



6 February 2009

Biodiversity Discussion Paper Comments
Department of Environment and Climate Change
P O Box A290
Sydney South NSW 1232

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) Comments
on Biodiversity Strategy Discussion Paper**

SSROC wishes to put forward the following submission on the NSW Biodiversity Discussion paper.

SSROC has been a keen participator in the Sydney-wide biodiversity project, GreenWeb Sydney. This program has been running since 1996, initiated by 5 of the NSW ROC's and funded by several sources, channelled through the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority. Over the past few years, as funding has ceased, the GreenWeb program largely stalled.

In examining the Biodiversity Strategy objectives, SSROC believe that it is an opportune time to put forward GreenWeb as a tool to be used in meeting a number of the strategies objectives.

1. SSROC wished to put forward the GreenWeb Sydney program as an example of a program that could be picked up by the DECC in order to meet some of the objectives and goals of the NSW Biodiversity Strategy. It appears from the discussion paper that GreenWeb Sydney could become an Regional Conservation Initiative (RCI).

The program was initially funded by the National Heritage Trust. Further funding was received and in total the program comprehensively ran (with a dedicated project officer) for approximately 5 years. The public website and detailed vegetation mapping were elements of this program that aimed to improve the connectivity of biodiversity corridors. The website is now out of date, but the concept of the mapping of green corridors is still an important part of GreenWeb Sydney, and should be maintained.

The program was successful, with second round grant funding also being received in order to continue with the project and many Councils and ROC's being involved. But without consistent funding and lacking a management model, it has laid dormant for a number of years.

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2. The goals and principle of the strategy state that “biodiversity recovery and increasing landscape connectivity with involvement from the whole community”

This is something that SSROC believes the GreenWeb Sydney program, with effective management from the DECC, would achieve. Biodiversity corridors are a major issue, and one that will affect the success of the strategy. This needs to be effectively addressed in this plan.

3. Regional Conservation Initiatives (RCI's)- as mentioned in the strategy, with the aim to guide long term biodiversity conservation planning and priority set on a regional scale. SSROC would suggest that Local Government is a potential RCI and that the program GreenWeb Sydney is a tool to be used for determining these locations. GreenWeb could also be used for the monitoring and tracking of these locations.

It seems that the lack of monitoring, of gain or loss, on single asset areas is lacking and something that the strategy should address. This leads to the “death by a thousand cuts” scenario that occurs due to lack of management and monitoring resources. With up to date mapping not available through GreenWeb Sydney or elsewhere, it is impossible to access the effect that developments etc are having on the whole “green network”.

4. BioBanking is an example of the need for integration between strategies and programs to ensure that fragmentation does not continue to occur. It is essential to get community buy-in and awareness for BioBanking to succeed
5. Ultimately, Biodiversity is managed locally in order to achieve the bigger picture targets. It is at a local level where change will be affected. It is with this in mind that SSROC suggests the need for a clear focus with the strategy and how it links on a national, regional and local level.

It is SSROC's recommendation that as part of the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy that the DECC consider taking on the GreenWeb program and managing it in order to get the desired outcomes.

Should you wish to discuss further please contact Ms Erin Bennett on 9330 6455.

Yours sincerely,

David Lewis
General Manager