

Business Plan Achievement Report

1st Quarter 2021-2022

1 June to 30 September 2021

Eastern District



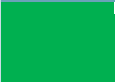


About

The Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board's [Business Plan for 2021-22](#) sets out the programs, and component sub-programs or work activities for 2021-2022, which are funded and delivered by the Board to achieve the goals and vision of the [2021-2026 Eyre Peninsula Regional Landscape Plan](#).

This *Business Plan Achievement Report* provides an update on delivery of all our Board-funded programs in the Eastern District during the last quarter. It includes reporting on the following for each sub-program:

- program highlights;
- local government engagement;
- communications and community engagement undertaken; and
- upcoming priorities for the next quarter.

Each sub-program is assigned a status, based on its current progress.

	On track to deliver key programs.		On track to deliver most programs. May be some delays.		Unlikely to deliver some program elements
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For projects in the City Council of Whyalla and District Councils of Kimba, Franklin Harbour and Cleve areas, further details of our work and programs can be found on the [Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board website](#) or by contacting **Tim Breuer** (*Team Leader, Landscape Operations - Eastern District*) on 0488 000 481.

Note: For updates about delivery, in the Eastern District, of Regional Projects such as the [Regenerative Agriculture Project \(RAP\)](#) and the [Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery \(STAR\) Project](#) refer to the *Business Plan Achievement Report: Whole of Region*.

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Water

Focus areas and priority programs	Status
<i>Managing Water Affecting Activities (WAAs)</i>	
Managing Water Affecting Activities (WAAs) , including providing support for WAA enquiries, processing WAA permit applications and ensuring compliance with WAA policies and permits	

Managing Water Affecting Activities (WAA)

Water Affecting Activities (WAA) are activities and works that can impact on the health and condition of water resources, water dependent ecosystems and other water users. Under the Landscape South Australia Act 2019, an approved permit is required to undertake a Water Affecting Activity.

*Information for those planning to undertake a Water Affecting Activity is available in the factsheet [Permits - Water Affecting Activities](#). Our Water Resources Assessment Officer and other staff are always available to advise and help with WAA enquires. They also administer and process WAA permit applications and ensure compliance with WAA policies and permits. For updates on WAA related work across the region please refer to the **Business Plan Achievement Report: Whole of Region**.*

Local government engagement for this period

- Board staff provided comment to the Whyalla City Council about the design of a stormwater drain near Newton Street in Whyalla. It was very encouraging to see that the advice provided has been taken on board and the Council have incorporated suggestions around erosion management and filtration into the design of the stormwater outlet.

Sustainable agriculture

Focus areas and priority programs	Status
<i>Reducing the risk of land degradation to protect the region's valuable soils</i>	
Delivering district level sustainable agriculture services , including: Monitoring and managing land management compliance	
Providing support to build awareness of the importance of erosion protection and improvement of land management practices	
Delivering the National Landcare Program (NLP) Smart Farm Mallee Seeps Project	

*For updates on our [Regenerative Agriculture Project \(RAP\)](#) and Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF) services, please refer to the **Business Plan Achievement Report: Whole of Region**.*

More information about our sustainable agriculture program, as well as useful information and resources for land managers can be found [here](#).

Delivering district level sustainable agriculture services

Program highlights this period

- Ongoing monitoring of ground cover levels has shown that these are generally adequate to protect vulnerable soils from erosion across the Eastern District.

- Below average rainfall and warm conditions in September have resulted in crops and pastures showing significant evidence of moisture stress and rapid senescence.
- Cereal crops in some areas contained less biomass than would normally be expected during September. It would be expected that these lower biomass levels at the start of summer could translate to poor surface cover by March if grazing is not well managed on these sites
- Whilst a lot of paddocks have been cut for hay, the area cut is not significantly more than normal.
- Livestock are generally in excellent condition. Pastures in most districts have sufficient feed to support stock until stubbles become available at harvest.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Board staff will continue to monitor surface cover levels, particularly after harvest, and during warmer spring and summer months.
- Board staff will provide support and advice for farmers regarding managing surface cover levels and grazing of pastures and stubbles.

