# **Our vision**

Eyre Peninsula landscapes support biodiversity, community and business in a

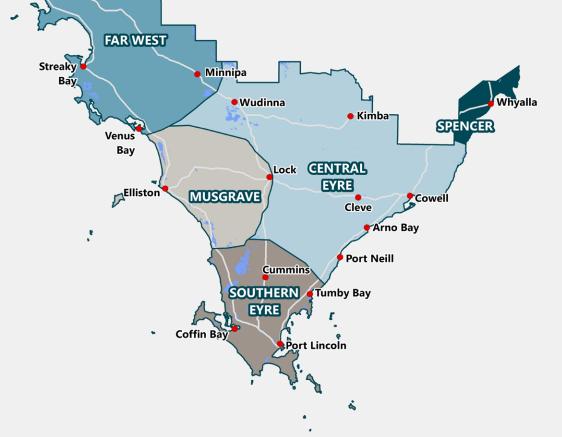
Ceduna

changing climate

# Our region

The Eyre Peninsula landscape region takes in approximately 8 percent of South Australia, covering an area of 80,000 square kilometres. It extends from Whyalla in the east, along the Gawler Ranges in the north, to the edge of the Nullarbor Plain in the west. The region includes over 3,000 kilometres of coastline spanning from the upper Spencer Gulf to the Great Australian Bight, including 182 offshore islands.

Fowlers



# **Regional priorities**



## Water

#### Focus areas:

- Effective water allocation planning in prescribed water areas
- Managing water affecting activities



## **Sustainable Agriculture**

#### Focus areas:

- · Reducing the risk of land degradation to protect the region's valuable soils
- Facilitating regenerative land management to improve soil health



### **Pest Plants** and Animals

#### Focus areas:

- Supporting landowners to control prioritised pest plants and animals
- Collaborating to reduce threats from impact-causing native species



## **Biodiversity**

#### Focus areas:

- Protecting and restoring prioritised coastal habitats
- Maintain and enhance biodiversity in prioritised ecosystems



## Community

#### Focus areas:

- Community at the centre and actively engaged in landscape management
- Effective decision-making and local government engagement

Adaptation and mitigation to climate change is the enduring context for all focus areas.

#### This is underpinned through our effective:

Leadership and governance

Planning and compliance

Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement Partnerships and collaboration



### **FOCUS AREA** - Effective water allocation planning in prescribed water areas

There is a scarcity of drinkable water resources on the Eyre Peninsula, hence fresh groundwater being the main source of water for public water supply, irrigation, stock and domestic use. Fresh groundwater is generally confined to discrete areas within limestone aguifers, which occur in the southern and western extents of the region. Most of the region's fresh groundwater is prescribed under the *Landscape* South Australia Act 2019, and take is regulated through the Water Allocation Plan (WAP) for the Southern Basins and Musgrave Prescribed Wells Areas and associated water licences.

The main objective of the WAP is to ensure the sustainable and equitable use of the prescribed water resources, while also making sure the needs of the environment are taken into account. This includes sharing water with groundwater dependent ecosystems, which rely on groundwater for survival. In non-prescribed areas, there is no management regime to regulate the take of groundwater, but there are provisions to control the location and construction of wells via water affecting activity (WAA) permits.

#### **Priority programs**

- Effective implementation of the WAP for the Southern Basins and Musgrave Prescribed Wells Area.
- Completion of a mid-term (5 year) review of the WAP to gauge the effectiveness of implementation and identify future improvements.
- Continued monitoring of Groundwater Dependant Ecosystems (red gums and wetlands).

#### **FOCUS AREA** - Managing water affecting activities

Water resources on the Eyre Peninsula are precious and need to be managed sustainably. In addition to fresh groundwater, there is a prevalence of saline water resources including large saline wetland complexes, brackish creeks and saline aguifers. Watercourses are generally confined to southern and eastern Eyre Peninsula, where catchments have been extensively developed for agriculture, modifying the hydrology and ecology. Most watercourses are ephemeral, experiencing peak flows during winter, and often ceasing to flow by late spring or early summer.

