

Business Plan Achievement Report

3rd Quarter 2020-2021

1 January to 31 March 2021

Regional Projects






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 broader program management and planning across the Eyre Peninsula region in regards to our core programs; information about implementing the Water Allocation Plan, managing Water Affecting Activities and delivery of regional Federally-funded projects; and includes updates on our planning processes and general business support functions. For each sub-program the report covers:

- 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 some program elements.
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Further details of each of these programs can be found on the [Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board website](#) or by contacting **Susan Stovell** (*Manager, Planning and Engagement*) on 08 8688 3201.

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Sustainable agriculture

Sub-program	Status
Delivering the RLP Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF) services	
Delivering the RLP Regenerative Agriculture Project	
Delivering the Eastern Eyre Soil Project	

Delivering the Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF) services

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).

Program highlights this period

- *Lower Eyre Peninsula Ag Expo* was held on 2 March 2021, with 58 attendees including farmers, advisors and industry representatives. The Expo, organised by Air EP, included guest speakers on a range of topics relating to improving profitability and productivity in lower EP farming systems.
- The RALF officer supported the promotion and extension of the National Landcare Program (NLP) Mallee Seeps project. More information about this project can be found in the *Business Plan Achievement Report: Eastern District*.
- The RALF officer attended and supported organisers of the Regional Innovators Group (RIG) Meeting as a part of the NLP funded *Resilient EP project*, which is looking at improvements to the soil moisture probe network.
- The RALF is participating in the *National Grower Group Collective: Building Australian Agricultural Extension Skill Program*, facilitated by Jeannette Long and Danielle England. This National Landcare Funded Program aims at building extension and facilitation skills of project officers, giving them access to specialists in the field while applying learnings to on-ground extension work. The RALF is already applying learnings in the planning of activities for farmers.

Local government engagement for this period

Nothing to report.

Communications and community engagement for this period

- *Facilitation of the Upper Eyre Peninsula post-harvest meetings.*
Post-harvest meetings were held by AIR EP in conjunction with the South Australia Research and Development Institute (SARDI) Minnipa Agricultural Centre team. Eight meetings were held with a total of 114 farmers and seven industry representatives attending across the eight locations. Topics covered included the latest research results on a range of issues such as Mallee seeps management and new annual legume pasture species and grazing trials.



Photo 1: Amanda Cook SARDI, presenting at the Kalabni (Ceduna) Upper EP Farmer Meeting on 9 March 2021.



Photo 2: Chris McDonough presenting the EP Mallee seeps project at the Rudall Upper EP Farmer Meeting on 11 March 2021.

- The RALF supported the delivery of a number of workshops and meetings including:
 - two Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) *frost workshops*, aimed at increasing grain grower understanding relating to frost risk and how to manage it, using tools such as frost mapping,
 - a GRDC funded *Precision Ag (PA) workshop*, held by AIR EP in conjunction with the Society of Precision Agriculture Australia (SPAA) and Pinion Advisory, aimed at showing farmers how to get the most out of PA.
 - The inaugural AIR EP Medium and Low Rainfall Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) Committee meetings.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Promotion of the Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board's 2021-22 Grassroots Grants round to farmer and community groups.
- Supporting AIR EP in the organisation of:
 - *Post-emergence herbicide application workshop* to improve knowledge of more effective and safe use of post-emergent herbicides in low rainfall cropping systems, and
 - *Soil amelioration master class*, which will provide farmers with the key principles to be aware of when considering soil amelioration activities such as ripping, delving and spading on different EP soil types.
- Supporting the Regenerative Agriculture Project (RAP) *Regenerative ag forum* scheduled for 8 June 2021, for farmers interested in improving their soil health, featuring Dr Christine Jones, an expert soil ecologist from Western Australia and a passionate spokesperson for restoring Australian soils.
- Assisting farmer groups/ag bureau groups with the coordination and organisation of their in-season crop walks.

Delivering the region's Regenerative Agriculture Project

The [Regenerative Agriculture Project \(RAP\)](#) on Eyre Peninsula is a five year (2018-2023) program funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program. The project aims to increase awareness, knowledge and the adoption of land management practices to restore soil pH levels, increase soil organic carbon levels and reduce the risk of nutrient loss from wind and water erosion. The project supports farming systems groups and individual farmers to implement best practice management, through extension activities, pH mapping, pH testing, demonstration sites, forums and monitoring sites. Results are showcased to the broader farming community. The program engages farmers across the Eyre Peninsula through paddock based demonstrations to reduce sub-soil constraints, increase soil organic carbon, and increase soil cover using winter and summer mixed species, thereby reducing nutrient and organic carbon loss. There are currently eighteen demonstration sites established across the Eyre Peninsula.

Mallee seeps are an increasing issue in eastern Eyre Peninsula. This project also aims to increase the understanding of the extent and impact of these seeps in the environment. Farmers and farming communities are supported through web-based mapping programs, forums, workshops and one-on-one support.

Project delivery is contracted to Agricultural Innovation and Research Eyre Peninsula (AIR EP), Rural Solutions SA, and other service providers as required.

Program highlights this period

- Signing of agreements of the new round of soil carbon and multi-species cover crop demonstrations with farmer groups and landholders.
- The *Farming acid soil champions workshops* held on the Lower EP and Cleve Hills area were successful with good feedback from participants. These workshops are held for participants willing to champion the cause of managing acid soils, sharing their knowledge and skills with other landholders in the district.
- On the back of the soil acidity workshops, follow up work has been done with a number of landholders to manage acidic land better.
- Following a visit by Chris McDonough from Insight Extension for Agriculture, there has been continued interest in 'Mallee seeps' type salinity.



Photo 3: Participants in 'Farming acid soils champions workshop' at Cleve, February 2021.



Photo 4:
Hands on soil pH testing at the Cleve 'Farming acid soils champions workshop', February 2021.

