

Business Plan Achievement Report

4th Quarter 2020-2021

1 April to 30 June 2021

Western District



About

The Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board's [Business Plan for 2020-21](#) 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 *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: Regional Projects*.

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Sustainable agriculture

Sub-program	Status
District level sustainable agriculture activities	

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](#).

Program highlights this period

- Landscape officers engaged with a landholder regarding a revegetation project and re-introduction of stock. This is part of projects for additional fencing being funded through the WildEyre Sustainable Sheoak Project. The project is seeking to restore Sheoak grassy woodlands across western Eyre Peninsula, whilst also identifying appropriate timeframes for the re-introduction of grazing and sustainable stocking rates for this vegetation community.
- Autumn monitoring (for a long term rotational grazing trial project in the Elliston District area) was completed. Native grass numbers were found to be low, mainly due to dry conditions over the summer-early autumn period. Next monitoring is to be conducted in October, when it will be interesting to see whether the native grass numbers and cover has increased with the predicted wetter and longer winter season.
- An investigation into a dust / erosion issue in Central Eyre was undertaken. A potential breach of the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 in terms of land management practises resulting in the unreasonable degradation of land was identified. A letter was served, and support and advice was provided to the landholder, who has addressed the issue by sowing seed into the affected paddocks.



Photo 1:
Native grass monitoring
at Polda Station

Communications and community engagement for this period

- **Regenerative Agriculture Forum**
 - Landscape officers promoted the Regenerative Agriculture Forum to the community through email distribution lists and across our network of landholders.
 - Landscape officers attended the event, and later gave feedback, and shared information and handouts with other landscape officers who were not able to attend.
 - More information about this event is available in our *Business Plan Achievement Report: Regional Projects. 4th Quarter 2020-2021*.
- The Eyre Peninsula (EP) Landscape Board's temporary RAPPA fencing unit was loaned to local farmers for use for sustainable management of soils. Three farmers have been trialling the unit across Central Eyre.

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 Western 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.

Local government engagement for this period

- Engagement with the District Council of Elliston regarding their stormwater wetlands project and necessary permits for Water Affecting Activities is ongoing. The project, for which the Council has recently acquired funding, is being implemented to address long term town drainage issues. As part of the project planning process landscape officers have attended site visits, assisted with providing advice regarding Native Vegetation Council requirements and seeking expert advice in regards to revegetation and restoration post drainage, and wetland design works.



Photo 2:
Site visit with District Council of Elliston regarding their stormwater management project and application for Water Affecting Activities permits. Officers are inspecting the current drainage line from the saltmarsh area within Elliston Township

Communications and community engagement for this period

- Landscape officers have performed a number of salinity water tests for landholders who are watering stock from wells. The EP Landscape Board offers free water sample testing services to landholders, for salinity and pH testing ([see here for more information](#)). To use the free testing service, landholders can drop water samples off at their nearest landscape office including Streaky Bay, Wudinna, Ceduna, and Elliston in the Western EP.
- We have received a number of enquiries from community members regarding water quality and where to seek comprehensive testing of rainwater for chemicals and bacteria. The EP Landscape Board only has facilities to conduct water quality testing for pH and salinity. Advice was therefore given to landholders to send water samples to a professional laboratory for testing for other factors such as bacteria levels, algae and mineral content.

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 Western 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

Control work

- **African Boxthorn**
 - African Boxthorn control work has continued in the Little Wudinna Rock and Polda Rock Reserves. The majority of these reserves have been surveyed and controlled for African Boxthorn, with 43 plants found and treated (Figure 2). The remainder of these reserves will be surveyed and treated during the next reporting period.
 - Follow up African Boxthorn control work has been undertaken around the Blancheport Sapphire and Cape Bauer (Streaky Bay) buffer areas (Figure 1, Inset 1).
- **African Boxthorn** and **Aleppo Pine** follow up control works have been undertaken on the Flinders and Birdseye Highways.
- Reports of **Opuntoid** species between Wirrulla, Miltaburra, Koongawa, and Lock were investigated by landscape officers. Fourteen plants (Rope and Wheel Cactus species) were surveyed for future control. One landholder was engaged regarding control required on their property.
- **Buffel Grass** inspections and control works were undertaken at all known Buffel Grass sites.