Water affecting activities are activities and works that can adversely impact on the health and condition of water resources, water dependant ecosystems and other water users. Under the Landscape South Australia Act 2019, a permit is required to undertake a water affecting activity. Full details of water affecting activities can be found in our Water Control Policy document.

#### **Priority programs**

- Provision of advice and support in relation to water affecting activities enquiries.
- · Administration and prompt processing of water affecting activity permit applications.
- Ensuring compliance with water affecting activities policies and permits.

#### **Priority**

### Water

#### Focus areas

- Effective water allocation planning in prescribed water areas.
- Managing water affecting activities.





# **Sustainable Agriculture**

# **FOCUS AREA** - Reducing the risk of land degradation to protect the region's valuable soils

The Eyre Peninsula agriculture sector (cropping and grazing) covers approximately 80% of the land mass on Eyre Peninsula, producing approximately 40% of the state's wheat exports and more than 20% of barley exports, with approximately 97% of the region's grain crop exported. The region also has more than 1.5 million head of sheep, making it the 17th largest sheep region in Australia.

Large areas of sandy soils – about 550,000ha – are prone to increased risk of wind erosion. This is due to a number of inherent characteristics which restrict crop germination and growth; causing loss of surface cover and protection against wind erosion. These characteristics include low inherent fertility, poor moisture-holding capacity and water repellence. Soil acidity is also a significant issue on lower and eastern Eyre Peninsula with more than 186,000 hectares (7%) of agricultural land in the region prone to acidification.

Erosion protection field surveys conducted for more than 15 years, have seen an increase in the amount of days that the region is considered to be adequately protected from the risk of wind erosion. The occurrence of wind erosion across most parts of Eyre Peninsula in recent times has been low for cropping enterprises, however there is room to improve management practices of livestock enterprises to further reduce erosion risk. Despite the low occurrence of wind erosion, the inherent risk level remains moderate to severe for around 30% of cleared agricultural land within the region and becomes a particular concern following bushfires and under extremely dry seasonal conditions which occur with greater frequency and magnitude as a result of climate change.

The Board is responsible for the management and protection of land under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*. Part 7 of the Act focuses on, and sets outs a range of compliance 'tools' to assist the Board with ensuring appropriate management of land. Details of the Board's approach to land management can be found in the Land Management Control Policy document.

#### **Priority programs**

- Continue to monitor land management compliance in line with the Board's policy.
- Support land managers and agriculture groups across the region to build awareness of the importance of erosion protection and improvement of land management practices.

# **FOCUS AREA** - Facilitating regenerative land management to improve soil health and vitality

Through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program (NLP), the Board has been appointed as a service provider to deliver agricultural projects across Eyre Peninsula. These projects currently include:

#### Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF)

This role provides a central contact point for farmers and farming groups within the region and is responsible for:

- Keeping all stakeholders informed of new government policy, sharing results from crop and pasture trials or other extension activities, building awareness of new advances in technology and emerging issues, etc.
- Collecting regional intelligence understanding the needs of the agricultural community and keeping abreast of emerging challenges, issues or threats that may affect the agricultural sector in the region and reporting these to the Board.
- Supporting agricultural groups to develop new projects and seek grant funding, for example through the NLP Smart Farms Small Grants, Smart Farm Partnership rounds and other possible funding opportunities.

- Facilitating collaborative approaches between the agricultural sector and other industry or community sectors so they can work together to address common issues.
- Supporting the promotion of other NLP agricultural projects to farmers, industry, and community groups to encourage uptake. Engage with a significant number of agricultural stakeholder groups over a large demographic in the Eyre Peninsula.

#### Regenerative Agriculture Program (RAP)

This is a five-year program that will now be in its fourth year of delivery. The program was designed to progress NLP Outcome 5.

The objectives of this program are to increase landholder awareness, knowledge and adoption of:

- Techniques for and benefits of monitoring, maintenance and amelioration of soil surface pH in priority soil acidification areas, through extension activities, pH mapping, pH testing and monitoring sites (in known and emerging priority areas).
- Reducing subsoil constraints through management of soil carbon.
- Reducing erosion by improving groundcover through plant-based options.
- Improving the detection and management of mallee seeps.

These programs are being delivered in close partnership with the farming community of Eyre Peninsula, with major delivery components outsourced to one of the region's farming groups - Agricultural Innovation and Research Eyre Peninsula. Full details of the programs, existing demonstration sites and results can be found on our website.

