

# Business Plan Achievement Report

**2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2020-2021**

1 October to 31 December 2020

## Eastern District






## About

These *Business Plan Achievement Reports* provide a quarterly update on the delivery of our programs, as detailed in the Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board's [Business Plan for 2020-21](#). The *Business Plan* sets out the programs, and component sub-programs or work activities, which are funded and delivered by the Board to achieve the goals and vision of the [Regional Landscape Plan](#).

This *Achievement Report* provides updates on delivery in the Eastern District, and during the last quarter, of all Board-funded programs, including reporting 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 all milestones. |  | On track to deliver most milestones. May be some delays. |  | Unlikely to meet milestones. |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|------------------------------|

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: Regional Projects*.

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# Sustainable agriculture

| Sub-program  | Status |
|--|--------|
| District level sustainable agriculture activities                              |        |
| 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: Regional Projects**.

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

## District level sustainable agriculture activities

### Program highlights this period

#### Meat and Livestock Australia Producer Demonstration Site Grant

- Board staff have assisted the Upper Eyre Peninsula Pasture Group's in developing a successful application (submitted under the auspices of the Franklin Harbour Ag Bureau) to Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) for a perennial pasture [Producer Demonstration Site](#) Grant. Twelve producers will participate in the MLA grant-funded project, the delivery of which will be facilitated by Craig James, a local agronomist who works in the low rainfall zones on the Eastern Eyre and Western Eyre Peninsula.

The aim of the project is to improve grazing potential, through finding better species to grow more biomass in paddocks that are taken out of cropping production, or that have been out of cropping production for some time.

In 2019, Board staff commenced discussions about this project with landholders, and also identified possible appropriate funding for the project. In 2020 officers continued to work with producers and Craig James, developing the proposal and grant application. Thanks to excellent work by landscape officers, funding was approved after meeting stringent requirements through a multi-stage application process.

- Having assisted with securing funds for the project, EP landscape officers are expected to play a minimal role as the project moves into the delivery phase. Craig James will commence project rollout in January 2021. The Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF)<sup>1</sup> will also assist with delivery of the project, working with producers to set up the demonstration sites, and undertaking initial soil monitoring and on-going bio mass production monitoring.

#### Soil cover

- Land management compliance site visits and monitoring have continued where required. Generally soil cover levels in the Eastern District are sufficient to protect against erosion, however there are still some isolated sandy rises which continue to erode and some areas still at risk of erosion. Good spring rains and warm weather have helped to establish cover in areas where cover has been poor due to

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<sup>1</sup> The Australian Government, through the National Landcare Program, have funded the [Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator \(RALF\)](#) with core funding for five years to June 2023. The RALF services are contracted to Agricultural Innovation and Research Eyre Peninsula (AIR EP).

dry conditions over the last few years. Careful grazing management will, however, still be needed to ensure that vulnerable soils are not exposed during summer and autumn prior to season-opening rains.

The Bureau of Meteorology's (BOM) long range forecasts are still suggesting wetter than average conditions for much of Eyre Peninsula from February to April. This should help establish and maintain cover across the Eastern District.

- Investigation of bare soil patches in a paddock and soil salinity (electrical conductivity or EC) testing were conducted for a farmer.
- Four water salinity tests and two soil salinity (EC) and pH tests were conducted for farmers.
- Staff participated in an Eyre Peninsula Soils project meeting with external organisations including Agricultural Innovation and Research Eyre Peninsula (AIR EP) and the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) to ensure extension staff and scientists all understand the breadth of soil-focussed projects occurring in the Region. A landscape officer provided an update on the National Landcare Program (NLP) funded [Overcoming the Rising Degradation of Mallee Seeps on Eastern Eyre Peninsula](#) project at this forum. This gave the opportunity to establish linkages with other projects being implemented in the region and to get suggestions for appropriate sites to be included in the project.

### Local government engagement for this period

- Nothing to report.

### Communications and community engagement for this period

- Nothing to report.

### Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Staff will continue to monitor soil cover levels across the Eastern District.