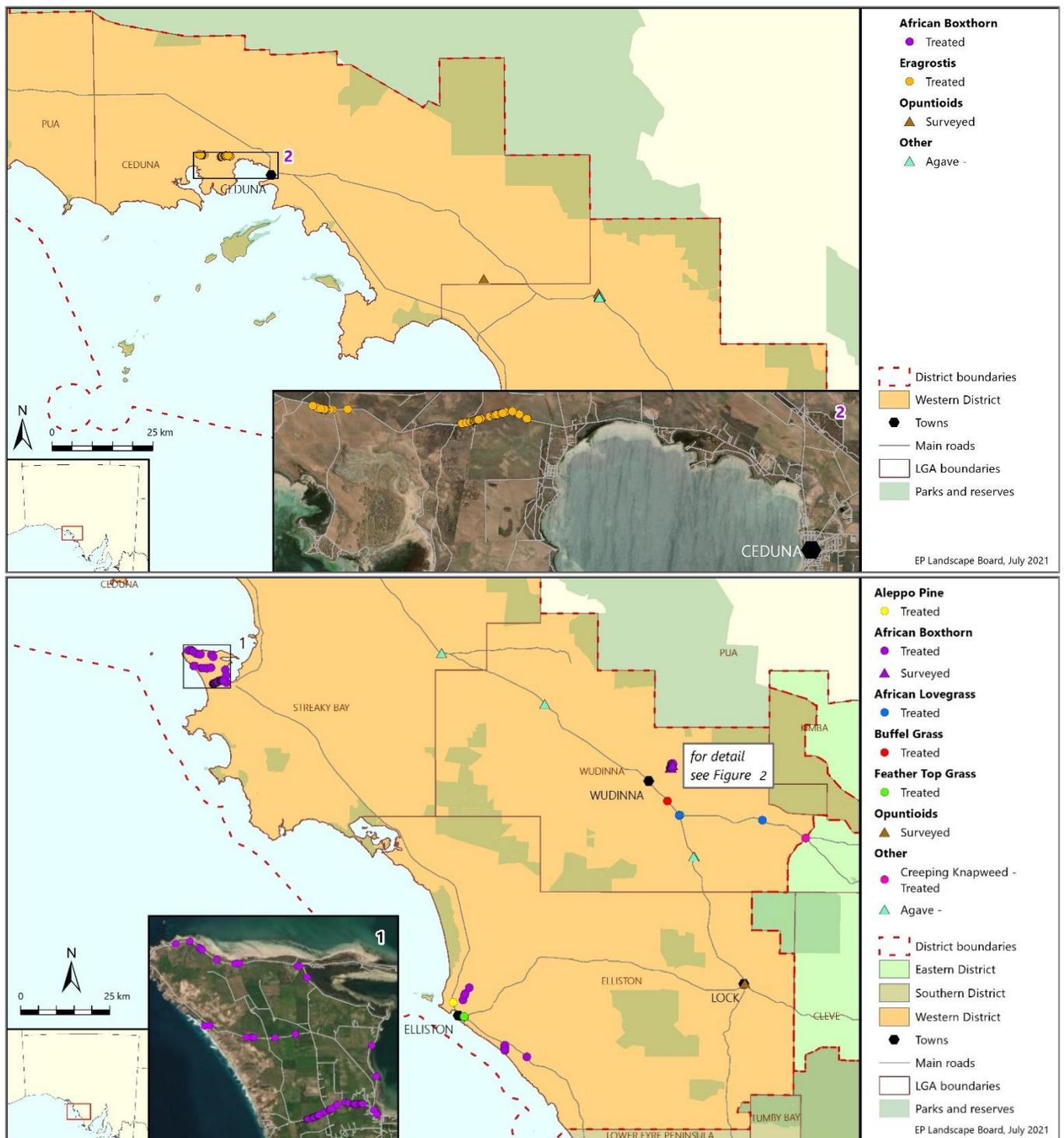


Figure 1: Priority pest plant control for the period 1 April to 31 June 2021

Pest animals

• Foxes

- We have continued to supply 1080-fox baits to landholders on a regular basis during the lambing season.
- We have provided support for the National Parks and Wildlife Services SA (NPWSSA) fox control program, with landscape officers injecting 20,000 fox baits for Paney National Park.
- Fox baits are available free of charge to Landholders at the Streaky Bay, Ceduna and Elliston and Wudinna offices by appointment.