National Landcare Program Smart Farm Mallee Seeps Project

The Australian Government, through the National Landcare Program, have funded the [Overcoming the Rising Degradation of Mallee Seeps on Eastern Eyre Peninsula](#) project. Land managers are increasingly identifying Mallee seeps as a growing land degradation issue on the EP. Mallee seeps severely change pH and the chemical composition of soil, forcing areas of paddocks out of production. This project aims to increase farmers' awareness about Mallee seeps, and build capacity to detect and manage Mallee seep formation in their paddocks before land degradation occurs. The project will connect landholders to relevant scientific data and identify known management options that are best suited for the EP. Local trials and demonstrations will determine suitable practical treatments that can be applied by land managers in line with best practice sustainable agriculture to reduce the effects of saline seeps on the EP.

Program highlights this period

- Spring crop walks at Buckleboo, Tuckey, Lock provided an opportunity to showcase to local farmers the on-ground works being trialled to remediate Mallee seep sites on Eastern EP as part of the National Landcare Program Smart Farm Mallee Seeps Project.
- The crop walks were very well attended with approximately 170 farmers coming along to the field sites.



Photo 1: Dr Chris McDonough addresses a group of farmers at a Mallee seep trial site during the spring crop walks

- Dr Chris McDonough, who is the scientist running the trials, was in attendance and was able to provide a good practical overview of the on ground works being trialled in each location.
- While each site is different and all are at varying stages of degradation due to the differing timescales of seep development at each site, Chris was able to report that the trials are going well. Significant progress has been made in either returning seeps to cropping or at sites in the more advanced stages of seep development, being able to reduce or stabilise the size of the scalds.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Case study videos of the trial sites will be produced.
- A "How to identify a Mallee seep" guide will be produced/
- On-ground works at each trial site will be completed.
- Monitoring at all trial sites will be ongoing.



Photo 2: Dr Chris McDonough addresses a group of farmers at a Mallee seep trial site during the spring crop walks

Pest plants and animals, and impact-causing native species

Focus areas and priority programs	Status
<i>Supporting landowners to control prioritised pest plants and animals</i>	
Implementing regional pest management plans for priority pest plants and animals	
Supporting landowners with their pest control responsibilities, including weed identification, best practice control advice and property planning assistance	
Delivering targeted pest animal baiting programs and weed control campaigns, monitoring, permitting and compliance works	
<i>Collaborating to reduce threats from impact-causing native species</i>	
Assisting landowners to connect with relevant authorities and providing information about impact-causing native species and control options	
Cataloguing current and emerging impact-causing native species, their impacts and extent	
Collaborating to reduce threats from impact-causing native species	

For updates about pest plant and animal, and impact-causing native species control activities implemented in the Eastern District as part of the [Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery \(STAR\) Project](#) refer to the **Business Plan Achievement Report: Whole of Region**. Updates on development of our regional pest and impact-causing natives management plans can be found in the same report.

Program highlights this period

Pest plants

Compliance

- A visit to the Mt Laura **Opuntia** site was undertaken and a voluntary compliance control plan initiated with Whyalla City Council.
- A follow-up inspection of an **Opuntia** site at Charles Avenue property in Whyalla was undertaken. Voluntary compliance control work was carried out by the landowner in 2019, but prickly pear and jumping cholla (*Cylindropuntia prolifera*) are regrowing in places. Biocontrols were introduced to the site by landscape officers and a voluntary compliance Opuntia control plan will be re-negotiated with the landowner.

Control work

Opuntia cacti – Focus on Biocontrol

A large amount of work related to the biocontrol of Opuntia cacti has been undertaken this quarter. Biological control is a cost effective and long term solution to reduce Opuntia population size and prevent further spread.

- A 2016 biocontrol release site on a property in the hills near Cowell was revisited. The biocontrol measures have been extremely effective, with about 98% eradication the *Opuntia engelmannii* (Engelmann's prickly pear) infestation after 5 years (Photo 3).
- A 2019 biocontrol release site infested with *Opuntia ficus-indica* (Indian fig or prickly pear) and located on Birdseye Highway, was revisited. The biocontrol cochineal beetle is now well established, and ready for harvesting and further distribution around the site and to other sites in the district (Photo 4).



Photo 3: Opuntia engelmannii infestation on a property in the Cowell hills
August 2016 - taken before biocontrol release

August 2021 - five years later cacti 98% eradicated



Photo 4: Opuntia ficus-indica (Indian fig or prickly pear) infestation on Birdseye Highway
November 2019 – taken before biocontrol release

August 2021 – after two years cochineal beetle are well established and having a visible impact on plants. Infected pads can now be harvested for release around site and to other sites in the district.