#### **Priority programs**

- Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator supporting farmers, agronomists and farming system groups to promote sustainable agricultural practices.
- Continued implementation of Regional Land
  Partnership, Regenerative Agriculture Program.

#### **Priority**

# **Sustainable Agriculture**

#### Focus areas

- Reducing the risk of land degradation to protect the region's valuable soils.
- Facilitating regenerative land management to improve soil health and vitality.





# **Pest Plants and Animals**

# **FOCUS AREA** - Supporting landowners to control prioritised pest plants and animals

Controlling existing pest species while minimising the risk of new pest threats is critical for reducing impacts to agricultural productivity, biodiversity and human health. The *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* sets out the requirements for the control of pest animals and plants. To guide how we meet these requirements, a risk assessment was undertaken by the Board in 2020 to determine the region's priority pest animal and plant species. This is available in the Pest Plant and Animal Control Policy document.

It is important to note that the risk assessment was conducted at regional and district scale using generalised land use, however there are instances when a pest species may pose a greater or lesser risk for a local area and/or specific land use. There is also the potential that the relative pest risk and/or the feasibility of control will change in the future.

Pest management plans have been developed for the priority pest plants and animals found within the region and these can be accessed through our <u>website</u>. These plans are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure continuous improvement.

Under the Act, it is a landowner's responsibility to comply with these statutory requirements as they apply to a declared pest species.

#### **Priority programs**

- Review and implementation of regional pest management plans for priority pest plants and animals.
- Provision of support to landowners in regard to their responsibilities, weed identification, best practice control advice and property planning assistance.
- Delivery of targeted pest animal baiting programs, targeted weed control campaigns, monitoring, permitting and compliance works.

# **FOCUS AREA** - Collaborating to reduce threats from impact-causing native species

Under the new Landscape South Australia Act 2019, regional landscape boards will now have a role in helping to manage native species that are causing adverse impacts. In the Managing South Australia's Landscapes: Policy Overview that the Minister released, it's defined that 'managing impacts will be achieved by connecting landholders and relevant authorities, and providing information'. It further outlines that the existing functions of the other bodies and people involved in controlling the adverse impact of native species will continue (e.g. permits will continue to be required from the Department for Environment and Water, under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972, for the destruction of any protected native animal).

The Act includes a number of provisions specifically identifying this new role around the management of impact-causing native species. The objects and principles of the Act includes promoting collaborative management and assisting to facilitate action to mitigate or manage 'native animals that adversely affect the natural or built environments, people or primary production or other industries' - section 7(1)(g) and 25 (1) (i).

#### **Priority programs**

- Assisting landowners in connecting with relevant authorities and providing information about impactcausing native species and control options.
- Cataloguing of current and emerging impact-causing native species, their impacts and extent across the region.
- Collaboration with other regions and agencies to develop policy frameworks, strategies or programs, with the aim of reducing threats from impact-causing native species.

#### **Priority**

### **Pest Plant and Animals**

#### Focus areas

- Supporting landowners to control prioritised pest plants and animals.
- Collaborating to reduce threats from impact-causing native species.





### **FOCUS AREA** - Protecting and restoring prioritised coastal habitats

The region's coastal habitats are diverse and impressive, with limestone cliffs up to 100 metres high, undulating sand dunes, rocky headlands, sheltered bays, inverse estuaries, samphire and mangroves. Coastal temperate saltmarshes (e.g. samphire) habitats are now listed as a threatened ecological community under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. These habitats support commercial species including western king prawns, tuna, abalone, mussel and kingfish; along with a diversity of birdlife, such as the threatened Hooded Plover.

The Eyre Peninsula Coastal Action Plan is a detailed conservation study and action plan that covers the coastline from Two Hummocks Point north of Whyalla to the eastern boundary of the Wahgunyah Conservation Park in the Far West. It provides baseline information for the protection and management of more than 85 coastal cells, and outlines priority actions for each site. This guides the Board's decision-making in regard to coastal management works undertaken throughout the region.

#### **Priority programs**

• Delivery of the National Landcare Program's Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery project.

