South Australia
OUR FUTURE
actions to protect
people, places and wildlife
Introduction

South Australia has a proud history as a visionary, inclusive and innovative state.

We’ve led the way on smart environmental policy, from container deposit legislation to the creation of marine parks. Now South Australia is showing the world how to switch to clean energy by transitioning away from polluting fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) that are causing dangerous climate change.

We have unique land and seascapes, wildlife and wilderness. Our environment has an intrinsic magnificence – we rely on nature for our most basic needs, and a healthy environment and climate are essential to our wellbeing.

Yet we are facing a number of serious environmental challenges. Our actions and priorities are not reflecting the urgency and scale of these threats to our people, places and wildlife. That’s why we need adequate funding and policies that properly care for this state that we call home.

The 2018 South Australian state election comes at a critical moment, both for nature protection and making the transition to clean energy. That’s why we have come together to outline the 36 policy benchmarks all parties need to commit to.

South Australians want a state government that enables people and wildlife to thrive, champions clean energy and stops polluting companies damaging our climate. From climate change and clean energy policy, to protecting our oceans and waterways like the Murray River and Coongie Lakes, these benchmarks outline the key outcomes any party must commit to if it is serious about ensuring we can keep enjoying life on this beautiful planet.

In the lead up to the 17 March 2018 state poll, we will periodically release and update a scorecard which will rank the parties against these benchmarks, so South Australians can make informed choices about what the parties promise to do, if elected, when it comes to stopping climate pollution, ramping up clean energy, and ensuring our communities and natural environment can thrive.

South Australians, our climate, our wildlife and our wilderness deserve no less.

Clean and Clever – our heritage, our future

South Australia has led the way on smart environmental policies and now we’re showing the world how to switch to clean, renewable energy. It’s time to extend that boldness and move on from polluting fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) that are causing dangerous climate damage.
We want SA to make a rapid and fair transition to 100% renewable energy, followed by a plan to make our state a renewable energy superpower exporting an additional 50% of our energy needs interstate and to the world by 2030.

Legislate by 2019 to source 100% of South Australia’s electricity from renewables by 2025 with a fully funded implementation plan.

- Commit to an interim target of at least 80% by 2022.
- Replace the South Australian Energy Security Target with an on-demand renewables plan underpinned by reverse auctions and public ownership. Following the achievement of 100% renewables, maximise our ‘first mover’ advantage and South Australia’s renewable potential and;
- Set a state target of exporting an additional 50% of our energy needs by 2030;
- Establish a renewable hydrogen export industry; and
- Use the investment in cheap abundant power in SA to attract appropriate industries.

Ensure all South Australians are empowered through the energy transition by:

- Establishing a publicly owned, public interest energy retailer to facilitate access to cheap power, energy efficiency and renewables with storage for people in public housing or on low-incomes;
- Funding the development of community owned and led energy projects;
- Working with Indigenous communities to co-design and fund an Aboriginal Renewables Program;
- Creating a workforce plan by 2019 to support workers in the fossil fuel industry to retrain and be re-employed in other sectors, and to equip new workers in the renewables sector to enable a rapid and fair community transition;
- Legisitating a fair price for solar;
- Facilitating peer to peer trading; and
- Providing incentives for both landlords and tenants to install solar PV and/or batteries.

Oppose all oil and gas exploration activity (seismic and deep sea drilling) in the Great Australian Bight. South Australia does not have the capacity to cope with disaster in the Great Australian Bight. We must recognise and act upon the catastrophic risk oil exploration presents to this globally significant whale nursery, and the tourism and fishing sectors.

Protect the South East (Limestone Coast and Otway Basin) with a ban on all gas field exploration and/or development and a permanent ban on all gas activities on prime agricultural and high yielding cropping land across the state.

Ban all extreme and risky fossil fuel extraction activities, including underground coal gasification.

Remove all State Government incentives and subsidies for the exploration and/or production of fossil fuels, to clearly affirm the state’s commitment to renewables.

In SA we’ve got far better options than turning our food bowl and natural spaces into industrial gasfields. With an abundance of exciting renewable energy options, we don’t need to risk our state’s clean marketing edge, our water supplies, and our health.”

- Craig Wilkins CE, Conservation SA

The Great Australian Bight whale nursery is a completely inappropriate place for risky deep sea oil drilling, especially as we hurtle towards catastrophic climate change. Actively pushing to expand the fossil fuel industry is the height of irresponsibility and not an option if we are to have any chance of providing our children with a liveable climate.” – Peter Owen, Australian Environmentalist of the Year

About one in three SA households are generating their own clean energy.