## Delivering the NLP 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

- The Board's website was updated with [project information](#).
- A meeting was held with stakeholders to discuss the upcoming priorities for the project, as well as plan deliverables and responsibilities for 2021.



*Photo 1: Landholder pointing out a mallee seep on his property*

- The first monitoring data gathered under the project was downloaded from data loggers at all trial sites.
- Additional mallee seep sites were visited.

### Local government engagement for this period

- Nothing to report.

### Communications and community engagement for this period

- In November 2020 a [media release](#) to introduce the wider community to the project was published by the Stock Journal and Port Lincoln Times. Outlining the project aims and describing key elements of the project, the media release targeted farmers and farm advisors with the intent of building interest among the community for extension activities in autumn and spring 2021. Landholders and advisors interested in learning more about the project were encouraged to contact the RALF or their landscape officer.

### Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Board staff will work closely with the specialist contractor and farmers to ensure the trial remedial activities are implemented in autumn. Remedial activities will entail seeding at some sites and deep ripping at others.
- An article about the project and the trials being undertaken across five sites is to be finalised and published in the *Eyre Peninsula Farming Systems Summary 2021*.
- The contractor will promote the project by speaking at harvest meetings in March.
- Planning will be progressed for the production of one or two video clips to communicate messaging about the importance of active management of mallee seeps for improved soil health and productivity.
- A short article about the project will be produced for publication in the AIR EP e-newsletter.

## Water resources management

| Sub-program  | Status |
|--|--------|
| District level rivers and creek restoration activities, water quality testing etc. |        |

For updates about water resources management activities implemented in the Eastern District as part of the [Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery \(STAR\) Project](#) and the [Regenerative Agriculture Project \(RAP\)](#) refer to the **Business Plan Achievement Report: Regional Projects**. Updates on work related to Water Affecting Activities and the Water Allocation Plan can be found in the same report.

### Program highlights this period

- Multiple water quality tests were conducted for landholders.
- Water Affecting Activities Staff training**  
Authorised landscape officers received training to undertake assessments of Water Affecting Activity Permit applications and other water resources tasks.

### Local government engagement for this period

- Reviewed stormwater management proposal for Whyalla and provided comment. Whyalla City Council have employed a consultant to assist with flooding issues in South Eastern Whyalla. Board staff reviewed this document mainly in relation to water discharge into the coastal environment.

### Communications and community engagement for this period

- Nothing to report.

### Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Expressions of interest will be sought from Councils in the Eastern District for a Water Sensitive Urban Design workshop to be held.

## Pest plant and animal control

| Sub-program   | Status |
|---|--------|
| Monitor and facilitate management of priority pest plants and animals |        |

For updates about pest plant and animal 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: Regional Projects**. Updates on development of our regional pest management plans can be found in the same report.

### Program highlights this period

#### Pest plants

- A new DiBak drill and fill injector machine were purchased for control of woody weeds. Trials using this new equipment will commence in the third quarter 2020-21.

- **Summer grasses**

- Approximately 565 **African Lovegrass** plants were controlled across a 15 ha area in the Kimba area.
- Surveys for **African Lovegrass** and **Buffel Grass** were conducted.
- Roadside summer grasses inspections were carried out on Lincoln Highway from Arno Bay to Whyalla. Two grasses, not previously encountered in the Eastern District of the EP, were detected between Arno Bay and Cleve. These were identified by the State Herbarium Weeds Botanist to be ***Paspalum dilatatum*** (commonly called paspalum grass), and ***Ehrharta calycina*** (commonly called perennial veldt grass). These introduced grasses originate from South America and Southern Africa respectively, and have a history of invasiveness in other countries and Australia. Landscape officers will monitor the sites and carry out control works with the aim to eradicate these before they can become problematic in our region.