- While *Opuntia ficus indica* is not a declared pest, it is the most prevalent Opuntioide in the Cleve area. To combat its spread, further biocontrol releases are planned for infestations at the intersection of Misery Corner and Carpa Road, on the pipeline track near Poodra Creek, and on a Glare Road agricultural property near Arno Bay.
- Opuntia infestations have been detected or reported in Whyalla at Mt Laura (common prickly pear), McDouall Stuart Avenue (coral cacti), and Charles Avenue (common prickly pear, jumping cholla), and on a pastoral property at Moonabie Hill (white-spined Hudson pear), and on a Native Vegetation Heritage Agreement property at Minbrie (jumping cholla).
- Site visits have been undertaken to the above locations to identify the Opuntia species and survey the extent of infestations. The extent of *Opuntia stricta* (common prickly pear) infestation at Mt Laura has been mapped.
- Our staff have been consulting and liaising with SA Arid Lands Landscape Board staff on Opuntia control. EP landscape officers have visited the Opuntia biocontrol nursery shed at Arid Lands Botanic Gardens in Pt Augusta. Cochineal beetle and cactus moth biocontrols for four Opuntia

species have been collected on infected cacti pads from the SA Arid Lands nursery and harvested from field nursery sites in Pt Augusta. Clean cacti pads to feed biocontrols housed in the nursery shed were harvested from our Eastern District sites and provided to SA Arid Lands in exchange for biocontrol infected pads.

- In September, biocontrols were released and field nursery sites were established for four *Opuntia* species; common prickly pear, coral cacti, white-spined Hudson pear, and jumping cholla.
- Table 1 shows the location of our established and planned biocontrol field nursery sites, the *Opuntia* species being controlled and the type of biocontrol used. At the newly established biocontrol nursery sites, these biocontrols will take around six months to colonise before they can be harvested for further distribution around release sites, and to new sites in the district.



Photo 5: *Cylindropuntia pallida* (white-spined Hudson pear) infestation at Moonabie Hill being treated with *Dactylopius tomentosus* (cochineal beetle) biocontrol. Infected pads are placed on plants and left to colonise. Release sites will be revisited in six months to check progress.



Photo 6: White-spined Hudson pear has particularly vicious spines which are capable of penetrating footwear and even vehicle tyres. It spreads by movement of segments and fruit that take root where they come in contact with the ground. **It is important to fence infestations** to prevent spread by stock and wildlife until infestations are controlled.



Photo 7: *Opuntia stricta* (common prickly pear) biocontrol field nursery site and photo point established at Mt Laura. In six months infected pads can be harvested for further distribution around Mt Laura. The Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board and Whyalla Council will engage the Whyalla and Districts 4WD Club and local mountain bike riders for assistance with spreading biocontrol to areas where the terrain is challenging for vehicles access.

Table 1: Eastern Eyre Peninsula *Opuntia* biocontrol field nursery sites

Cactus species	Common name/s	Biological controls <i>Dactylopius</i> = Cochineal <i>Cactoblastis</i> = Cactus moth	Cochineal beetle biotype	Location	Property type	Date established
<i>Cylindropuntia fulgida</i> var. <i>mamillata</i>	boxing glove cactus, coral cactus	<i>Dactylopius tomentosus</i>	Cholla	McDouall Stuart Ave, Whyalla	Crown land	Sep-2021
<i>Cylindropuntia imbricata</i>	rope pear, Devil's rope pear	<i>Dactylopius tomentosus</i>	TBA	Kielpa Silos	Crown land	To be established
<i>Cylindropuntia pallida</i>	white-spined Hudson pear	<i>Dactylopius tomentosus</i>	Californica	Moonabie Hill	Pastoral property	Sep-2021
<i>Cylindropuntia prolifera</i>	jumping cholla	<i>Dactylopius tomentosus</i>	Californica	Minbrie	Heritage Agreement	Sep-2021
<i>Opuntia engelmannii</i>	small round-leaved prickly pear	<i>Dactylopius opuntiae</i>	Mexican	Cowell Hills	Agricultural property	Nov-2016
<i>Opuntia ficus-indica</i>	Indian fig (not declared)	<i>Dactylopius opuntiae</i> , <i>Cactoblastis cactorum</i>	Unknown	Birdseye Hwy	Roadside	Nov-2019
<i>Opuntia monacantha</i> (<i>O. vulgaris</i>)	drooping tree pear	<i>Dactylopius ceylonicus</i> , <i>Cactoblastis cactorum</i>	TBA	Port Gibbon Rd	Roadside	To be established
<i>Opuntia stricta</i>	common pear, spiny pest pear	<i>Dactylopius opuntiae</i> , <i>Cactoblastis cactorum</i>	United States	Mt Laura, Whyalla	Council land	Sep-2021

