



DEW Reference Number DEW22/094

Your ref: 17062319

81-95 Waymouth Street
Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 1047
Adelaide SA 5001
Australia

Ph: +61 8463 6625

www.environment.sa.gov.au

Hon David Speirs MP
Parliament House
North Terrace
ADELAIDE SA 5000

E: leaderoftheopposition@parliament.sa.gov.au

Dear Mr Speirs

I refer to your application pursuant to the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* (FOI Act) received by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) on 15 December 2022, seeking access to:

"A copy of all briefings, minutes, or reports to the Chief Executive (or the Chief Executive's Office) regarding blue carbon, from 21 March 2022 to 27 November 2022."

The determination was due to be completed and forwarded to you by the statutory due date of 16 January 2023.

As the agency did not determine the application within 30 days of receiving it, by the operation of section 19(2)(b) of the FOI Act, the agency is taken to have determined the application by refusing access. Section 19(2a) of the Act permits a determination to be made after the statutory due date has lapsed, and this course of action was pursued.

DETERMINATION

Five documents were discovered within the scope of your application.

As an Accredited FOI Officer, I have determined to grant full access to the five documents. Details of the documents can be found in the document schedule (Attachment 1), while the released documents form Attachment 2.

The determination is provided to you electronically.

In accordance with [PC045 – Disclosure logs for Non-personal information](#) once a determination has been provided, the agency is required to make available on our website information and documents that have been disclosed. Information will be publicised online at <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/about-us/freedom-of-information/foi-disclosure-log>.

FEES AND CHARGES

There is no charge for processing this application.

YOUR APPEAL RIGHTS

If you are dissatisfied with this determination, you are entitled to exercise your rights to internal review and appeal by completing the '[FOI Application Form – For Internal Review of a Determination](#)'. If you decide to apply to exercise your rights to review, the completed form must be returned within 30 days to:

Chief Executive (Principal Officer FOI)
Department for Environment and Water
GPO Box 1047
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Should an FOI applicant believe an agency has failed to identify all of the documents within the scope of their FOI application, they can make a complaint to the Ombudsman under the *Ombudsman Act 1972*. Attachment 3 of this determination outlines this process. You can also visit www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au.

If you have any queries in relation to the above please contact a Freedom of Information Officer on telephone (08) 8463 6625 or email DEW.FOI@sa.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Martha Savva
Accredited Freedom of Information Officer
Department for Environment and Water

03 / 04 / 2023

Encl: 1. Document Schedule
 2. Release Documents
 3. Sufficiency of Search – Factsheet – Ombudsman SA



Government of South Australia

Department for Environment
and Water

Freedom of Information application: DEW22/094 Applicant: Hon David Speirs MP re Blue Carbon

Scope - "A copy of all briefings, minutes, or reports to the Chief Executive (or the Chief Executive's Office) regarding blue carbon"
Timeframe: between 21/03/2022 to 27/11/2022

Number	Date	Author	Document name	Determination
1	20/05/2022	DEW	DEW-D0017497 - Briefing - Director approved	Full release
2	25/05/2022	DEW	DEW-D0017497 - Briefing - Executive Director approved	Full release
3	26/05/2022	DEW	DEW-D0017497 - Briefing - CE approved	Full release
4	5/08/2022	DEW	DEW-D0018490 - Briefing - Executive Director approved	Full release
4.1		DEW	DEW-D0018490 - Attachment 1	Full release
4.2		DEW	DEW-D0018490 - Attachment 2	Full release
5	5/08/2022	DEW	DEW-D0018490 - Briefing - CE approved	Full release
5.1		DEW	DEW-D0018490 - Attachment 1	Full release
5.2		DEW	DEW-D0018490 - Attachment 2	Full release

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

Government of South Australia
 Department for Environment
 and Water

DEW-D0017497

TO: CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

**RE: THE NATURE CONSERVANCY'S BLUE CARBON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION GRANT
 (UNDER EMBARGO)**

THROUGH: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Environment, Heritage and Sustainability

**CC: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Strategy, Science and Corporate Services
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, National Parks and Wildlife Service**

Routine Business: as soon as possible due to likely announcement by end of May 2022

RECOMMENDATIONS

That you:

1. Notify the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water of The Nature Conservancy's successful Blue Carbon Restoration grant recently awarded by the Australian Government Department for Agriculture Water and the Environment (DAWE).