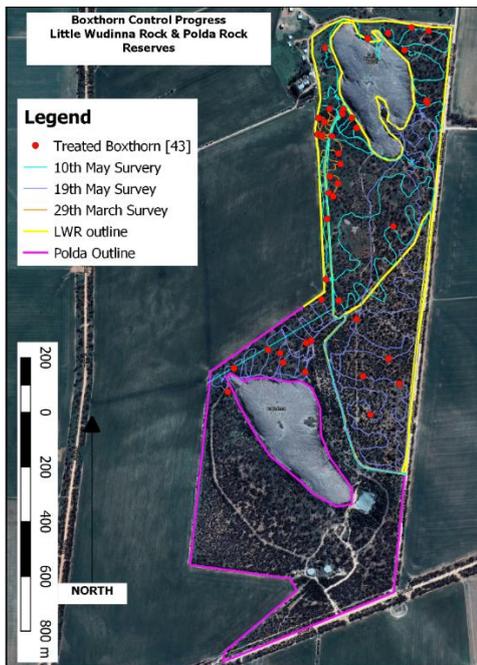


Figure 2: African Boxthorn survey and control work undertaken in Little Wudinna Rock and Polda Rock Reserves



Photo 3: African Boxthorn treated (cut and swab) in local nature reserves reduces spread of invasive species onto agricultural land and other environmentally sensitive areas

• Rabbits

- Rabbit control has been undertaken at the Far West / Koonibba Aboriginal Sporting Complex (Ceduna) using RHD (Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease virus, previously known as calicivirus)
- Rabbit control using RHD was also undertaken at the Smoky Bay and Districts Community Club and Smoky Bay Golf Club.
- Wild rabbit abundance is being monitored at control sites and control programs will be planned and implemented if required based on information provided from landholders. Farmers and landholders are encouraged to chat to their local landscape officer to provide information on rabbit numbers and impacts they are seeing on their properties.
- 1080 poison oats for rabbit control are available to landholders for purchase from the Streaky Bay, Elliston, Wudinna and Ceduna offices by appointment. Advice for RHD releases and where to obtain the virus is also available from the offices above.

• Feral goats and deer

- Staff have monitored and investigated reports of feral goats and feral deer. Increased reports of goats across the top end of western Eyre Peninsula. Ongoing deer sightings from north of Wudinna, in the Coorabie / Chadinga area and around Mt Hope area.

• Feral cats

- Feral cat control (cage trapping) has been undertaken at Point Brown as part of the Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery (STAR) project to assist with protection of Hooded Plovers. More information about this project can be found in the *Business Plan Achievement Report: Regional Projects. 4th Quarter 2020-2021*.



*Photo 4:
Wild Dog at Dog fence access grid
captured through ongoing remote
sensing camera monitoring of wild
dog movement at dog fence sites,
far western Eyre Peninsula*

- **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. Over the last three months of monitoring, little activity has been recorded. Specifically, two dingoes have been recorded on the northern side of the fence, and one wild dog on the southern side. One feral cat was recorded and no images of foxes were captured.

- **Audits**

- Discussions have been held with the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) Biosecurity Rural Chemicals Branch regarding auditing landholders who use 1080 baits on EP. Following one report of potential misuse of 1080 baits an investigation was undertaken by PIRSA and a warning letter was served to the landholder and audit undertaken. Timely reminder that any suspected misuse of 1080 is taken seriously and will be investigated.

Local government engagement for this period

- Landscape officers assisted the District Council of Elliston with feral pigeon control. Support was provided for a net gun trial. As a result of the trial DCE are looking into the purchase of larger explosive canisters to increase the net firing range. More trials to be completed in the next quarter depending on the pigeon flocking and feeding behaviour over the late autumn / winter months.

