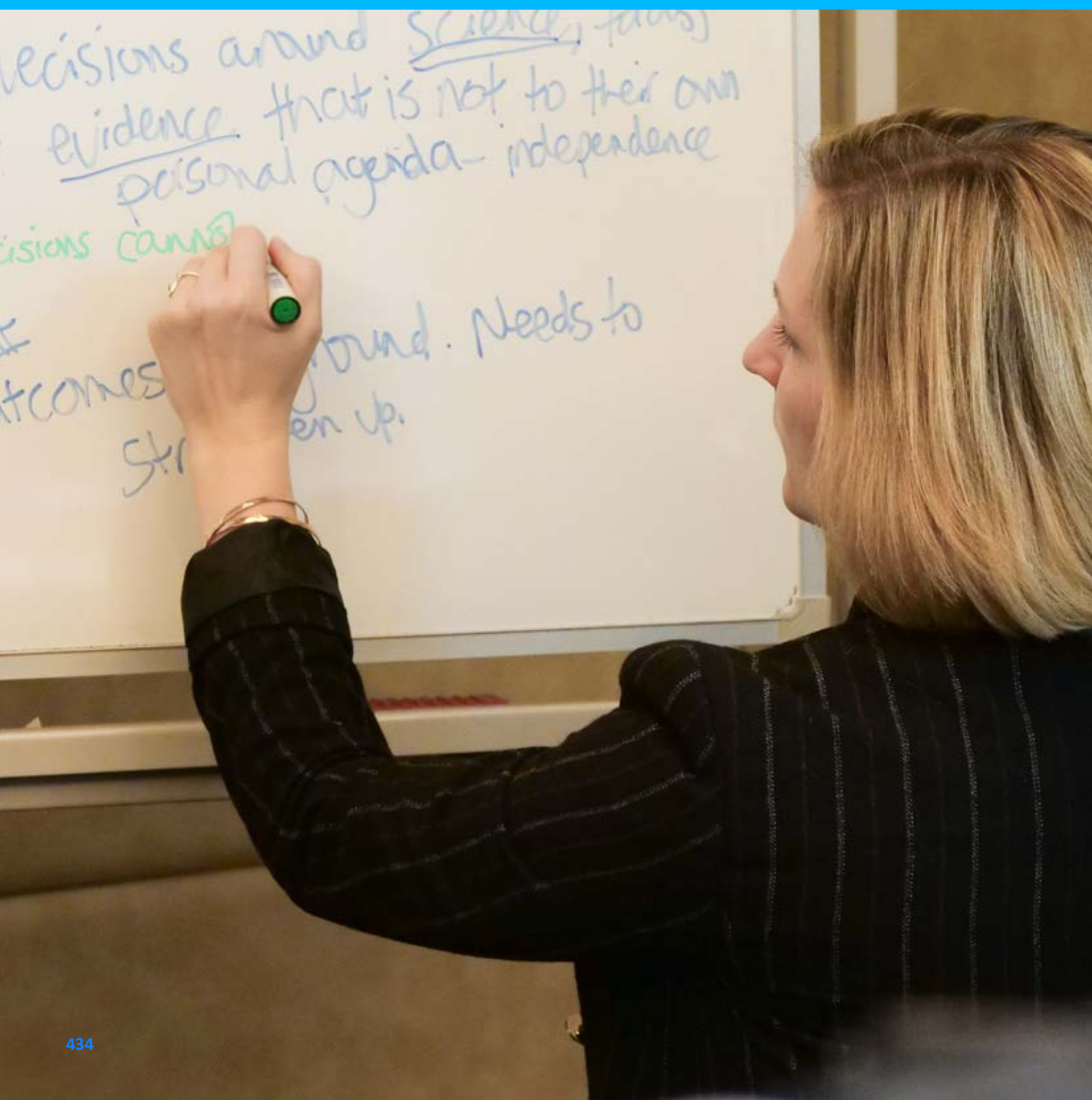


8.3 | Reports From Meetings With NRM Boards



Reports from meetings with NRM Boards

- 8.3.1 Kangaroo Island NRM Board - 21 August
- 8.3.2 Eyre Peninsula NRM Board - 27 August
- 8.3.3 Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board - 6 September
- 8.3.4 South Australia Arid Lands NRM Board - 10 September
- 8.3.5 Northern and Yorke NRM Board - 11 September
- 8.3.6 SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board - 17 September
- 8.3.7 South East NRM Board - 17 September
- 8.3.8 Alinytjara Wilurara - 2 October

PHASE:	NRM BOARD DISCUSSIONS
SESSION:	KANGAROO ISLAND
TIME/DATE:	11AM-1PM 21ST August 2018
FACILITATOR:	Becky

Becky Hirst met with 5 members of the Kangaroo Island NRM Board and facilitated a conversation based on the key proposals being put forward, using the same tools being used in the broader community forums.

Whilst a full account of input noted can be found below, some of the key points to arise from the meeting were –

- There is a need for **greater local decision making** with **more autonomy** for the board, having governance in place to enable decisions to be made within the region;
- A desire for **‘what’s best for of the environment’** to be at the centre of decision making, not any specific stakeholders or other agendas;
- A great sense of **pride in the way the existing board works** – both in its representation and the way members work well together;
- There was **concern around the election** of community members on to the Landscape board. It was felt that **7 members is too few** to get good representation. It was highlighted that the **existing words in the NRM Act are good** in suggesting the type of representation required on the boards. There was strong sentiment that **the existing board does have community and landholders at the centre**, aligning with this guiding principle;
- With regard to discussion around boundaries, the board felt strongly that **the existing boundary of the island should remain**, with a firm need for Kangaroo Island to retain its own board;
- Some discussion around funding and a **desire for the board to be able to make the decision on how the levy rates are calculated**. It was also highlighted that this region is totally dependent on the appropriation fund. Concern was raised around the Grassroots funding and how this was going to be **taken out of existing levies**. The group felt the Landscape Priorities Fund was good in principle – Kangaroo Island needs this additional top up of income;
- Kangaroo Island is a **leading example of sustainable lifestyle**;
- Mention of **over-abundant species**, used primarily as examples of where more local decision making would be effective.

FACILITATED DISCUSSION

The group went on to undertake a series of discussions, exploring the following topics –

1. **Top 5 priorities** – what are the top five things you would like the reform to achieve for natural resource management in your region?
2. **What’s already working well** – What are the top five things that are currently working well and you would be disappointed if they were lost through this reform process?
3. **The 5 Guiding Principles** – How might these principles might help your priorities to be addressed?
4. **Governance & Planning** – Discussion regarding board representation, board accountability, boundaries
5. **Engagement** - How should Landscape SA boards engage with their communities in planning, delivering and evaluating natural resource management programs and projects?
6. **Funding** – Discussion regarding levies, Landscape Priorities Fund, Grassroots program
7. **Measuring Success** – If you were the Minister, how would you know that the reform has been successful?

The notes below are written up verbatim.

1. PRIORITIES FOR REFORM

Each person was given five large sticky notes and asked to write down their top five priorities for the Landscape SA reform process. Everyone then shared their priorities with the group and sorted them in to themes together. Participants chose headings for each of the clusters of priorities.

The priorities for the KI NRM Board were –

- Autonomy/Governance/Local decision making as an enabler
- Over-abundant species
- Planning for the future

<u>OVER ABUNDANT SPECIES</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More, faster response and flexibility in responding to environmental difficulties e.g. the problems of over abundant species.• Better over abundant species management i.e. koalas.	<u>AUTONOMY/GOVERNANCE/LOCAL DECISION MAKING – (ENABLER)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional autonomy in natural resource management decision making. Act recognises the reality of natural resource management is specific to each of the regions.• KI is different to rest of SA and needs to be able to proceed as KI.• Visibility to community.• Have an effective governance role – currently the linkage with the department has generated a strange hybrid system lacking in preferred degree of autonomy/local autonomy.• More localised decision making – native vegetation.• Community bringing whole of region together.• Localised.• Ability to make regional decision relevant to whole community.• Local decision makers.
<u>PLAN FOR THE FUTURE</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whole of landscape capability with a greater emphasis on identifying and managing for the future. it must recognise the reality of present economics but future planning and management to get there is important.• Commercial reality will look after the present.	
<u>OTHER</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environment as a top priority – not always as the bottom, bottom line.• Legislation response in the best interest of the environment. Allowing the community including DEW staff, NRM board to respond to their own particular environmental issues without being ham strung by legislation. Trust in DEW and NRM boards to deliver on these issues.• Access to necessary funding: funding for our region; specific; utilising all department links between these.• Ensure that the board remains capable of delivering programs funded through a range of NR mechanisms: e.g. NLP, private donations i.e. not be limited by state-driven priorities; missing native vegetation/species protection.• Water, pests and soil not enough.• Strong regional and community linkages partnering with local groups – ensure this remains.• Funding that allows programs that have been initiated to continue without interruption.	

2. WHAT'S CURRENTLY WORKING WELL?

Each table was given five large sticky notes and asked to write down the top five things that they feel are currently working well with natural resource management.

- The number of members on the KI NRM board: provides a more diverse skill and experience base; is about the right number to provide efficient working.
- Board membership – number is import skills based.
- Board local and representative of range if skills, experience and interests.
- The forum of presiding members providing feedback between different regions and information to boards – don't have to reinvent the wheel if another board has good ideas.
- The current board membership.
- Our on-ground delivery and the recognition that it has given to our ability to access federal funds.
- Breadth of delivery through DEW and community.

- The relationship between DEW staff and the NRM board.
- Practical achievable programs with qualified staff.
- Biosecurity consciousness.
- Acknowledgement of management of pests: pigs; cat; koala.
- Committed structure as a result – biosecurity outcomes.
- Environmental management: biodiversity; soil and water.
- Focus on ecologically sustainable development of KI as per NRM Plan.
- Sustainability as a community/region – individuals; KI branding uniqueness.

3. THE 5 PRINCIPLES

The facilitator introduced the 5 principles which the Minister has developed to help guide the legislation reform. In small groups, the participants visited each of the 5 principles and considered the following three questions –

- What does this principle mean to you?
- Does it resonate?
- How might it address your priorities?

The following notes were made under each principle –

a. Decentralised decision making

- Relates to local decision making – priority – autonomy etc.
- Fits well with KI priorities.
- Concern – still need support of government behind us – legally, financially and evidence base.

b. A simple and accessible system

- If we want this, we should have our Commissioner for KI back and working for us (ends September) – but if we are autonomous this person should work closely with us.
- Community Engagement Officer – big role to play in this.
- Flip side – got to have effective compliance systems in place – legislation, compliance officer – don't have dedicated person.
- Enforcing biosecurity.

c. Community and land owners at the centre

- This is exactly what we're trying to do.
- Someone has to do the visioning/future direction – who identifies what future of environmental management on KI looks like?
- Role of community forums – liaison/Community Engagement Officer role to get out there to bring ideas to board.
- Make up of board must be from region.
- Problem with funding system – we operate with federal funds – given to us with government priorities (to fit political agenda) we have to twist and manipulate to make relevant to our community.

d. A whole of landscape approach

- Good words already in NRM Act.
- Focus on soils, water and pests doesn't deliver this.
- But it is a good thing.
- Important to Kangaroo Island – estuaries.
- Biosecurity – whole landscape – how to protect?
- Clean and green demands this approach.

e. Back to basics

- We disagree. Doesn't cover the complete biodiversity, ecosystems, whole of landscape approach.
- Don't know what it means – fishing, farming and copulating! That is what I mean by basics.

- Concern this eliminates things we see as important. Thinking has to evolve – not go back to basics.
- Everything inter-relates – could be a good place to start.

4. GOVERNANCE & PLANNING

4.1 Board Representation

The nine Landscape Boards will have seven members with three members elected by the community and the other four members, including the Chair, appointed by the Minister for the Environment and Water.

What's good about this structure?

- Nothing.

What concerns you?

- More difficult to get quorum/extra opinion across community with just 7 members.
- What if 3 elected were all farmers? Or all conservationists?
- What if lobby groups gets position? We don't want bias.
- Continuity.
- Size – restricted. Current system has worked well.
- Cost of extra members is peanuts compared to outcomes delivered. 9 or 10 good number.

What will we need to have in place to make sure this structure works?

- We like what's currently in Act i.e. diversity of board.
- Three sectors might not be way to do this (as earlier discussed).
- Is tourism something we need – eco-tourism?
- Cross section needed – offer Primary Producers – Tourism – Conservationists – they put forward – Minister decides or election happens.
- Gender balance processes across state – 60/40 balance either way.
- Tenure.
- We need skill set not just good speakers.
- Balance of skills, backgrounds, representative from places like farming community.
- Hard to see how it can be delivered.

4.2 Board Accountabilities

What processes are important to have in place to best evaluate and report on outcomes from managing natural resource management?

- Business as usual – normal processes already in place.
- Board to appoint general manager.
- Disagree – as needed, consultation process.
- Establish a 10 year Landscape Plan, need strategic vision long term aims – takes time to achieve outcomes in NRM and need integrated approach. Shorter term priorities in business planning cycle and operational planning.
- Partnerships and outsourcing – all have responsibility for NRM outcomes.
- Need objectives, big picture thinking based on sound independent science to deliver benefits for society, fair consideration of take-offs.

Any other comments about board accountabilities?

- Certain core functions must still be provided by DEW/state government e.g. good independent science; good policy; sound framework to operate within.

4.3 Boundaries

The boundaries for the new Adelaide regions are not yet drawn. As part of defining these boundaries, it may be relevant to consider adjusting the boundaries of other regions adjacent to the new Adelaide regions. What are the top 5 things that you'd like the Minister to know about boundaries affecting either your region, or beyond?

- KI needs to stay as its own region. Not absorbed by Fleurieu. Very important for our people – we are different. We just need capacity to strengthen our uniqueness.

4.4 Green Adelaide

What do you believe should be the top three functions or priorities of Green Adelaide?

- Citizen science.

Green Adelaide would manage a separate region and raise levies in a similar way to Landscape Boards. What concerns you about this?

- Less community based.

5. ENGAGEMENT

How could Landscape SA boards engage with their communities in planning, delivering and evaluating natural resource management programs and projects? The following points were noted –

STOP DOING	START DOING	CONTINUE DOING
No comment made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room for improvement – Board with community. Board with department. • Board to have more autonomy not through MO/DEW. • Strengthen evaluation of delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using local knowledge. • Community involvement in activities e.g. census glossies.

6. FUNDING

6.1 Capping Levies

Election commitment: Cap annual land and water levy rises at a rate set by an independent body or according to the CPI. Levies (land and water) collected in a region will be spent in the region, except for a portion of priority landscape scale or cross-boundary projects, and services to underpin regional outcomes. What's your initial reaction? Is there a better way of capping, collecting or distributing income from levies?

