

City of Hobart Response to Discussion Paper

Developing a new threatened species strategy for Tasmania

The City of Hobart (CoH) has prepared the following submission in response to the current request for feedback regarding the 'Discussion Paper – Developing a New Threatened Species Strategy for Tasmania' (the 'discussion paper').

The City of Hobart manages 4,600 hectares of native bushland, as well as involvement in the management and protection of additional public and private land. As such, we have first-hand knowledge on the issues and management practices relevant to the Hobart region. We also have a direct interest in the outcomes of the Threatened Species Strategy (the 'Strategy').

The following submission responds to the nine questions outlined in the discussion paper in the order provided.

1. Key Elements from the 2000 Threatened Species Strategy:

CoH considers that the following are the key elements to be considered for the Strategy:

- **Community Involvement:** The 2000 Strategy's emphasis on community engagement and ownership underscores the importance of building a collaborative approach. Preserving and strengthening this principle in the new Strategy ensures sustained public support, fostering a shared responsibility for the protection of threatened species.
- **Research and Monitoring:** Maintaining a continuous focus on ongoing research and monitoring is foundational for informed decision-making. By staying up-to-date on threatened species and associated threatening processes, the Strategy can effectively address knowledge gaps, adapt conservation efforts, and ultimately improve outcomes.
- **Resource Allocation:** Careful consideration of resource allocation, encompassing funding and community contributions, is pivotal for the Strategy's success. Striking a balance in resource distribution ensures that financial support and community involvement aligns with identified priorities, maximising the impact of conservation actions.

2. Missing Key Threats:

Missing Key Threats: A Call for Specificity in the New Strategy

The threats outlined in the 2000 Strategy are broad, necessitating a more nuanced approach to allow for tailored actions. The new strategy must delve into the intricacies of threatening processes, giving due consideration to the following individual key threats:

- **Invasive Species:** Addressing the introduction and proliferation of non-native species that disrupt local ecosystems (including but not limited to):



- **Weeds:** Impacts of invasive flora on native ecosystems.
 - **Cats Predating on Native Wildlife:** Mitigating the impact of domestic and feral cats, both as predators of native wildlife and vectors for disease transmission.
 - **Impacts of Deer on Native Vegetation:** Understanding and managing the consequences of deer populations on native ecosystems.
 - **Rabbits:** Implementing measures to control and regulate rabbit populations to safeguard native ecosystems.
- **Native Animal Predation and Resource Competition:** Addressing predation and resource competition among native animal species to maintain ecological balance.
 - **Overgrazing by Natives:** Managing the impact of native species overgrazing to prevent habitat degradation, e.g. wallabies, noisy minors.
 - **Predation by introduced Australian Native Animals:** Understanding and mitigating instances of predation by introduced native fauna species.
- **Irresponsible Pet Ownership:** Advocating responsible pet ownership practices to minimise the impact of pets on native wildlife.
 - **Release of Unwanted Roosters:** Preventing the release of unwanted roosters into native bushland to avoid disruptions to local ecosystems.
 - **Release of the Domestic Mallard Duck:** Addressing the release of domestic mallard ducks into waterways to prevent hybridisation with native duck species.
 - **Predation of Native Wildlife by Domestic Dogs:** Specifically addressing the predation of little penguins (in the Derwent) by dogs.
 - **Domestic Cats Predating on Wildlife:** Managing the impact of domestic cats on wildlife populations.
- **Anthropogenic Induced Climate Change:** Recognising and mitigating the impact of human-induced climate change on biodiversity, considering (but not limited to):
 - changing ocean currents and water temperatures;
 - changing weather patterns, such as seasonal rainfall; and
 - changing natural hazard risks, such as flooding and bushfire (including reduced window for controlled burns).
- **Inappropriate Land Management Activities:**
 - **Overuse of insecticides:** Understanding and controlling the overuse of insecticides, which leads to a decrease in insect abundance and diversity.
 - **Poisoning of Native Wildlife by Anticoagulant Rodenticides:** Addressing the use of anticoagulant rodenticides, which pose a threat to native wildlife.
 - **Poor Hygiene and Biosecurity:** Implementing measures to address poor hygiene and biosecurity practices, preventing the spread of pathogens and weeds.
 - **Habitat Loss, Degradation and Fragmentation:** Addressing the ongoing challenges of habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation.
 - **Inappropriate Fire Regimes:** Addressing the impact of inappropriate fire regimes on native ecosystems, ensuring consideration of multiple values and avoiding single-value burns at the expense of others.