- Supporting community to undertake coastal management works in line with the Coastal Action Plan.
- Supporting partners to progress Eyes on Eyre activities, protecting priority coastal habitats and encouraging sustainable use.
- Partnering with other agencies to advance blue carbon initiatives particularly focused on temperate saltmarsh restoration.

#### **FOCUS AREA** – Maintain and enhance biodiversity in prioritised ecosystems

Approximately 20% of Eyre Peninsula landmass is comprised of native vegetation protected through formal conservation covenants (e.g. National Parks and Conservation Reserves, or Heritage Agreements, etc.). A further 23% of the landmass is comprised of fragmented native vegetation – community reserves, roadside verges, scattered woodlands or paddock trees in amongst cropping land, grazing or pastoral properties. This native vegetation contains a wide range of biodiversity that underpins the healthy functioning of the ecosystems throughout the region.

With a region the size and complexity of Eyre Peninsula, to aid the planning process, the region has been broken down into five subregions based on areas

of similar landscape and land uses, with subregional descriptions developed. These descriptions provide detailed information in regard to each subregion's biodiversity, using a systems thinking approach which also captures the subregion's values from a social and economic perspective. Other planning documents and tools have also been developed for specific bioregions in Eyre Peninsula, and for programs areas, including the WildEyre Conservation Action Plan, Eyre Hills Landscape Assessment Framework, Eyes on Eyre Masterplan and the Cummins Wanilla Drainage Management Plan. At the individual species or ecological community level, activities are guided by recovery plans or specific management plans.

#### **Priority programs**

- Support the implementation of the Cummins Wanilla Streamcare Group Drainage Management Plan and associated PIRSA Regional Growth Fund infrastructure upgrade project.
- Support community and landholders to improve the health and condition of threatened ecological communities, native vegetation and threatened species.
- Continued implementation, review and improvement of the biodiversity monitoring program.
- Collaboration with partners to source funding for landscape-scale projects in priority ecosystems.



### **Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery** project

(NLP), the Board has been funded to deliver the Saltmarsh Threat Abatement and Recovery (STAR) project, which is focused on improving the condition of the Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh threatened ecological community and a variety of threatened species such as the Hooded Plover, throughout the region.

Eyre Peninsula contains almost half the coastline of SA, 16 coastal embayments (half of SA's estuary area) containing one-third of SA's intertidal samphire habitats. Projected sea level rise will likely result in coastal saltmarsh migration and have secondary impacts on fish and many other species dependent on saltmarsh habitat for survival. Eyre Peninsula's saltmarshes are also internationally and nationally important sites for many other resident and migratory shorebirds waders and waterfowl - including the Hooded Plover.

Within the region, many coastal towns and each of the major regional centres, have substantial areas of coastal saltmarsh nearby. There is an emerging awareness in the community of the ecological and economic importance of coastal saltmarsh and how its continued presence and good health is important for sustaining the regionally significant economic sectors of recreational fishing, nature-based tourism, and commercial fishing and aquaculture industries.

The STAR project is working to further expand this awareness, leveraging off it to deliver on-ground actions that preserve and restore this important ecological community, with particular emphasis on working with landholders, Aboriginal Homelands and Local Government, who have large areas of coastal saltmarsh under their care.

The activities and outputs being delivered under the STAR project are varied in scope to enable the most effective assessment and identification of priority sites and subsequent abatement of the different primary and secondary threats impacting those priority sites.



# Community

# **FOCUS AREA** - Community at the centre and actively engaged in landscape management

The involvement of the region's community has and will continue to be central to implementing landscape change. The community's contribution is broad and diverse, and it includes on-ground action, information sharing through community networks, working in partnership with the Board to develop and deliver projects, and participation in decision-making such as the preparation of this plan.

By continuing to work together we can manage our landscapes for the benefit of the natural environment, and for current and future generations.

#### **Priority programs**

- Review and improvement of the citizen science program; providing meaningful opportunities for volunteers and groups to get involved and value the natural environment.
- Supporting Aboriginal and community groups, Local Government, farming groups and schools to progress natural resource activities through the provision of the Grassroots Grants program.
- Strengthening relationships with other regional partners, community groups and industry stakeholders.