- Important boards have capacity to determine levy – household **vs** capital value.
- Need to have capacity to raise funds outside of household or capital value e.g. Visitor Environmental Tax (so not tied to government funding) - not all agreed. KI belongs to all South Australians.
- Have to find ways to achieve without more money – be more efficient.

6.2 Cross-regional and state-wide coordination

Do you think there is a need for cross regional and Statewide projects and programs? What do you think about these two initiatives? Are there other ways?

- Sounds good.
- Percentage of all levies goes into landscape fund. But who decides? And how will areas be chosen?
- Concern KI will be left out.

6.3 Grassroots Program

Election commitment: Establish the Grassroots program, a \$2million a year statewide annual fund (in addition to existing grants programs), administered at a Landscape Board level for volunteer, community and not-for-profit groups to access. What's your initial reaction? What's the most important thing to get right with this annual statewide fund?

- We can't exist without State appropriation fund - \$1.1M – we still need this. \$2M budget.
- Concern reducing levy in current deliverables.
- People need to be supported to work on properties – but things moving on from landcare group mode here on Kangaroo Island.

7. MEASURING SUCCESS

Participants were asked to imagine that it was 2 years from now, and that they were the Minister for the Environment and Water. They were asked to write down how they would know that the Landscapes SA reform had been successful.

Region achieves self-governance, unique to our environment/brand.	A community caring for and enjoying their environment.	SA leads the world in environmental management.
No complaints from public. Minister re-elected.	SA delivering a larger percentage of funds to ecologically sustainable development.	

PHASE:	BOARD SESSION
SESSION:	EYRE PENINSULA NRM BOARD
TIME/DATE:	2-5PM, 27th AUGUST 2018
FACILITATORS:	STEVE DANGERFIELD

Steve Dangerfield met with 6 members of the Eyre Peninsula NRM Board, including the Presiding Member, (plus one member of staff present as an observer) and facilitated a conversation based on the key proposals being put forward, using the same tools being used in the broader community forums. Whilst a full account of input noted can be found below, some of the key points to arise from the meeting were –

Board roles and responsibilities

- The EP Board has worked hard to deliver on key principles that align with the direction the Minister wishes to head:
 - Currently use local resources and try to initiate employment opportunities in the region
 - Board members are local and have a diverse spread
 - The support of the Department (senior advice) is critical and this link needs to continue (support for continued agency representatives on the Board)
 - Current Board selection process is effective, enables diversity and local representation
- Back to basics simplifies too much what is a complex issue – a rigorous approach based on science is required for natural resource management
- Boards must have a strategic focus
- Board is constrained with respect to accessing some administrative services – they are required to access the services of Government and pay an administration fee accordingly. The Board currently doesn't have the ability to seek competitive prices for some services and access local companies and the ability to do so would be a good change
- Acknowledged that Boards have lost their connection to portions of the community – this does vary from region to region but is an issue in general terms that needs to be addressed
- The Board should be a facilitator of programs and projects – and provide advice to landowners about land management issues (including weed management – as was accessible via the previous plant boards)
- EP has had a strong focus on citizen science strategies – where does this fit going forward?
- Boards need a consistent standard of Governance which needs to be applied across all Boards – robust processes but not inefficient or heavy on administration and associated costs.

Board Selection

- Board selection process needs to be considered carefully – members need to have key skills and knowledge of contract management, strategy, human resource management, business and an understanding of conservation and land management issues
- Community interest in voting would be minimal – in EP it is considered that it would be difficult to obtain enough of an interest so as to be assured that the community elected representatives are supported adequately by the community
- If the community voting model is to be introduced it needs to consider criteria and how the right people with the right skills will be nominated
- Retaining skills in the region is critical and this will be helped by greater certainty of funding and greater control of the levy
- Board terms would be to be off-set to support continuity

Funding and Levies

- Support the concept of trying to retain more money in the region for delivery of on the ground services, minimising the dollars that go back into Government for administrative purposes and having the autonomy to seek services from the region that are price competitive
- One option to manage levy increases is to consider a willingness to pay model – if the community see a need and want it addressed are they willing to pay, and if so then this flexibility to increase the levy based on willingness to pay could be built into any capping model.
- Retained earnings – will the Landscape SA Boards have access to retained earnings?
- Concern was raised about paying into a centralised fund for Grass-roots volunteer programs and a Landscape Priorities fund – if decentralisation and greater autonomy over spend is envisaged then this approach appears to be contradicted by this model
- Appropriation of funds from Adelaide is necessary

Planning

- The idea that the State needs an NRM Plan that individual Boards roll up into – minimise the amount of planning and look to include elements where possible to NRM Plans – ie: need to avoid regions having multiple disconnected plans such as a Native Veg Plan, NRM Plan, Coast protection plan etc)
- There needs to be a stronger focus on regional needs and the staff need to be taken back to having a greater knowledge of agriculture, impacts etc
- The current EP NRM plan took five years to develop and in the opinion of the Board would be well aligned with the Minister's key principles. It included extensive community consultation and significant investment by staff. Reducing to a five year plan would potentially see a loss of continuity – need a longer term vision. The transition process to a new model needs to consider plans that have been recently developed and actioned.

FACILITATED DISCUSSION

The group undertook a series of discussions, exploring the following topics –

1. **Top 5 priorities** – what are the top five things you would like the reform to achieve for natural resource management in your region?
2. **What's already working well** – What are the top five things that are currently working well and you would be disappointed if they were lost through this reform process?
3. **The 5 Guiding Principles** – How might these principles might help your priorities to be addressed?
4. **Governance & Planning** – Discussion regarding board representation, board accountability, boundaries
5. **Engagement** - How should Landscape SA boards engage with their communities in planning, delivering and evaluating natural resource management programs and projects?
6. **Funding** – Discussion regarding levies, Landscape Priorities Fund, Grassroots program
7. **Measuring Success** – If you were the Minister, how would you know that the reform has been successful?

The notes below are written up verbatim.

1. PRIORITIES FOR REFORM

Each board member was given five large sticky notes and asked to write down their top five priorities for the Landscape SA reform process. Everyone then shared their priorities with the whole group and sorted them in to themes together, choosing headings for each of the clusters of priorities, as follows –

<u>PLANNING AND VISIBILITY</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce planning requirements (cut red tape). • Build visibility of NRM projects. • Stability in services and regional capacity to deliver services. • Increase on ground works. • Build financial capacity and attract funds. 	<u>STAFF</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff tenure.
<u>AUTONOMY</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More autonomy for the board. 	<u>COMMUNICATION</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear 'promotion' of what NRM does and what resources are available to land managers. • Greater level of engagement with community including townships (citizens science etc.,) • Improved soil productivity. • Continued improvement in knowledge for land managers re pollinators, soil PH, vegetation management and biodiversity.
<u>FARMING SYSTEM REPORT</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued support of farming systems groups etc. • Board member diversity and balance. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy-in by community. • Re-engage the community e.g. in local areas, things like agriculture, Landcare, local government are full of community leaders. They would be the first stop. • More autonomy and better contract for project delivery staff – staff are demoralised by continually re-applying for their job! Plus the up chain reporting – wastes time.
<u>CONTRACTING SERVICES</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to choose who delivers the services. 	
<u>OTHER</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local people on boards. • Back to basics – more complex than the statement suggests. • Local resources – are our staff FIFO? • Levies – all should pay an equal levy amount. Not a split levy. • Move Whyalla from EPNRM to Arid Lands. Although there would be a loss of revenue, it has more in common with Arid Lands. • Smaller boards – board of 8 members – 2 + 4 year terms, overlapping. 4 appointed by Minister and 4 by public vote. • Less onerous reporting. • Broad scale approach. • Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Broad scale approach to NRM matters (Landscape). ○ Bigger 'buy-in' by community. ○ Capacity to choose who provides services based on VFM. ○ Less onerous reporting and compliance arrangements. 	

2. WHAT'S CURRENTLY WORKING WELL?

Each table was given five large sticky notes and asked to write down the top five things that they feel are currently working well with natural resource management.

- Project staff, we have some very good on-ground staff with a lot of experience.
- Baiting program (foxes and cats) good involvement by public, good PR.
- Wild Eyre project has good acceptance by public and works.
- Board hasn't left back to basics.
- Water planning and permitting happens locally – this needs to be retained in the region.
- Maintain, support of farming systems groups – the board member selections process.
- Funds raised in the region are expended in the region.
- Good skills and relationship of staff in region.
- Aboriginal engagement/employment.
- Good regional board members – mix background and mix skills.
- Very good blend and vision.
- Engagement/working partnerships: PIRSA and others – rarely deliver without their strong partnerships.
- EPLGA – without these ability to deliver compromised.
- Agency representation on boards – their advice is invaluable.
- Existing partnerships with local groups including farming etc.
- Capacity to adjust levy to accommodate larger scale projects e.g. integration with commonwealth funds.
- Management of water.
- Can we adjust the levy based on what we need to do?

3. THE 5 PRINCIPLES

The facilitator introduced the 5 principles which the Minister has developed to help guide the legislation reform. In small groups, the staff visited each of the 5 principles and considered the following three questions –

- What does this principle mean to you?
- Does it resonate?
- How might it address your priorities?

The following notes were made under each principle –

a. Decentralised decision making

- Never stop doing it!

b. A simple and accessible system

- Yes – but don't lose good governance and financial accountability. Need to ensure that the system is robust, transparent, avoids duplication, gives more autonomy to boards to engage administrative service but measures KPIs, and accountability and standards needs to be set and kept.

c. Community and land owners at the centre

- Board members are all currently local.
- Representation across sectors is currently good and well balanced.
- Ministerial appointment process currently works well.
- Partnerships are strong in the region but could be enhanced, particularly in using local companies to provide lay services to NRM.
- Local landowners need better line of sight to programs and benefits of NRM – transparency and promotion.

d. A whole of landscape approach

- Do it already.
- Wild Eyre – has been very successful.
- EP doesn't have many cross boundary opportunities given its geographic area.
- Board members to be appointed need to have strategic capability to ensure broader programs are delivered.
- Funding for programs like Wild Eyre under the future model and access is unclear. (Will the Landscape Priority Fund be all there is?)

e. Back to basics

- Never left it!
- Consider that this is done relatively well on EP.
- Some debate about what level of advice NRM should be able to provide landowners about weed management – is it the NRM role to have the knowledge to impart to landowners or should landowners be responsible for accessing their own advice privately at their own additional costs?

4. Governance & Planning, Engagement & Funding

4.1 Board Representation

The nine Landscape Boards will have seven members with three members elected by the community and the other four members, including the Chair, appointed by the Minister for the Environment and Water.

What's good about this structure?

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current structure: diversity in backgrounds, skills and regional spread – views. Robust discussion. • New structure: not much – democracy is a good thing...(sarcastic). |
|---|

What concerns you?

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voting may result in 'one issue' elections. • Potential reduction in skills and diversity. |
|---|

- Ability to fill positions.
- How the election process will be undertaken?
- Costs of running election process.
- Over politicises NRM Boards and their management (formal election could be 'over the top' process).

What will we need to have in place to make sure this structure works?

- Needs to have broad skills based approach.
- Needs to have back-up process in the event insufficient candidates (or candidates nominated are not suitable).

4.2 Board Accountabilities

The worksheet provided to tables gave an overview of board responsibilities and responsibilities, including –

- Managing own budgets, shared publicly
- Employ a general manager who manages staff
- Power to set and manage own levies (with increases reviewed by an independent regulator according to CPI)
- Establish a 5-year Landscape Plan for their regions, identifying 5 priorities
- Partnerships and outsourcing.

The priorities would focus on basics of enabling natural resource management such as soil quality, water management, and pest plant and animal control, complemented with landscape scale restoration projects.

What processes are important to have in place to best evaluate and report on outcomes from managing natural resource management?

- 5 Pillars as basis KPIs across all boards.
- Consistent MERI process and standardised measures.
- Data and measures available to community.
- Inclusion of financial measures to reinforce how levies spent.

Any other comments about board accountabilities?

- Audit process – ALG or independent?
- Measures to include our corporate government performance.
- Governance process that is financially efficient.
- Consider 10 year plan with 5 year review.

4.3 Boundaries

The boundaries for the new Adelaide regions are not yet drawn. As part of defining these boundaries, it may be relevant to consider adjusting the boundaries of other regions adjacent to the new Adelaide regions.

What are the top 5 things that you'd like the Minister to know about boundaries affecting either your region, or beyond?

- Keep Whyalla in the region: has worked hard with Whyalla region. Without their levy it may make the EP region. Without their levy it may make the EP region non-viable. Its levy base is critical to EP.
- Accept there is a landscape synergy with Arid Lands however they are also seen as gateway to EP.
- Aboriginal Nations connection – Brigatta.
- Whyalla community travel to EP and use area.

4.4 Engagement

The staff were asked to consider how could Landscape SA boards engage with their communities in planning, delivering and evaluating natural resource management programs and projects. They were asked what we should stop doing, what we should start doing and what we should consider doing. The following points were noted –

STOP DOING	START DOING	CONTINUE DOING
Table 1		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send the story and the photo (stop writing media releases). Marketing strategy – if you need skill on the Board or at staff level. Regional control over communications – local decisions. No requirement to get approved by Adelaide. Control own communications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board is seen as another layer of bureaucracy by some in the community. Needs to be clarity and promotion about what the Board does - be careful about not spending heaps of money on brochures. Be targeted to groups and councils. Currently it is confusing and lacks consistency. Do we look at activating NRM Groups on a Landcare basis?? Needs to be transparent and a direct relationship between the board and community – not a 6 step process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good community engagement around planning has been valued and given some momentum to Board Local government strategy. Branding strategy. Current good connection with Agricultural bureaus.

4.5 Capping Levies

Election commitment: Cap annual land and water levy rises at a rate set by an independent body or according to the CPI. Levies (land and water) collected in a region will be spent in the region, except for a portion of priority landscape scale or cross-boundary projects, and services to underpin regional outcomes.

What's your initial reaction? Is there a better way of capping, collecting or distributing income from levies?

- Yes, capping would be accepted but...if the community supported a request for an increase (once-off, purpose specific), need the avenue to apply to the Minister for permission.

4.6 Cross-regional and state-wide coordination

Landscapes and the pressures affecting them don't stop at administrative boundaries. Many issues require cross-regional and Statewide coordination, like controlling pests and managing threatened species. Two approaches include:

- Partnerships across multiple landscape boards and other groups.
- A Landscape Priorities fund contributed to by Landscape Boards to invest in large scale projects across landscapes

Do you think there is a need for cross regional and Statewide projects and programs? What do you think about these two initiatives? Are there other ways?

- No – should be working with boards/groups directly as needs.
- Should be able to retain surplus funds/extra levy \$ in region for uses as outlined above.

4.7 Grassroots Program

Election commitment: Establish the Grassroots program, a \$2million a year statewide annual fund (in addition to existing grants programs), administered at a Landscape Board level for volunteer, community and not-for-profit groups to access.

What's your initial reaction? What's the most important thing to get right with this annual statewide fund?

