

## **Sustainability threats to a regional botanic garden**

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Part of a larger organization, the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium of South Australia, Mount Lofty Botanic Garden, nestles within the biodiversity-rich environment of the Adelaide Hills. The garden faces several sustainability threats that are mostly influenced by the gardens unique geographical and natural heritage. These threats will challenge our fundamental responsibilities as a botanic garden. Climate change emerges as a primary concern with the likelihood of more frequent and severe bushfires posing a significant risk to the survival of our living collections. Bushfire management strategies have been developed and upgraded to ensure the site is prepared to respond to emergency situations. Invasive or introduced species represent another significant challenge. Our aim in conserving significant and valuable plant species becomes increasingly difficult as invasive species and feral animals establish dominance, outcompeting native plants and making it unsuitable for the cultivation of living collections. Urbanization of the Adelaide Hills has reduced the space available for natural habitats but also leads to habitat fragmentation, making the garden a refuge for a significant population of native and feral animals, putting further pressure on our living collections. Some of these challenges affect the whole organization, while some are unique to Mount Lofty. Addressing these sustainability threats has required the implementation of integrated management strategies across all levels of our organization to ensure the enrichment and long-term sustainability of our regional botanic garden.