Mixed species crops and pastures for soil management program

- Low amounts of summer rainfall across the region in January through to March have hampered the growth of summer established cover crops. Nevertheless, there has still been some good survival.
- Two demonstration sites (PB15 and PB14) were visited, and landholders were assisted with the collection of initial soil samples along with soil bulk densities to improve the baseline data quality.
- One demonstration site (PB3), which wasn't established in 2020 as originally scheduled, has been relocated and resampling will be conducted in the winter season in 2021.
- AIR EP have been working with Brett Masters from the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) Rural Solutions, to make sure sufficient soil information is collected at the commencement of the mixed species demonstrations sites, to improve the comparison of treatments in the longer term.
- Rural Solutions have been contracted to deliver 16 one-on-one site visits for the Regenerative Ag program. Site visits are available by request to landholders with a soil or production issue, following the visit they will receive a report on the issue with recommendations for action.
- New methods for treatment comparisons, like the use of the smart phone app 'Canopeo' for surface cover assessments, have been included in the signed agreements with demonstration site landholders.

Soil carbon demonstration sites

- Agreements have been signed for three new soil carbon demonstration sites (SC7, SC8 and SC9).
- One demonstration site (SC9) was visited, soil sampling was undertaken and soil bulk density measurements taken.
- One site (SC4) wasn't established in 2020 due to poor seasonal conditions, and has been moved into 2021, and resampled.

Mallee seeps project

- AIR EP organised and hosted a virtual soils meeting for EP practitioners to discuss current and planned projects around soil constraints, including Mallee seeps.
- Assistance has been provided to the NLP funded Mallee Seeps project. More information about this project can be found in the *Business Plan Achievement Report: Eastern District*.
- A Mallee Seeps information session was delivered by Chris McDonough as part of the Upper EP Farmer Meetings in March 2021.

Restoring soil pH project

- Two soil acidity workshops were held at Cummins and Cleve in February.
- Brett Masters, Rural Solutions has completed two one-on-one site visits to assist landholders with acid soil amelioration recommendations.

Local government engagement for this period

- Nothing to report.

Communications and community engagement for this period

- *Farmer Connect* issue number 11 was prepared and distributed.
- Two social media posts regarding Regenerative Ag events (acid soil workshops and Upper EP farmer meetings with Mallee Seeps speaker).

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- The second part of workshops relating to the Restoring Soil pH project are coming up in the next period. Some of the participants have had pH mapping undertaken since the first workshop and we can discuss the implications of this.
- New small grant recipients will be establishing their demonstration plots following their successful grant application.
- Regenerative Agriculture Forum is being planned to be held on 8 June, and hopefully some of the learnings from the participants in the small grant program can be shared and discussed.

Delivering the Eastern Eyre Soil project

Funded by the EP Landscape Board, the short term, opportunistic project aims to increase soil cover of bare soils of Eastern EP over the 2020/21 summer, either by providing support to sow cover, undertake soil amelioration activities, or monitor existing cover crops to determine suitable species and understand the impact on the following winter crop.

Program highlights this period

- **Monitoring soil moisture levels on areas planted to summer crops:**
Landholders considered that this was important to assist in gaining confidence of the correct time to spray out summer covers to limit impact on subsequent winter crops. Transects have been identified and mapped. Baseline soil samples were collected in February and March. These samples have been processed.
- **Site levelling of areas that have been subject to significant erosion:**
Ripping and levelling programs have been conducted on two previously inspected sites at Arno Bay and Mount Priscilla.
- **Technical support for ripping and seeding of areas of poor cover:**
Another site visit was conducted to properties closer to Mount Priscilla. Advice was provided on ripping and seeding programs to target key areas on these paddocks. Additional support is being provided to one landholder who has also decided to conduct some assessments of ripping with inclusion plates with sowing using a disc seeder.
- **Testing and evaluation of different ripping practices to reduce erosion risk:**
Ripping with inclusion plates has shown benefits to crop establishment and growth, and hence surface cover in the long term. However, these techniques can also result in an uneven surface making sowing of crops difficult. As a result, some landholders are using techniques including crumple rollers and/or levelling post ripping to improve seed depth control. There is growing concern that these practices increase erosion risk in the short term. Landholders have requested monitoring of

the potential issues and an evaluation of different techniques to reduce erosion risk. Techniques being evaluated include tyre rollers post ripping and ripping at a slight offset to seed rows.

- **Mixed species cover crops:**

The list of landholders applying for support to assess the benefit to soil cover and production of mixed species has been finalised.

Local government engagement for this period

- Nothing to report.

Communications and community engagement for this period

- Fourteen site visits have been conducted including:
 - an initial visit with all landholders,
 - monitoring of soil water levels under summer cover crops conducted on five sites, and
 - establishment of sites for monitoring the impact of ripping on soil cover established on two sites.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Further samples will be taken at Ranford at four demonstration sites in the middle of April, with one other prior to seeding.
- Areas and species composition are being finalised in early April. The total area to be planted will be between 350 to 500 ha.
- **Perennial pastures:**
Areas to be sown are being finalized with landholders to order seed in prior to the middle of April.

Water resources management

Sub-program	Status
Implementation of the Water Allocation Plan (WAP)	
Groundwater dependent ecosystem (GDE) monitoring	
Water Affecting Activities (WAA) processed and managed	

Implementation of the Water Allocation Plan (WAP)

The Water Allocation Plan (WAP) for the Southern Basins and the Musgrave Prescribed Wells Areas, Eyre Peninsula, was endorsed by the State Government on 28 June 2016. The WAP guides the management the extraction of groundwater from wells within two Prescribed Wells Areas (PWAs). The Southern Basins PWA is located between Coffin Bay and Port Lincoln on southern Eyre Peninsula, and the Musgrave PWA is located between Lock and Elliston on western Eyre Peninsula.

