NEWS RELEASE

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NEW PHASE FOR SA'S PIONEERING NATIVE VEGETATION PROGRAM

Environment and Planning Minister, Ms Susan Lenehan, will introduce a Bill in the coming Parliamentary session to ensure the effective management of thousands of hectares of native vegetation throughout the State.

The proposed legislation is the next step in the State Government's pioneering native vegetation program which has seen SA landholders preserve about 250,000 hectares of wildlife habitat.

Over the past six years, SA landholders have been entitled to financial assistance for lost income for land they have not been allowed to clear, Ms Lenehan said.

More than $40 million has been paid out.

In the last months of this phase, another 150,000 hectares is likely to come under similar protection.

Under the new legislation, the compensation scheme would cease from the date of introduction of the Bill to Parliament on Tuesday February 12.

"As I said last year, we now intend to move to an emphasis on managing those thousands of hectares," Ms Lenehan said.

"The new arrangements have the support of the United Farmers and Stockowners (UFS) and the Nature Conservation Society."

Ms Lenehan said that SA's legislation to protect native vegetation outside the park system was unique in the country and was being examined by other States intending to introduce similar measures.

"The legislation to place areas under heritage agreements has been highly successful," Ms Lenehan said.

"The areas have been saved - it is now time to look closely at their long-term protection and management.

"The Government is looking forward to continuing working with landholders in this next important phase of the program."