APPROVED / NOT APPROVED

Comments	<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>-----</p> <p>JOHN SCHUTZ</p> <p>Chief Executive, Department for Environment and Water</p> <p>/ / 2022</p> </div>
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OFFICIAL:Sensitive

BACKGROUND

The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) have been working in partnership with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) as part of implementing the *Blue Carbon Strategy for South Australia*. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between TNC and DEW defines the partnership to work together to improve the health and productivity of marine and coastal habitats in South Australia. The MoU includes the development of blue carbon projects under the Commonwealth's Emissions Reduction Fund and mechanisms for project financing while implementing coastal resilience and marine habitat restoration projects in South Australia.

DISCUSSION

TNC, with collaborating organisations DEW, Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation, Adelaide Plains Council, Flinders University, University of Adelaide, Birds SA, Birdlife Australia, and Northern and Yorke Landscape Board, applied to the Australian Government Department for Agriculture Water and the Environment's (DAWE) [Blue Carbon Ecosystem Restoration Grants](#).

The *South Australian Blue Carbon Restoration Project* application proposed to restore a 256 hectare coastal site north of Adelaide on private land adjoining the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary at Webb Beach/Parham, including tidal reconnection via installation of culverts to an unsealed road that currently blocks tidal flow from Baker's Creek.

The project application has been successful with TNC awarded \$2,896,526 (GST exclusive). Please note that the grant announcement is under embargo until a public announcement is made by DAWE (this is likely to be by end of May 2022).

The implementation of the pilot project and the broader tidal reconnection sites across the project area will assist in building our knowledge and expertise in blue carbon ecosystem restoration activities across Australia.

As DEW is a partner in the project, you may wish to inform the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water.

CONSULTATION


TNC

FINANCIAL/HR IMPLICATIONS

Are there financial or HR implications?

No

ATTACHMENTS



Neil McFarlane
Director, Climate Change, Coast and Marine
20/05/2022

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

Government of South Australia
 Department for Environment
 and Water

DEW-D0017497

TO: CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

**RE: THE NATURE CONSERVANCY'S BLUE CARBON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION GRANT
 (UNDER EMBARGO)**

THROUGH: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

[CH – 25/5/2022](#)

**CC: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, STRATEGY, SCIENCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

Critical Date for CE: as soon as possible due to likely announcement by end of May 2022

RECOMMENDATIONS

That you:

1. Notify the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water of The Nature Conservancy's successful Blue Carbon Restoration grant recently awarded by the Australian Government Department for Agriculture Water and the Environment (DAWE).

APPROVED / NOT APPROVED

Comments	<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>-----</p> <p>JOHN SCHUTZ</p> <p>Chief Executive, Department for Environment and Water</p> <p>/ / 2022</p> </div>
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CONSULTATION

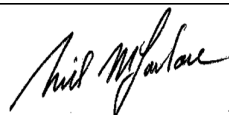
TNC

FINANCIAL/HR IMPLICATIONS

Are there financial or HR implications?

No

ATTACHMENTS



Neil McFarlane

Director, Climate Change, Coast and Marine

20/05/2022

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

Government of South Australia
 Department for Environment
 and Water

DEW-D0017497

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[CH – 25/5/2022](#)

**CC: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, STRATEGY, SCIENCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

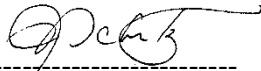
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APPROVED / NOT APPROVED

Comments	 <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> JOHN SCHUTZ Chief Executive, Department for Environment and Water 26/05/2022
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OFFICIAL:Sensitive

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CONSULTATION

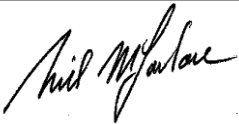
TNC

FINANCIAL/HR IMPLICATIONS

Are there financial or HR implications?

No

ATTACHMENTS



Neil McFarlane
Director, Climate Change, Coast and Marine
20/05/2022



DEW-D0018490

Briefing type: Project or program advice

TO: CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

RE: DRY CREEK SALT FIELD TIDAL FLOODING TRIAL

Routine Business: Timely Response to provide background to this issue

RECOMMENDATIONS

That you:

1. Note that within the Dry Creek Salt Field operated by Buckland Dry Creek (BDC), the trial site pond XB8A has successfully been remediated and is now a blue carbon research site informing local and statewide blue carbon programs.

NOTED

2. Note that the bund wall physically separating trial site pond XB8A and the main salt pond has been identified as requiring repairs and that BDC have confirmed with the Department for Energy and Mining that they will conduct the necessary repairs.

NOTED

Comments	<div>-----</div> <p>JOHN SCHUTZ Chief Executive, Department for Environment and Water / / 2022</p>
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BACKGROUND

Salt production ceased in the Dry Creek Salt Field in 2013. The state government worked with the site owner (at that time Ridley Corporation) to establish a 'holding pattern' involving circulation of salt water through the ponds to mitigate any environmental impacts associated with cessation of salt production. A Strategic Technical Advisory Group (STAG) was established to oversee a transition to future alternative uses for the site. This included the concept of tidal restoration of suitable ponds.