- No.

5. MEASURING SUCCESS

The staff were asked to imagine that it was 2 years from now, and that they were the Minister for the Environment and Water. They were asked to write down how they would know that the Landscapes SA reform had been successful.

My hopes would be as follow: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An involved, committed community encouraged by the new, more open system, and grass roots driven.• Reduce managerial/office positions through streamlining and re-allocation and reduction of state compliance needs.• More importance place on deliver of projects rather than planning/compliance.	The Landscapes SA Board is a well-known, well-respected active member of EP's community. Seen as hands-on, on the ground, delivering what they say they will.	Boards well accepted by community at large. Environmental amenity seen as more valuable. Less squeaky wheels. Legislation admired by other states.
Whole community is aware of what Landscape SA boards achieve, what they are working on in the community. Many community members work/engage in citizens Science projects alongside Landscape SA.	All parties are happy – farming and environment both been looked after.	NRM funded programs are widely recognised in the region. Shift of community willing to invest in natural resource management.

EXTRA NOTES MADE:

- Back to basics – not simple – need scientific/rigorous approach.
- Local resources – currently use local resources.
- How to get a board of skills **vs** engagement – boards have to drive strategy not undertake individual engagement.
- Board members are currently local and community members.
- Constrained currently to a type of bureaucracy and cannot price match.
- Need to have skills to manage: contracts; HR; strategy; certain amount of connection back to the Minister.
- Can't be popularity contest.
- Will need to still do the same administration – someone will have to do it.
- Could save \$ because not paying Government rates/\$ not being sent back into treasury.
- Too focussed on compliance.
- The original intent of the Act was the Board was a facilitator.
- DEWNR took over and the admin went out of control – redirect \$\$.
- Distance Boards from DEW – to force Boards to think.
- Boards have lost connection with large portions of the community.
- Land managers still need to take some responsibility.
- However, landowners should be able to get advice from the NRM about weed management.
- Landowners shouldn't have to pay the levy and then pay for a private consultation to get the advice.

- Does the Board need better skills on the ground?
- Where the \$\$ goes – levy should be spent on public lands.
- Where does community involvement and education sit – strong citizen science strategies – where does this fit?
- Put it back to a Management level of use to the community.
- Board becomes a facility, facilitator of advice.
- Don't over complicate planning – a simple plan for whole of government.
- Need a state NRM plan that Boards role up into?
- Risks that will have native vegetation plan, water security plan etc., etc.
- 2 levels of planning only.
- Staff – shift in culture over the years to Adelaide centre.
- Minister to drive the staff back outwards to be familiar with agriculture etc.
- Need to move back to understanding regional needs. Funding aspect also makes a big difference i.e. what gets delivered.
- Population numbers to support the election process – preselect.
- Community interest in voting would be minimal.
- Currently funding:
 - \$20,000 per FTE.
 - Pay advice from Department.
 - Shared Service Fee.
- Staff tenure – security of role.
- Greater stability; minimise loss of time and focus.
- Security through greater certainty with external funding and use of levy – keeping skills.
- Agency representation on the Board is critical and helpful (non-voting). Needs to continue. Really important conduit back into Government.
- Has worked well – link to State and National perspective.
- Think of cost – currently would be very well aligned – took 3 years to develop with landscape approach. (Reduce admin process, still a process would be needed).
- Reducing to a five year plan would mean rolling over (system review) shouldn't rebuild every 5 years.
- Board to employ a General Manager – selection process currently has served the region well.
- Funding: set the levy based on willingness to pay and delivery of programs.
- Retained earnings – the Landscape SA Boards have access to these funds.
- Board: Current capping is 2 terms (4 year terms). Election – Electoral Commission – term should be included in the schedule. No need to cap it. Would need to off-set terms to get continuity.
- How to deal with potentially difficult candidates?
- How to get the right people? Pre-selection process.
- An open election on EP will result in Whyalla and Port Lincoln – not equitable.

Accountabilities:

- Use principles as the measures and to establish consistency.
- Transparency of measures.
- Audit process – can we engage our own?
- Corporate governance measures and governance to be efficient.
- 5 year reviews (taking account of landscape scale).

Funding:

- Capping, yes but community would probably support.
- However there needs to be the option based on community willingness to pay to exceed the cap.
- Who is the authority on the Cap?
- Line up with Local Government policy?
- No cross boundaries on EP.
- No to paying into centralised funds – though we were getting away from this.
- Should be able to retain surplus fund and extra levy \$\$ that are raised – utilise these.
- Green Adelaide – appropriation of funds – back out.
- Curtail the power of native vegetation and coastal development which is limiting development in the region.
- Native Vegetation Council are autonomous with staff in the department.
- Proactive Fire Management to manage and protect native scrub.
- Concern about standard of governance. Needs to be support and robust. Just sight – balance – not too convoluted – but robust.

PHASE:	BOARD SESSION
SESSION:	AMLR NRM BOARD
TIME/DATE:	1-4pm 6TH AUGUST 2018
FACILITATOR:	BECKY

Becky Hirst met with 7 members of the ALMR NRM Board (including the Presiding Member) and facilitated a conversation based on the key proposals being put forward, using the same tools being used in the broader community forums.

Whilst a full account of input noted can be found below, some of the key points to arise from the meeting were –

- A number of priorities for the reform emerged from the discussion. The board noted their support of the **Whole of Landscape Approach** and there were comments made around how the reform needs to be based on systems of catchment and landscape scale, with decision-making using science-based evidence. It was recommended that MERI principles drive strategic plans. The board need more of a definition around what the Minister means by whole of landscape, and some concern was given around the terminology and that it may cause confusion – confusing landscapes with vistas;
- There was **concern around going back to basics** (though acknowledged that this is an area they could do more of) and that just because the former boards such as a Soil Board don't exist anymore, doesn't mean it isn't happening. Things have moved on from Back to Basics. Previously NRM would go out to spray weeds or do soil management, but there was no logic or strategic thinking around this and this needs to be there. Global science is saying that the strategy is more important than ever, and not a back to basics approach. It's not effective to achieve enduring outcomes, it's just throwing money down the drain. A more strategic approach in general was requested (as opposed to going back to basics), noting that it is important to start 'from the top' with a vision, and plan from there;
- The board noted that **NRM isn't a simple and accessible system** – but that they got used to this and take it in to account in their planning. However, they understand from the outside looking in that it looks complicated. They are managing and are accountable for a budget of over \$33million so there needs to be some sort of system in place;
- It was suggested that **"Independent Decision Making"** was a more appropriate term than Decentralised Decision Making. There was a strong sense of wanting autonomy and being able to make decisions in relation to staff. Some discussion occurred around whether the boards will employ staff, with sentiment that it would be good to know more about the staff that are available to specifically support the board at the moment. Whilst the board is aware of what staff do, there was some acknowledgement of staff being shared with other functions with the Department. It was also noted that there is a current conflict for the Regional Manager who has to report to both the Board and the Department;
- Reflecting on the **guiding principles** as a whole, the board consider that they are already doing them – they are simply good management practice. Members of the group asked where the evidence was that this change is needed and is this just a rebadging exercise;
- There was also acknowledgement that **the environment needs to be at the centre of decision making**, rather than community and land owners. It was felt that community and land owners are instead mechanisms for achieving the best for the environment;
- A number of things were identified to be working well, written up in the below report. There was a large amount of **engagement activities** that the board felt were working well and should continue, including NRM Education, volunteer grass-roots activity, sustainable agriculture working directly with farmers, board visits to the regions to visit projects, genuine leading engagement with the Kaurna community, and the regional plan consultation which was excellent with a high volume of input from communities across the region;
- In relation to **boundaries**, it was strongly felt that the catchment split in to the three regions is the major flaw of the proposed approach. Boundaries must be based on a catchment approach. Decisions must be made on an environmental basis. Do not split up catchments. A strength of ALMR has been setting up a whole of catchment approach. Setting up two extra boards just isn't sustainable and may even cause competition between them;

- A suggestion was made that there could **be one board for the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges region**, with three advisory boards. A representative from each of these advisory boards could then attend the main board meeting;
- **Board membership** must absolutely have a good skill mix, with all applications addressing skills gaps or mix. People should be only put up for the public vote if they have the appropriate and required skills. They will need to know their duty as board members. It must be clear that their responsibilities are to the objects of the act. There was a concern that the proposed mix of minister appointees and community elected members could create a hybrid board who aren't sure whether they are there to represent the community or something else. There was concern that an election process may lead to bias on boards, and there may be too much self-interest with a popularity approach. The board noted that they are community members. The board acknowledged the value of having agency staff at the table to provide expert advice and guidance, but these ex-officio positions need to be senior staff;
- It was felt that **5-year plans** for the boards aren't long enough. If there are going to be 5-year plans then they need to be nested within longer term plans, such as **20-year plans**;
- In relation to **Green Adelaide**, there was concern regarding this region collecting 80% of the revenue via levies. It was acknowledged that there must be a distribution model to share this income with the other regions. Green Adelaide must also be connected to the bigger landscapes focus. There was also concern that unless communications between boards in the three regions are really good, then there'll be a big disconnect from the long-term goals. More information is needed on Green Adelaide to be able to discuss it in any great depth. There is potential for the role to include nature play, sustainable education, grassroots programs (equally acknowledging that supporting Councils in doing these things would be good);
- The facilitator noted that many of the community and staff forums had highlighted **compliance** as a key priority for the reform and sought the boards thoughts on the topics of compliance and enforcement. They noted that they have taken an approach that is about enabling people to make the right choices themselves, and they deliberately encourage people to be successful, before the next steps that follow. The board does take compliance very seriously. One board member commented that compliance shouldn't really be their role, but instead DEW. There should be a separation of duties – how can the board be both the carrot and the stick?
- The board felt that there needed to be a clearer communications strategy with clearer branding.
- Priorities should also include **getting the reform process right**, with minimal disruption to existing successful programs and projects and that the reform needs to build on and acknowledge past achievements;
- On leaving the meeting, one board member specifically requested that **the current board be given direct feedback** on what they have been doing wrong – if this is the feedback being received.

FACILITATED DISCUSSION

The notes below were made by both board members and the facilitator during the session.

1. PRIORITIES FOR REFORM

Each table was given five large sticky notes and asked to write down their top five priorities for the Landscape SA reform process. They were encouraged to write no more than a couple of sentences.

The groups then shared their priorities with the whole group and sorted them in to themes.

<u>COMMUNITY/VOLUNTEERS</u>	<u>ORGANISATION/REFORM PROCESS</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the connection with volunteers as an outcome from the reform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal disruption to existing successful programs and projects.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on real, resource condition improvements which build upon past efforts of landholders, staff and volunteers • Greater involvement with urban community – 80% of NRM levy source. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 reforms acknowledge and build on past achievements: NRM Education; Community involvement; Engaging Aboriginal Nations; Volunteer Networks; Rigorous Planning. • Effective and co-ordinated management of money, time and effort.
<p><u>TARGETS/ACCOUNTABILITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMLR – long term targets are robust – maintain these to guide the new Boards. 	
<p><u>GOVERNANCE/AUTONOMY</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governance system is viable in the long term. • Greater autonomy for the Boards from DEW • Full independence of the Boards from the department (including Green Adelaide) – budgets; staff etc. 	<p><u>ENVIRONMENT AT THE CENTRE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment is kept at the centre of decision making – the governance arrangement come after. • Climate Change needs greater emphasis – long term thinking is critical. • Effective systems/processes/delivery maintenance and restoration of healthy ecological, agricultural and urban systems. • New focus on soil, water and plants – acknowledge interdependencies systems.
<p><u>LANDSCAPE/CATCHMENT SCALE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience thinking/ecosystem natural farm and urban, whole of catchment approach to Landscape SA outcomes (not based on: an 'artefact' boundary mode: focus on one sector over others; failure to recognise that soil, water, pests, diseases are integral part of the functioning ecosystem – not separate 'units'. • MERI discipline needs to be retained to ensure accountability. • Focus on a whole of landscape/catchment approach to NRM using MERI principles to drive strategic plans. • Natural systems based approach – boundaries are based on catchment based approach. • Reforms to be thinking based on systems, catchment landscape scale and evidence based. • Valuing science-based decision making to determine investment priorities. 	

2. WHAT'S CURRENTLY WORKING WELL?

Each table was given five large sticky notes and asked to write down the top five things that they feel are currently working well with natural resource management.

- Landscape/catchment to local approach.
- Community involvement, particularly volunteers, (see Board letter). Volunteers include passionate people interested in the environment as well as committed farmers.
- Policies/strategies have true intergenerational time lines/commitments – stewardship.
- Engagement with ATSI groups in NRM planning and delivery.
- Kaurua relationship is working well – continue to support.
- Aboriginal engagement and partnership.
- Framework for making the 'hard decisions'.
- Enthusiastic landholder and volunteer participation (e.g. \$11M of in-kind volunteer hours).
- Community engagement – variety of stakeholder's essence of community: schools; landholders; farmers; volunteers; NGOs – partnerships.
- Our volunteers.
- Well recognised framework for NRM investment across the region.
- Proud of NRM education.
- Proud of engagement of: community; Aboriginal Nations and volunteers.
- Proud of rigour in planning and MERI.

- WAPs almost completed across AMLR Region – therefore well managed water resources with secure title and allocation.
- Balance between incentives and community knowledge and capacity (capacity and understanding out lasts incentives!)
- Education – programs with schools.
- NRC's communities empowered to do NRM work.
- Passion and commitment of AMLR NRM Board members.
- World class education (NRM) program – driven by evidence: adapted over time embedded change within schools; students become advocates of the environment – take career pathways.
- Financial management ability to work across a multi-dimensional environment with competing needs to see species come back home on the brink.

3. THE 5 PRINCIPLES

The following notes were made under each principle –

a. Decentralised decision making

- 'Independent' decision making more applicable e.g. Sand pumping decision – took a year.

b. A simple and accessible system

- The systems are not simple – we've taken this in to account in our planning. But from outside looking in – we acknowledge that it does look complicated.
- People typically want someone to talk to.
- We have \$33M worth of accountability – we've got to have some sort of system.

c. Community and land owners at the centre

- Should be 'Environment' at the centre.
- Community and landholders are ways of achieving.
- Get rid of words – land owners – why are they separated? E.g. volunteers.
- About community taking responsibility – being responsible.

d. A whole of landscape approach

- We agree! (See written submission).
- Community is part of this.
- Need to know what Minister means. We can offer a definition. Need to test language with the community.
- 'Managing our Landscapes' – terminology just flagging – don't confuse. Whole of landscape approach with vistas – landscape architects!
- Cross boundaries – we could improve at this.

e. Back to basics

- *Back to Basic:* not what science is saying – and effectiveness in achieving enduring outcomes?
- Something we could do more of – but needs to be in an integrated way.
- Just because we don't have boards (i.e. soil) doesn't mean it isn't happening.
- Has changed though – previously had no logic e.g. not just spraying weeds, soils.
- Missing strategy.
- Water Allocation Plans – challenge.
- Pest plants and weeds – individual Landholders responsibility – need to consider weeds i.e. positive.
- Listed weeds/pests – need that in broader context. Global science says strategy is more important than ever – throwing \$ down drain.

