

The Habitat Council is a South African environmental umbrella body that came into existence in 1974 following a national conference attended by over 300 environmentalists from a wide range of disciplines concerned about the environmental decline in South Africa.

The *modus operandi* of the Council is based on consultation with its membership and with other environmental bodies on matters of environmental concern. The **objectives** of the Council are to promote consultation, co-operation, and, where appropriate, coordinated action, in order to:

- contribute towards sustainable environmental conservation and management as well as to environmental education
- conserve biodiversity, fragile ecosystems, and South Africa's natural (water, marine, etc) resources
- act as early-warning system to help prevent environmental and ecological harm
- reduce / prevent all forms of pollution and waste, and other harmful practices that threaten environmental and social well-being, and promote responsible waste management based on waste separation at source, with optimal resource recovery from non-biodegradable waste, and composting of biodegradable waste
- contribute towards improving environmental, planning and administrative laws and procedures.

Membership

Membership is open to non-governmental organizations or other bodies whose aims and objectives are not at variance with the objectives of the Council. The Habitat Council has a membership ranging from youth organizations (such as the Girl Guides, the Scout Association of SA), to scientific societies and institutes with a bearing on the environment (such as the Geological Society of SA, the Institute of Natural Resources, and the Institute of Waste Management), to larger NGOs that operate on a national scale (such as the Wildlife and Environment Society of SA, and Birdlife South Africa), down to smaller localized NGOs (such as the Magaliesberg Protection Association, the Brackenfell Hypermarket Environmental Group, the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve Association and the Still Bay Conservation Trust).

Environmental Award

The Habitat Award was instituted in 1997 to give recognition annually to outstanding contributions in the field of environmental conservation.

Administration

The wide dissemination of members across the country makes attendance at meetings difficult; therefore the Habitat Council's constitution makes provision for representation at meetings by proxy.

The current President is Dr DW van der Zel, forestry expert. (Tel; +27 12 807 3370 (h); cell: 083 292 1585; e-mail: dokdiek@mweb.co.za). The Executive Officer, M-L Roux, is responsible for office and general administration. Further information, as well as application-for-membership forms, may be obtained from address below.

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