If you would like more information on the WAP, you can download a copy of the Water Allocation Plan for the Southern Basins and the Musgrave Prescribed Wells Areas by clicking [here](#).

Program highlights this period

- The Water Allocation Plan implementation team meeting number 10 was held.

Local government engagement for this period

- A meeting was held with the Elliston Council Chief Executive Officer and Deputy Mayor to discuss groundwater levels in the Musgrave Prescribed Water Area.

Communications and community engagement for this period

- A meeting was held at Elliston District Council between Council staff and councillors, Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board staff, Department for Environment and Water (DEW) Water Licencing, and Policy and Planning staff, and local water licence holders. An update was provided to all stakeholders in attendance on the current groundwater levels and likely allocations for 2021-22.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- The Water Allocation Plan implementation team meeting number 11.
- Annual water allocations are to be finalised in April with an announcement to be made in late June or July.

Groundwater dependent ecosystem (GDE) monitoring

One of the objectives of the Water Allocation Plan (WAP) for the Southern Basins and Musgrave Prescribed Wells Areas (2016) is to minimise the impact of licenced taking of groundwater on ecosystems that depend on the prescribed groundwater resources. The Plan aims to maintain these ecosystems, collectively known as Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs), at a low level of risk, and in the condition, and at the locations and extents they occurred at in 2016. Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board has therefore developed a program to establish a baseline and monitor changes in flora condition, groundwater level and salinity, at a group of GDEs within the Southern Basins and Musgrave Prescribed Wells Areas. More information about GDE monitoring, including report cards can be obtained [here](#).

Program highlights this period

- Staff have finalised a plan to improve and expand the monitoring program for Wetland sites. This monitoring will continue in 2021 and involve the use of a drone.
- The 2020 GDE monitoring Report Cards for the five Red Gum sites have been completed and made publically available on the Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board website [here](#). A social media was also posted about this achievement. Monitoring results for 2020 show that in both the Musgrave and Southern Basin PWAs there has been no negative impact of licensed groundwater extraction on the Red Gum GDEs between 2016 and 2020. There has been an increase in the average condition of Red Gums at both the control and extraction sites during this period. This improvement in Red Gum condition has occurred despite a continued decline in groundwater levels at all sites from 2016 to 2020 (approx. 13 cm in Southern Basins PWA and 30 cm in Musgrave PWA from 2019 to 2020).

Local government engagement for this period

- As described above some consultation with the District Council of Elliston was undertaken in relation to the WAP which included some discussion of the 2020 GDE monitoring Report Cards

Communications and community engagement for this period

- As described above the website was updated with the 2020 GDE monitoring report cards and a social media post was also completed

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Finalise the monitoring for the GDE Wetland sites.

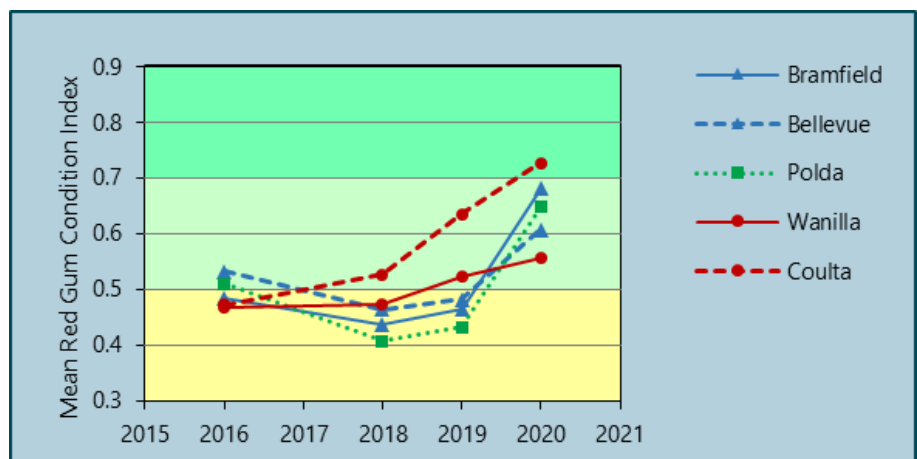


Figure 1: Change in Red Gum Condition Index, 2016 to 2020, at all monitored Red Gum GDE sites

Water Affecting Activities (WAA) processed and managed

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](#) and the region's Water Resources Assessment Officer is always available to advise and help.

Program highlights this period

- Across the region the following work related to Water Affecting Activities (WAA) has been undertaken by Board staff:
 - 11 WAA permit applications were received and 4 approved. These include permit approvals for vehicle crossings, dam construction, and saline drainage to help manage waterlogging and salinity issues.
 - Four inspections of WAA completed works were undertaken.
 - Two active compliance issues are being addressed.
 - 41 water salinity/pH tests were completed for landholders.
 - 57 WAA enquiries were received and addressed.
- As the [Staff WAA Transition Plan](#) is implemented, regional Authorised Officers are now undertaking assessments of Water Affecting Activity Permits and other water resources tasks, with the support of the Water Resources Assessment Officer based in our Port Lincoln office.
- [District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula: upgrade to Bratten Way](#)
Worked with DCLEP and landowners to address concerns about impacts to catchment flows and waterlogging



*Photo 5:
Completion of works inspection on this dam constructed in late 2019. This property was limited for water supply and has steep terrain, where this dam now allows for improved sheep grazing on this land.*



*Photo 1:
Downer, landowners and EPLB site visit to
discuss construction and post work
remediation of a temporary high compact
crossing through a salt impacted watercourse
for the construction of the high voltage electric
transmission line.*

- Construction of the ElectraNet Transmission line from Whyalla to Port Lincoln has commenced. Site visits have been undertaken with the principle contractor Downer Australia and landowners to provide advice on minimising impacts on watercourses and wetlands.
- **Cummins Wanilla Basin Drainage Project Grants**
The Board is administering \$250,000 in funding from the South Australian Government's Regional Growth Fund, which is available through a grants program for landholders to complete work that upgrades and maintains existing drainage infrastructure in the Cummins Wanilla Basin. The first round of applications for this grant funding have been received. Site visits and assessments of the applications have been undertaken, with three grants approved. Successful grants will be announced next quarter. A second round of funding will open later in 2021.