4. Governance & Planning, Engagement & Funding

4.1 Board Representation

The nine Landscape Boards will have seven members with three members elected by the community and the other four members, including the Chair, appointed by the Minister for the Environment and Water.

What's good about this structure?

- Support the agencies being at table as ex-officio – need to be Senior Staff e.g. Executive Director.
- Alternative model – one board with 3 advisory boards – then senior Executive only need to go to one meeting.
- Representatives from 3 advisory boards could attend the main board meeting.

What concerns you?

- Green Adelaide board – why all Minister appointed? If it's about community at centre – need representation.
- What is the cost of election process? Would cost a lot.
- People may go on boards to get money for what they want! Needs to focus on bigger community issues.
- Hybrid board – not sure whether it's there to represent community or something else. Confusion possible.
- Responsibility is to the objects of the Act.

What will we need to have in place to make sure this structure works?

- Set of criteria – skills mix – all applications must address skills gap/mix.
- People who nominate only put up for vote if they have appropriate skills.
- Board members need the right skills.
- As long as elected members meet principles and standards. Need to know duty.
- May get bias on boards – concern i.e. popularity approach – self-interest.
- Minister needs veto/final say.

4.2 Board Accountabilities

- 5-year plan nested within 20-year plan.
- Discussion re whether boards will employ staff: need to consider how young people will come in to do this work. Need good career paths. Need long term, secure contracts for staff.
- Need for autonomy – comments made – important we have scope to employ and partner outside for DEW.
- Need a tighter 'service level agreement' – Board has to manage it better.
- When SLA signed – need accountability – seconded to Board.
- Negotiate changes in personnel (through GM) – so we actually manage all staff. We currently wouldn't have a clue what people are doing – e.g. Communications services – a lot being done for National Parks but more could be done for the Board.

Any other comments about board accountabilities?

- What will term of Board members be?
- Staggered roll through needed. Two terms – with term being...
- Will all come down to what are the objectives of the Act?

4.3 Boundaries

The boundaries for the new Adelaide regions are not yet drawn. As part of defining these boundaries, it may be relevant to consider adjusting the boundaries of other regions adjacent to the new Adelaide regions.

What are the top 5 things that you'd like the Minister to know about boundaries affecting either your region, or beyond?

1. Catchment based approach – not government boundaries – has to have an environmental basis. Don't split up catchments.
2. Strength of AMLR – been able to employ a whole of landscape/catchment approach. Setting up two additional boards that aren't sustainable. Introducing competition.
3. Major flaw – catchments 'split' – huge administrative cost. Need a model that minimises cost.
4. Could there be an overarching Board with sub-units?
5. Is this just rebadging?
6. Stormwater Management and coast protection – Green Adelaide!

4.4 Green Adelaide

What do you believe should be the top three functions or priorities of Green Adelaide?

- Needs purpose and function – work with Councils – support work they are doing.
- Integrated solutions – system is Urban Adelaide. Prolong the life of people.
- Nature Play – could pick up those kinds of initiatives. Sustainable education.
- Grassroots programs – but supporting Councils. Doesn't need to invent new things.
- Biodiversity hotspots.

Green Adelaide would manage a separate region and raise levies in a similar way to Landscape Boards.

What excites you about this?

- Would Green Adelaide be collecting levies and redistributing to other regions?

What concerns you?

- It will capture 80% of revenue.
- Where does the water levy go in relation to those separate regions?
- Other regions will need to cut back – not ideal, must be shared. They will 'scream like hell' if it doesn't happen – distribution model.
- Needs to be connected to the bigger Landscape picture.
- Concern re money going in to regional areas – much needed. Can't keep money within Green Adelaide.
- Unless communications is really good, wary there'll be a big disconnect from long term goals.

4.5 Engagement

The board were asked to consider how could Landscape SA boards engage with their communities in planning, delivering and evaluating natural resource management programs and projects? They were asked what we should stop doing, what we should start doing and what we should consider doing. The following points were noted –

STOP DOING	START DOING	CONTINUE DOING
------------	-------------	----------------

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need clear identification/knowledge before we decide what to stop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding - there is current confusion. We need a clear identity. – But note it's not important that people 'down the street' know what NRM is • Perhaps need to review engagement with land holders. • Coming up with new ways to deliver –with community. • Don't start anything that will stop doing what's already happening! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The engagement is working. • NRM education. • Regional Plan consultation; range of places, sizes; serious endeavour to listen – 1,100 spreadsheets. • Volunteer grass roots. • Sustainable agriculture working directly with farmers. • Participating budgeting. • Going in to regions as a board - visiting projects. • Genuine engagement with Kaurua engagement – leading.
--	---	--

4.6 Capping Levies

Election commitment: Cap annual land and water levy rises at a rate set by an independent body or according to the CPI. Levies (land and water) collected in a region will be spent in the region, except for a portion of priority landscape scale or cross-boundary projects, and services to underpin regional outcomes.

What's your initial reaction? Is there a better way of capping, collecting or distributing income from levies?

- There has to be some way of the urban money gets distributed across all boards.
- In favour of regional distribution.
- Have in Act – ability to disperse funds across regions. Need very clear guidelines.
- Time consuming for other boards to pitch for what they need to balance books.
- Perhaps need (like we used have – in the first 5 years) – baseline figure of what boards need to operate.
- A lot of experience in the room – 3 minutes to spend is not enough.

4.7 Cross-regional and state-wide coordination

Do you think there is a need for cross regional and Statewide projects and programs? What do you think about these two initiatives? Are there other ways?

- Yes, in favour of allocating out some funding.
- High standards of governance needs to be maintained.

4.8 Grassroots Program

Election commitment: Establish the Grassroots program, a \$2million a year statewide annual fund (in addition to existing grants programs), administered at a Landscape Board level for volunteer, community and not-for-profit groups to access. **What's your initial reaction? What's the most important thing to get right with this annual statewide fund?**

- In favour of this.
- \$2M not going to go far across the state – need balance between bribing and doing for themselves.

5. MEASURING SUCCESS

The board were asked to imagine that it was 2 years from now, and that they were the Minister for the Environment and Water. They were asked to write down how they would know that the Landscapes SA reform had been successful.

As Minister for Environment in SA in 2020 I would measure success: Measurable improvements in environmental outcomes. Acknowledged, supported and to a large extent divorced by community (including volunteers, Landowners, NRM groups).	NRM strategy seen as being equitable across all regions, with long term/enduring effective benefits \$ SA – environment, regional and urban communication.	Our natural resources have improved in condition, our community is supported is supportive and continues to help and we are on track to respond to future challenges to support our state and the world to thrive.
The NRM processes are flourishing and people are happy with the reforms.	The population loves the sustainable habitat around Adelaide and want to pay more and be involved in environmental management.	Improvement in the condition of the environment 'and ongoing' improvement.

6. PARKING SPACE

- Current structure flawed.
- Catchment- 'split' – the major flaw of the current government approach.
- 5 Guiding Principles – to what extent are we not doing these already? – They are just good management practice.
- Whole of Landscape/Back to Basics – conflicting.
- Why the change? Where's the evidence this change is needed?
- This is a rebranding exercise
- We're community members
- Survey – by Minister whilst in opposition – some discontent.
- Compliance? - We take it very seriously.
- Approach - helping people to get themselves - deliberately encourage people to be successful –then the next steps. Deliberately encourage people to be successful.
- Shouldn't be our role. Role of DEW - should be separation of duties
- Need more effective outcomes strategy – start with what we want to achieve.
- How can you be the carrot and the stick? Ask right at the beginning?
- This engagement process provides limited capacity for us to learn from hearing others – we're often in isolation.

SAAL Board

Monday 10 September 2018

4 Board members – 2 present and 2 via phone

Summary of Key issues and Priorities

Given the small number present and two members of the Board participating over the phone, the group activities that were previously planned were replaced with a facilitated discussion during which the key topics presented in the community sessions were canvassed and discussed. The group also reflected on some of the conversations had with the Arid Lands communities and explored key issues and opportunities that would be important to consider in the reform process.

Key Priorities for the Reform

The group discussed what key priorities should be considered in shaping the reform.

Partnerships

- There needs to be an inclusion of industry in developing partnerships, in particular mining and tourism. The Boards need to work closely with these industries to encourage sustainable use of the natural resources. Rather than the focus being about protection of the resources, there needs to be consideration about how the natural resources are accessed and used in the best way possible minimising landscape impacts and looking for better outcomes that enhance biodiversity.

Landscape Approach

- There is a need to ensure an understanding of the broader landscape issues and that they inform the back to basics approach. Science, knowledge and values mapping at the whole of landscape level needs to drive program delivery.

Programs

- Tangible outcomes must be delivered from on ground activities and programs that are visible to the community in order to build faith and confidence in the Board. The EMU program was a successful example of this and the principles of this can be transferred and applied to other programs.

District Groups

- The district groups have worked well for the Arid Lands given geographical distance. A Board member sits on each district group for coordination and consistency of approach.
- The success of the groups has been based on the extent of support from the staff.
- The groups reflect the former soil board model – which worked on the principle of community integration.
- The district groups for this region should be maintained and continued for the Arid Lands Region.

Compliance

- The legislation needs to be more enabling rather than compliance focused. It needs to encourage people to move forward and provide necessary support for them to do the right thing rather than seek to use a 'big stick'. Biosecurity use NRM legislation for example as leverage for compliance. The use of the legislation needs to be carefully considered and consideration given to the objectives – ie: what is the desired outcome.

Strategy and Policy Setting

- Boards need to remain as community boards, but currently they are somewhat bound to the strategies and policies of the State. Boards need to be more involved in setting the State policies as they represent the community and can provide valuable insight into the key issues.

Legislation

- In reforming the current NRM legislation, consideration needs to be given to the interaction with other related legislation.
- The SAAL Board interacts with industries that are widespread across the region and needs to have a line of sight to legislative implications in managing landscape issues. For example, mining legislation, biosecurity legislation and pastoral land management and conservation legislation all intersect and while DEW appears to manage implications at a policy level the Board doesn't see this. There could be opportunities to have better coordination and create greater efficiencies on the ground with respect to compliance, land management and program delivery.
- While DEW does make policy responses to other areas of Government responsible for the respective pieces of legislation that intersect, there appears to be no social assessment or social overlay considered. The Board is well positioned to provide this input and therefore a stronger engagement with the Board on such matters would deliver better outcomes.
- The legislation should support consultation with the Board on applications from industry for various activities that may impact landscape as well as Departmental policy changes in response to issues and opportunities within the frame of the legislation. The Board must have a stronger influence in such matters at a strategic level and seen as an important stakeholder to assist Government in decision making as it relates to broader Government legislation and landscape management.

The discussion then focused on the specific proposals that have been put forward as suggested elements of the legislative reform and which are intended to deliver on the five key principles on which the reform is based.

Board Membership

The proposal is to have nine landscape Boards to replace the existing NRM Boards. Each Board is to have seven members with three members elected by the community and four members including the chair appointed by the Minister. This concept was discussed by the group and the following observations made:

- Board appointments to date have been skills based and this has served the Board well.
- The definition of community at the centre was discussed – does this mean that Board members must work and live in the region?
- Concerns were raised about the community election process – most particularly with respect to the possible cost and administration of the process and whether this would be funded by the levy.
- The election process would need to be created and could have unintended consequences. Peak groups could stack the voting and skew the results, resulting in a non-representative board.
- The community election process is unlikely to work across the Arid Lands. The Arid Lands is an unincorporated region and does not have a culture of community-based elections. It is unlikely that communities will get involved in an election process and even less likely if they need to travel. The election process could also deter women from nominating.
- The community sessions held at Marree, Leigh Creek and Yunta had all discussed the merits of the District Group model. The group discussed this and endorsed this model as appropriate for the Arid Lands given geographical distances. It provides for a bottom up approach with the Board taking an added strategic view across the region. The group liked the idea of the community representatives being nominated from the District Groups to the Board and suggested a rotational approach to these appointments could be useful. The structure has worked well to date and to the Board's knowledge there hasn't been any disquiet about the current structure.
- The District Group model for the Arid Lands needs to be retained and could be used as the means to ensure regional representation and diversity across sectors.
- Currently the Board is not closed to the community – nominations to the Board can be received from members of the community and therefore the objective of having community participants can and is achieved through the current model.
- By retaining the District Group model another option could involve nominations from each group to represent the districts on a selection panel to make recommendation to the Minister as to who should be on the Board.

Boundaries

A proposal to shift the City of Port Augusta from the Northern and Yorke region to the Arid Lands Region was canvassed. Discussion was also had regarding the Flinders Ranges Council area and the eastern pastoral lands region south of Yunta along the Barrier Highway.

- Port Augusta issues are very different from the Arid Lands region. While the surrounding area around Port Augusta aligns, the issues for the City are very different. Port Augusta is dealing with matters related to an urban environment within a local government area that has a strong voice and in this sense is quite different when compared with the unique issues of the Arid Lands region.
- If a community election process is introduced there is a risk that the City of Port Augusta will participate more strongly than the Arid Lands region resulting in a

skewed outcome. This could then see decisions made at a Board level that favour the City of Port Augusta.

- If Port Augusta was to come into the Arid Lands Region, a large percentage of the levy payers would come from Port Augusta and therefore be a strong voice in requesting a greater spend in the City and surrounds than the broader region.
- There needs to be greater thought given to the possible implications of this boundary change – it would be a risk to make the change purely from a financial perspective or perceived levy distribution benefit which may not in reality deliver the right outcome. Any extra revenue received will be absorbed by the City and there will likely be a community expectation that the levy money raised from Port Augusta is reinvested in Port Augusta.
- There is some merit in including Hawker into the Arid Lands area given the similar landscape issues, however this will introduce a portion of a local government area into the region.
- There may also be some merit in including a greater portion of the Eastern Pastoral Districts south of Yunta into the area currently held by the Murray Darling Basin (MDBA) Board. However, community views should be canvassed and existing MDBA legislation considered.

Board Accountabilities

Discussion was had around Board accountabilities and how the Board should be positioned relative to Government. The following points were noted:

- A greater separation from DEW was supported with systems and processes put in place to enable greater autonomy.
- Supported the Boards selecting and appointing their own General Manager who can deliver on the Board's objectives and business operations.
- Boards should be empowered to operate in a more business like way and be accountable for its operations and delivery.
- Currently the Board doesn't have control over how the money is spent – yes, plans are established and priorities set but so much of the Boards operational business is decided by the Department.
- DEW currently have strong influence over how funds are spent and where, as well as influence over the plan. While DEW are a critical stakeholder and coordination and linkage is important, Boards should have a greater capability of responding to their communities and directing funding to regional priorities.
- Staff need to be separated from DEW and be the responsibility of the Board and its General Manager in order to change direction. The philosophy at times from DEW is different to the view of the Board and therefore for there to be a change in direction there will need to be a shift in the way staff are employed. The public sector model would seem to be the most preferred approach to resolve this issue and will effectively create a separation and distance from DEW while maintaining certain terms and conditions for staff synonymous with Government.
- The Board reflected on community feedback during the engagement sessions regarding placing of staff in small regional centres across the region to build relationships, to be accessible to community and responsive to on the ground

landscape issues. While this has some merit and has worked well in the past, it does have costs attached. If this was to occur technology and the introduction of associated systems is critical to success and cost minimisation.