Photo 3: African Lovegrass infestation on the Cows Head Corner road



Photo 2: Preparing to spray African Lovegrass using a ute tray-mounted spray unit



Photo 4:  
Landscape officers preparing to spray Buffel Grass at control sites along the Port Bonython Road as part of the summer grasses control program

- **Fountain Grass** survey and control works were carried out in Whyalla around Hummock Hill, McBryde Terrace, Wilson Park, Holcim Quarry Road, and McIntyre Road. Around 780 plants were sprayed.
  - **Buffel Grass** spraying was carried out at control sites on and around Whyalla, Point Lowly and Whyalla-Kimba roadsides.
  - A patch of ***Aristida personata*** grass (Purple Wiregrass), not endemic to South Australia, was treated on a roadside near Iron Baron Mine and Myola Station with the aim to eradicate.
  - Soft compliance checks were conducted with a landholder in the Kimba area. A future site visit will be arranged after the summer control period to evaluate their control works.
- ***Opuntia* sp.**
    - Monitoring of *Opuntia* patches where Cochineal biocontrol is being trialled is ongoing. At some sites the extent of infection Cochineal has increased to as much as 40%, with an associated noticeable decrease in biomass (up to 10% decrease) at these sites. Infection levels are now sufficiently high to allow for the removal of some infected pads so that these can be utilised to infect news sites where *Opuntia* control is needed. There is also the potential for distributing infected pads to landholders to use on *Opuntia* infestations on private properties.
    - Cochineal biological control of *Opuntia* has commenced at a new site on Carpa Road.
    - Another site requiring *Opuntia* control has been identified on Wangaraleednie Road. Transfer of infected pads to this site is planned for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2020-21.
- 
- Photo 5: Biomass reduction of *Opuntia* as a result of Cochineal activity
- **Boneseed**
    - A herbicide injector has been purchased for future Boneseed control. A site for trialling the injector has been site selected
  - **Gazania**
    - A trial to compare the efficacy of different herbicides for Gazania control was completed. The reporting on the outcomes of the trial is in progress and will be delivered in the third quarter 2020-21.
  - **Silverleaf Nightshade**
    - Silverleaf Nightshade was detected, and has been surveyed for follow-up treatment on the Lincoln Highway between Whyalla and Cowell.
    - A Silverleaf Nightshade infestation was also reported on the Eyre Highway, just inside the SA Arid Lands Landscape region boundary. EP landscape officers therefore liaised with SA Arid Lands landscape officers, who in turn engaged a contractor to carry out control works.

- **African Boxthorn**

- Cut and swab control of **African Boxthorn** was implemented in a buffer zone around the Arno Bay saltmarsh (STAR Project). Approximately 1,000 plants were manually treated across an area of about 10 ha.

