World Water Day

How little things can make a big difference when it comes to sustainable water use.

Sustainable water use is a balancing act, requiring careful management between ensuring ample water to sustain water-dependent ecosystems, while providing enough to efficiently support agricultural, industry, social and cultural needs.

To celebrate World Water Day (22 March), we are highlighting projects across the state which show how water can be used more sustainably in our landscape; and sharing tips for how you can do your bit.

Projects that show how we keep getting better at managing our water

Landscape boards are getting behind some seriously innovative projects that are adding to our water management know-how. Several of the projects highlighted below have been supported by landscape boards' Grassroots Grants to help groups find ways to use water more sustainably, at a time when trends across the state indicate declining water quality and availability.

Here are some great projects across the state kicking goals for sustainable water use.

1. *Underground stormwater redirected above-ground to irrigate suburban Adelaide reserves*

This project makes underground stormwater available to irrigate vegetation at two suburban reserves south of Adelaide. This means plants and trees grow better and faster providing better amenity, canopy cover and cooling benefits for adjacent residents and people visiting the reserve. Read more about projects using stormwater to green Adelaide.

The Pasadena Biodiversity Corridor will bring underground stormwater flows above ground through vegetated swales with pool and riffle elements, basins and soakage trenches.

2. *Adelaide Hills grape growers embrace soil moisture and temperature monitoring*

Grape growers in the Adelaide Hills Wine Region are excited about the benefits of soil-moisture and temperature monitoring technology. Promotion of the technology across the sector is encouraging growers to think outside-the-box and find new ways to manage their water use sustainably. Watch a video about the project here.

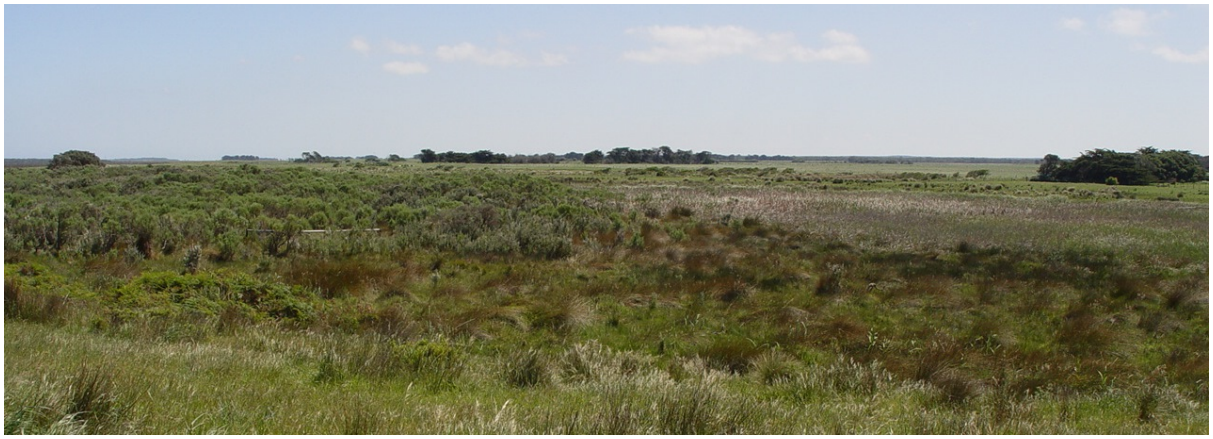
3. *Rural school on EP find solutions to poor water quality*

Students on the Eyre Peninsula growing native plants in their school nursery for their local Coastcare group have been struggling with the effects of increasingly saline groundwater. Installing a tank, pump and new irrigation has improved water efficiency and quality, and expanded the growing capability of their onsite nursery. Lake Wangary School has been working with the Lower Eyre Coastcare group for over a decade to undertake revegetation work. Read more about this project here.

Access to quality rainwater will see the partnership between Lake Wangary School and Lower Eyre Coastcare continue well into the future.

4. *Water storage moves sub-terrain on the Limestone Coast*

Infrastructure works are underway to enable more efficient water storage in the aquifer of a unique wetland on the Limestone Coast. The initiative is part of a Regional Recharge Farms project, and is an innovative new approach to protect ecological values while tackling the complex challenge of water security in a changing climate. Read more about Regional Recharge Farms here.



Hutt Bay Wetland Recharge Farm. Photo Credit. Mark Bachmann of Nature Glenelg Trust

5. *Working with Traditional Owners to ensure water resources retain cultural values*

Many water features are highly significant for Aboriginal groups. Important work continues with Traditional Owners in the north of the state to protect rockholes from damage by large herbivores, and ensure that permanent or ephemeral water features retain Aboriginal laws, protocols and understanding related to their use when planning water allocations. Read more about water sources in the Alinytjara Wilurara region and their Aboriginal connection.

6. *Demonstrating the benefits of water security on Kangaroo Island*

Demonstration sites are being established on Kangaroo Island to promote innovative methods to improve water security. To assist with long term planning landholders are able to have customised Water Security Plans developed for their properties using high resolution elevation data, updated surface water models and climate change projections. These plans will provide detailed information on how water flows at a property scale, catchment areas for farm dams and information on how predicted climate change is likely to impact the reliability of farm dams and the health of watercourses. Read more here.

7. *Riparian restoration for water quality in the Northern and Yorke region*

Private landholders are working with their local landscape board along a 5km stretch of the Wakefield River near Manoora, to improve water quality and protect the watercourse from erosion and weed invasion. Methods used in the substantial riparian-zone restoration include stock fencing, weed control and planting. Read more about how a healthy riparian zone maximises ecosystem health.

8. *Saving water outback in the Great Artesian Basin*

Water is scarce in the Outback and the Great Artesian Basin is the main source to sustain pastoral businesses, communities and industry. Pastoralists are leading the way with reducing water use on the finite resource, saving more than 1240ML of water a year by improving water infrastructure. Find out more about the work they are doing.

What you can do to use water more sustainably

1. Get to know your water bill – See how your household usage stacks up against the average daily residential water use per person on the SA Water website.
2. Install drip-irrigation where possible - Use up to 50% less water than overhead irrigation but don't forget to set it to a schedule or timer.

3. Establish a raingarden - Maximise every drop and create the perfect water-wise oasis.
4. Harvest rainwater - Tanks are a perfect storage vessel, but contact your local landscape board if planning on building a dam.
5. Manage your dam – Control evaporation by planting a windbreak or considering a dam cover. Reduce take from the catchment and leave more water for the environment by reducing diversions and modifying or removing dams that are no longer needed. Check with your local landscape board if you need a water affecting activities permit.

How landscape boards play a role in sharing water between users

Landscape boards play a key role in water management. Under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* boards develop water allocation plans (WAPs) and have a shared role in their implementation.

Science coupled with information from local communities help our understanding of how the water in different areas can be used sustainably.

WAPs set out the rules for the use of water in each prescribed water area.

The ultimate aim is to protect the environment and equitably share the available water between users to ensure its long term sustainability. This is more important than ever, with forecasts showing we will have to learn to live with less water, of variable quality, in the future.

Boards also issue permits for water affecting activities to make sure that any work done to construct or modify a watercourse doesn't negatively impact other water users or the natural environment.

Landscape boards are here to help

Everyone has a local landscape board, go to www.landscape.sa.gov.au to find yours.

Contact them to learn how you can use water more efficiently on your property, or to apply for water affecting activities permits.