Funding Structures

A number of changes to the levy system are being proposed as part of the legislative reform process. These include the capping of levies, the establishment of a landscape priorities fund and the establishment of a grassroots grants program to support local projects at the community group level. These proposals were canvassed with the Board and the following observations made:

- The idea of capping levies was supported in principle.
- Landscape Advisory board/group: while its initial reason for being seems to be to administer the proposed Landscape Priorities Fund, there remains the question as to what this advisory group might become over time. These groups can have the tendency to develop into something different away from their initial intent.
- The Landscape Boards need to be better leveraged and utilised effectively – and if this occurs the purpose, function and reason of a Landscape Advisory Board/Group could be questioned.
- In theory there was no issue with the concept of two central funds – one for landscape priority projects and one for grass roots community projects, however concern was raised about the ability of the Arid Lands region to contribute relative to return. The Arid Lands region is expansive with a small and sparse population. The region needs the funding for landscape priority projects for a whole of landscape approach to be effective, but by comparison to other regions does not have the population and therefore the levy raising capacity to strongly contribute to any central fund. Therefore, if this model was to proceed, there would need to be consideration as to how money from these funds was distributed equitably across the State to areas of need and how priorities are structured – otherwise there is a risk that regions with the loudest voice could benefit the most.
- In going forward the Board is hoping for a more secure funding model with greater certainty. The current grants program makes for uncertainty and therefore creates difficulty when trying to plan and deliver programs and projects. Equity sharing with certainty of funding as a baseline needs to be the focus.

Overall observations

Overall the five key principles underpinning the reform are relevant and supported. Decentralisation and greater Board autonomy is supported with the system to be simplified and more accessible for community. A back to basics approach needs to be balanced with a whole of landscape approach and equitable distribution of funding provided to enable Boards with smaller populations to be effective. Any new process introduced needs to be efficient and mindful of not unnecessarily adding further administrative processes that may absorb funds. The Board currently has community at the centre with Board appointees being selected from the community – although this does somewhat depend on how community is being defined.

What is clear and has been endorsed through the community engagement process is that one size does not necessarily fit each region. While the principles should be consistent across the State, how they are implemented needs to account for the differences in how communities are structured and operate. The best example of this is the current NRM district group model which works well for the Arid Lands but are not effective in other regions. The District Group model aligns somewhat with the current approach to administering the region with Progress Associations working across various regional towns reporting back up to a central overarching body, the Outback Communities Authority. The Board strongly advises that any structural change needs to account for the uniqueness of the Arid Lands Region guarding against a blanket implementation of standard operational models across the entire State.

Natural Resource Management cuts across different legislation and the work of multiple Government agencies. Mining, energy, pastoral lands, primary industries, tourism, conservation, native vegetation, wild dog fence, are just a few of the key areas across which the Board intersects. It would be beneficial for this reform to consider how programs across these areas can be better coordinated and administered to ensure consistency of purpose and land management across the region. The ability for on the ground staff to feed back up into these areas of Government and influence how various issues are managed to support sustainable landscape practice would be valuable in any reform process.

PHASE:	NRM BOARD SESSION
SESSION:	NORTHERN & YORKE NRM BOARD (CLARE)
TIME/DATE:	1-3PM – 11th SEPTEMBER 2018
FACILITATOR:	BECKY

Becky Hirst met with 6 members of the Northern & Yorke NRM Board (including the Presiding Member) and facilitated a conversation based on the key proposals being put forward, using the same tools being used in the broader community forums.

Whilst a full account of input noted can be found below, some of the key points to arise from the meeting were –

- **Boundaries** were the biggest priority for the board to discuss during the meeting, with the Presiding Member keen for feedback to be passed on to the Minister.

With regard to the possibility of **Port Augusta** moving in to the SAAL region, the group said that if there was no gulf, it might make sense. But as at the head of the gulf, Port Augusta should stay in Northern & Yorke, given the amount of coastline already in this region. However, the board suggested that the **Northern & Yorke board could manage the coastline on behalf of SAAL**, much like they already work with the SAMDB Board on cross-boundary projects. The board acknowledged the sense of community in Port Augusta and that it makes sense for Port Augusta to be in SAAL region. The group highlighted that in making the final decision, the needs of Aboriginal nations in the area should be considered.

With regard to the southern border, it was strongly felt that **Clare** belongs in the Northern & Yorke region – firmly! Clare fits with the identity of Northern & Yorke. Clare is the centre. Clare is not Adelaide Plains. It was also noted that Councils to the north of Clare align south to Clare, not north to Port Augusta. One suggestion also included that Northern & Yorke could ‘take in’ the Adelaide Plains – though Council areas should be asked where they would like to sit.

- This board has recently spent 18 months developing a **10-year Business Plan**, engaging the community through a Community Action Planning process in doing so. The board, staff and community are very proud of this plan. They felt that 5-year plans would be too short but could simply split their 10-year plan in to two 5-year plans if necessary! It was felt that 5-year plans are too short.
- The board felt that the proposed structure of **community elections** runs a risk of board members having a vested interest, and only those with great lobbying power (and the loudest voices) would win.

The board were not averse to 3 community members being **nominated by groups** such as Councils, PPSA or other relevant organisations, but it must be clearly explained what is being achieved by taking this approach.

The board noted that they are already all members of the community and questioned why being elected would make a difference. There was also concern regarding **the cost of an election process**.

- If a **Grassroots Program** is to go ahead, activities delivered within it must address strategies in the overall plan for the region. It was also felt that \$2 million is insufficient for a statewide program like this. The board felt a better use of \$2 million could be to set up a **Youth Environmental Leadership program** across the state, replacing one that has recently been discontinued in the region due to lack of funding. The board noted that it takes significant time, energy and money to chase other funds to support their work.
- There were overall concerns about **funding and distribution of the levy**, with members noting that they are worried that the sums don’t add up as to how boards will survive with levy income being distributed to other pots such as the Landscape Priorities Fund and Grassroots Program. There needs to be further work/information in explaining the anticipated distribution of funds.
- **Engagement with the community** is something that the board felt is working really well at the moment. They also noted that interaction between board and staff work well, as well as the way the board work well together, is excellent.

FACILITATED DISCUSSIONS

The board undertook a series of facilitated discussions, exploring the following topics –

1. **Top 5 priorities** – what are the top five things you would like the reform to achieve for natural resource management in your region?
2. **What's already working well** – What are the top five things that are currently working well, and you would be disappointed if they were lost through this reform process?
3. **The 5 Guiding Principles** – How might these principles might help your priorities to be addressed?
4. **Governance & Planning** – Discussion regarding board representation, board accountability, Green Adelaide functions and priorities, boundaries
5. **Funding** – Levies, Landscape Priorities Fund, Grassroots program
6. **Measuring Success** – If you were the Minister, how would you know that the reform has been successful?

The notes below are written up verbatim.

1. PRIORITIES FOR REFORM

Each board member was given three large sticky notes and asked to write down their top three priorities for the Landscape SA reform process. The facilitator then sorted them in to themes and shared what had emerged.

<u>BACK TO BASICS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kill some weeds. • A lot more emphasis on our basics – pests, plants, weed control etc. 	<u>REFORM PROCESS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the positive work of the current NRM plan i.e. don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. • Be aware of and have an input to any changes to the status of the Natural Resources in our region – both planned and unplanned.
<u>SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable agriculture. 	<u>COMMUNICATION</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communication with our stakeholders – both up and down the chain.
<u>ABORIGINAL ENGAGEMENT</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Aboriginal engagement. 	<u>COASTAL PROTECTION</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the whole system – marine, coastal and terrestrial. • Our gulfs are the ultimate endpoint of all of our works. • Coastal protection. • Coastal input.
<u>COMMUNITY</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing/improved community engagement. • Absolute community support for our plan and its outcomes. • Be inclusive of the whole community – not just the loudest voices. • Continue with the good work we are currently undertaking. 	<u>OTHER</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and manage the Natural Resources in our region. • Look after the environment – retain the landscape • Have more time to deal with less information. • Environmental outcomes which are measurable.

2. WHAT'S CURRENTLY WORKING WELL?

Each board member was given three large sticky notes and asked to write down the top three things that they feel are currently working well with natural resource management.

<u>ENGAGEMENT</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaging in our young people.• Education through schools• Y.E.L. and education.• Our community support is increasing.• Regaining community trust – until now.• Our community 'face' – people are more aware of who we are and what we do.• We engage and offer engagement.• Partner and community engagement i.e. Cap process.	<u>PERSONNEL</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interaction between Board and Staff underlined by our strategic plan.• Broad spread of interests and regions and skills on the Board.• Chair Person – Delegate – Eric.• Our Board itself.• Staff and Board work to a common purpose.
<u>OTHER</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agricultural – sustainable soils.• Our specific projects.• Linkages to key groups in the region.	

3. THE 5 PRINCIPLES

The facilitator introduced the 5 principles which the Minister has developed to help guide the legislation reform. The board considered the following three questions relating to each principle –

- What does this principle mean to you?
- Does it resonate?
- How might it address your priorities?

The following notes were made by the facilitator under each principle –

a. Decentralised decision making

- In engagement process, we've been excluded as a board. We are the community. We've been doing this.
- We are all community members – we're connected – attending meetings – reporting back. We're all interested in the environment. Variety of skills – would hate to see it lost.
- Where do we sit? Our place to make decisions? We are voice of community as well. We want to make recommendations as well as decision makers. Community come to us – it's how they see us. Our scope – where do we start/stop?
- Planning Reform – integrated and holistic planning processes.
- In new Act – explicit – what our responsibilities are?

b. A simple and accessible system

- Election process adds another layer of complexity.
- Would be good – but not sure it will be achieved.
- Board/Staff currently quite integrated – if we split – not sure how it will work. Where will we get scientific expertise from? E.g. in DEW building now – what happens when we split?
- Nobody likes forms – but that's life. Dwindling resources. There are checks and balances there for regions.
- Centre in Clare has been a real success – tenants, businesses want to work here with us. That's the community – very supportive.

c. Community and land owners at the centre

- Shouldn't be separated – land owners are the community. Makes land owners different. We don't have different thought processes.
- Land owners (bigger) can have vested interest – on making profit. Most are very responsible. We don't want to set up a process where wealthy can 'buy it out'.

d. A whole of landscape approach

- Community Action Planning (CAP) – has led to us having this approach from a long way back. Over the years – successive boards – allows the public to comment.
- We take a bottom up approach already – the people are behind it. Community have ownership.
- Identifies where we should spend \$.
- We know who we are as a region. We're cohesive. CAP helps define even further.
- Coastal/Seascape very important to be included.
- Environmental NGOs are so supportive of this approach (Landcare Groups).
- Ecosystems, biological diversity, unique native flora and fauna mustn't be pushed aside.
- Pressures on region from tourism – metro visitors.

e. Back to basics

- We've all had to do this anyway. Community Action Planning (CAP) process – we run already. Pest plant and animal is what they want.
- Back to Basics – it's not that simple!

4. Governance & Planning, Engagement & Funding

4.1 Board Representation

The nine Landscape Boards will have seven members with three members elected by the community and the other four members, including the Chair, appointed by the Minister for the Environment and Water.

What's good about this structure?

- Can see how an open process makes it fair but...

What concerns you?

- The power and influence of people may elect people on to board – those with lobbying potential win. Those who we want to engage more, may not come to the table.
- Runs risk of just getting vested interest.
- Cost of election process.
- If we go to an election, mustn't just have 'reps' but people with a passion.
- We're already all community! Why being elected will make a difference? What are we if we aren't community?

What will we need to have in place to make sure this structure works?

- Not averse to 3 community members being put forward by a group: council, PPSA, other organisations; rather than an election process.
- Must clearly outline what is being attempted here? Perhaps previous board or community organisations to put forward suggestions.
- Currently Minister asks what skill set we want/areas covered – works well – though PM doesn't make recommendations – just encourages applications. These people would never to an election but might be convinced to apply.
- Current members wouldn't have gone through election – no way.
- Must be from region.

4.2 Board Accountabilities

- We have already done our plan – Community Based Action Plan – waiting for sign off. 10 year plan.
- We've already done it – 18 months developing. Could split in two. Read it!
- If we reduce our levy raising capacity, how will we afford a General Manager – and to do all this? (Including expert advice etc.).

4.3 Boundaries

What are the top 5 things that you'd like the Minister to know about boundaries affecting either your region, or beyond?

- PORT AUGUSTA – if there was no gulf, it might make sense. But as at the head of the gulf, it should stay in N&Y. However, we could manage the coastline, much like we work with SAMDB as an option. Sense of community – makes sense for PA to be in SAAL main region – cost, levy collection. Need to consider Aboriginal Nation Adnya cross regional – coastal support to SAAL.
- Clare belongs to N & Y – firmly! Our identity. Tourism. Identity as landowners. CAP process has all been based around Clare. Getting that community owning it.
- Clare is our centre. We are not Adelaide Plains. Local Government alignments e.g. Peterborough – we come south to Clare. Is this just a financial decision?
- We could take Adelaide Plains in to N & Y. Council areas should be asked where they would like to be.
- Catchments.

4.4 Green Adelaide

What do you believe should be the top three functions or priorities of Green Adelaide?

One board member noted that Green Adelaide should have a role in –

- Hills Face Zone – protection of
- Keep Adelaide Green – protect parklands!
- Beaches – protection.

4.6 Capping Levies

Election commitment: Cap annual land and water levy rises at a rate set by an independent body or according to the CPI. Levies (land and water) collected in a region will be spent in the region, except for a portion of priority landscape scale or cross-boundary projects, and services to underpin regional outcomes.

What's your initial reaction? Is there a better way of capping, collecting or distributing income from levies?

- We haven't got levy raising capacity – for a long time we've been saying these areas hard hit by tourism need supporting. Needs to be equitable – at least more equitable.

4.7 Cross-regional and state-wide coordination

Do you think there is a need for cross regional and Statewide projects and programs? What do you think about these two initiatives? Are there other ways?

- It's not going to achieve a thing.
- And we can only get by lodging an application.
- Marine/coastal – around Gulf – makes sense to work together.
- Same with Adelaide coastline.

4.8 Grassroots Program

Election commitment: Establish the Grassroots program, a \$2million a year statewide annual fund (in addition to existing grants programs), administered at a Landscape Board level for volunteer, community and not-for-profit groups to access.