- We are planning for an additional two biocontrol field nursery sites (Table 1) to be established for Devil's rope pear at Kielpa, and drooping tree pear on the Pt Gibbon Road.
- Biocontrols are only active during the warm months and are dormant over winter. Following a successful spring release 60-80% eradication can be achieved in as little as two years depending on the size of the infestation. A media release is planned for next quarter, asking public to report *Opuntia* infestations and register their interest in biocontrols for a second phase release planned for March-April 2022.
- ***Important note*** Cochineal biocontrols are specific to *Opuntia* species and ineffective unless the correct biotype is used (Table 1). Even if the biocontrol and biotype for two different *Opuntia* species are the same, infected pads from different *Opuntia* species should never be moved between sites - otherwise there is a risk of starting a new infestation of a different cactus species. **Biocontrols should only be used under the direction of landscape officers**, it is prohibited under the Landscapes Act 2019 to transport declared weeds without a permit.

• African Boxthorn

- Whyalla - Thirty plants on the Northern Coastline and around Peats Composting Facility on the Iron Knob Road were treated with Regain granular herbicide. Granular herbicide is activated by wetting so a good knockdown should be achieved following the first summer rain event.
- Although African Boxthorn prefers the sandy loam soils of the coast, infestations are now spreading inland. Surveying and mapping of African Boxthorn has therefore been undertaken inland to gain a better understanding of the extent of this spread. The broad aim is to keep infestations from spreading further inland.
- As part of the STAR project, work has been completed on controlling a large infestation of mature African Boxthorn plants in 22 hectares of native vegetation in a buffer zone surrounding supra-

and intertidal saltmarsh. For details of this work refer to the *Business Plan Achievement Report: Whole of Region, Biodiversity, STAR Project* section.

- **Gazania**

- As part of the STAR project, Gazania has been sprayed on Mullaquana Road and subsidiary roads in Whyalla. A mix of Lontrel broadleaf herbicide and pine oil surfactant was used. The intent of this work is to eradicate Gazania from vectors leading into saltmarsh. For details of this work refer to the *Business Plan Achievement Report: Whole of Region, Biodiversity, STAR Project* section.
- An action plan is being established to tackle the ever-growing infestations of Gazania in the Eastern District. We have been focusing strongly on doing extensive mapping of the distribution of the weed, which we will use to develop a clear plan of attack. Because of the overwhelming nature of Gazania, it is important to develop a strategic plan before commencing control work. Once mapped, outlier infestations will be controlled first, followed by containing infestations beyond the 80 km speed signs on the outskirts of most towns to prevent further spread.

- **Carrion Flower**

- Inspection of voluntary compliance Carrion Flower control work was carried out by Whyalla City Council on Flinders Lookout Reserve and Hummock Hill. Less than 50% knockdown has been achieved. We are therefore planning follow-up control work with Council.
- Potential biocontrol of Carrion Flower is being investigated. An insect specimen from the Lygaeidae family (Seed Bugs, Milkweed Bugs, Chinch Bugs) was collected by landscape officers after it was suspected to be linked to the eradication of Carrion Flower on a hill face at Coobra Retreat north of Fitzgerald Bay. The insect *Oncopeltus quadriguttatus*, identified by an entomologist from SARDI-PIRSA (South Australian Research and Development Institute – Department for Primary Industries and Regions), is exotic with limited recorded distribution in SA, but has been collected on Carrion Flower near Whyalla previously. It feeds mainly on milkweeds so while it is not eating the Carrion Flower, entomologists believe they may transmit a bacteria that is harmful to the plants, but this requires further investigation.