Communications and community engagement for this period

- [Buffel Grass weed identification handouts](#) were distributed to local agronomists and landholders at the Regenerative Agriculture Forum and generally around the Wudinna township.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- As part of trials for the use of BioHerbicides' Di-Bak Injecta tool for the control of woody weeds, Aleppo Pine will be controlled at a number of test sites. The Di-Bak Injecta delivers capsules containing a chemical compound directly into the tree stem, and is being trialled to determine its efficacy for the control of woody weeds.

- Remote cameras are to be set up at key locations to confirm the increased movement / presence of feral goats across the northern-western Eyre Peninsula. Camera trap locations will be fixed working with local landholders and considering recent goat sightings and trappings.

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 Western District, 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

- Working with University of Adelaide scientists, staff from the Department for Environment and Water's Coast and Marine branch, NPWSSA rangers from the Far West Coast and local surveyors, saltmarsh profiling and sediment core sampling in the saltmarshes in Acraman Creek Conservation Park was undertaken. The saltmarsh profiling was conducted at a site that was previously surveyed. It was implemented under the federally funded Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery (STAR) Project (see the *Business Plan Achievement Report: Regional Projects. 4th Quarter 2020-2021* for more information) and will provide information on how saltmarsh condition is changing.

The sediment core sampling has been undertaken to estimate the carbon stock, often referred to as blue carbon, stored in the saltmarsh sediments. This data will provide information on the potential for this ecosystem at this site to store (sequester) additional carbon if actively managed for that purpose.

Photo 5:
Port Lincoln Times article about the saltmarsh profiling and blue carbon sampling completed at Acraman Creek

Latest saltmarsh profiled in region

THE profiling of saltmarsh communities across Eyre Peninsula is providing scientists with a better understanding of species within the saltmarsh and changes to sites over time.

Saltmarsh profiling is taking place at 11 sites, with the latest survey completed at Acraman Creek - near Smoky Bay - as part of a baseline data comparison of the condition of sites.

The profiling is nearing the halfway mark with Acraman Creek the fifth survey to be completed as part of the Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery Project, supported by Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board (EPLB) through the federal government's National Landcare Program.

EPLB staff were joined in the field by Adelaide University scientists, local surveyors, Far West Coast rangers and staff from the Department for Environment and Water's Coast and Marine branch.

They worked together to collect information, including vegetation type, vegetation height and density, land height, evidence of animal presence and any signs of disturbance.

EPLB landscape officer Alex Fraser said saltmarshes were a critically important vegetation community.

"Many are supporting early stages of marine species

and provide important feeding areas for many shorebirds.

"These surveys are really important to help us to manage the more than 3000 kilometres of saltmarsh coastline across the Eyre Peninsula."

Results are being analysed with indications revealing some sites have changed little in 25 years since they were previously surveyed, while others are showing more significant changes.

The study of the saltmarsh sites was shedding new light on the influence of vegetation types and saltmarsh on carbon stock in South Australia.

The results from the western Eyre Peninsula sites will add to the results from 181 sediment core samples taken at Mount Young, Franklin Harbour and Tumby Bay sites last year. A final report for all sediment sample sites will be undertaken once the western Eyre Peninsula sediment analysis is complete.



SURVEY: A saltmarsh community at Acraman Creek, near Smoky Bay. Photo: Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board

Photo 6:
Spiny-cheeked
Honeyeater,
photographed during
woodland bird survey for
the Sustainable Grazing
Sheoak Project. Lake
Hamilton April 2021.
Photo Credit Sam
Gordon



- Input was provided for the Great White Kaolin Project, Poochera, Mining Proposal. This included providing information of threatened species that have been recorded within (or close to) the proposed mining area and suggested actions to mitigate the potential impacts such as further survey work and conservation works nearby to mitigate / off-set any loss of habitat as a result of mining activity.
- Monitoring of burnt and unburnt Malleefowl mounds within Kulliparu Conservation Park was completed. The report is currently being completed and results will be included in the next quarterly report.

