

Ref N02 41

Hon Ian Hunter MLC  
Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation  
GPO Box 1047  
Adelaide SA 5011

**Lake Gairdner National Park  
Co-Management Board**

**Gawler Ranges National Park  
Advisory Committee**

PO Box 22  
Port Lincoln SA 5606

86 Tasman Tce  
Port Lincoln SA 5606

Tel 08 8688 3111  
Fax 08 8682 3110

[www.environment.sa.gov.au](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au)  
[www.epnrm.sa.gov.au](http://www.epnrm.sa.gov.au)

Dear Minister Hunter

**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 Board provides a direct response to you on this matter.

This letter relates to both the **Lake Gairdner National Park Co-management Board** and the **Gawler Ranges National Park Advisory Committee**. The two groups were established at the same time and consist of the same membership.

Lake Gairdner and Gawler Ranges National Parks are part of the traditional country of the Gawler Ranges people. Both Parks are culturally significant to the Gawler Ranges People, who are a collective of the Kokotha, Barngarla and Wiringu People.

Negotiating the Co-management agreements for these parks was a long and at times a difficult process, spanning more than a decade. Native Title was finally granted in December 2011. The Board and Advisory Committee were finally established in October 2013 and held their first meetings in December 2013.

An important purpose of the Co-management Agreements are to recognise, value and apply traditional knowledge in the management and promotion of the parks. In addition the Agreements provide a framework for the Gawler Ranges People and the State make a significant contribution towards the reconciliation of indigenous and non-indigenous people. Members believe that park management through the Board and Committee are the most effective and efficient "forums" to enable these outcomes.

In the relatively short time the Board and Committee have been established there have been real and noticeable advances in moving towards effective co-management. Significant benefits and outcomes that can be directly attributed to the effective functioning of the Board and Committee since being established less than one year ago are:

- The level of trust and collaboration between the Gawler Ranges People and the State has improved dramatically.
- The engendering of a genuine and positive intent to "work together" and share traditional aspirations and contemporary management needs.
- Commencement of the development of new Management Plans for the two Parks. The first drafts of these Plans will be considered by the Board and Committee in September 2014.

2

- Progress in exploring initiatives to realize the cultural aspirations of the Gawler Ranges People. This has included planning workshops and field visits to explore sites and discuss management options.

The Board and Committee consider that the alternative Co-management engagement options would not provide effective mechanisms for engaging with the Gawler Ranges People. Reasons to continue with the current arrangements include:

- Without the Board/Committee "engagement framework" it would be logistically difficult to effectively and meaningfully engage all Gawler Ranges People (via their elected Board and Committee representatives) in Co-management.
- The current Co-Management Board/Advisory Committee model will continue to enable the development and support of strong relationships where trust and respect has and will continue to develop with a strong commitment to regular 'face to face' communication.
- Removing the Board and Committee would be seen as lessening the recognition of the Gawler Ranges People as land managers and decision makers and would be viewed as a backward step in the People's relationship with the government and wider community.
- The Board and Committee provide the most cost effective and efficient forum to achieve effective Co-management outcomes.
- Co-management Agreement arrangements, including the establishment of the Board and Committee, are integral to the native title rights and the consent determination process and were entered into in good faith with the South Australian Government.
- The Board and Committee structure provides certainty and clarity of management structure and requirements for other Park stakeholders.

The relationship with Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula and DEWNR is positive and one which will grow. The Lake Gairdner Co-Management Board and Gawler Ranges Advisory Committee are committed to continuously improving performance and efficiency.

In terms of improving operational efficiency, members of the Co-management Board and Advisory Committee and the Gawler Ranges Aboriginal Community would welcome and encourage a merger of the Board and Advisory Committee to form one Co-management Board for both Lake Gairdner and Gawler Ranges National Parks. This change is previewed in the co-management agreement to occur once park management plans have been revised. It is anticipated that the revised plans will be adopted in the latter half of 2015 but a merger as soon as possible would fuel the positive momentum already generated and reduce the inefficiency of running two separate bodies for essentially the same purpose.

If you would like to discuss any of this information in further detail please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED] or at [annie.lane@sa.gov.au](mailto:annie.lane@sa.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,



Dr Annie Lane  
Chairperson  
Lake Gairdner Co-management Board  
Gawler Ranges Advisory Committee  
11/08/2014