Photo 8: *Oncopeltus quadriguttatus* (seed bug) believed to carry and transmit a bacteria harmful to Carrion Flower plants is being investigated as a potential biocontrol.



Photo 9: Almost complete eradication of Carrion Flower observed on a hill face at Coobra Retreat north of Fitzgerald Bay thought to be linked to the bugs

- **Bridal Creeper**

- Bridal Creeper is a declared weed of national significance (WoNS) often neglected in our district due to the presence of weeds of higher priority. Work using a biocontrol 'Rust Fungus' has been conducted in the past. However, data shows the biocontrol from nursery zones within the Verran and Wharminda areas is yet to spread elsewhere. A strategic plan is being developed for collection of Bridal Creeper infected with rust fungus to be further spread next season.

- **Other Weeds**

- **Silverleaf Nightshade** and **Apple of Sodom** were detected at a pastoral property near Whyalla whilst carrying out annual Bushland Condition Monitoring.
- EP landscape officers participated in a PIRSA Weed Risk Assessment panel for two weeds proposed by SA Arid Lands Landscape Board staff: mother-of-millions, *Bryophyllum daigremontianum*, *Bryophyllum delagoense* and their hybrids in rangelands and native vegetation, and pepper tree, *Schinus molle*, in native vegetation. Outcomes of these state level risk assessments will influence our regional and district level action plans for these weeds.

- **Plant Identification**

- A grass sample collected for us by the Whyalla Council spray team has been identified by the State Herbarium as a common roadside native grass *Enneapogon nigricans*, recorded as native to South Australia and Eyre Peninsula. Although it has spread way beyond its original distribution along roadsides, it is of no concern.