- **Incomplete Knowledge:**
 - **Incomplete Knowledge:** Recognising the impact of decisions guided by incomplete knowledge and working towards more informed decision-making.
 - **Under researched Species and Groups:** Acknowledging the potential loss of biodiversity and ecosystem collapse due to insufficient research, particularly of species and groups.

Suggested Actions:

- Seeking input from subject matter experts.
 - Quantifying anecdotal data.
 - Expanding resources for collaboration and gap identification.
 - Defined implementation pathways of research findings into management actions
- **Inappropriate Land Use & Development:**
 - **Inappropriate Land use:** Mitigating the impact of unsuitable land use practices near areas of high conservation value.
 - **Illegal Wood Hooking:** Combating unauthorised removal of vegetation that harms natural habitats.
 - **Loss of Hollow-Bearing Trees:** Implementing measures to protect trees crucial for habitat and biodiversity.
 - **Degradation of Native Riparian Vegetation Along Rivers and Streams:** Addressing the deterioration of vegetation along watercourses.
 - **Inappropriate Land Use Practices Causing Increased soil Loss, toxification, and pollution of waterways:** Recognising and rectifying practices leading to soil loss and water pollution.
 - **Inadequate planning regulation:** Biodiversity loss on private and public land from inadequate planning regulations, considering cumulative impacts.

3. Evaluation of Proposed Vision, Objectives, and Guiding Principles:

The proposed Vision, Objectives, and Guiding Principles reflect a comprehensive foundation for the new Strategy. However, their adaptability to evolving challenges is essential. Regular reviews and updates are crucial to incorporate emerging issues that may not be initially addressed, ensuring the Strategy remains dynamic and responsive to changing conservation needs.

4. Prioritisation Principles:

Prioritisation principles play a central role in effective resource allocation. Weighting these principles based on community importance, ecological significance, recovery potential, impact, and pre-emptive action ensures that resources are directed where they can have the most significant impact. Regular feedback and consultation with the community refine the prioritisation process, enhancing its relevance.

5. Appropriateness of Prioritisation Framework and Strategic Priorities:

To assess the appropriateness of the prioritisation framework and strategic priorities, detailed information on the specific criteria and methodologies employed is required. This includes a thorough examination of

how ecological importance, community feedback, and potential for recovery factor into the prioritisation process.

The incorporation of Tasmanian Aboriginal engagement is absent from the strategic priorities and is highly important to both improved environmental management and supporting cultural practices.

6. Plan and Opportunities:

CoH is committed to aligning its activities with the proposed objectives and strategic priorities. This includes ensuring the survival and flourishing of threatened species, preserving genetic diversity, preventing further species threats, fostering shared responsibility, and actively engaging with the community for educational purposes.

Currently CoH achieves this by:

- Partnering with external stakeholders to help drive innovation, knowledge sharing and effective broadscale programs;
- Aligning our Biodiversity Action Plan, Fuel Management Plans and strategies with the latest science and community values; and
- Educating community and partners, at every opportunity, and through our longstanding programs such as Bushcare and Backyard Bandicoots.

CoH sees an opportunity to further achieve objectives and priorities of the strategy by:

- continuing to actively adapt our land management practices, particularly in fire management and bush regeneration, as we learn through doing and accumulation of long-term data collection;
- continuing to expand and scale restoration of native grasslands, building on the success of the Queens Domain Grassy Woodlands Restoration Project;
- seeking new and novel industry partnerships and opportunities to deliver landscape-scale projects that promote biodiversity health and resilience; and
- continuing to expand upon and focus on repeatable quality surveys and assessments that help us better understand the health of our bushland and waterways. Eg. "State of our Rivulets- A report into the Environmental Health of Hobart's Waterways".

