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Action Officers	/ LH
Response due	



Government of South Australia

Department of Environment,
Water and Natural Resources

4 August 2014

Vulkathunha - Gammon
Ranges National Park
Co-management Board

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Hon Ian Hunter MLC
Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation
9th Floor, Chesser House
91- 97 Grenfell Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear Minister

Re: Reform of South Australian Government Boards and Committees

I refer to the recent letter from the Premier dated 8th July 2014, regarding the reform of South Australian Government Boards and Committees. Thank you for your subsequent letter of 1 August requesting that our committee provides a direct response to you on this matter.

The Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park (V-GRNP) was dedicated in 1970 and incorporates 128,228 hectares of the visually spectacular Northern Flinders Ranges. The Park is part of the traditional country of the Adnyamathanha people for whom it is of special cultural significance, containing a wide range of cultural features and evidence of Aboriginal past occupation. In 2003 the Park was co-named to include "Vulkathunha" in its title, in recognition of the Adnyamathanha tradition.

In 2005, the State of South Australia and the Adnyamathanha people entered into a Co-management Agreement (CMA) and Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA). The management of the park became the responsibility of the V-GRNP Co-management Board, a body that includes representatives from both the Adnyamathanha and Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources. Our Adnyamathanha representatives on the Board are nominated by the Adnyamathanha Traditional Lands Association (ATLA), and as such, effectively represent the broader views of the Adnyamathanha community in making decisions supporting the management of the park.

The Co-management framework provides for use of the park by the Adnyamathanha people in such a way that their cultural, economic, social and environmental aspirations can be enhanced in a manner consistent with the management objectives of the Park.

The V-GRNP Co-management Board considered the Premier's letter at the most recent meeting held on 18 July 2014. The Board resolved that I write to you expressing concern and disappointment that our Co-management Board has the potential to be abolished.

Co-management of the park involves a partnership between the Government of South Australia and traditional owners to share responsibility and decision-making for the strategic management of the V-GRNP. Since the inception of Co-management, Adnyamathanha people have for the first time, enjoyed self-determination with the management of this Park.

The VGRNP Co-management Board was the first board established in South Australia, and has been recognised internationally as a model which supports effective collaboration with Aboriginal people in the management of their traditional lands. Up until this point, there has been no finer example of reconciliation, as championed by your Government.

The V-GRNP is of great significance to all Adnyamathanha people, and the Co-management Board has a proud proven history in engaging with and representing the views and interests of the Adnyamathanha community, in ensuring the strong cultural values of the park are conserved and protected.

The V-GRNP Co-management Board considers that the alternative engagement options as outlined in the Premier's letter (Your SAY, Government chat service, and citizens juries) would not provide an appropriate mechanism for engaging with the Adnyamathanha community, many of whom have limited access to technology and live in remote and isolated areas.

Additionally, the productive relationships we have established with DEWNR through the Co-Management Board are built on respect and trust, which have come with the passage of time and the ability to meet 'on country' to debate and make decisions together that affect the management of the park.

Finally, the CMA and ILUA arrangements are integral to the native title rights and the consent determination process and were entered into in good faith with the South Australian Government.

I trust you will agree that the Governance arrangements around our Co-Management Board demonstrate a 'best practice' approach to engaging the Aboriginal community in the effective management of the park.

Yours sincerely

P J McKenzie

Pauline McKenzie
CHAIRPERSON

VULKATHUNHA-GAMMON RANGES NATIONAL PARK CO-MANAGEMENT BOARD

cc: Jason Irving, Manager Protected Areas
John Schutz, Group Executive Director, Partnerships and Stewardship
Tim Goodes, Group Executive Director, Strategy and Advice
Allan Holmes, Chief Executive