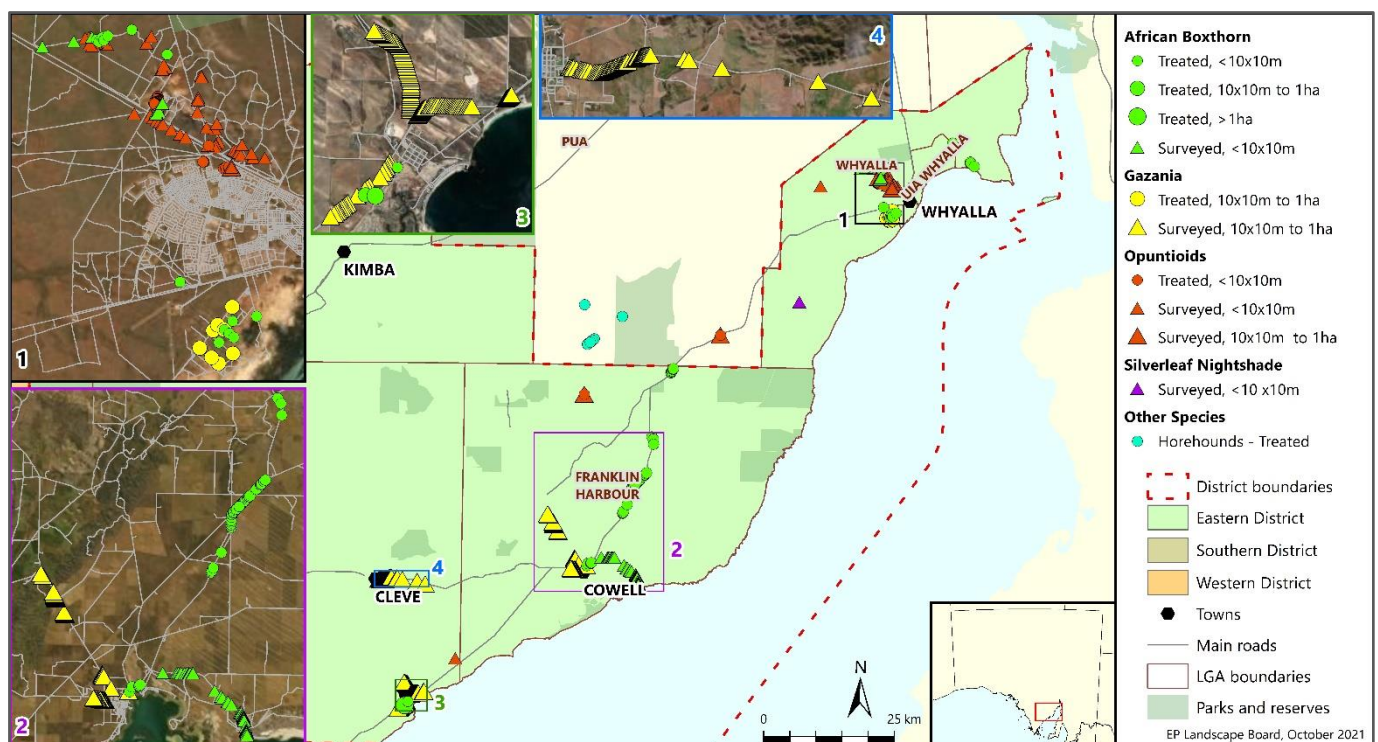


Figure 1: Priority pest plant control for the period 1 June to 30 September 2021

Pest animals

• Rabbits

- A [call to action](#) was published to notify landholders in the district who may have an issue with rabbits on their property. This was due to a rise in rabbit reports from landholders in the area. A trial site for a release of the K5 virus near Arno Bay is being organised and will commence before the end of October.



Photo 10: Landscape officer assessing a warren site near Arno Bay for an October release of the K5 rabbit virus

Local government engagement for this period

- A meeting was held with new the Coordinator of Parks and Open Spaces for Whyalla City Council to discuss control of declared weeds on Council land, including at Hummock Hill, Flinders Lookout Reserve, and Mt Laura. The Whyalla City Council are undertaking voluntary compliance and Board staff are continuing to work with them on a weed control plan for these areas.

Communications and community engagement for this period

- A '[Grow Me Instead](#)' presentation was given to the Whyalla Gardening Club at their members' meeting on 16th August. The talk presented a case study of a Board funded 'Grassroots Grants' project. In this project local shack owners removed tons of invasive succulents and cacti from Whyalla's Northern Coastline. The need for this work highlights how garden escapees have become some of our worst environmental weeds and that gardeners should choose plants wisely utilising the 'Grow Me Instead' resources available online at <http://www.growmeinstead.com.au/>.

- In a joint [media release](#) with the Department for Environment and Water, national Parks and Wildlife Services, Community members in the Cleve Hills area were urged to report any sightings of **feral goats** and **deer**, especially within Yeldulknie Conservation Park, as these animals are causing infrequent yet site intensive damage to Yeldulknie Conservation Park and potentially also to family farms.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- A media release about Opuntia control is planned.
- Toolbox meetings will be held with Whyalla City Council's mowing and spray crews to spotlight declared weeds.
- Survey and control of summer grasses (Buffel Grass, Fountain Grass, African Lovegrass) will be undertaken.
- Development of Eastern District Annual Action Plans for the management of priority pest animals and plants will be ongoing.
- Note: A media release about African Boxthorn planned for this last quarter has been delayed until July 2022.

Biodiversity

Focus areas and priority programs	Status
<i>Protecting and restoring prioritised coastal habitats</i>	
Supporting community to undertake coastal management works in line with the Coastal Action Plan	
<i>Maintain and enhance biodiversity in prioritised ecosystems</i>	
Supporting community and landholders to improve the health and condition of threatened ecological communities, native vegetation and threatened species	
Implementation of the biodiversity monitoring program	
Collaboration with partners to source funding for landscape-scale projects in priority ecosystems. Specific projects underway include:	
Enhancing Remnant Vegetation (ERV) Pilot	

For updates about delivery of our landscape-scale and region-wide biodiversity projects and programs, including activities in the Eastern District, refer to the **Business Plan Achievement Report: Whole of Region**. This report includes information on:

- the [Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery \(STAR\) Project](#);
 - *Blue Carbon*
 - the *Enhancing Remnant Vegetation (ERV) pilot*;
 - *Eyes on Eyre*;
 - the *Biodiversity Monitoring Program*;
- and others.

Protecting and restoring coastal habitats

Program highlights this period

- **Winter Shorebird Count Whyalla Saltpans**

- BirdLife Australia volunteers and landscape officers conducted a late, winter National Shorebird count, at the Whyalla Saltpans on 20th August. The original count was postponed due to Covid-19 lockdown.
- Highlights were 48 nicely coloured Red-Capped Plovers, including a nest with a ready to fledge chick. Six Red-Kneed Dotterel, and five vagrant Great Crested Grebe were also seen.
- Shorebirds counted tallied 336 (22 species), other bird species counted tallied 128 (11 species). Overall 464 birds (33 species) were counted, less birds but more species than last year.



