

Business Plan Achievement Report

1st Quarter 2021-2022

1 June to 30 September 2021

Western 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 Western 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 District Councils of Ceduna, Elliston, Streaky Bay, Wudinna and Far West Coast areas, further details of our work and programs can be found on the [Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board website](#) or by contacting **Liz McTaggart** (*Team Leader, Landscape Operations - Western District*) on 08 8626 1108.

Note: For updates about delivery, in the Western 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**.*

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	

*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

Communications and community engagement for this period

- Landscape staff in the west have been assisting landholders with applications for funding of up to \$10,000 under the [Revitalising Private Conservation in South Australia](#) program. The funding program aims to help landholders and support farmers to improve their bushland and protect native vegetation.

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	On Track
Supporting landowners with their pest control responsibilities, including weed identification, best practice control advice and property planning assistance	On Track
Delivering targeted pest animal baiting programs and weed control campaigns, monitoring, permitting and compliance works	On Track
<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	On Track
Cataloguing current and emerging impact-causing native species, their impacts and extent	On Track
Collaborating to reduce threats from impact-causing native species	On Track

For updates about pest plant and animal, and impact-causing native species control activities implemented in the Western 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

- **Boneseed** - infestations around Elliston, Lock and Venus Bay were surveyed and controlled as part of an ongoing control program to eradicate this weed.
- **African Boxthorn**
 - African Boxthorn was controlled along Flinders Highway, the Eyre Highway and Birdseye Highway as part of ongoing declared pest plant control.
 - Follow up African Boxthorn control work was undertaken in the buffer-zone around The Spit saltmarsh, as well as in the direct saltmarsh area. This work has been done to help restore surrounding habitat and biodiversity and support fauna (particularly insects and birds) that are important to saltmarsh ecology. Seventy-two boxthorns were targeted.



Photo 1:
Boneseed plant behind Elliston hospital September 2021



Photo 2:
Volunteer obtaining GPS point of African Boxthorn once granular herbicide has been applied. At The Spit samphire area



Photo 3:
Aeonium arboreum control at
Bairds Bay

- All known **Buffel Grass** sites were inspected and controlled where necessary.
- As part of the STAR project, pest plant control work has been undertaken in and around a number of saltmarshes (refer to the *Business Plan Achievement Report: Whole of Region* for details). This work included:
 - control of approximately 900 m of **Gazania** roadside weeds along the boundary of the Blanchepoort saltmarsh area, and
 - follow up control of *Aeonium arboreum*, **tree aeonium**, in a buffer-zone around the saltmarsh at Bairds Bay.

Pest animals

- **Rabbits**

Calicivirus

- Three dead rabbits collected from Bramfield and Murdinga were sent for testing to confirm presence of rabbit haemorrhagic disease (RHD), also known as rabbit calicivirus.
- After laying RHD (rabbit haemorrhagic disease) bait at Smoky Bay, three dead rabbits were collected for testing for presence of the calicivirus.
- Dead rabbits are tested for calicivirus at the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) Biosecurity Waite Campus laboratory. The results are used by PIRSA to help map the spread of the virus and determine its efficacy in controlling rabbit populations at a landscape scale. We also use the results to understand the local spread of the virus and advise landholders on the spread of this biocontrol virus.
- We are awaiting the outcomes of the testing.

1080 poison oats

- 1080 poison oats for rabbit control are available to landholders for purchase from the Streaky Bay, Elliston, Wudinna and Ceduna offices by appointment only. Advice for RHD releases and where to obtain the virus is also available from these offices.



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

- **Feral goats and deer**

- Feral deer and feral goat monitoring has been conducted as part of ongoing pest animal surveillance.
- Landscape officers have followed up on three reports in the previous quarter of increasing numbers of feral goats appearing in the Far West.
- At sites around Wirrulla, we have consulted with landholders, are monitoring with remote sensing cameras and have requested that any further sightings be reported to us.
- We are also using remote sensing cameras to monitor sites on Crown and private land near Elliston.
- Reports of Goats moving around the Port Kenny area were investigated with as a possible compliance issue. The landholder has agreed to voluntary compliance, and we will continue to monitor for ongoing compliance.
- We strongly encourage anyone to report sightings of goats and deer to any of our offices, and/or on [FeralGoatScan](#). This is especially important if you are seeing goats moving into areas where you don't usually see them.