Local government engagement for this period

- District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula: engagement around the Bratten Way road upgrade.

Communications and community engagement for this period

- [Media release](#) about the Cummins Wanilla Basin drainage project grants
- 41 water salinity/pH tests were completed for landholders.
- 57 WAA enquiries were received and completed.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- WAA permit application processing.
- WAA compliance cases investigated.
- Completion of WAA works inspections.
- Regional water testing undertaken and support provided
- WAA enquiries fielded and responses provided.
- Work with local government on any WAA / field based water resource issue
- Round 1 of the Cummins Wanilla Basin Infrastructure upgrade grants to be announced and projects commenced.

Pest plant and animal control

Sub-program	Status
Pest management plans	

The Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board works closely with land managers to find ways of reducing the number of pests, help restore native biodiversity and reduce losses in the agricultural industry. As part of the pest management program, the Board has developed twenty-one pest management plans for the management of priority pest plants and animals across the region. Here we report on region-wide and high level activities contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the pest management plans including, but not limited to:

- *Higher level progress towards pest management plans implementation and review.*
- *Development of district actions plans.*
- *Delivery of cross district control programs. .*

*Implementation of actions identified in the current twenty one pest management plans is ongoing. Please refer to the **Pest plants and animals sections** in the district [Business Plan Achievement Reports](#) for key progress, operational activities and achievements.*

More information about pest plants and animals on the Eyre Peninsula, and links to the EP landscape board pest management plans can be found [here](#).

Program highlights this period

- A review of the pest animal and plant assessment matrix was completed in this quarter. The assessment matrix is a scoring system used to prioritise pest species for strategic management and will guide the Board's direction on priority pest species in the future. This assessment guided information provided in the Pest Plant and Animal Control Policy as part of the draft EP Landscape Plan.
- There has been continued progress on updating all twenty-one pest management plans. This has included updating information as a result of the updated assessment matrix and acquiring comment from PIRSA Biosecurity.
- The writing of annual district action plans has also started. These are being written to assist operational staff undertake different priority control activities for different pests in each district.

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

- Continue to progress updating pest management plans.
- Continue to progress writing annual action plans.

Other stewardship

Sub-program	Status
Delivering the RLP Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery Project (STAR)	
Delivering the RLP Fire Recovery Program	
Other regional scale landscape management activities (coastal management, restoration, conservation, threatened species and ecological communities, blue carbon, citizen science etc.)	

Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery (STAR) Project

The [Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery \(STAR\) Project](#) is being delivered thanks to funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program (NLP). The project focuses on temperate saltmarshes, part of a nationally Threatened Ecological Community, and the Hooded Plover, one of Australia's top 20 threatened fauna species. The project will be delivered until 2023. Priority works include access management, threat abatement, revegetation, weed management, improving hydrological flows, and removing marine debris. More information about the project can be found [here](#).

Program highlights this period

Eastern District

Beach nesting birds

• Whyalla Saltpans Summer Shorebird Count

BirdLife Australia volunteers recorded large flocks of banded stilts, red-necked stints, red knots, and curlew sandpipers, a total of 3,716 shorebirds (27 species) were counted. Breeding of black-winged stilt and Caspian tern were also noted, the cute fuzzy chicks delighting volunteers. The *BirdLife Australia's National Shorebird Monitoring Program* monitors the population trends of shorebirds in Australia and these data inform conservation actions in Australia and in the flyway. Thank you to our BirdLife Australia volunteers, Pacific Salt and BASF for supporting this twice yearly monitoring program. The Whyalla saltpans are important habitat and sanctuary for waders and migratory shorebirds.

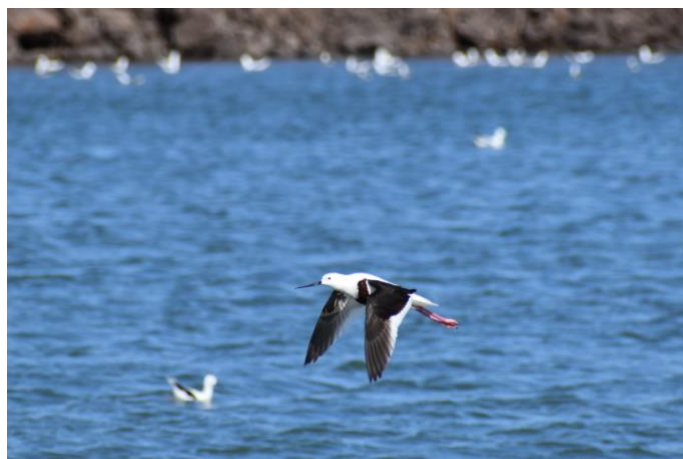


Photo 2: A banded stilt takes flight at the Whyalla Saltpans Summer Shorebird Count.



Photo 3: Little egrets spotted wading in the saltmarshes at the Whyalla Saltpans Summer Shorebird Count.

*Photo 4:
BirdLife Australia volunteers
counting the number of Banded Stilts
in a large flock at the Whyalla
Saltpans.*



Saltmarshes

- **Cowleds Landing South Debris Removal**
Twenty-five cubic metres of rubbish, including 98 tires, car, boat and caravan bodies were removed from 50 hectares of saltmarsh using a local contractor.