Photo: Shutterstock

Community rally against oil drilling. Photo: Andrew Correll
Cleaner Transport

SA transportation options must also transition away from fossil fuel dependency.

Commit to position SA as the ‘Electric Vehicle (EV) Capital of Australia’ by 2019 through:
- An EV uptake target;
- Immediate implementation of a backbone EV charging network;
- Government fleet purchase target;
- Stamp duty registration and tax discounts; and
- Public/Fleet purchaser awareness programs.

Commit to the rapid phasing out of all diesel public transport fleet vehicles and rule out new diesel fleet purchases.

Extend and upgrade the cycling network infrastructure in SA including a cycling strategy with special reference to connections with public transport links and develop new guidelines to make all local government roads cycle-friendly.

Circular Economy

Continue SA’s international and national leadership in transforming waste into a resource.

Drive South Australia’s transformation towards a circular economy by establishing a ‘Circular Economy Action Lab’ in 2018 to generate innovation and cross-sector collaboration.

Commit to the diversion of 90% of municipal solid waste (MSW) from landfill by 2023, including state-wide comprehensive organics and food waste recycling.

Institute a credible, comprehensive and consistent mass balance reporting system for the waste and recycling industry.

Make SA a national leader by banning disposable plastic cups, cutlery, and plates, unless made from compostable or biologically sourced materials.

Ban the sale of products containing micro-plastics/micro-beads.

Clean Food

Continue SA’s reputation for clean and green food.

Maintain the moratorium against GM crops recognising the growing economic importance of organic production and international market access, and the need to protect SA’s clean, green status.

No Radioactive Waste

Protect SA from the threat of radioactive waste importation, storage and disposal.

For over 20 years South Australians have been saying no to a nuclear waste dump. Now that an international dump is off the table, it’s time for all political parties to stand up for regional and rural communities and ensure our laws that ban nuclear waste dumping are respected.” – Cat Beaton, Community Organiser, CCSA

Community rally. Photo: Kathy Whitta

A circular economy is a job-rich economy. Photo: Comaniciu Dan/Shutterstock
Clean & Clever

350 Australia
Australian Conservation Foundation
Australian Marine Conservation Society
Australian Nuclear Free Alliance
Australian Youth Climate Coalition
Conservation Council of South Australia
Eco-Action Kangaroo Island
Experiencing Marine Sanctuaries
Flinders Local Action Group
Friends of the Earth
Landcare Association of South Australia
Limestone Coast Protection Alliance
Sea Shepherd Australia
Solar Citizens
Transition Gawler
The Wilderness Society
Western Adelaide Coastal Residents’ Association Inc

Morialta Conservation Park.

Collingrove Lakes. Photo: Bill Doyle
Nature for Everyone – respect and protect

South Australia has unique land and seascapes, wildlife and wilderness. Our environment has an intrinsic magnificence and a right to exist in perpetuity, and we need to ensure a healthy environment for all South Australians now and in the future. We rely on nature for our most basic needs, and we need contact with it for our wellbeing. Therefore adequate funding and policies to respect, value and properly care for the place that is our home, is essential.

South Australia is a state blessed with natural wonders. We have some of the world’s most ancient landscapes, containing the earliest history of life on our planet. We have incredible deserts rich in culture and songlines. We have spectacular beaches and seas full of diverse marine life.

Protect Iconic Areas

Retain the South Australian system of Marine Parks including current management plans and sanctuary zones, and consider increasing the size of key iconic sanctuaries in the Great Australian Bight region.

Protect the iconic Kalakooapah Creek wilderness in the Simpson Desert Regional Reserve via a proclamation under the Wilderness Protection Act (1992).

Protect the Coongie Lakes by establishing a Wilderness Protection Area covering the National Park and the No-Go Mining zone in Coongie and Tirrawarra Paddocks. The management of the entire Coongie Paddock should also be considered.

Legislate to prevent mining and exploration activities in all public and private protected areas, including Regional Reserves and areas recognised through Heritage Agreements.

Reinstate the Wilderness Advisory Committee to enhance and progress the wilderness assessment process under the Wilderness Protection Act (1992).

Develop and implement a ‘Climate Change Adaptation Strategy’ for parks and reserves by 2020.

Revise preventative fire management activity in SA (excluding emergency responses) to ensure they are based on best practice science and sound biodiversity management principles which include ongoing post fire monitoring and evaluation.