Certain ponds were dried out (adjacent Bolivar and on freehold land in northern sections) and various site characterisation investigations were conducted – including assessing acid sulfate soils risk and the impacts of closure on shorebirds.

Ridley sold the salt field to Buckland Dry Creek (BDC) in 2016. This led to pursuit of a range of commercial uses of the land including commercial and residential development in the southern crystallisers section.

In parallel, the state government pursued a trial to reintroduce tidal flows to a small pond, XB8A, in the salt field (see Attachment 1). The primary focus of the trial was reduction / treatment of acid sulfate soils and hypersalinity hazard and re-establishment of intertidal saltmarsh / mangrove wetland in the 30 hectare pond.

The trial was a joint effort between BDC, DEW, Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges (AMLR) NRM Board and the University of Adelaide (UofA). It was included in the Holding Pattern program for environment protection and rehabilitation (PEPR). The trial was funded by Department for Energy and Mining (DEM), DEW and AMLR NRM Board (Samphire Coast Icon Project), costing approximately \$1.2 million. It included a flood gate system with remote operation and water quality monitoring.

Royal Park Salvage (a company associated with BDC) was engaged for the civil works to isolate the pond from the field and install the tidal gates. The University of Adelaide was engaged to monitor water quality, sediment quality, hydrology and benthic macroinvertebrates for approximately 2 years after tidal restoration commenced in July 2017.

In 2018 the Goyder Institute funded a project to monitor and assess blue carbon potential across the salt field. AMLR NRM / Green Adelaide have continued to fund the blue carbon work. The site has demonstrated the potential for blue carbon sequestration in restored coastal saltmarsh/mangroves. Improved sediment and water quality conditions have enabled recolonisation by benthic invertebrates and native vegetation, with the restored intertidal mudflat habitat being utilised by local and migratory shorebirds. No acid sulfate soils eventuated.

From drone footage taken on 30 June 2022 and provided at Attachment 2, it appears that there is 70 to 80% cover with colonising saltmarsh species. Only the low lying area adjacent XB8 appears to have no vegetation cover.

Aside from the inherent value of the emerging habitat, the site is still developing and maturing as a blue carbon demonstration project. It is a local case study for measuring the carbon

OFFICIAL

capture and co-benefits of re-establishing saltmarsh/mangrove habitat, in South Australian climate and conditions. Not only in the context of alternate uses for salt ponds on Crown land, but also more broadly in South Australia. This site will have 5 to 10 years lead time on any similar restoration site established in South Australia in the next couple of years (e.g. Parham/Webb Beach site).

DISCUSSION

DEM have recently informed DEW about an issue with the bund wall between the Salt Pond and the XB8A trial Site (attachment 1). The bund wall needs to be repaired. If it failed it would allow highly saline pond water to enter the XB8A trial site, potentially damaging the restored vegetation. In this case of the bund wall failing, the outer sea gates on the sea ward side of XB8A would need to be closed to prevent the highly saline water entering the St Kilda mangrove site. The bund wall was not built to be a sea wall, which it has now become due to the trial site pond now being open to the ocean. DEM as the regulator have approached BDC to request the bund wall is repaired.

As of 4 August 2022 DEM have confirmed with DEW, that BDC have conducted the necessary engineering investigations and have confirmed they will repair the bund wall. BDC have also confirmed with DEM that the bund wall is not in immediate danger of failing. BDC are currently determining an agreed repair plan and timeline with DEM. This will include advice from the UoA, Associate Professor Luke Moseley, on an acceptable time period in which the sea gates can be closed, to minimise any potential risk during repairs, while the bund wall is repaired. DEW is confident that this process is being managed appropriately by DEM. DEM will inform DEW when the bund wall repairs have been completed.

CONSULTATION

The information for this briefing was provided by the DEW Coast and Marine branch and Paul De Ionno, Director, Mining Regulation, DEM.

FINANCIAL/HR IMPLICATIONS

Are there financial or HR implications?