- **Off-Road Vehicle Damage to Saltmarshes Short Film**

This project aims to raise public awareness of the impacts of recreational off-road vehicles (4WD and motorbikes) on coastal saltmarshes and how recreational off road vehicle drivers can enjoy the coastal environment responsibly. Work on the project to date includes procurement of a local film maker, film planning and liaison with stakeholders including the Whyalla 4WD Club and the Whyalla Motorcycle Club. The short film is due for release in June.



Photo 5: Debris including car bodies being removed from saltmarsh south of Cowleds Landing.



*Photo 6:
Almost 100 tires were removed from
50 hectares of saltmarsh south of
Cowleds Landing.*

Western District

Beach nesting birds

- *BirdLife Australia's National Shorebird Monitoring Program*

The 2021 surveys were conducted in conjunction with DEW National Parks and Wildlife staff and volunteers across nine nationally significant Shorebird Areas on the western Eyre Peninsula, which included 29 count areas. Surveys involved five EP Landscape Board staff, four National Parks and Wildlife staff and seven volunteers.

- *Hooded Plover nesting territory monitoring*

Fortnightly monitoring of five Hooded Plover breeding territory sites across the western region have been completed for the 2020-21 breeding season.

- *Feral cat and fox control*

- Feral cat and fox control has been implemented as a threat abatement activity to protect the Hooded Plover breeding territory at Surfers Beach near Scales Bay.
- Remote camera monitoring for feral predator management and the use of the Felixer automated cat control tool has continued at Venus Bay Conservation Park, with particular emphasis on protecting the Hooded Plover breeding site at Entrance Beach.

Saltmarshes

- *Saltmarsh remediation works*

Remediation activities, including track ripping to enable saltmarsh regeneration and fencing of off-road vehicle tracks passing through saltmarsh, has occurred at Seagull Lake.

- *Rabbit control*

Rabbit monitoring and control has occurred at temperate saltmarsh areas including Seagull Lake, Blanchepoint and The Spit covering a combined area of over 250 hectares.

- *Monitoring and evaluation*

Photopoints were established with aerial photos taken in a saltmarsh remediation project site near the Smoky Bay township. By taking repeated photographs at the photopoints over time, we will be able to determine the level of regrowth of saltmarsh vegetation at the site, enabling us to analyse the success of the remediation works.



Photo 7: Track remediation at Seagull Lake.
Photo credit: Nadine Brown



Photo 8:
Eastern Curlews counted during Migratory
Shorebird Survey near Smoky Bay

Southern District

Beach nesting birds

- *BirdLife Australia's National Shorebird Monitoring Program*

During February two landscape officers, two DEW staff and seven highly-skilled volunteers surveyed eight key count areas by foot across three priority shorebird areas on southern Eyre Peninsula coastline, to collect data for BirdLife Australia as part of *Australia's National Shorebird Monitoring Program* (previously *Shorebird 2020*). Long-term monitoring of shorebirds is vital to many species, and key habitat for migratory and resident shorebirds include saltmarsh, sandflats, islands and protected embayments. This was a key milestone for the STAR project. For the Coffin Bay key migratory shorebird area, more than 2,900 birds were counted, with 42 species recorded including nationally endangered red knots and critically endangered nationally curlew sandpipers.

- **African Boxthorn control** was implemented around a Hooded Plover nesting territories and in saltmarsh sites at Cape Euler and Redcliffs south of Tumby Bay.

- **Fox control**

- Co-ordinated fox control was undertaken at three Hooded Plover nesting territory sites in lower eastern EP at Golf Club Beach, Cape Euler and Bolingbroke north. Foxes are one of the key threats to the recruitment of Hooded Plovers. Landscape officers worked with coastal landholders to undertake a targeted baiting program that ran for four weeks adjacent to Hooded Plover nesting territories. A total of 14 fox baits were taken during this time. Our program was also enhanced by six adjoining landholders who undertook their own fox baiting program or trapping at the same time.
- Surveying of fox dens in the coastal reserve has also commenced, with plans to close fox dens before the next Hooded Plover nesting season.



Photo 9: 1080 warning signs erected for the STAR fox baiting program



Photo 10:
Shorebird survey– Migratory shorebirds observed through a spotting scope at Pt Longnose, Coffin Bay.

Local government engagement for this period

Eastern District

Site visits and agreement with [District Council of Cleve](#) to upgrade the culvert on Cowley Road in Arno Bay. This project will increase the hydrological flow under this road helping to restore threatened temperate coastal saltmarsh habitat.

Western District

Worked with [District Council of Streaky Bay](#) to remediate tracks at Seagull Lake.

Southern District

Approvals to undertake pest plant and animal control on [District Council of Tumby Bay](#) land for STAR-related on-ground works.

Communications and community engagement for this period

Eastern District

- [Edward John Eyre High School](#) excursion to [Eight-Mile Creek](#) saltmarshes in [Whyalla](#)
Year 11 students from Edward John Eyre High visited the saltmarshes as part of their SACE, Stage 1 Outdoor Education project on 'Coast Care - Human Impact on our beaches'. A local landscape officer led the excursion discussing the importance of Temperate Coastal Saltmarshes, key threats, and the work the EP Landscape Board are doing as part of the STAR project. The excursion support student learning in understanding and developing sustainable environmental practices with a focus on an important local ecosystem.



*Photo 11:
Students learning about the importance of mangrove-saltmarsh habitats on an excursion with local Landscape Officer at the Eight-Mile Creek Beach.*



*Photo 12:
BirdLife Australia presenter Colin Rogers explains why
saltmarshes and salt fields provide important habitat for
waders and migratory shorebirds at a workshop in
Whyalla.*

- **Shorebird Workshop**

BirdLife Australia volunteers from the 'Eyre Peninsula Whyalla' and the 'Port Augusta Babbler' Bird Groups attended a shorebird workshop in Whyalla. Guest lecturer Colin Rogers from BirdLife Australia explained how saltmarshes and salt fields provide important habitat for waders and migratory shorebirds, which are declining in numbers globally. He detailed what the birds are looking for in these refuges, ranging from food to roosts. BASF Whyalla Operations Manager also attended the workshop. BASF and Pacific Salt have supported the National Shorebird Monitoring Program at the Whyalla Saltpans since 2016.