Other Important Considerations and Issues for CoH:

- Health of the rivulets.
- Improved management and restoration of native grasslands, incorporating lessons from the Queens Domain Grassy Woodlands Restoration Project, including managing the encroachment of sheoaks.
- Support for community education and civic participation programs, e.g., Backyard Bandicoots & Bushcare.
- Bushfire and cultural burning, considering the risk to wildlife from damaging bushfires and the increased opportunities for cultural burning to manage bushfire risk and improve ecosystem health.
- Monitoring and performance indicators are crucial, given the environmental decline. The State of the Environment Report 2024 will be pivotal in ascertaining the current environmental condition.

7. Research and Innovation Priorities:

Research and innovation efforts should include:

- bridging knowledge gaps related to species biology, habitat requirements and ecological importance;
- developing cutting-edge conservation technologies and methods to enhance protection efforts;
- spatial analysis tools to assess impacts such as habitat fragmentation, climate impacts, species (current and future) distributions and invasive species movements. Many of these exist and are used in other jurisdictions but require additional support or funding in Tasmania; and
- identifying key drivers of threatening processes and potential solutions.

8. What would encourage you to support and invest in threatened species management:

CoH makes a substantial investment and undertakes extensive activities in the management of natural values to support biodiversity. To further encourage investment the following should be considered:

- Improved coordination and alignment across jurisdictions through strategies, policies and facilitation.
- Clear communication and transparency on conservation outcomes. Greater understanding is required of conservation activities through monitoring, assessment and communication.
- Positive impacts should be shared, and issues or gaps identified. This would enable a clearer picture of strengths and weaknesses, celebrating the wins while identifying areas for improvement. This is also important for community involvement and encourages ongoing support whilst also may attract new investment, creating a positive feedback loop for conservation efforts.
- Better protections through reform should be considered to address specific processes leading to habitat destruction. For example, there is currently limited environmental protections to avoid, mitigate or offset vegetation loss from private development. More stringent and clear standards and protections for biodiversity protections would be beneficial.

9. Cost-Effective Management Tools:

CoH sees the following areas as the most cost effective for threatened species protection and conservation:

- **Utilising Legal Mechanisms such as Part 5s** - Natural values assessments for development, with associated costs borne by developers. This ensures that any conservation or restoration of land is integrated into contractual agreements, utilising legal mechanisms such as Part 5s to enforce set objectives. Learning from successful models, such as the Kingborough Council's approach.
- **EPBC Act reform** - The upcoming national reform agenda of the EPBC act presents an opportunity to better align with the Commonwealth policies and legislation.
- **Coordination across jurisdictions** – the Tasmanian Government has the opportunity to coordinate conservation actions across jurisdictions at larger scales.
- **Tasmanian Aboriginal engagement** - better engagement with Tasmanian Aboriginals to inform how the environment is managed.
- **Investment** - Major investment in nature restoration projects and conservation groups. Both public and private restoration programs are required in targeted locations

- **Volunteer programs** - Tasmania has highly engaged volunteer conservation sectors in Australia, through programs such as Landcare and Bushcare. These programs offer exceptional return on investment but greater funding is needed to support the capacity and reach of these programs.
- **Harnessing industry partnerships** – Organisations such as TLC, UTAS, Greening Australia and Bush Heritage offer public-private partnership opportunities to deliver landscape scale restoration projects, while sharing costs, expertise and building capacity.
- **Aligning cross-sectoral objectives to amplify strategic value** – e.g. a lot of improvements made to waterways can benefit threatened species through habitat creation and water quality improvements while also enhancing flood mitigation and providing natural amenity that benefits property prices, active recreation and health
- **Securing new conservation areas in line with the National Threatened Species Action Plan** - Towards Zero Extinctions and informed by improved, landscape-scale conservation planning.
- **Review & Monitoring** - More frequent State of the Environment Reports and better use of environmental assessments to inform management actions.
- **Scaling lessons from successful programs and research** - e.g. Improved management and restoration of threatened native grasslands, incorporating lessons from the Queens Domain Grassy Woodlands Restoration Project, including managing the encroachment of sheoaks.

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