- **Wild dogs**

- Wild dog monitoring using remote sensing cameras has been ongoing at sites along the dog fence, far Western Eyre, to track the movement of dogs and dingoes moving across the fence at grid sites.
- Landscape officers continue to work with landholders supporting them in the use of FeralScan's WildDogScan app to report wild dog sightings and share them within their community.

- **Foxes**

- 1080 meat fox baits are available free of charge to landholders at the Streaky Bay, Ceduna and Elliston and Wudinna offices by appointment only.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Manufacture of about 28,000 1080 meat fox baits is planned, for supply to landholders as part of ongoing fox control work.

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 Western 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

Communications and community engagement for this period

- The unusually high numbers of wildlife on Western District beaches and jetties this quarter, have resulted in lots of engagement and conversations between Board staff and the community. Visitors have included multiple sea turtles, as well as a Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), and larger than usual numbers of Long-nosed Fur Seal pups (*Arctocephalus forsteri*) resting on beaches and jetties. A number of dead Long-nosed Fur Seal pups have also been found, and a Great White shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) washed up on the beach.

Photo 4:
Fur seal pups resting
at Smoky Bay Jetty



Maintain and enhance biodiversity in prioritised ecosystems

Program highlights this period

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

- Board staff in the Western District surveyed 15 Bushland Condition Monitoring (BCM) sites during September, as part of the regional long term [Biodiversity Monitoring Program](#). With over 300 BCM sites across the Eyre Peninsula, each site is monitored once every 10 years using health indicators to provide a snapshot of the overall health of the vegetation community at the site, as well as identify distinct changes and herbivore grazing activity.
- The sites monitored in 2021 ranged from Coorabie in the west, Scrubby Peak in the central Gawler Ranges, and south to Sheringa. Sites include resource condition sites, selected to give a representative sample of the main vegetation types on the Eyre Peninsula, and performance sites, which are located where on-ground works have been undertaken to improve vegetation condition.
- With good winter rains a number of ephemeral herbs and orchids were sighted.



Photo 5: Orchids on BCM site near Locks Well



Photo 6:
Site at Coorabie in 2010 when
fencing was just completed



Photo 7:
Threatened West Coast
mintbush (*Prostanthera
calycina*) recovering at Coorabie
on Far West Coast, 2021

- One of the performance sites monitored this year is at Coorabie. Stock exclusion fencing and rabbit control works were completed at this site in 2010. One of the aims of this *Caring for our Country* project was to aid the survival of the threatened plant species West Coast Mintbush (*Prostanthera calycina*). This year's monitoring found that Mintbush is recovering at the site, showing the success of the initial project and long-term grazing exclusion.

Sheoak Market-Based Instruments (MBI) Project

*The Sheoak Market-Based Instruments (MBI) Project, which commenced in 2011 as part of the WildEyre conservation program, is a 10-year project funded by the Native Vegetation Council. Through the implementation of targeted long-term grazing management and revegetation, the project aims to improve the condition and extent of 1,000 ha of threatened Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) Grassy Woodland ecological community located on private land. The impacts of the project are monitored through monitoring change in vegetation and bird life at project sites.*

- The final fencing and revegetation works under the Sheoak MBI Project has been completed. These works completed by landholders and contractors included 3.4 km of direct seeding with a Sheoak Grassy Woodland seed mix. The area that was sown was then also fenced off, to exclude grazers from the revegetation area.