Western District

- A beach nesting bird and shorebird workshop was held with the Streaky Bay Children's Centre with the aim of increasing awareness around the threats the birds face, teaching children how to identify the birds and their habitat, and explaining what actions can be taken to increase their breeding success and survival rate.
- A shorebird workshop was also held with the Streaky Bay Scout group and involved a debris clean up along the edge of the Blancheport Samphire area. Students learnt about the role samphire plays in filtering runoff before it enters the marine ecosystem, how samphire acts as a fish nursery and the use of samphire in medicine, soap making and culinary dishes.
- Working in conjunction with a National Parks and Wildlife staff member, a marine education workshop was held with Year 8 students from Cleve Area School at Smooth Pool. Shorebirds, beach nesting birds, local marine habitat, indigenous culture and basic geology were discussed. Students were also given the opportunity to use a basic bird ID guide and birdscope to identify shorebirds.



*Photo 13:
Landscape Officer and Cleve Area School Students
discussing Hooded Plover habitat and threats to
nesting success.*



Photo 14: Hooded Plover volunteer meeting in progress.



Photo 15: Beach Nesting Birds presentation underway.



Photo 16: Role play activity – a Hooded plover incubating 3 eggs.



Photo 17: Beach walk – where might a Hooded Plover nest?

Southern District

- Landscape officers worked with six adjoining coastal landholders to enable successful implementation of the fox baiting program.
- Sixteen volunteers from Southern Eyre Friends of Parks group attended a Hooded Plover information session at the EP Landscape Board office in Port Lincoln. Participants were provided an overview of the BirdLife Australia Hooded Plover monitoring programs, including nesting territory monitoring and the Hooded Plover biennial counts, which are coordinated locally by the EP Landscape Board. They were also provided information about training requirements, which will be delivered at a separate workshop. All participants that attended left the meeting motivated and have confirmed their interest in attending a Hooded Plover territory monitoring training workshop.
- Two landscape officers ran a 'Conservation of Beach Nesting Birds on Eyre Peninsula' workshop at Redcliffs Camp near Tumby Bay for the Lower EP Home School group, who have never been engaged with by Landscape Board (or old NREP) staff previously. Twenty-two members of the group (parents and children) attended the three-hour workshop that included an interactive presentation focusing on beach nesting birds, with a particular focus on the threatened Hooded Plover. A role play activity was narrated by a landscape officer while children acted out the 'nesting season' of a Hooded Plover pair. A beach walk was also undertaken to see where Hooded Plovers nest, look at the threats to the Hooded Plovers and discuss these. Participants' knowledge of Hooded Plovers was greatly increased from the workshop and the different activities enabled reinforcement and understanding at all levels.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

Eastern District

- Completion of fencing project to protect approximately 700 ha of saltmarsh from off-road vehicle damage.
- Completion of video about off-road vehicle damage to saltmarshes.

Western District

- Shorebird workshops with Streaky Bay Area School and Miltaburra Area School.
- Threat abatement activities at the Far West Hooded Plover Breeding territories being monitored under the STAR project.
- Overwintering surveys.
- Saltmarsh remediation works at Smoky Bay.
- Saltmarsh profile surveys at Laura Bay and Ackramans Creek with DEW and Far West Coast Rangers.

Southern District

- Hooded Plover nesting territory training for Friends of Lincoln National Park.
- School Hooded Plover workshop.
- Rabbit baiting to protect threatened coastal saltmarsh.
- Rubbish removal from coastal saltmarsh areas.

Delivering the RLP Fire Recovery Program

Funded under the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, fire recovery works are being undertaken in the Middleback and Secret Rocks fire grounds which were impacted by the 2019 bushfires. Works include priority pest plant, pest animal, and overabundant native herbivore control, as well as controlling access and undertaking erosion management. The fire recovery program will assist the recovery of threatened species including Malleefowl, Sandhill Dunnarts, Chalky Wattle and Yellow Swainson Pea.

Program highlights this period

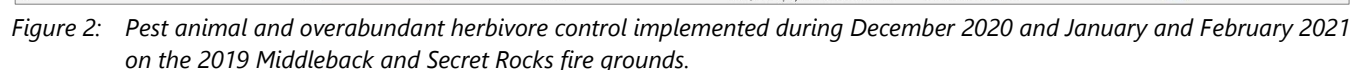
- The program has been delivered within scope, with the third quarterly report for 2020-21 submitted to the Australian Government.
- Overabundant herbivore (kangaroo), rabbit, fox and cat control is being undertaken on a monthly basis by a qualified contractor. This is difficult to implement across a fire ground, but is essential to allow vegetation to recover post fire, particularly for more palatable species. Monthly control will continue until at least June 2021.
- Staff have been assisting landholders to obtain funds from DEW to replace heritage agreement fencing burnt in the fires.

Local government engagement for this period

- Nothing to report.

- Ongoing communication is occurring with four land managers affected by the fires.

- Continue overabundant herbivore (kangaroo), rabbit, fox and cat control.
- Continue to support landholders to replace heritage agreement fencing burnt in the fires.



Program highlights this period

- A Blue Carbon meeting facilitated by EP Landscape Board was attended by DC Franklin Harbour, DC Ceduna, DC Tumby Bay, DC Streaky Bay, DC Elliston and DEW Blue Carbon specialists. Opportunities for Blue Carbon offsets that can be realised by councils were discussed. Further information will be shared with councils as it becomes available.