Sheoak Market-Based Instruments (MBI) Project

The Sheoak Market-Based Instruments (MBI) Project, which commenced in 2011, 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 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.

- With the 10-year project drawing to a close, all on-ground works projects implemented under the broader Sheoak MBI project were completed this quarter. Another 1.5 km of fencing has been erected to exclude grazing from an area which is being direct seeded by hand with seed stock sourced from an adjoining Sheoak Grassy Woodland habitat area.
- Final surveys were completed at 10 bird survey sites, which were also surveyed in 2012 and 2015. Bird survey data for the 10 year period is being compared and findings will be reported in the project completion report to be submitted to the Native Vegetation Council next quarter.

Communications and community engagement for this period

- The EP Landscape Board has supported revegetation works on private land through the provision of tree guards, stakes, planting advice and species selection.



*Photo 7:
Field trip to Back Beach, with
the R/1 classes from Streaky
Bay Area School where pupils
learnt about shorebird
monitoring, marine ecosystems
and associated threats*

- Landscape officers have assisted a number of farmers with the identification of both weed and native plant species, and have provided information about the toxicity levels of the species to stock.
- Plant identification was undertaken for a landholder who is wanting to write a book about Laura Bay local plant species.
- The EP Landscape Board, in collaboration with the Streaky Bay Area School, hosted a marine education field trip to Back Beach. Students participated in a shorebird identification session, where they had the opportunity to use a birdscope. They also learnt about the role of shorebirds in the ecological system, food webs, the threat of marine debris and micro plastics, and about other plants and animals in the ecosystem.
- An interactive presentation on land management and conservation was held with Streaky Bay Area School year 11's as part of their geography and outdoor education project.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- The Sheoak MBI Project will draw to a close, and final reporting for the project will be completed.
- Regional Bushland Condition Monitoring will be starting in late August. Fifteen sites will be surveyed in western Eyre Peninsula. As part of this program benchmark vegetation communities that are being monitored to assess long term health of Eyre Peninsula's environment are coastal shrublands, woodlands with a grassy or sedge understory, inland mallee on sandy loams and swamp paper-bark low forests.

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 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: Regional Projects**.*

Program highlights this period

Hillsea Station Contributing to the Restoration of Coastal Woodlands on Lower Western Eyre Peninsula

- Project work for this Grassroots Grant funded project has been completed.
- Revegetation via direct seeding was implemented over 10 hectares and access to the revegetation area has been controlled by the construction of 2 km of fencing.
- These works will benefit threatened species including the Diamond Fire-tail and White-bellied Sea-Eagle. The on-ground work will also help to improve the station’s terrestrial biodiversity and that of surrounding areas by establishing Sheoak Grassy Woodland and Coastal Mallee habitat adjacent to threatened temperate coastal saltmarsh. Restoration and protection of these important plant communities will also support the recovery efforts for several Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act listed plant and animal species in this key biodiversity area.

Local government engagement for this period

The Whirlpool Wetland Recovery and Visitor Management Project

- Landscape officers have worked in collaboration with the District Council of Streaky Bay to develop interpretive signage for Grassroots Grant funded ‘The Whirlpool Wetland Recovery and Visitor Management Project’.



*Photo 8:
Fencing and direct seeding to restore critical Sheoak Grassy Woodland vegetation on Hillsea Station which has been affected by wildfire and historic grazing*

Communications and community engagement for this period

- Landscape officers have been liaising with the Fowlers Bay Progress Association and the Venus Bay Progress Association to provide advice for the development of project applications for the 2021-2022 Grassroots Grants funding round.
- Grassroots Grant application guidelines for the 2021-2022 grant round were distributed to community groups, NGO's and other potential applicants.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- The 'The Whirlpool Wetland Recovery and Visitor Management Project' Grassroots Grant project will be completed.
- The 2021-22 Grassroots Grants will be awarded and support provided to successful applicants for the initiation of projects.



*Photo 9:
Discussing saltmarsh conservation and sand
dune restoration project ideas with Fowlers
Bay community members for the STAR project
and potential grass roots grants funding*

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