Photo 11: National winter shorebird count - BirdLife Australia volunteer and landscape officer counting birds at the Whyalla Saltpans



Photo 12: Red-Kneed Dotterel feeding in intertidal saltmarsh



Photo 13:
A male Red-Capped Plover displays nicely coloured plumage for breeding

Maintain and enhance biodiversity in prioritised ecosystems

Program highlights this period

Implementation of the Biodiversity Monitoring Program - Bushland Condition Monitoring (BCM)

- As part of the Board's long term [Biodiversity Monitoring Program](#), we look at between 20 to 30 vegetation sites across the region every spring. Sites are surveyed on a 10-year rotation to give us an indication of what change is occurring in different vegetation types, including threats to habitats and native animals.
- This year landscape officers in the Eastern District carried out monitoring at four resource condition (selected for vegetation type) and two performance sites (selected where on-ground works have been undertaken to improve vegetation condition) on properties around Whyalla, Iron Stone Hill, and Arno Bay. Vegetation was surveyed for species diversity, weed abundance, grazing pressure, regeneration, vegetation health, and habitat values.
- Plant samples have been sent to the State Herbarium for identification, and data will be entered into the Biological Database of South Australia (BDBSA). Once data has been entered and collated, reports will be provided to land owners.
- Of particular note this year was the abundance of *Austrostipa* (spear-grass), which was almost absent from our surveys last year. There was also an abundance of annual herbs, and flowering perennials.
- An Eyre Peninsula Whyalla Bird Group volunteer carried out a survey of the diversity and abundance of birds at one of the adopted Bushland Condition sites. The bird data collected will be used in conjunction with the vegetation assessment data as an indicator of environmental condition.
- The bird survey component of Bushland Condition Monitoring is largely undertaken by community volunteers who have participated in a comprehensive bird survey training program. These volunteers form a very important citizen science collective working with us to increase our knowledge of EP's environments.



Photo 14: Annual Bushland Condition Monitoring (BCM) spring surveys monitored benchmark vegetation communities including this *Chenopod* open shrubland on grazed pastoral land near Whyalla. Vegetation is assessed for species diversity, weed abundance, grazing pressure, regeneration, vegetation health, and habitat values. Reports will be provided to land owners next quarter



Photo 15: *Austrostipa* (spear-grass) was abundant in Bushland Condition Monitoring (BCM) sites this year in comparison to last year where it was notably absent or heavily grazed

Photo 16:
Landscape officer photographing a
Pimelea Daisy-bush, *Olearia
pimeleoides*, at Mullaquana Station
near Whyalla whilst carrying out our
annual springtime Bushland Condition
Monitoring



- Birds are used as a surrogate for evaluating the health of broader fauna communities in the monitoring program. Birds are much easier to monitor than other species and trends in their population are known to correlate with those of other species sharing the same habitat.

Enhancing Remnant Vegetation (ERV) Pilot

- Applications were open from late September until 27th October for landholders who wanted to apply to be part of the [Australian Government's Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot](#). Under the pilot, farmers can receive payments to manage and enhance remnant native vegetation on-farm, through activities such as installing fencing to exclude grazing, carrying out weeding, pest control and replanting. With the Eyre Peninsula being one of six trial regions from across Australia for this project, our landscape officers have helped to [spread awareness](#) about the pilot and have supported landholders with applications.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Bushland Condition Monitoring data will be compiled and reports for landholders developed.
- Landholders will be provided with support to lodge ERV pilot applications.
- Site visits and verifications will be conducted for potential ERV project sites.
- Annual breeding monitoring of Eastern Eyre Malleefowl grids will be undertaken at Cowell and Munyeroo Conservation Parks for the National Malleefowl Recovery Team.