What's your initial reaction? What's the most important thing to get right with this annual statewide fund?

- Have got rid of Fund my Neighbourhood.
- State wide – seriously? \$2M is chicken feed. And we are paying for it ourselves.
- We'd like to see the Minister give us (N & Y) \$2M.
- How about set up a YEL program with this \$2M.
- If there is to be this fund, activities must address strategies in our plan.
- Significant time and energy and \$ need to go in to chasing other funds.

5. MEASURING SUCCESS

The board members were asked to imagine that it was 2 years from now, and that they were the Minister for the Environment and Water. They were asked to write down how they would know that the Landscapes SA reform had been successful.

By 2020 the community is pleased to see landscapes vehicles and proud of the staff who are comfortable in walking into the pub wearing the uniform.	Well done – you managed to TALK LESS and LISTEN MORE.	Increased community engagement from all sectors.
Not one NRM complaint from staff, Board or community came across my desk this week!!	The environment is sustained and maintained across all fascists of the Natural Resources.	

6. PARKING SPACE

The current additional notes were made –

Engagement/reform process feedback -

- Thought processes in putting together this reform seem to have been steered by loudest voices.
- By not consulting early, Minister has risked disengaging those of us currently involved.
- Where's the evidence that the system is broken?
- Would have been nice to have boundary options to discuss.

Other notes -

- We already tick all the boxes! i.e. guidelines.
- Current board structure – cross section of region, skills, connections – really good mix.
- Scary that marine, coastal and education is an after-thought.
- Education is how we future proof.

PHASE:	NRM BOARD SESSION
SESSION:	SAMBD
TIME/DATE:	12-3PM – 17 th SEPTEMBER 2018
FACILITATORS:	BECKY

OVERVIEW OF SESSION

Becky Hirst met with 5 members of the SAMDB NRM Board (including PIRSA representative) in person in Mount Barker and via video conference. There were two staff who participated in the meeting. Becky facilitated a conversation based on the key proposals being put forward, using the same tools being used in the broader community forums. Whilst a full account of input noted can be found below, some of the key points to arise from the meeting were –

Community Engagement

- Members of the board commented that the legislation at the moment is very specific. It doesn't enable innovative solutions to be found. It should be written in a way that makes it clear what we are trying to achieve. There are some very specific requirements which can be very complex.
- A specific example was given relating to required **consultation processes** needing X number of days before X kind of meeting is held. This board believes in and operates with **a more contemporary approach to community engagement** and would like to see the new legislation reflect this. They want more genuine engagement and less consultation.
- They would like to see the community more involved in developing a draft plan **early in the process**, rather than simply be presented with a final draft for comment. This part of the existing Act hasn't moved with the times, for example for **Water Allocation Planning**. For this, the board works with the community to understand what's up for discussion. They prepare a plan together. They consult at the end just to test that what has been discussed is reflected in the Plan. The legislation in this regard should be less prescriptive regarding consultation.
- They would like to see **engagement principles** upfront in the legislation that talk about community being engaged in the process.
- The board would like to see an empowered community making behaviour change. They'd like to see community taking ownership and contributing to a decision. The board is very proud of the work it currently does in engaging the community and is **progressive in its approaches**. Approaches like the River Murray Water Allocation Planning Advisory Committee worked really well, as well as other approaches such that have been about early engagement with impacted and well-connected stakeholders.

Communication & Media

- The community don't often understand who is responsible for what. The board felt that they aren't able to manage their own **messaging and media** around this. This can be very frustrating. There is a significant process that they have to go through once a decision has been made in order for it to be communicated to the community. This can be a very long process via HQ, seeking **approval for communications**, with messages getting diluted throughout the process. There are so many lost opportunities.
- We already make our own decisions, but then it's an incredibly **clunky process** in either implementing or communicating them.

Roles & Responsibilities

- In relation to communications and media above, there is also a **lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities** in the region. For example, Corellas are raised all the time as an issue. These aren't the responsibility of the NRM Board – we have no role in managing them. But we aren't able to say that it isn't our role. However, nobody else says it is their role. It's very frustrating that everything has to go through Adelaide. The board would like to see clearer roles and responsibilities.
- This is a good opportunity for the Minister to talk about roles and responsibilities – the board, the department, local government, partners, and so on.

Partnerships

- The board see partnerships as a smart way to bring people along – with local people providing input. They like to use **existing systems** to facilitate this, such as small community grants that they already offer. The board acknowledged that they could do better at acknowledging the number of partnerships that are in place. The way the board works on partnerships is quite **flexible** at present and they would like this to continue.

Levies & Funding

- The levies are fundamental in helping the board achieve what it needs to do. They would like to see the Act strengthened in **communicating** why a levy is in place, and that this is a good opportunity to clarify how levies are collected and distributed across the state. The difference between a land and water levy at the moment is clunky at the moment and this makes it difficult to communicate why the levies are in place. The group noted that there is an **inconsistency of philosophies** across the regions, for example this board land based and water-based levies are pooled, and spent on highest priority things, whereas in other regions this is done differently.
- There was some discussion around **Green Adelaide** and to be careful that it doesn't become 'the magic pudding'. It was noted that the potential for the levy collection in the region will be large and whilst the intention seems to be to distribute some of this to other regions, there is a high risk that much of the funds could end up being spent on large scale projects that are required in metropolitan Adelaide, such as sand pumping.
- The board noted that there is no mention of state appropriation.
- The **Landscape Priorities Fund** doesn't sound like an efficient model. How would the distribution be calculated? It was noted that there isn't much money in the **Grassroots Grants Program** once it gets divided across the state.

Integrated Landscape Approach

- This board believes in social and ecological systems based on **catchments**. There needs to be a strong focus on **biodiversity**. The **Back to Basics** approach is simply treating the systems. The **Whole of Landscape Approach** treats the cause. This board aligns mostly with the latter.
- The Back to Basics approach is what we did twenty years ago and is frustrating because it undermines the work that has been happened. What we need to do isn't basic – it's complex – it needs to be smarter than going back to the basics, however the board did note that this depends on the definition of basics.

Skills-based board

- The skills-based board is a strength of the current structure. The board regularly makes **decisions based on consensus**, limiting the need to take votes. From a staff perspective, this makes it easier and more effective to support a board that can reach a consensus easily. Decision making must be backed up by **science**. There needs to be a strong evidence based.
- There was great concern that the proposed model of **community elections** will be expensive to implement, there will be strong political influence, it will attract board members with single issues, and possibly a lack of appropriate skills. It was also questioned who would vote? This approach also bring concern that it may result in a lack of diversity on the board – with a high probability of lower representation of women and young people.
- The Presiding Member shared a suggestion that she had heard in another session around a skills-based board where **peak bodies have a role** in forming a selection panel and making recommendations to the Minister or making nominations for some or all of the board members. It was agreed that this was a **good compromise** and would help ensure diversity. It would also empower the peak bodies.

Decentralised decision making

- The board currently makes decisions and they therefore feel that this principle aligns with their existing approach. However, they noted that some elements of the proposed reform go against the concept of decentralised decision making, such as the Statewide Priorities Fund and Grassroots Grants Program, being administered outside of the Board. The new Landscape Boards will have a legacy of things that don't line up with this new philosophy of decentralised decision making.

Compliance

- The Act doesn't currently have a voluntary compliance option. In relation to a **simple and accessible system**, the Act could include framing for more voluntary compliance. However, the board did note that they get criticised when they can't enforce. It takes too long to go through the enforcement process and can be very expensive. They would like to **find a balance** between enforced and voluntary processes.

Boundaries

- There was some discussion about boundaries of the region, specifically in relation to the Council areas of Alexandrina, Mount Barker and Goyder. The board feels strongly that boundaries should not be the tool ensuring the financial viability of the boards. This board believes in a landscape approach of catchments, bio-landscapes and social considerations.
- We can't split **Alexandrina** and **Mount Barker**. This would be splitting the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges in half. It makes no sense. From a Murray Darling Basin perspective, they fit in to the Basin and this was a decision based on science.
- Where good relationships exist, don't change the boundaries. The local people in **Burra** would be disappointed to be removed from our region.

FACILITATED DISCUSSION

The board undertook a series of facilitated conversations, exploring the following topics –

1. **Top 5 priorities** – what are the top five things you would like the reform to achieve for natural resource management in your region?
2. **What's already working well** – What are the top five things that are currently working well, and you would be disappointed if they were lost through this reform process?
3. **The 5 Guiding Principles** – How might these principles might help your priorities to be addressed?
4. **Governance & Planning** – Discussion regarding board representation, board accountability, Green Adelaide functions and priorities, boundaries, engagement, and funding
5. **Measuring Success** – If you were the Minister, how would you know that the reform has been successful?

The facilitators notes below are written up verbatim.

1. PRIORITIES FOR REFORM

<u>REDUCE THE COMPLEXITY</u>	<u>REGIONAL GOVERNANCE</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The legislation is very specific – so doesn't enable innovative solutions. Should be written in a way that makes it clear what we're trying to achieve. Specific requirements – very complex e.g. x days before x. We want good outcomes with community. Could go in regulations or other policy. Community don't often understand who is responsible for that – we don't manage our own messaging and media – significant processes for managing risk. Something happening – 4 week processes – messages get diluted. Through HQ e.g. corellas – raised all the time. But we have no role in managing. We aren't able to say it's not our role. Nobody claims it's their role. All has to go through Adelaide. Frustrating. Lack of timeliness. So many lost opportunities. Roles and	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As previous item. Legislation to include engagement rather than consultation. More involved in developing draft plan. This part of Act hasn't moved with the times e.g. Water Allocation Planning – we work with community to understand what's up for discussion. Consultation process to just test. Legislation should be less prescriptive re consultation. Principles up front that talk about engaging with community.

responsibilities. We do make decisions (often) but then a clunky process e.g. media release.	
<u>INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE APPROACH</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social and ecological systems based on catchments. Biodiversity. 	<u>LEVIES</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raised in region – fundamental in achieving what we do. Strengthen Act in explaining ‘why’ a levy – clunky difference between land and water levy. Not helpful. Opportunity to clarify. Inconsistency of philosophies. Here – land-based and water-based levies are pooled and spent on highest priority things.
<u>PARTNERSHIPS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smart way to bring people along – local people input. Use existing systems e.g. small community grants. We could do better on communicating the number of partnerships we have. Quite flexible now. Works well – dollars in-kind. 	<u>EMPOWERING COMMUNITY</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour change. Community taking ownership and contributing to decision.

2. WHAT’S CURRENTLY WORKING WELL?

- Co-design of legislation with key stakeholders e.g. WAP.
- Partnerships – being flexible. Sustainable agriculture, e.g. Landcare – wetlands/staff.
- Skills based Board – and consensus decision making. Minimal votes. Outstanding.
- Staff perspective – makes easier and effective to support.
- Enabling department to work through communities to make better decisions e.g. Board Members well known in community – facilitate flow of information – much easier than bureaucrats could.
- Engagement processes with community and philosophy of the Board.
- Creating portals for federal to meet/work with community.
- Key management personnel – regional – know the region well. Live in the region. Part of community.

3. THE 5 PRINCIPLES

The facilitator introduced the 5 principles which the Minister has developed to help guide the legislation reform. The board considered the 5 principles and provided the following feedback -

a. Decentralised decision making

- Doing.
- Decision making backed up by science. We could go off on a tangent if not supported by evidence-base.
- In terms of whole system, water planning and management costs were part of centralised decision making. Some of proposals are centralised e.g. Grassroots funding.
- Boards will have legacy of things that don’t line up with this philosophy. E.g. Water Planning. Water Planning and Management \$2.2M in our region.

b. A simple and accessible system

- Some things can’t be simple e.g. Water Allocation. Don’t accidentally simplify.
- Legislative simplicity.
- Media release example. Takes a long time for us to get something through system. Perception.
- Some systems legislative, some departmental.
- Is this code for transparency? If it’s not simple it can be complex but not complicated.

- Some things could be easier if we had simple communications – trust and relationships are critical.
- Need to be really clear on roles and responsibilities. Minister has opportunity: - Boards; Departments; Local Government; Land holders.

c. Community and land owners at the centre

- Doing.
- Fits with priorities and philosophy.
- RMAC – feeds in to board (e.g. River Murray WAP) – main consultative arm. 20 – odd regular members.
- Board membership – outs has been people as people not necessarily promoting their cause. Diversity of interest is maintained.
- Community is diverse in itself. Need all parts discussing and debating and finding compromise – a broader community. Don't be afraid of different perspectives.
- Need private land holders – must be involved, own large parcels of land – Regional Partnership.

d. A whole of landscape approach

- Doing.
- Almost polar opposite with Back to Basics.
- Fits more with our systems thinking – and this isn't foreign to farmers.
- National Irrigators Council – saying this – it's not just back to basics – it's complex.
- Back to Basics – treating symptoms. Whole of Landscape – treating the cause.
- Balance needed between physical aspects/landscapes and social catchments – need to consider both landscapes.

e. Back to basics

- Concept is something we did 20 years ago. Its complex – it's not basic.
- Trying to sell a view that this will fix it.
- Needs to be smarter than this.
- Depends on definition of 'basics'.
- Trying to have foot in both camps – this with whole of landscapes.
- Pest plant and animal space – pressure is unrealistic to remove weed/pest species. Frustrating because it's undermining work that's been happening. Waste of money. Managing impact not eradication.

4. Governance & Planning, Engagement & Funding

4.1 Board Representation

The nine Landscape Boards will have seven members with three members elected by the community and the other four members, including the Chair, appointed by the Minister for the Environment and Water.

What's good about this structure?

- Gives the Minister a level of comfort.
- Gives a perception of community decision making.

What concerns you?

- Looks expensive – cost and time of election.
- Political influence.
- Squeaky wheels.
- Single based issues from elected members – lack of skills.
- Who would actually vote?

- RAA – 720,000 members – costly for 12-15k members voting. Huge risk if voting is voluntary – small number of voters – could create a divisive board – problematic for Minister. Divisive if you are elected versus nominated.
- Diversity of board – highly unlikely to be women or young.
- Agency reps is a strength (as non-voting members).
- Skills based board. Peak bodies could nominate someone to sit on selection panel might choose – they then recommend to the Minister the 7 or 3 to be on the board. Diversity geographic spread, saves costs. Would expand peak bodies.

What will we need to have in place to make sure this structure works?

- Would process be funded by levy?
- Peak body approach – a good compromise.
- SE Drainage Board – some appointed, some elected. Doesn't function well.

4.2 Board Accountabilities

The worksheet provided to tables gave an overview of board responsibilities and responsibilities, including –

- Managing own budgets, shared publicly
- Employ a general manager who manages staff
- Power to set and manage own levies (with increases reviewed by an independent regulator according to CPI)
- Establish a 5-year Landscape Plan for their regions, identifying 5 priorities
- Partnerships and outsourcing.

