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Yorke Peninsula Council
Proposed Expansion of Bush Camping Locations
Yorke Peninsula Council
PO Box 57
Maitland SA 5573

August 19, 2016

To the Yorke Peninsula District Councillors,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Proposed Expansion of Bush Camping Locations Public Consultation Report and providing an extension of time to enable us to do this. As South Australia's primary nature conservation advocacy organisation, the Nature Conservation Society of South Australia (NCSSA) has been a long term advocate for the protection and conservation of native vegetation and biodiversity in South Australia with particular attention being paid to nationally and state listed threatened plants, animals and ecological communities, management of protected areas and remnant native vegetation.

You are no doubt aware that although the southwest tip of the Yorke Peninsula retains a high proportion of native vegetation, the remainder of the landscape has been heavily cleared for agriculture with approximately 13% of the original native vegetation cover remaining. The majority of the remnant native vegetation is located in small and fragmented parcels, such as in coastal reserves and along roadsides. These remnants provide critical habitat for a number of plant and animal species with conservation ratings under the *Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999* and the *South Australian National Parks & Wildlife Act 1972*.

NCSSA has an ongoing interest in the management of remnant native vegetation on the Yorke Peninsula and have been working with the Northern & Yorke NRM Board to establish Bushland Condition Monitoring (BCM) sites in recent years. Over 100 BCM sites have been established across the Yorke Peninsula including a large number in coastal habitat on the lower Yorke Peninsula. These sites enable an assessment of vegetation using ten condition indicators that are scored regularly. These indicators are measurable and dynamic attributes of bushland that demonstrate how bushland at particular sites is changing in response to land use or management practices.

The Public Consultation Report identifies four camping locations that have been identified for potential expansion yet provides no detail about any proposed infrastructure developments associated with these sites. We have serious concerns about the impact of bush camping on these important remnants of native vegetation and their nature conservation values. We strongly recommend the Council provide further details about the proposed expansion of these additional bush camping areas before proceeding with this proposal. We also recommend that, in order to demonstrate the sustainability of the fifteen existing bush camping locations, that a scientifically rigorous monitoring program be established to evaluate the impact of camping on the conservation values of these areas. We would be happy to meet with the Council to discuss the survey design and methodology.

We are particularly concerned about the impacts of the proposed expansion of bush camping at the Len Barker Reserve, Port Minlacowie, Parara and Foul Bay Boat Ramp. Most of these areas contain relatively large areas of remnant coastal vegetation and provide important habitat for threatened and regionally rare species including the Slender-billed Thornbill, Hooded Plover and Coast Spider-orchid and are therefore critical for long-term conservation of biodiversity across the Yorke Peninsula. We strongly recommend that the Council provide detailed information about the proposed developments at these sites before proceeding further with this proposal. We also recommend further assessment of the impact of increased visitor use on species and ecological communities of national and state conservation importance is urgently required.

We commend the Council for the development of a comprehensive Roadside Vegetation Management Plan (RVMP) that acknowledges the importance of remnant roadside vegetation and one of the key objectives to maintain and enhance the species diversity, genetic diversity, vegetation associations and habitat types currently occurring within existing roadside vegetation. We strongly recommend that this approach is extended to all existing bush camping areas across the Yorke Peninsula to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on the conservation values of these areas. For example, Section 2 of the RVMP states that “native vegetation along roadsides needs careful management if it is to be conserved for future management” and that “degradation can be compounded if soils are disturbed or compacted by machinery or if low shrubs or native grasses are unwittingly driven over or cleared”. This statement also applies to the management of areas designated for bush camping across the Council area. We also recommend that the Bush camping page on the council’s website refer to and contain further information regarding the collection of firewood (either living or dead trees and fallen timber, kindling or logs) in any of the bush camping areas as outlined in Section 2.10.2 of the RVMP. Further emphasis is also needed on the impact of unrestrained dogs on shorebirds and migratory waders that utilise the beaches of the Yorke Peninsula. These areas provide critical feeding and/or nesting habitat for a large number of migratory waders and shorebirds that are protected under international agreements and the EPBC Act. We recommend the Council develop a Bush Camping Code of Practice that highlights the importance of these issues and is accessible on the Council website.

Please feel free to contact me on (08) 71274633 or via email at nicki.depreu@ncssa.asn.au if you would like to discuss any of the points we have raised further.

Yours sincerely,



Nicki de Preu

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