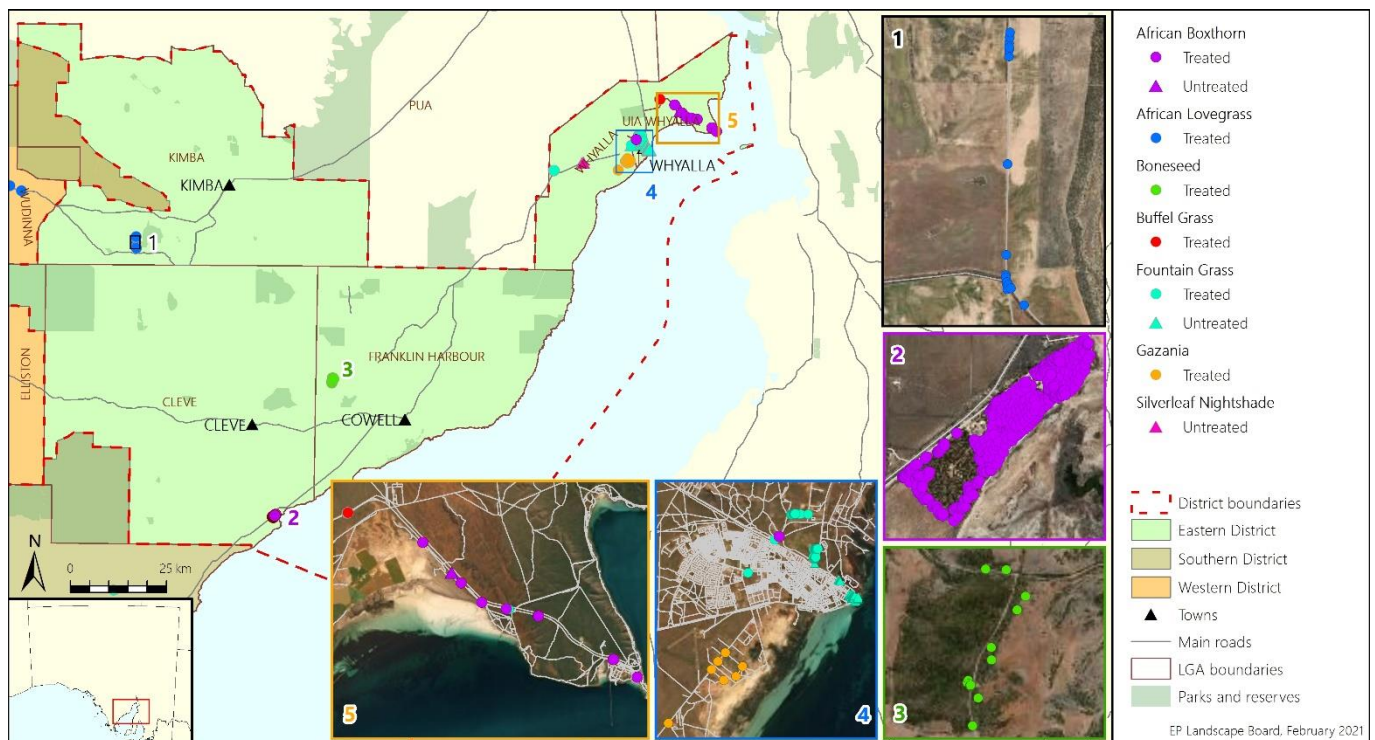


Figure 1: Priority pest plant control for the period 1 October to 31 December 2020

## Pest animals

- **Foxes**

- Landscape officers contributed to two coordinated fox bait manufacturing days at Paney Station in the Gawler Ranges. Twenty thousand horse meat fox baits were manufactured for distribution at up-coming landholder fox bait distribution days in Eastern and Western Eyre Peninsula. Of these 7,500 baits are designated for distribution to landholders in the Eastern District.
- Organisation of group bait distribution days commenced. These will take place during the third quarter 2020-21.



Photo 6: Fox bait manufacturing facility at Paney Station in the Gawler Ranges, where Landscape Officers manufactured 7,500 (1080 poison) baits for distribution at up-coming fox bait distribution days

- **All pests**

- Three landscape officers received training in Vertebrate Pest Management through PIRSA. This covered general pest vertebrate management (including control of impact causing native species), Level 1 and 2 Poisons Administration, and (back to basics) best practice management rabbit and fox control.
- District level pest management plans have been developed and are being implanted for five priority pest species.

### Local government engagement for this period

- Nothing to report.

### Communications and community engagement for this period

- **Feral deer**

- Information gathering on deer was undertaken, with information being collected from shooters and landholders on deer presence, particularly in the north-east part of the Eastern District.
- A media article encouraging reporting of feral deer was drafted for release in early January 2021.

- **Rabbits**

- A group was formed in Mangalo for the coordinated release of the RHDV1 (K5 strain) virus. Release of the virus was delayed due to the wet spring weather and resulting in the presence of lots of green vegetation, which are not ideal conditions for virus release. An early January 2021 date has now been set for the release.

### Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Control of summer grass species will continue.
- Fox bait distribution days: Organisation of these days will be completed, with actual distribution scheduled for the last two weeks of February 2021.
- Release of the RHDV1 (K5 strain) virus for rabbit control is scheduled, working via the Managolo group.
- Translocation of Cochineal to new site/s for biocontrol of *Opuntia* is planned.