Carbon + Biodiversity pilot

The Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board region has been chosen as one of six pilot regions across Australia for the program which is part of the Agriculture Stewardship Package being delivered by the Australian Government Department for Agriculture, Water and Environment. This pilot will develop arrangements to reward farmers for increasing biodiversity and storing carbon by undertaking revegetation. The Board will assist the Department for Agriculture, Water and Environment with pilot design and promote the opportunity to farmers on Eyre Peninsula.

Program highlights this period

- Ongoing discussions have been had with representatives of the Department for Agriculture, Water and Environment and advice has been provided around region specific planting protocols and establishment costs.

Local government engagement for this period

- Nothing to report.

Communications and community engagement for this period

- A social media post alerting farmers to this opportunity was also completed in early March.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Finalise a media release and further social media describing in more detail this opportunity.
- Liaise with farmers to assist them complete applications to the Department for Agriculture, Water and Environment for revegetation works which are due in June 2021.

Eyes on Eyre

The 'Eyes on Eyre' concept was formulated in 2016 with a collective involving three organisations: the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association, Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board and Regional Development Australia Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula (RDAEP), coming together to form a working group to face the challenge of improving outcomes for the environment and visitors. The Department for Environment and Water have joined this collective as well. The aim of Eyes on Eyre is to enable more people to enjoy and appreciate the spectacular coastline and avoid impacts on the natural environment. This is being done by implementing a cohesive, region wide strategy for the sustainable management of visitor access. Eyes on Eyre will be delivered in a staged approach on an ongoing basis to see incremental positive change over time.

Program highlights this period

- Eyre Peninsula experienced a huge influx of visitation over the Christmas period which has resulted in Board staff having to work with concerned community members and local councils to try and hasten management and infrastructure upgrades to limit future environmental degradation. The Eyes on Eyre collective organised a survey to gather the communities' perspective about how we manage the challenges going forward.

- Board staff submitted an expression of interest and then a subsequent application to the Landscapes SA Landscape Priorities Fund. The application was titled “Eyes on Eyre – protecting Eyre Peninsula’s coastal environment” and requested \$1.5 million over two years to upgrade fifteen existing camping nodes to provide modern, consistent and state of the art facilities including toilets, shelters and signage, and improve the value of this beautiful and fragile coastal environment through access rationalisation, revegetation and pest control.

Local government engagement for this period

- There has been extensive engagement with all local councils on Eyre Peninsula.

Communications and community engagement for this period

- As mentioned above staff responded to community concerns about the huge influx of visitors, assisted RDAEP organise a survey monkey and created some social media posts.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Continue to liaise with coastal councils to assist them deliver camping node infrastructure upgrades.
- If the Landscape Priorities Fund application is successful delivery of this project will need to be initiated.



Photo 18: Influx of people camping at Greenly Beach

Nomination of ‘Sheoak Woodlands over calcrete’ to be listed under the EPBC Act

Sheoak Woodlands over calcrete are an ecosystem that has degraded significantly since European settlement. After many years of conservation works by farmers and the gathering of data by WildEyre enough evidence was available for a threatened ecological community nomination to be submitted (by the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board) to the Australian Government in January 2018. The Australian Government started the assessment of this nomination in 2020.

Program highlights this period

- Staff from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment visited Eyre Peninsula to look at areas of Sheoak Woodlands over calcrete and talk to farmers, traditional owners and others about the ecosystem. Board staff organised the itinerary and spent time discussing the nomination.

Local government engagement for this period

- Nothing to report.

Communications and community engagement for this period

- Board and Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment staff met with farmers and traditional owners to discuss the nomination

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Respond to any further queries from Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment staff concerning the application.

Grassroots Grants program

Sub-program	Status
Grassroots Grants program established, evaluated and awarded	

*The Grassroots Grants program supports individuals, volunteers, community groups and other organisations working on a not-for-profit basis, with local landscape management projects. Grants are awarded annually. Reporting on support provided by Board staff to grant applicants, as well as monitoring of grants awarded and acquitted is included in the **Grassroots Grants program** sections in the district quarterly reports.*

Program highlights this period

- The Grassroots Grants for the 2020-21 period have all been awarded to community and are all at various stages of delivery. Progress on these individual projects will be reported at the district level.
- The Board is in the process of transitioning the application process and management its grants program from a manual system over to the SmartyGrants online grants management system, in readiness for the next round of Grassroots Grants.
- The application template and guideline for the 2021-22 Grassroots Grants round are currently being reviewed and updated in readiness of the call for applications.

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

- The next round of Grassroots Grants is likely to be called in late April 2021.

Leadership and accountability

Sub-program	Status
Development of the Landscape Plan, Business Plan and other supporting documents	
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting on Landscape Plan priorities and contractual obligations (including Biodiversity Monitoring Program)	
Referrals (including Stormwater management) received and responded to	
EP Landscape Board and Committees supported, budget approved, annual report prepared and Board minutes available to public	

Development of the Landscape Plan, Business Plan and other supporting documents

The EP Landscape Board formally adopted the existing Regional NRM Plan, as the interim Landscape Plan, until the new Landscape Plan is developed for the region in May 2021. This plan, [The Eyre Peninsula Regional Landscape Plan 2017-2027](#), including components such as the regional descriptions and policy framework and is available for download on the EP Landscape Board [website](#) in separate components.

The strategic component of the Plan includes three goals, which are underpinned by six strategic priorities and provides a regional snapshot. The region has been divided into five sub-regional planning areas, and sub-regional descriptions have been developed as separate components to describe the landscapes, as well as the lifestyles and livelihood that influence how the landscape is managed in each of the areas. There is also a policy document that provides the policy framework for how land, pest plant and animals and water affecting activities are to be managed in the region.

