

PLAN 2

CONSERVATION RESERVES

Plan 2 – Community Land Management Plan for Conservation Reserves



PLAN 2 CONSERVATION RESERVES

This Management Plan should be read in conjunction to the Introductory Information in Plan 1, which includes general information that relates to each individual plan.

Adelaide Hills Council is the centre of the high rainfall areas of the Mount Lofty Ranges. Many nationally and state listed threatened species are found within our boundaries. Council's Conservation Reserves are not only important in their own right, but provide important linkages to and between land protected under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* and privately owned land with biodiversity values. Council's commitment to its conservation reserves will help to halt the decline in threatened species and in recovery plans for those species.

A parcel of Community Land may be categorised as Conservation even if its biodiversity values are only modest at the time of the adoption of this plan if it has been identified for habitat restoration or as an important linkage between other land of higher biodiversity values.

Many natural areas will require, or in some cases already have, more detailed documents prepared to address revegetation, feral species control or ecological burning. Those documents provide greater detail pertaining to certain parcels of land covered by This Management Plan. This Management Plan is intended to provide context and guidance to those documents without replacing them.

This Management Plan pertains to all community land that has been placed into the category Conservation including that portion of multi-use sites that have a Conservation component.

Leases and licences are not consistent with the objectives of Conservation Reserves, but management agreements may apply to facilitate environmental works for the benefit of the biodiversity values of these reserves. Management agreements may also apply to buildings that already exist on reserves for conservation purposes at the time of the adoption of this plan.

Because of the risks of damage to native vegetation and introduction of weed species, horses are not permitted on Conservation reserves, with the exception of any track on a reserve for Conservation purposes which is marked as allowing horses, in which case horses must not leave the track within the Conservation reserve.

Some tracks in land in this category are narrow, have steps and uneven surfaces and for this reason are unsuitable for shared use. Unless a track has signs to the contrary, bicycles are permitted on any track with a width of three metres or more, but prohibited on any track with a width of less than three metres.

Some reserves in this category have heritage agreements attached to the land pursuant to section 23 of the *Native Vegetation Act 1991*. Council may seek to enter into heritage agreements for any other land in this category where the land is assessed as having sufficient biodiversity values to warrant an agreement. If a Crown reserve in this category is assessed as having sufficient biodiversity values for a heritage agreement, but such an agreement would be inconsistent with the current purpose of the dedication, Council will in the first instance apply for the land to be dedicated for a consistent purpose.

Land in this category may have high importance for Peramangk and Kaurna people, regardless of whether or not native title continues to exist over the land

PLAN 2**CONSERVATION RESERVES****Operational considerations**

In order to protect the biodiversity values of land in the Conservation category, certain activities are authorised by this plan that will not normally be considered for land in any other category.

Prescribed burns may be carried out in conjunction with the Department for Environment and Water or its successors for ecological purposes. These burns help to provide a mix of habitats so that those species that prefer regenerating native vegetation and those that prefer vegetation that has remained unburnt for many years are both catered for. Many plants of the Mount Lofty Ranges have evolved to germinate after fire and prescribed burns encourage the germination of the seedbank in the soil.

Baiting to control feral animal species may occur on land in the Conservation category. Any baiting programs must be advertised in advance through the Council's website and signage must be placed at each public entrance to the land the subject of baiting warning the public of the presence of baits and the potential risk to dogs during the duration of the baiting program. If Council or its delegates consider it necessary, a reserve in this category may be temporarily closed to the public for the purpose of a baiting program. Alternatively, the land may remain open to the public but dogs may be temporarily prohibited from entering the land for their own safety.

Improvements on reserves in the Conservation category

Only very limited further improvements are appropriate on reserves in the Conservation category. The following may be acceptable following an investigation into the impacts on the biodiversity values of a particular site, but will not be approved if it involves the removal of intact native vegetation. If at the time of the adoption of this plan a reserve in this category has a minor portion of the land used for activities other than conservation, any improvements on that portion of the land must not impinge on the majority of the land with conservation values:

- Walking tracks with a small environmental footprint
- Directional signs
- Interpretive signage
- Seating
- Rubbish bins
- Bird Hide

Objectives

- The conservation of the biodiversity of the Mount Lofty Ranges.
- To provide linkages and connections between habitat remnants to increase range, allow gene flow and species movement to and between other land of biodiversity significance regardless of ownership.
- To encourage and support the activities of local community conservation groups, project partners, Government and non-Government agencies that will progress conservation outcomes.
- To provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy and appreciate nature.
- To pursue heritage agreements pursuant to the *Native Vegetation Act 1991* where this will promote long-term conservation of biodiversity values.
- To provide educational opportunities to foster understanding and support for the conservation of the biodiversity of the Mount Lofty Ranges.

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- To apply the precautionary principle in the management of reserves in the conservation category when comprehensive information or knowledge is not available.
- Where boundaries are fenced, to use fencing that permits the movement of native wildlife across property boundaries unless it should be restricted along any particular boundary.
- To allow passive recreation where it is not in conflict with the conservation of biodiversity.
- Where a minor portion of the land has been developed for recreational or other activities or facilities prior to the adoption of this plan, including community events, to permit the continuation of those activities, events or facilities and to prevent the encroachment of those activities and facilities onto that portion of the land of conservation significance.

Performance Targets

- Biodiversity values of reserves in the Conservation category are maintained and improved.
- Residents and visitors appreciate the value of reserves in the Conservation category.
- Bushfire risks are managed while maintaining biodiversity values.
- Invasive species are controlled and, where practicable, eradicated.

Performance Measures

- Surveys of selected reserves demonstrate that the species diversity of reserves for Conservation purposes is maintained.
- Feedback received by Council and resident surveys demonstrate that the biodiversity values of the Adelaide Hills Council area are regarded as important.
- Asset protection zones are maintained and ecological burns occur in conjunction with the Department of Environment and Water or its successors.
- Programs are in place for the control of invasive species either directly by Council, by Friends groups or through management agreements.
- Recreational activities and events do not result in a loss of biodiversity values.