South Australia’s iconic marine sanctuaries including the Nuyts Reef, the Isles of St Francis, Pearson Island, areas around Kangaroo Island and the Coorong Coast are of international significance. It is critical that our world class marine parks system and current management plans are retained.” – Peter Owen, Director, The Wilderness Society SA

Simpson Desert wilderness. Photo: Matthew Turner

South Australia’s Australian sea lions. Photo: Taylor Marine Pictures
Partnerships for Nature

A collaborative approach will enable the best outcomes, and a healthy democracy enables citizens to take action against environmentally destructive decision-making and activities.

Invest in Nature

Our financial investment in nature has been falling for a decade.

Ensure a minimum 2% of the state budget is invested in biodiversity conservation, effective monitoring and evaluation, as well as enforcement of environmental legislation and climate change action.

Respect and Protect: Actions to Protect Nature

Pelicans, Kingscote. Photo: Kathy Whitta

Respect and Protect: Actions to Protect Nature

Community volunteer event 'Swampfest'. Photo: John Gitsham

Respect and Protect: Actions to Protect Nature

We are fortunate that so many South Australians love nature and work to protect it on both private and community land. More resources, stronger partnerships and smart, strategic projects will multiply their impact and empower thousands of volunteers.” – Natasha Davis CE, Trees for Life

NRM Reform and Partnerships

Significant Natural Resources Management (NRM) reform is necessary to get more investment in on-ground projects for a healthier environment.

Establish a genuine partnership with the SA Nature Alliance to deliver the following NRM reforms in 2019:

- Increase the proportion of NRM levy revenue and Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) budgets dedicated to on-ground works;
- Implement a devolved delivery model and formalise opportunities for the environment non-government sector to deliver projects and have direct involvement in investment decision making;
- Increase resourcing for volunteers and community groups delivering environmental protection and restoration services and projects, and re-establish state funded community grants;
- Co-invest state funds ‘dollar for dollar’ in on-ground programs, to match regional NRM levy revenue and federal government investment;
- Allocate resources for a targeted stewardship and acquisition program to help protect areas of high conservation value;
- Increase the proportion of funding for landscape scale, multi-partner and multi-year biodiversity projects such as Wild Eyre; and
- Ensure that more robust science is combined with local knowledge in project delivery.

Partner with environment NGOs to continue “Nature of SA”, the partnership project building shared visions for nature conservation in SA.

Commit to investing in projects that showcase how nature contributes to our wellbeing and sense of identity as South Australians.

Commit to working with indigenous communities in SA to expand and secure initiatives such as Indigenous Rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas.

Commit to recurrent funding of $200K p.a. for the South Australian Environmental Defenders Office to support vital public interest legal action.

Rule out any new laws that constrain the democratic rights of people and communities to peacefully protest or prevent environmentally destructive activities, and ensure legal protection exists for such actions taken in the public interest.
Driest State, Driest Continent

Water is a critical limiting factor for much of the Australian environment. Sound management of our water resources is essential to maintain community wellbeing and to protect biodiversity and ecological systems.

Prohibit exploration and mining activities that have the potential to impact groundwater resources including the Great Artesian Basin.

Prescribe all at-risk surface and groundwater supplies, resources and reserves and ensure there is a water allocation plan in place for them.

Create 1000 hectares of new ‘Aquifer Recharge Farms’ in agricultural regions of the state by 2022.

Ensure that the Murray-Darling Basin Plan returns the equivalent of 3200 GL to the environment to safeguard the health of the River Murray, Lower Lakes and the Coorong, including the 450GL negotiated by SA when the Basin Plan was formed. Maintain strong pressure on the Federal Government to return oversight of water to the federal environment portfolio and ensure all states play by the rules and deliver on their commitments under the Basin plan.

Nature for Everyone

Native vegetation and other significant vegetation is fundamental to the health of our land, and current measures to protect them are failing.

Urgently review by 2019 all legislation and other protection measures that impact on native vegetation and significant trees to address the unsustainable rate of removal in urban and regional areas.

Support development of a biodiversity-focused carbon offsets industry in regional South Australia, delivered in partnership with the environment sector.

Unless the water promised to SA under the Murray Darling Basin Plan is delivered, there is no hope for the future of the Coorong.

– Gavan McFadzean, Climate Change and Clean Energy Program manager, ACF

Murray River. Photo: David Sickerdick

Dusky Woodswallow chicks, Cleland Conservation Park. Photo: Kathy Whitta

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