The final component of the regional Landscape Plan is the Business Plan. The first Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board Business Plan was approved by the incoming Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board on 15 May 2020, and needs to read as an addendum the existing Business Plan for 2019-22, the latest version of which was approved on 27 March 2019 and is available on the [website](#).

Program highlights this period

- The Board finalised the draft Landscape Plan (the Plan) documentation in this quarter and this has been open to formal consultation, which closed on 29 March 2020.
- The draft Landscape Plan is comprised of the following documents:
 - **The Strategic Plan for 2021/26** - a high-level document outlining the vision, priorities and focus areas for the next five years.
 - **The Business Plan for 2021/22** – an annual plan that provides a snapshot of the Board’s proposed activities for the next 12 months, as well as income, expenditure and details of the landscape levy.
Note: The landscape levy will increase by 1% next year in line with CPI.
 - **The Subregional Descriptions** – covering five subregions, these documents provide important information about how each system functions, the current state of the resources and community values of the subregions.

- **Policy documents** - including details of the Board's Water Affecting Activities, land management and pest plant and animal policies and procedures.

Local government engagement for this period

- The Chair, General Manager and Manager of Operations have been on the road over the past two months meeting with councils throughout the region to consult on the Plan, and to discuss a range of other matters.

Communications and community engagement for this period

- The Board has an approved consultation plan which has guided consultation on the Landscape Plan.
- Consultation included a range of activities including; media releases, social media messaging, a YourSAy portal where stakeholders could provide comment and respond to an online survey, features published in a range of stakeholders' newsletters, as well as targeted emails and letters to key stakeholders.

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- All feedback provided through the consultation period will be reviewed, with any necessary changes made to the Landscape Plan documentation.
- The Board will be presented with revised documents ready for their endorsement at the May Board meeting, with these then being sent to the Minister for approval (as required).
- Once the Landscape Plan has been formally approved the results of the consultation as well as the final documentation will be loaded on to the website.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting on Landscape Plan priorities and contractual obligations (including Biodiversity Monitoring Program)

A Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) plan was approved on 17 April 2019 to enable the board to measure how effective it has been in achieving the goals in the strategic plan. In adopting the existing Regional NRM Plan as the interim Landscape Plan, the Board also adopted this existing MERI Plan as the interim MERI Plan. The MERI Plan guides monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities for the Board and the regional community.

As part of the MERI Plan, the Board established the Biodiversity Monitoring Program, in 2015-2016. This Biodiversity Monitoring Program will result in 355 sites across the region being monitored (using the Bushland Condition Monitoring methodology) on a ten year rotational basis. To supplement this important monitoring a Citizen Scientist network has been established to undertake annual bird surveys at some of these sites.

Program highlights this period

Biodiversity Monitoring Program

- Datasheets relating to the 2020 Bushland Condition Monitoring sites were completed by staff as part of the Biodiversity Monitoring Program. Datasheets have now been sent to the Nature Conservation Society of SA (NCSSA) for the information to be entered into the state-wide database.

- Work has begun on an internal review of the Biodiversity Monitoring Program to see if efforts can be scaled back without negatively impacting the integrity of the program.

Citizen Science

- The Citizen Scientist network continues to undertake bird surveys and enter data into the EP Birds portal.
- With the increased number of tourists visiting the Eyre Peninsula, we have had high numbers of wildlife sightings reported through our citizen science web portals. Over 50 sightings were reported between 1 January and 31 March 2021, including reports of sightings of goannas, koalas, Malleefowl, and iconic birds including white-bellied sea eagles and ospreys.

Local government engagement for this period

- Nothing to report.

Communications and community engagement for this period

- Staff have supported members of the Citizen Scientist network to undertake bird surveys etc. and enter data into the various portals (including the new Iconic bird sighting portal).

Upcoming priorities for the next period

- Staff will work with NCSSA to assist with data entry into the state-wide database.
- Staff will continue to support the Citizen Scientist network and get the information they collect publically available on the Biological Database of SA.
- Continue working on the internal review.

Referrals (including stormwater management)

The Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board has formal referral responsibilities (such as commenting on development applications or stormwater management plans) and informal responsibilities (such as providing feedback on associated legislative changes, significant discussion papers or plans). These matters need to be responded to in a timely manner and often require the consolidation of feedback from across the organisation.

Program highlights this period

There were a total of seven referrals commented on (including no comment) in this period, which included:

- Responding to a ministerial from DEW in relation to a letter from the Lower Eyre Coastcare Association concerning unintended consequences of increasing numbers of visitors to the Eyre Peninsula;
- The expansion of gypsum mining south of Penong;
- The State Government's Draft Nature Conservation Partnership Prospectus;
- A proposed new oyster lease in Streaky Bay;
- A proposed new aquaculture lease and corresponding licence in Anxious Bay, Elliston;
- Draft Stormwater Management Planning Guidelines; and
- The Parliamentary Inquiry into Coast Protection Board.

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

- Board staff will continue to provide feedback in a timely manner relating to the Board's formal and informal referral responsibilities.

Support to EP Landscape Board and committees, budget, annual report and Board minutes

Program highlights this period

- The Risk Audit & Finance Committee (RAFC) meeting held in Port Lincoln on 15 February 2021.
- Board meeting was held in Ceduna on 23 February 2021. Minutes of the 6th Board meeting held on 16 December 2020 are available [here](#).
- The mid-year budget review was completed and presented to both the RAFC and Board Meeting.
- Recruitment of the administrative team that will now be employed directly by the Board has been underway.

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

- Draft Budget 2021-22 for presentation to RAFC and Board.
- Interim Audit and End of Financial Year preparations.
- Induction and training of new Finance and Business Support staff.
- The next Board meeting will be held 3 May 2021 in Kimba. Minutes of the 23 February meeting will be available on the website [here](#) following ratification at this meeting.

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