- With the project drawing to a close, some of the key outcomes of the project can be summarised as follows:
 - The main aim of the project, to engage private land managers in long term contracts to manage Sheoak Grassy Woodlands has been achieved, with on-ground actions resulting in the improved condition and extent of 1,000 ha of this ecological community.
 - At managed sites, domestic stock exclusion has proved to be a highly effective restoration method for this vegetation community. The height, age and density characteristics of 1,000 hectares of ungrazed Sheoak Grassy Woodlands now more closely resembles that of an undisturbed system. Conversely, the Sheoak Grassy Woodlands subjected to business-as-usual grazing practices continue to senesce and die without effective replacement of trees.
 - The condition and diversity of native grasslands within these fenced managed areas have also improved markedly. In 2020, native grassland density was 98.6 times greater within stock exclusion areas compared to areas subjected to business-as-usual grazing. At the commencement of this project, the grassland characteristics were uniform between sites.
 - Other, more indirect and time-lagged (slow response to change), measures of vegetation condition also show signs of improvement or have at least stabilised.
 - We will continue to work on the final completion report for the project during the next quarter, and expect to have it available early next year.

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.

Communications and community engagement for this period

- The good winter rains on western Eyre Peninsula have made it an exceptional season for orchids. Board staff have therefore had many conversations with landholders around the high numbers of orchids, with topics such as recording techniques (including the use of GPS), phone apps to use for reporting data, and identification discussed.
- Board staff assisted a number of landholders with applications for Nature Foundation's [Revitalising Private Conservation](#) program for Heritage Agreement Funding. If successful, funding will be used to improve the quality of the Heritage Agreements through pest plant and animal control, fencing repairs and revegetation of buffer areas.

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 surveys of Western Eyre Malleefowl grids will be undertaken for the National Malleefowl Recovery Team.

Community

Focus areas and priority programs	Status
<i>Community at the centre and actively engaged in landscape management</i>	
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 Western 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**.*

Local government engagement for this period

Whirlpool wetland recovery and visitor management project

- The District Council of Streaky Bay's 'Whirlpool wetland recovery and visitor management project', funded under the Board's 2020-2021 Grassroots Grant funding round, is nearing completion. Interpretive signage has been finalised. Stormwater diversion was installed directing runoff away from The Whirlpool, and this, combined with the recent winter rains has resulted in improvement in the clarity of water in The Whirlpool and the condition of the associated vegetation. The project will be completed by 30th October.



Photo 8: Household waste illegally dumped at The Whirlpool



Photo 9: Increased water clarity at The Whirlpool after completion of stormwater diversion works and good winter rains.

Communications and community engagement for this period

Connections with local Beaches and Wirangu culture in Streaky Bay project

- A coastal revegetation activity was undertaken in August with the Streaky Bay Children's Centre. Held in front of the Back Beach Lookout near Streaky Bay, the activity was attended by 15 students, three teaching staff and two landscape officers. Funded under the Board's 2020-2021 Grassroots Grant project '*Connections with local beaches and Wirangu culture in Streaky Bay*', the revegetation will assist stabilise the dune area, protecting it from the impacts of human foot traffic and coastal winds.

2021-2022 Grassroots Grants

- The 2021-2022 round of Grassroots Grants project funding has been awarded. Five applicants in the Western District, including three community groups, were successful and will receive grant funding. Staff are currently working with the recipients to finalise grant paperwork and project planning activities. The community projects will include revegetation and dune rehabilitation at Fowlers Bay, revegetation and track rationalisation at Venus Bay and further revegetation work on the Women's Pioneer Park revitalisation project at Minnipa.
- One of our 2021-2022 Grassroots Grant recipients have recently been in the news. Fowlers Bay and its impressive sand dune system which is threatening the town was featured in an [ABC article](#). We have given the Fowlers Bay Progress Association a \$4,500 Grassroots Grant for its revegetation work to help stabilise the dunes which are encroaching on the town.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Board staff will continue to work with Grassroots Grants recipients on implementation of their projects.



Photo 10:
Revegetation at
Back Beach,
Streaky Bay with
the Streaky Bay
Children's
Centre

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