Photo 7: Pest vertebrate training - PIRSA staff demonstrate how to smoke and fumigate rabbit warrens, as well as new 'Rodenator' shockwave and concussion control method which kills rabbits instantly and implodes their warrens in one go so follow-up ripping is not required

## Other stewardship

| Sub-program   | Status |
|---|--------|
| District level landscape management activities (coastal management, restoration, conservation, threatened species and ecological communities, citizen science etc.) |        |

For updates about delivery of the [Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery \(STAR\) Project](#) across the region, including the Eastern District, refer to the **Business Plan Achievement Report: Regional Projects**.

### Program highlights this period

#### Malleefowl monitoring

- Landscape officers coordinated and worked with volunteers to monitor 89 known nest sites at Munyeroo and near Cowell. They also assisted ecologists with monitoring nest sites at Secret Rocks Nature Reserve near Kimba, where many hectares of Malleefowl habitat were destroyed in the January fires. No active nests were recorded at the Munyeroo and Cowell sites, however Malleefowl scat and footprints that were found confirm the presence of Malleefowl in these areas.

#### Bilby monitoring

- Landscape officers assisted Western District staff with monitoring Bilbies following a relocation to boost a previously reintroduced population inside a predator proof exclusion fence at the Venus Bay Conservation Park.

#### BirdLife Australia Shorebird Count

- Landscape Officers coordinated a *BirdLife Australia Shorebird Count* with four volunteers. The count was held at the Whyalla Salt pans on 16<sup>th</sup> October. In the two hour survey volunteers recorded a total of 753 shorebirds (22 species), and 56 other birds (12 species).

#### Other activities

- Landscape officers supported NPWSSA compliance activities inside Marine Park Sanctuary Zones in the District.
- Landscape officers supported Regional Fire Crew prescribed burning activities in the region.



Photo 8: Landscape officers and volunteers record data on malleefowl nesting activity as part of the National Malleefowl Recovery Team annual monitoring program



Photo 9: Malleefowl mounds (nests) are monitored annually during the breeding season for signs of Malleefowl and predator activity. Whilst not active, this mound at Secret Rocks has litter in the nest - evidence of recent nesting activity

- Erosion potential surveys were conducted in conjunction with PIRSA.

### Local government engagement for this period

- Staff liaised and held meetings with the Northern Coastline Working Group, and also provided support for developing their grant funding proposals.
- Liaison and site visits with Council regarding proposed works for Stony Point Cuttlefish Dive Site improvements and Fitzgerald Bay “Eyes on Eyre” camp sites.

### Communications and community engagement for this period

- Engagement and coordination of volunteers for Malleefowl and BirdLife Australia Shorebird surveys.

### Upcoming priorities for the next period

- *BirdLife Australia National Migratory Shorebird* surveys – Staff will coordinate volunteers and participate in the count.

## Grassroots Grants program

| Sub-program   | Status |
|---|--------|
| Support to grant applicants, monitoring of grants awarded and acquitted |        |

*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: Regional Projects**.*

### Program highlights this period

#### Restoring Eyre Peninsula (E.P) Blue Gum Woodlands and managing saline soil

- Work on this project for revegetation at EP Blue Gum revegetation sites has progressed, and the landholder has engaged contractors to complete direct seeding.

### Local government engagement for this period

#### Northern Coastline track closure project

- Project site visit: Landscape officers met with Whyalla Council staff and Cultana Jenkins Shack-Owners Association representatives to assist with final planning for rationalisation of tracks and arranging track closures and vegetation barriers.

### Communications and community engagement for this period

- Media release in conjunction with Whyalla City Council, promoting the Board’s Grassroots Grant program and the Northern Coastline track closure project.

## Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Staff will support three Grant recipients to with delivery of their 2020-2021 Grass Roots Grants projects.
- Support will be provided to local government, community groups and agricultural bureaus to develop Grassroots Grant projects and applications for the 2021-2022 grants program.



Photo 10: Planning track closures and vegetation barriers at Fitzgerald Bay north as part of the Whyalla City Council's Northern Coastline track closure Grassroots Grant project

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