- Re 5-year plan - If it's only this, it isn't enough. Would need layers. What is the board's role?
- Review Cycle – 5 years? E.g. 10 year plan, reviewed every 5 years.
- Should have 20 year targets – things take five.
- Plan with long term vision – reviewed every 5 years.
- Difference between plan for region and plan for boards – what they'll do.

Any other comments about board accountabilities?

- Landscape Plan – currently plan for region owned by region, not just board. NRM is everyone's responsibility.
- What scale for 5 priorities? Big or small?
- Simple language. Streamlining – what's worked in past?
- Maybe consistency in planning – how planning is done e.g. CAP versus resilience planning.
- Strategic Plan – 10 year Plan with 20 year targets.
- Regional Action Plan – 5 years – sets priorities at a local level (equivalent to CAP).
- Boards Business Plan – 3 year rolling.
- One year Implementation Plan.
- EMPLOYING A GENERAL MANAGER:
Good idea. We feel for regional staff. Under pressure juggling priorities – reporting to board and DEW. But wouldn't want that role. GM is only as good as the people who report to him. Staff employed by Department – don't see how GM role would be viable.
Various models. Boards could work together to manage different aspects.
Who's the employing agency? Could it be worded in SLA? Seconded to Board. Needs to be clear.

4.3 Boundaries

- Possible shifts Sharon is aware being considered: Alexandrina; Goyder; Mount Barker.
- Viability (financial) of being able to deliver is limited if boundaries are tinkered with.
- Boundaries should not be the tool for improving the financial viability of boards.
- Landscape approach catchments – bio landscapes – social.
- Can't split Alexandrina and Mount Barker.
- Split Eastern Mount Lofty in half – makes no sense also from a MDB – they fit in Murray Darling Basin. Decision based on science. Sending them in to Adelaide won't achieve landscape outcomes.
- Community ability to relate to a region/landscape/catchment. Want to be involved.
- Local community in Burra would be concerned to be removed from our region. Where would you take boundary? Re: Landscape Scale:
 - a. Catchments.
 - b. Where good relationships exist – don't change e.g. Burra.
- What's the objective of a change?
- NRM Groups can help with local connections – if looking to ways for better local decisions.

4.4 Green Adelaide

- Need to be careful about treating GA as the magic pudding – if boundaries are metro – the potential levy is large – GA would form significant part of \$30M.
- When you consider range of things/big scale funding (e.g. sand removal) – worrying. GA doesn't speak landscapes.
- What role could GA have around providing funding or supporting other parts of the state? E.g. KI – tourism from metro.
- Reality of distribution might not be that much. Potential levy funding could be absorbed within GA – operations and management of existing program.

4.5 Engagement

The board were asked to consider how could Landscape SA boards engage with their communities in planning, delivering and evaluating natural resource management programs and projects. They were asked what we should stop doing, what we should start doing and what we should consider doing. The following points were noted –

STOP DOING	START DOING	CONTINUE DOING
Table 1		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public meetings – we try not to – Act tells us we have to for new things. We don't do this – old fashioned. Doesn't work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Field visits – we could do more (time, costs, logistics) – gives us a face in community where we do things.• NOTE: Don't under estimate how much it costs to maintain relationships. It's very hard. We do it well. Really valuable. People recognise it's a partnership. True partnership – both coming to table.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• River Murray WAP – Advisory Committee has worked really well.• Trialled processes – identifying who key players are – directly impacted with good networks – getting them involved early – called it a 'lock in' – trusting environment, different approach. Getting information out early – keeping them involved in journey.• Public forums, shed meeting, industry commodity leads.• Board members used to have a 'community at the centre' committee re expectation.

4.6 Capping Levies

Election commitment: Cap annual land and water levy rises at a rate set by an independent body or according to the CPI. Levies (land and water) collected in a region will be spent in the region, except for a portion of priority landscape scale or cross-boundary projects, and services to underpin regional outcomes.

What's your initial reaction? Is there a better way of capping, collecting or distributing income from levies?

- We use levy funds to leverage federal funds. There'll be less available to leverage.
- No mention of state appropriation – shouldn't just be reliant on levies. Environment underpins the economy and community well being.

4.7 Cross-regional and state-wide coordination

Landscapes and the pressures affecting them don't stop at administrative boundaries. Many issues require cross-regional and Statewide coordination, like controlling pests and managing threatened species. Two approaches include:

- Partnerships across multiple landscape boards and other groups.
- A Landscape Priorities fund contributed to by Landscape Boards to invest in large scale projects across landscapes

Do you think there is a need for cross regional and Statewide projects and programs? What do you think about these two initiatives? Are there other ways?

- With additional extra funding, both these funds are great. But we won't, so they aren't!
- If boards are having to have plans and priorities – how do these fit?
- Doesn't sound like an efficient model?
- How would it be worked out? No figure for landscape fund.
- We already do save landscape projects cross-boundaries – may not need a formal think like this.

4.8 Grassroots Program

Election commitment: Establish the Grassroots program, a \$2million a year statewide annual fund (in addition to existing grants programs), administered at a Landscape Board level for volunteer, community and not-for-profit groups to access.

What's your initial reaction? What's the most important thing to get right with this annual statewide fund?

- Not a lot of money when divided up.
- Goes against decentralised decision making.
- Boards already invest in own grassroots funding – at least \$300K plus small volunteer grants programs – from existing funding. This is in addition – even less money in pot.

5. MEASURING SUCCESS

The staff were asked to imagine that it was 2 years from now, and that they were the Minister for the Environment and Water. They were asked to write down how they would know that the Landscapes SA reform had been successful.

A visible sign the SAMDB is a healthier place.	When I go to regional communities they congratulate me on being flexible and really listening to communities and understanding environmental issues.	No ministerials on landscape reform.
Communities are empowered: They are part of the process; They know what they need to do; Work together with Government. As Minister, I have been able to secure more \$ from Treasury.	Congratulations ~ signed Ian Hunter.	

6. PARKING SPACE

It was acknowledge that the agenda was full today and staff were providing input very specifically around the Landscapes SA reform. If topics came up that hadn't got time allocated to them, or that weren't immediately relevant to this first stage of the reform process, they could be noted in the Parking Space.

The current notes were made –

- Compliance – Act as it is doesn't have a voluntary compliance option. Simple and accessible system – in Act could include framing for more of a voluntary compliance. But at same time, we get criticised when we can't enforce. Takes too long to go through enforcement process and expensive. Finding a balance between enforced and voluntary process straightforward.

PHASE:	BOARD SESSION
SESSION:	SOUTH EAST NRM BOARD - NARACORTE
TIME/DATE:	2:00pm – MONDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER 2018
FACILITATOR:	STEVE

Seven Board Members were welcomed by the facilitator who set the scene for the session, as well as outlining their role and the likely range of diverse opinions in the room. A short update on the reform process to date was provided, including the engagement process occurring around the state. Two staff were present as observers.

FACILITATED DISCUSSIONS

The staff undertook a series of facilitated activities, exploring the following topics –

1. **Key priorities** – what are the key things you would like the reform to achieve for natural resource management in your region?
2. **What's already working well** – What are the key things that are currently working well, and you would be disappointed if they were lost through this reform process?
3. **The 5 Guiding Principles** – How might these principles help your priorities to be addressed?

In small groups participants provided comment and feedback on the following topics -

4. **Governance & Planning** – Discussion regarding board representation, board accountability, Green Adelaide functions and priorities, ALMR boundaries
5. **Engagement** - How should Landscape SA boards engage with their communities in planning, delivering and evaluating natural resource management programs and projects?
6. **Funding** – Levies, Landscape Priorities Fund, Grassroots program

The session ended with the facilitator asking all participants to consider -

7. **Measuring Success** – If you were the Minister, how would you know that the reform has been successful?

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

The facilitator scribed notes during the whole of group discussion. These notes provide an overview summary of the discussions and key points made by board members as follows:

Engagement Process

- Concern was expressed by one member that Boards were not to be present at the community sessions. It was felt that this was a good opportunity for Board members to hear the views and perspectives of their communities with respect to the reform and that by not attending it could be an opportunity lost.

Board relationship with other Departments (DEW and PIRSA in particular)

- The Board needs greater empowerment and clarity of role.
- The community are confused as to who makes decisions over what and who works for who.
- There is confusion also at the Department level with a lack of understanding at times as to the role of the Boards.
- Removing the NRM groups lost the community to some extent and added to the disconnect with the Board and its work.

The Levy and Landscape

- The history of the levy comes from private rate-payers.
- The landscape however does not stop at boundaries – all land owners and operators need to be in a position to support landscape management initiatives.

- Government Departments, the Crown and private sector lease holders (ie: mining industry) need to be well coordinated and contribute through either paying the levy to the Board or working with the Board to initiate landscape projects.

The Levy

- Need to be careful about any percentage of the levy collected from the region leaving the region.
- Boards need a greater degree of control over the levy money raised from the region.
- There needs to be a continuation of the appropriation of funds from Adelaide back out to the regions. The regions have a critical need for landscape management with many relying upon the sustainability of the landscape for productivity but have less of an ability to raise adequate funding because of the smaller populations. Equitable distribution across the State needs to be a key principle of the legislation.
- WPM Costs – the Board does not have control over these – a quarter of the budget currently is outside of the Board's ability to manage and this greatly constrains the Board in directing funding to on the ground initiatives.

Back to Basics

- Soil – the current Legislation is weak with compliance messy and difficult. The reform provides an opportunity for this issue to be addressed.
- Pest Management – again compliance is messy and complex. The current intent is for the Board to work with landowners but people take advantage. This is an opportunity for the process to be made simpler and easier.
- A compliance toolkit for staff that is clear in process could be helpful.

The Board

- There needs to be care taken not to overstate what the Board can do verses what it has to do.
- Boards currently have members from their communities who are passionate and know and understand the issues and who are working hard with their communities to deliver partnerships and programs. This aligns with the proposed principles.
- Be careful not to overturn the good work that is being done by effective Boards that are operating well within the constraints.
- The Board would like to achieve more – but there are existing constraints and legal responsibilities prescribed in the Act which absorb significant resources making it difficult to deliver other landscape initiatives.
- Should a community election process be introduced, there is the potential for greater support of Board decisions to be obtained from the community.
- With respect to a proposed community election process however, there are a number of issues and concerns including:
 - The risk of vote stacking
 - Results being skewed to areas of greater population (ie: Mount Gambier)
 - Cost of a community election process and how it is funded – will it be taken from the levy?
 - Motivating people to vote to have sufficient numbers to support the community election process
- There may be better ways to achieve the aim of greater community involvement and support of the Board that cost less than a community election process.
- In reforming the Natural Resource Management it is also important to ensure that we are not responding to just a small minority voice in the community who may have a specific agenda or are unaware of the current process and how it works.
- There is also a risk with a community election process someone with a particular issue could find their way to become a Board member – this would not help to achieve a high functioning Board.
- An alternative to the community election process could be to establish a community-based selection panel drawn from across sector groups and the region to make either recommendation to the Minister and/or appoint the community nominated members themselves based on criteria.

- Having said this the current selection process works well – maybe, the issue is more to do with a lack of transparency and understanding across the community as to how the process works currently and the effort that is applied to select the right people to a Board.
- Having Board members that are skill based with experience is critical to ensure a functioning and effective Board. Maybe a community election process can work on the basis that there is a pre-selection arrangement requiring candidates to meet a set criteria and skill base. This would need to be well coordinated with the Ministerial appointments as there is a need to ensure both the community elected members and the Ministerial appointed members compliment each other.
- Ministerial appointments need to be from the region and not appointed from elsewhere or appointed for political reasons.
- The process for election to the Board should not be overcomplicated.
- Consider also the need for continuity when setting terms and the cost of knowledge gaps and change over.
- Ensure Department representatives (non voting) continue to attend meetings of the Board – their knowledge and experience and link to Government is invaluable.
- Board accountability and transparency is necessary – and the ability to be able to demonstrate to the community where the levy money goes. Currently money is absorbed by administrative arrangements – community confidence will improve with a greater ability of the Board to be able to control and manage where the money goes.

Staff

- The Board should be able to choose what is outsourced or what skills or capabilities they need in-house and hire accordingly.
- Current integration with DEW causes confusion in the community and blurs the lines. Greater clarity for staff, the Board and the community is needed and welcomed.
- Is moving staff to a public sector model an option – this would help to establish a distance between the Department staff and Board staff.

Partnerships

- Support the emphasis on partnerships. Partnerships are critical to the success of the Board and are currently utilised in the region.

Planning and Reporting

- The sub-regional planning process has worked effectively in the South East Region with good engagement – a process such as this needs to be retained.
- Reporting is often cumbersome and for the sake of it. In going forward this reporting can be streamlined and focused on the right things that are important for community transparency and accountability.

Boundaries

- While there are no proposed boundary changes for the South East region, should consideration be given to the north west boundary north of Salt Creek (which is the boundary that receives most debate in the region), then communities of interest need to be taken into account together with landscape issues. This includes considering how the community structure operate and their links to key town centres.

Green Adelaide

- It was noted that Green Adelaide has seven key focus areas based on the urban environment and context. These are applicable to larger regional cities like Mount Gambier. The South East Board should have these as a focus for Mount Gambier and within their remit to support key environmental management initiatives within an urban context.

- There needs to be a focus on biodiversity at a State level – there is a risk that dollars could be soaked up in Adelaide to deliver the Green Adelaide objectives; biodiversity is an issue across the State together with similar environmental issues in urban regional centres to Green Adelaide so this needs to be given similar attention.

Funding

- Appropriation of levy funds from Adelaide will need to occur to support regional boards
- Further comments were made on this topic and are presented below under the relevant headings.

PRIORITIES FOR REFORM

The group were provided with large sticky notes and asked to write down their priorities for the Landscape SA reform process. They were encouraged to write no more than a couple of sentences.

The groups then shared their priorities with the whole group. The facilitator grouped the priorities into themes.

The table that follows contains all points made by members on the sticky notes and sorted by the facilitator into themes. The notes are written up verbatim.

<u>EMPOWERMENT</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divorce from DEW. • Separation of Board (Landscape SA) and DEW. 	<u>BACK TO BASICS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify NRM Act with relation to Pest Management Compliance. • Greater emphasis on soils – legacy of soil boards not having a levy.
<u>LEVY</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All landholders are to pay a levy (Crown, Mining Lease and Private). • Keep more levy money in our region. • Board to decide on all levy investment (e.g. DEW decided Water Plan Management costs etc., not to occur). 	<u>PARTNERSHIPS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More partnerships e.g. Local Government – currently good but enhance. Enhance others.
<u>NATIONAL PARKS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEW and Board – more ability to have a say on how National Parks are run. • Program co-ordination across boundaries funding. 	<u>DEVELOPMENT</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding high value asset. • Protects any development to have a light footprint across the landscape. • Developers don't appreciate. • Board to have a say and integration into the Planning Approval system – co-ordinate.
<u>EDUCATION, COMMUNITY SUPPORT, ENGAGEMENT</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater community support for the 'system' through which natural resources are managed. • Increase community engagement with NRM – planning and delivery. • Community acceptance – not them and us – like it is with Local Government. • Community education. 	<u>PLANNING AND REPORTING</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater transparency. • Transparency. • Planning processes that are more flexible and that the community can better understand. • Remove the red tape. • Simplify to allow for quicker decision making/more achieved on ground. • Simplification on water reporting for water uses. • Improved water management.
<u>OTHER</u>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal management. • Urban (Mt Gambier). • My concern is that what the Minister interprets as current impediments or flaws in NRM has been based on the interactions with a very small but vocal minority in the community, not the general public at large.