No

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Saltfield ponds location map

Attachment 2 – Drone footage

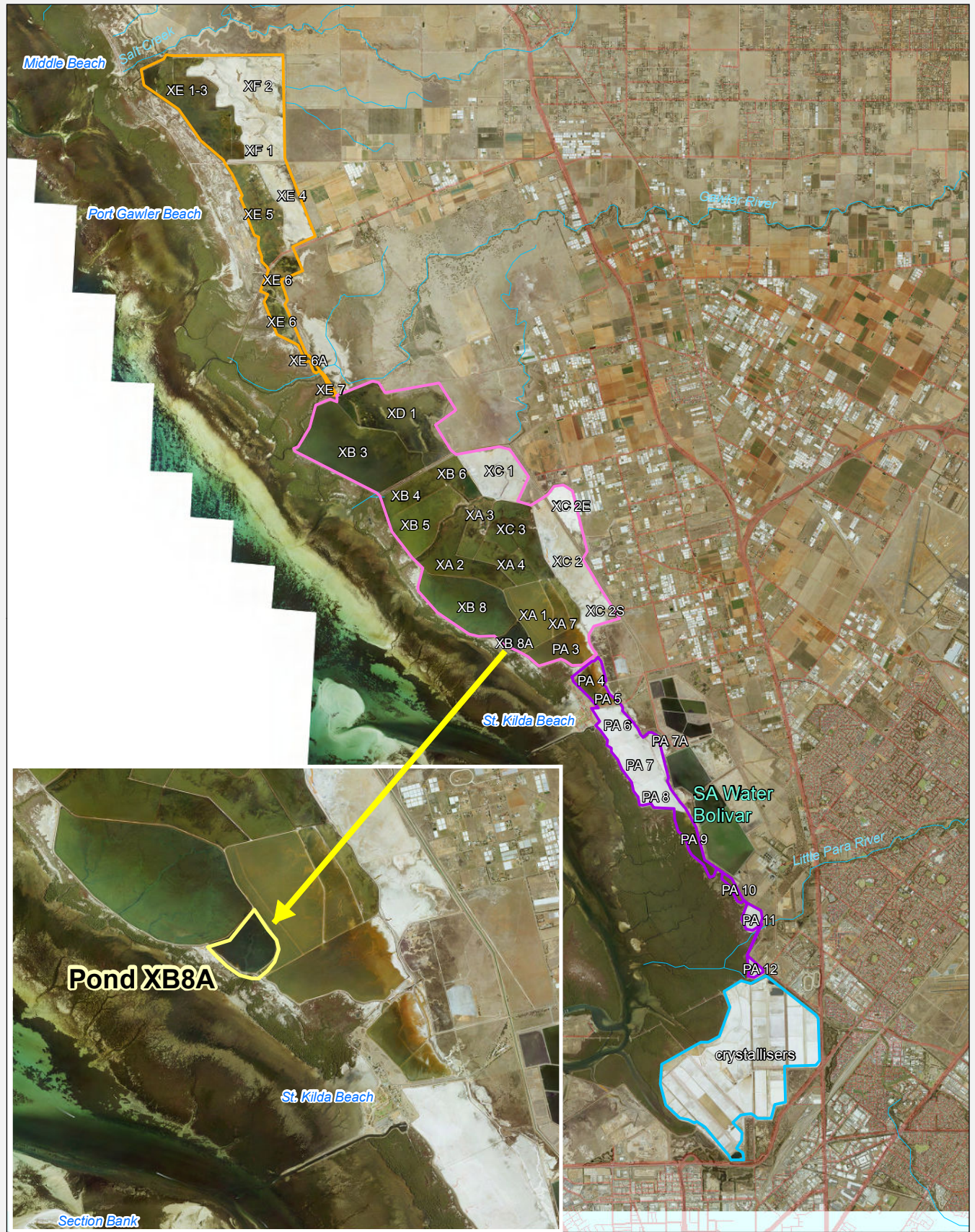
[Electronically approved](#)

Sandy Carruthers

**Executive Director, Strategy, Science and Corporate Services
Department for Environment and Water**

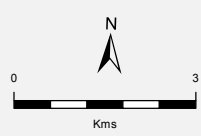
5/08/2022

Dry Creek Saltfield - salt evaporation ponds



Legend

- Section 1 - Dry Creek
- Section 2 - St Kilda
- Section 3 - Port Gawler
- Section 4 - Middle Beach



Produced by Coast and River Murray Unit
Department for Environment, Water and Natural Resources

Data Source DEWNR SDE
Compiled 6 December, 2016
Projection Lambert Conformal Conic
Datum Geocentric Datum of Australia, 1994

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Government of South Australia
Department for Environment
and Water

DEW-D0018490

Briefing type: Project or program advice

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NOTED**Comments**

Can this briefing be retitled to the Minister to note please

JOHN SCHUTZ
Chief Executive, Department for Environment
and Water

05/08/2022

OFFICIAL

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Are there financial or HR implications?

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[Electronically approved](#)

Sandy Carruthers

Executive Director, Strategy, Science and Corporate Services

Department for Environment and Water

5/08/2022

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Produced by Coast and River Murray Unit
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