Community

Focus areas and priority programs	Status
Community at the centre and actively engaged in landscape management	
Supporting Aboriginal and community groups, Local Government, farming groups and schools to progress natural resource activities through the provision of the Grassroots Grants program	

*This section provides information about the delivery and acquittal of Grassroots Grants in the Eastern District, and support provided by Board staff to grant applicants. For updates about the [Grassroots Grants](#) application process, successful applicants the award of Grants, and overall management of the Grassroots Grants program, refer to the **Grassroots Grants program** section in the **Business Plan Achievement Report: Whole of Region**.*

Program highlights this period

Restoring Eyre Peninsula (EP) Blue Gum woodlands and managing saline soils

- The endemic and threatened EP Blue Gum woodland community is hugely ecologically important, supporting rich biodiversity and providing essential ecosystem services. This Grassroots Grant project, aims to further restore an area of this community. It is being implemented in an area of approximately 10 hectares that is now unproductive for farming, having deteriorated in health over time. The deterioration, caused predominantly by dry conditions and stock damage, has resulted in the development of saline patches.
- To aid woodland recovery 300 EP Blue Gums have already been planted and plans for fencing made. This project will further restore the community, re-establish biodiversity and combat salinity through direct-seeding of a variety of Blue Gum community species, including salt tolerant species.
- As discussed during a site visit, these further plantings should be completed by early to mid-2022.
- Stock exclusion fencing of the area is also underway and due to be completed by 31 May 2022.
- Monitoring of revegetation at the project site was completed recently. The property has been seeded via the direct seeding method with a mix of native species in the past and more recently with tube stock plantings of the EP Blue Gum. All plantings, including the EP Blue Gum are well established and all parties are happy with the results.

Point Lowly and Santos Escape Road - Irrigation and vegetation protection projects

- This Grassroots Grant funded project of the Whyalla City Council is aimed at improving the amenity of camping areas on Whyalla's Northern coastline while protecting the native vegetation and broader environment at the same time. The project has two main components; provision of irrigation for new plantings and fencing.
- The Council will be completing the installation of drip irrigation systems to ensure the ongoing survival of newly planted trees at the Point Lowly campground surrounds as part of this year's project. This will enable better establishment of the newly planted trees and will also mean that replacement trees can be planted at any time, as irrigation will always be available. Trees will be weaned off this irrigation water after three years to then develop their own hardiness.
- Other locations nearby could be planted in the future, once this infrastructure is installed and can easily be expanded later.

- Currently large areas are being denuded of vegetation as campers continue to encroach and spread into native vegetation when arriving and setting up camp. Post and chain barrier fencing will therefore be installed to stop this encroachment. Unauthorised camping access along Wilsonia Drive and the Santos Escape Road will be blocked off and fencing will help delineate existing camping sites.
- Large rocks, track ripping and signage will also be utilised where required, to ensure some campgrounds and access tracks are closed permanently. Ripping of tracks will help to promote rapid natural revegetation, and vegetation surrounding campgrounds will also improve in vigour and health, as campers will no longer be driving over and trampling those areas that are to be fenced or blocked off.

Local government engagement for this period

SA New Food Waste Circular Economy

- Landscape officers attended the stakeholders forum at the Westlands Hotel, 15th July, hosted by [Green Industries SA](#) and [KESAB Environmental Solutions](#). Critical topics covered included South Australia's [Food Waste Strategy](#), Regional Waste Management, Compost and Closing the Loop.
- The event included:
 - networking with 'Peats Soil' staff and tour of their new green waste conversion and composting facility on the Iron Knob Road;
 - networking with KESAB representatives about schools Wipe Out Waste (WOW) program planned for next year, and future 'Living Smart' courses planned for Whyalla community; and
 - networking with Farms Waste Resource representatives about a trial project that is using [Tigercat 6050 carbonators](#) to convert woody weeds into biochar. Biochar is a type of charcoal that is made via a modern pyrolysis method that can be used for soil amendment.

Northern Coastline Working Group (NCWG)

- Landscape officers supported Whyalla Council's Tourism Assets Development Officer with planning and drafting of signs for a new 'Gulf and Ranges' walking and cycling trail around Crag Point hill and coastline. The trail contains seven interpretive signs and two trail information signs. The final texts and graphics for all signage are now completed.
- Board staff attended the monthly NCWG meetings chaired by Whyalla City Council.

Communications and community engagement for this period

- Ongoing liaison and support was provided to researchers working on the University of South Australia's Bushfoods Research Project.
- Environmental Consultation Group – Board staff attended the meeting 11th August chaired by GFG Alliance at the Whyalla City Council chambers. The agenda included planning for a community improvement project.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Supporting the delivery of Grassroots Grants will be ongoing.

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