WHAT'S CURRENTLY WORKING WELL?

Each table was given sticky notes and asked to write down the things that they feel are currently working well with natural resource management. The facilitator then sorted the points into themes. These points and themes are represented verbatim below.

<u>LEVY</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levy spend (mostly) directed by Board. • Corporate fees go to Department. • WAP • Board decides levy spending (mostly – should be all). • Half levy is directed to Department. 	<u>STRATEGIC PLANNING</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan as it is. • How do we merge in to new Act, without losing what's working? • Strategic regional NRM planning by Board.
<u>PARTNERSHIPS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAPs. • McKillop LMG. • NGT. • Industry. • Local Government relationships good in patches. 	<u>STAFF</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You're regional Director! ☺ • Regional staff delivering/developing WAPs with community. • Good staff.
<u>PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FOR WATER ALLOCATION PLANS (WAP)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community consultation with stakeholders – WAP. • Public consultation for Water Allocation Plans. 	<u>SMALL PROJECT FUNDING</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of small projects working within communities on a Landscape Scale. • Small projects e.g. Bucks for Bush; Cockys for Cockys; Soils. • Small Grant Funding e.g. 'George the Farmer'. • Integrated APC work e.g. foxes being controlled across landscape tenure to protect Mallee Fowl; deer program.
<u>DRAINAGE AND WETLANDS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage and Wetland Committee – interaction working well. 	<u>BOARD</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board membership made up of community members.
<u>OTHER</u> <p>"Don't chuck baby out with bathwater." ☺</p>	

THE 5 PRINCIPLES

The facilitator introduced the 5 principles which the Minister has developed to help guide the legislation reform. These principles were discussed randomly by the group in general conversation. The group reflected on these

principles in the context of their broader conversations about what's working well, priorities for the reform and specific initiatives being proposed by the Minister. Various comments and reflections are captured in the discussion summary.

KEY TOPICS – Governance & Planning, Engagement & Funding

The facilitator explained that the next section of the session was opportunity for board members to discuss topics of interest (from a total of 8) and to focus on providing input into that topic. Board members worked in pairs to discuss the topics and then had discussion from the floor as a whole group.

Key aspects of these discussions are presented in the workshop summary. However, for those topics where worksheets were completed the comments made on those worksheets has been provided below.

Board Representation

The nine Landscape Boards will have seven members with three members elected by the community and the other four members, including the Chair, appointed by the Minister for the Environment and Water.

What's good about this structure?

Sheet 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community based members (as current boards are).• Decisions made by the Board will be regional based.• Potential greater support for Board if community have chance to have say of who is on the Board.

What concerns you?

Sheet 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That what the Minister interprets as a current impediment in NRM has been based on interactions with a very small but vocal minority in the community and not the general public at large.• Cost of election.• Level of uptake of election i.e. small numbers voting and ability to 'stack' votes.• Logistics of bi-election.

What will we need to have in place to make sure this structure works?

Sheet 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An implementation plan for the timing of appointments.• A recognition that there are good things about the current approach to Board membership and that there are really passionate, skilled, knowledgeable individuals on the current Boards.• Recruitment for succession planning.

Board Accountabilities

The worksheet gave an overview of board responsibilities and responsibilities, including –

- Managing own budgets, shared publicly
- Employ a general manager who manages staff
- Power to set and manage own levies (with increases reviewed by an independent regulator according to CPI)
- Establish a 5-year Landscape Plan for their regions, identifying 5 priorities
- Partnerships and outsourcing.

The priorities would focus on basics of enabling natural resource management such as soil quality, water management, and pest plant and animal control, complemented with landscape scale restoration projects.

What processes are important to have in place to best evaluate and report on outcomes from managing natural resource management?

Sheet 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Responsible for: own budgets, shared publically: 100% of levy – DEW transparent too.</i> • <i>Employ a general manager who manages staff: Staff transition needs to be smooth.</i> • <i>Establish a 5 year Landscape plan for their region, identifying 5 priorities: how specific.</i> • <i>Partnerships and outsourcing: if cost effective and meets objective.</i> • <i>Soil quality; water management; pest plant and animal control: tools to do these.</i> • Good corporate governance. • Compliance with Act & Regulations. • Reduced staff time on Admin/Reporting. • Clear roles and expectations.

Any other comments about board accountabilities?

Sheet 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency.

4.3 Boundaries

The boundaries for the new Adelaide regions are not yet drawn. As part of defining these boundaries, it may be relevant to consider adjusting the boundaries of other regions adjacent to the new Adelaide regions.

What are the top 5 things that you'd like the Minister to know about boundaries affecting either your region, or beyond?

Sheet 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental boundaries vs board boundaries – should marry up. Formalise existing practices. • Change boundaries to encompass all of Coorong in South East or go to Murray Darling? • Ngarkat NP should be in Murray Darling. • Make sure to liaise with community.

4.4 Green Adelaide

Staff were provided with the following information: Green Adelaide will be created to deliver natural resource management functions in metropolitan Adelaide, focusing on enhancing the city's urban ecology and investing in the natural environment to improve overall community wellbeing. It will work towards Adelaide being the most ecologically vibrant city in the world. Green Adelaide will have an expert Board appointed by the Minister for Environment and Water. It will focus on building a strong connection between Adelaide residents and their natural environment. Green Adelaide will have the following seven priorities –

- Coastal Management
- Urban rivers and wetlands
- Water sensitive design
- Green streets and flourishing parklands
- Fauna in the city
- Controlling pest plants and animals
- Nature education

What do you believe should be the top three functions or priorities of Green Adelaide?

Sheet 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connection to regional areas: Urban ecology in the context of an urban environment is very important for Green Adelaide however can look very different to regional South Australia's landscape needs. Making connections and links of how the activities of people in urban areas affect the total ecological spectrum - urban to outlying through their high consumption needs for resources is important.• Education – biodiversity.• Coastal management.

Green Adelaide would manage a separate region and raise levies in a similar way to Landscape Boards.

What excites you about this?

Sheet 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water sensitive design – water needs to be used not flushed into storm water drains.• Green Streets – corridors for birds. Isolated pockets of Green.• Nature education.• Farm education.• Where food comes from.• Care for the land.

What concerns you?

Sheet 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$ spent in Green Adelaide.• These priorities are great they should also be priorities for regional centres. Either all regions – Back to Basics including Green Adelaide or need 4th priority about biodiversity, nature, education, wetlands, coastal management.

Engagement

This topic was not directly discussed however, aspects did emerge in general conversation. Relevant comments are provided in the context of the workshop summary.

Capping Levies

Election commitment: Cap annual land and water levy rises at a rate set by an independent body or according to the CPI. Levies (land and water) collected in a region will be spent in the region, except for a portion of priority landscape scale or cross-boundary projects, and services to underpin regional outcomes.

This item was discussed as a group and the following comments were noted:

- Capping levies to CPI might prove difficult with rising costs including wages and costs to deliver programs. CPI increases may not account for such rising costs that might exceed inflation.
- An independent body regulating levy increases may deliver an increase in community confidence through greater transparency and accountability while still providing boards with the ability to increase levies when necessary at a rate that enables continuation of key programs, initiatives and staffing ratios.
- Water management and planning would benefit from application to an independent body which could help resolve current debates around cost increases.

Cross-regional and state-wide coordination

Landscapes and the pressures affecting them don't stop at administrative boundaries. Many issues require cross-regional and Statewide coordination, like controlling pests and managing threatened species. Two approaches include:

- Partnerships across multiple landscape boards and other groups.
- A Landscape Priorities fund contributed to by Landscape Boards to invest in large scale projects across landscapes

Election commitment: Establish the Grassroots program, a \$2million a year statewide annual fund (in addition to existing grants programs), administered at a Landscape Board level for volunteer, community and not-for-profit groups to access.

Both the concept for a landscape priorities fund and a grass roots fund was discussed by the Board as a group and the following comments noted:

- Landscape Priorities fund – how would an advisory body make decisions over where the money was spent across the State – presumably, there would be criteria set against which applications would need to be made. Even so, how would applications that meet the criteria be prioritised? The membership of the advisory board presiding over the landscape fund is also of interest – how are the members appointed and where are they from? Are there regional representatives from each region that have adequate knowledge of the regions to adequately present issues and advocate for landscape funding?
- There is concern with both the landscape priorities fund and the \$2 million a year grass roots fund that regions will again over time lose control of their budget and not be in a position to make key decisions relative to funding. The board should retain control over its budget with the funds raised in the region remaining in the region.
- An alternative could be to have one state wide advisory board administer the landscape priorities fund and the grass roots fund with a percentage of the Green Adelaide levy paid into the fund. This would have the effect of reducing what is appropriated from Green Adelaide back into the regions but avoid the need for the regions to be paying levy money into two central funds centrally controlled. It could also be simpler and more streamlined and save in administration.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Board members were asked to imagine that it was 2 years from now, and that they were the Minister for the Environment and Water. They were asked to write down how they would know that the Landscapes SA reform had been successful.

An environment that is stable/improving – well managed.	Simplified systems – greater community engagement and on ground action working individually on projects which link across landscapes. Greater community confidence and transparency.	2020 Regional – increased primary production, increased soil cover, increased soil carbon, lower water use impacts, fewer animal and plant management issues and fewer species losses due to NRM mismanagement issues. Communities who feel they can influence decisions. Staff who feel they can do their jobs.
I think it would be too early to tell. It will be determined by community acceptance of the whole process.	Broad community participation and support for NRM model.	Increased attendance by farmers at NRM workshops due to increase visibility/transparency.
Clean, green, sustainable environment and living. No waste!		.

PHASE: NRM BOARD SESSION
SESSION: AW NRM BOARD WORKSHOP
TIME/DATE: 9am – 10.30am – 2ND OCTOBER 2018
FACILITATORS: JON

FACILITATED DISCUSSION

Workshop attendees reviewed the consultation materials utilised in the community consultation sessions, exploring the following topics –

1. **The 5 Guiding Principles** – How might these principles might help your priorities to be addressed?
2. **Governance & Planning** – Discussion regarding board representation, board accountability
3. **Engagement** - How should Landscape SA boards engage with their communities in planning, delivering and evaluating natural resource management programs and projects?
4. **Funding** – Discussion regarding levies, Landscape Priorities Fund, Grassroots program

The discussion identified the following key points:

1. KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

The following focus areas were identified from the Ministers comments in the introductory video

- Back to basics
- Partnerships
- Decentralise/power and influence back to community

The AW Board is achieving each of these priorities now, on a regional level. The strong message from the AW Board to the Minister was the importance of not impacting what has been built:

- **don't destroy what has been developed and achieved - particularly impacts of changes in other areas of Aboriginal policy**

The AW Board provides a model for engaging (co-planning, project developments, program design community engagement, traditional protocols and cultural leadership, with Aboriginal land holding authorities, their leadership, Aboriginal Nations and Aboriginal communities and 'cultural' key movers and shakers, that other Boards can learn from. Specifically, the AW Board provides a relatively high % of funding to communities for projects, relative to other NRM regions.

ACTION: Parry Agius has requested a discussion paper/submission be prepared by AW NRM in relation to how funding is directed to communities/high % relative to other boards

When considering other legislation for future reform (per the community consultation PowerPoint presentation), other legislation identified as important to consider was:

- ALT
- Mining Act
- Outback Trust
- Biodiversity* to be considered in this phase of reform

Other priority legislation for reform included:

- Coastal Protection
- Fisheries.
- NPWA
- Native vegetation.
- Pastoral.
- Water Industry.

- Planning Act relative to land use.

In relation to ALT, the following points were noted on the workshop whiteboard:

- Issue: engagement with FWC native title and communities
- Issue: ALT (tenure issue) and land management: tension between ALT and communities to be sorted out/also commercial considerations/statutory authority making decisions on behalf of communities/ability for people to use land vs commercial decisions by ALT eg Head of Bight
- AW NRM Board seeking ALT partnership but not forthcoming
- Historical and current relationships and communication issues

In relation to resourcing and economic sustainability, the following points were noted:

- Economic sustainability: need to address barriers to Aboriginal direct involvement/contribution
- Issue: security of funding beyond 12 months
- Red tape
- Over the period 2004 – 2018, the amount of State funding has reduced, as has the program areas to which funds can be allocated. The State Government provides funding to support the Board, but there is limited funding to support programs. Commonwealth funding priorities have become limited due policy and it's framework resulting in reduction of joint government and community action on the ground . The overall impact is less funding available for less programs
- AW NRM is actively and strategically seeking partnerships with other organisations and programs (eg AMLR, Cleland Wildlife Park) to increase opportunities for profiling AW with South Australians, programs/projects in the AW Region.

In the discussion on Boundaries, the following points were considered:

- Issue: too many meetings, not enough outcomes/need to resolve in context of FWC
- Communication between EP and AW in boundary/overlap area – potential for informal or formal partnerships in this area
- Issue: cost of changes specifically AMLR, duplication in small area

2. THE 5 PRINCIPLES

The facilitator introduced the 5 principles which the Minister has developed to help guide the legislation reform. In small groups, the participants visited each of the 5 principles and considered the following three questions –

- What does this principle mean to you?
- Does it resonate?
- How might it address your priorities?

The following notes were made under each principle –

a. Decentralised decision making

No comment made.

b. A simple and accessible system

- What is State's policy of putting resources back in regions – what are priorities?
- No \$ for projects – they need to be funded.
- AW accountability – communication with community; reliant on resources.
- Model of transparency, action, partnerships, decentralisation.
- Can provide example for others.
- Inequitable distribution of resources.
- Allocating funding better to priorities e.g. AW/AMLR partnership.

c. Community and land owners at the centre

- Landholding authorities nominate people to be on boards; recognise authority, legislation and the people who run them (decision-making).
- Decision making, representative level and other legislation.
- Aboriginal communities, AW staff working closely – coming out and doing work on country. Unique.

d. A whole of landscape approach

A more appropriate term is “whole landscape”

e. Back to basics

- Natural environment – definition of agriculture – very western; sustaining environment – what ‘farming’ actually means from Aboriginal perspective.
- Plants and systems provide food and other resources.
- As a neighbour to the pastoral region become a significant buffer (control of flora and fauna “pests”