space, not sustainable.)