# **FOCUS AREA** - Effective decision-making and Local Government engagement

The Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board works with community, industry, local government and agencies to ensure a sustainable approach to the management, protection and restoration of our soil, water, native plants and animals. The Board is comprised of seven community members, including a chair, who are representatives of their local communities, and include:

- Mark Whitfield (Chair) Whyalla
- Meagan Turner Cowell
- Tony Irvine Port Lincoln
- Justine Major Kimba
- Dr Steven Milner Denial Bay
- Debbie May Elliston
- Brian Foster Coulta

Further information on all Board members is available on our website (www.landscape.sa.gov.au/ep). All members were initially appointed by the Minister, with three positions falling vacant in 2022. These vacancies will be elected by the community in future.

The Board's functions are detailed in the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*. In summary, the Board is responsible for developing a simple and accessible five-year regional landscape plan with five priorities, which aims to ensure that there is a balance between

the needs of regional communities and the sustainable management of the environment. Other key functions include development of a water allocation plan for prescribed water resources, and operating as the relevant authority for a range of water, land protection, and animal and plant control activities.

Local Government is a key stakeholder within the region, as such Board members all have designated councils that they regularly engage with to ensure effective communications are maintained and relationships strengthened. Local Government also has responsibilities under the Act in relation to the collection of the landscape land levy within their council area. This is a service that councils undertake for the Board each year, and council costs are covered in line with Landscape South Australia (General) Regulations 2020, Part 4.

#### **Priority programs**

- Strengthening relationships with Local Government and other regional partners.
- Effective leadership and governance of the Board and its business, to meet legislative requirements.





# **Decision-making principles**

Board investment is targeted at the highest priority outcomes contained within our Regional Landscape Plan, regardless of how it is raised.

Below are the principles the Board use to support their decision-making processes:

- Core function statutory requirement under the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 or other legislative or regulatory requirements.
- Strategic alignment with the Regional Landscape Plan, Landscape SA reform priorities, Ministerial priorities and other key plans.
- Outcomes-focused will lead to sustainable use, protection and conservation of the region's natural resources.
- Cost/benefit for a given cost, the benefit or value is maximised where value is assessed through aspects such as total outcomes; number of partnerships; extent of community engagement; and extent of delivery whether local, district or region-wide, across a one or multiple industries or community sectors.

- Capacity and capability resources, knowledge and skills required to undertake the work are available within the Board, community or partner organisations.
- Collaborative forms partnerships with other groups and organisations to share responsibility and deliver the best possible landscape management outcomes.
- Innovative opportunity to drive innovation, demonstrate best practice and/or increase understanding of natural resources.
- Visibility raising the importance of the landscape and its natural resources and the work being undertaken by the Board, the community and partner organisations.

# **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Board has long-established monitoring programs and data sets to monitor the state and condition of the natural resources. and related trends on Eyre Peninsula. This includes monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of strategies to manage threats as well as protect specific natural resources. Limited resources means that monitoring needs to be prioritised in space and time, optimal indicators identified and cost-effective data collection strategies implemented. The Board's work in this area is guided by the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Plan, which is currently being developed

to underpin the Regional Landscape Plan. The MERI plan also defines how progress and impact of the Board's programs will be measured, and how learnings will be used to improve and adapt programs.

Other program specific monitoring plans have also been developed, which align to the delivery of major programs and projects such as those under the Regional Land Partnership arrangements and for major Board functions, such as the implementation of the Water Allocation Plan.

# 1 Plan







# 3 Observe



## 4 Learn

### Regional **Landscape Plan**

#### Vision statement and priorities

Supported through regional descriptions

#### **Control Policies**

Water affecting activities, land management and pest plant & animal policies and procedures.

### **Business Plan**

#### Focus areas and programs

Underpinned through projects plans and operational plans

#### **Outcomes**

Are we making a difference (programs scale impact)?

#### **Outputs**

Did we do what we said we'd do (project scale performance)?

### **Evaluating Performance**

Is our collective effort maintaining / improving healthy landscapes? (organisational and regional scale impact)

## Improve and adapt

actions as needed

# **Other**

Information on the Board membership, role and activities can be found at: www.landscape. sa.gov.au/ep/about-us