Natural Resources Management Act 2004

(South Australian)
What is Natural Resources Management?

- Natural Resource Management (NRM) refers to the management of natural resources such as land, water, soil, plants & animals

- NRM is similar to the concept of sustainable development & focuses on how management affects the quality of life for both present & future generations

Why is NRM important?

- Australia’s natural resources are under threat from climate change, water scarcity, pollution, inappropriate development, land clearing & unsustainable farming practices

- There will be significant costs to the Australian economy & the welfare of all Australians if these assets are allowed to degrade
What does the NRM Act do?

- Provides the guiding principles for Natural Resources Management in South Australia through an integrated & sustainable framework

- Establishes the Natural Resources Management (NRM) Council as the state-wide peak body for administration of the Act

- Establishes eight Regional NRM Boards across South Australia to
  - assist the NRM Council to monitor & evaluate the condition of natural resources across the State
  - promote public awareness & understanding of sustainable, regional NRM
  - provide grants to researchers, farmers & engineers (among others) to undertake NRM projects
  - develop a Natural Resources Management Plan for their region
    - Plans may cover weed, pest & animal management, salinity control, biodiversity enhancement, landholder advice & incentives
What does the NRM Act do? (cont.)

- Establishes the key objectives for state-wide NRM;
  - *integrated management*
  - *protection of existing biological diversity*
  - *ecological restoration & rehabilitation*
  - *economic production*
  - *balancing ecological needs with the need to support the contribution of primary & other economic production systems, such as agriculture & mining, to the State economy*
  - *supporting & increasing people’s capacity to participate in NRM, especially through educational initiatives*
How does the Act apply to the University?

• The University, as a substantial land-owner, occupier, manager & developer, is subject to the State NRM Plan which requires the University to (among others);
  – control declared plants on University land
  – eradicate certain pests
  – obtain water-allocation permits
  – construct animal-proof fencing
  – protect certain vegetation or habitats

• All Development Plans for construction & modification of University buildings must be consistent with the NRM Act
  – Some plans require consultation with an NRM board
Who does the Act apply to?

- The Act applies to any University staff member who works or interacts with natural resources (land, water, soil, plants & animals), but most specifically to:
  - staff at Waite & Roseworthy campuses
  - staff participating in field trips or research projects
  - members of the Infrastructure Branch who are responsible for the management of the University's property portfolio & the provision of asset & facilities management

- Some University staff may be a recipient of a NRM grant or undertake work as part of an NRM-initiated project

- All employees have a general statutory duty under the NRM Act to act reasonably & responsibly in relation to the management of natural resources
Control of Animals and Plants

• Under the Act, restrictions apply to the control, movement & transportation of certain animals & plants on University property

• The Act prescribed measures for the;
  – protection of vegetation
  – control of deer, goats & other animals
  – destruction or control of animals, plants or pests
  – construction of animal-proof fences
  – movement & possession of animals or plants

• Penalties of $50,000 or imprisonment for 1 year can result from breaches of the Act
Water Allocation Plans

- The University is subject to various Water Allocation Plans as outlined by regional NRM boards

- Water Allocation Plans specify (among others);
  - *the rate at which drinking water may be taken*
  - *obligations relating to the management & protection of water resources*
  - *strict rules forbidding certain conduct in & around a watercourse, lake or dam*

- The University may obtain a **water licence** to use water from a prescribed watercourse, lake, surface water area or well (*eg: Waite campus must obtain a licence to access water from an underground bore*)
  - A water licence provides a water access entitlement to the holder of the licence
  - **Penalties & fines of up to $70,000 apply for unauthorised taking of water in excess of the amount available under the allocation**
What can happen if I don’t comply?

*University Consequences:*

- Fines of up to $70,000
- Negative publicity
- Damage to the University’s reputation
- Attraction & retention of staff & students is compromised
- Offences under the NRM Act may also constitute a breach of the Environment Protection Act 1993 (SA)
  - harsher penalties apply
University Obligations under the Act

Managers:
- Promote environmental conservation & enhancement in the use & development of the university campuses & land, through;
  - proper environmental management
  - the development of sustainability targets

- Ensure that contractors on University campuses & property comply with the NRM Act

All Staff:
- Behave in a manner consistent with the University Sustainability Policy
- Learn to recognise environmental risk
  - undertake risk assessments for activities that may impact the environment
    - Contact Anne Hill, Manager Risk Services for more information
    - 8313 4603
Additional Resources

- Libby Dowling, Environmental Project Officer
  - 8313 5871
- University Sustainability Policy
- Ecoverity (formerly Sustainable Adelaide) website
- Natural Resources Management Act 2004 (SA)
- Natural Resources Management (General) Regulations 2005
- Natural Resources Management Council

Contact or learn more about your regional NRM Board:
- Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board
- Eyre Peninsula NRM Board
- Kangaroo Island NRM Board
- Northern & Yorke NRM Board
- SA Arid Lands NRM Board
- SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board
- South East NRM Board
- Alinytjara Wilurara
Disclaimer

The content of this material is intended only to provide a summary & general overview of the *Natural Resources Management Act* as it applies to the University of Adelaide.

It is not intended to be comprehensive nor does it constitute legal advice.

Please contact *Mathew Jeffrey* or Legal & Risk if you are unsure of your compliance obligations under the Act.