

## Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board

### MINUTES

#### *Acknowledgement of Country*

*We acknowledge the lands of the Hills and Fleurieu region are the traditional lands for the Kurna, Peramangk and Ngarrindjeri Nations. We respect the Kurna, Peramangk and Ngarrindjeri people as the custodians of these lands, and that their cultural and heritage beliefs, and spiritual relationships with Country, are still important to their people today.*

#### Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board Meeting #38

**Date:** 11/12/2024  
**Start Time:** 9:43 am **Scheduled Finish Time:** 1:00 pm (including lunch)  
**Location:** Mt Barker Football Club – 2 Howard Lane, Mount Barker 5251  
**Attendees:** Board Members  
Janet Klein (Acting Chair), Chris West, Keith Parks, and Leanne Muffet.

#### Staff

Michael Garrod (General Manager), Ben Della Torre (Manager – Landscape Operations), Wendy Telfer (Manager – Planning, Engagement and Partnerships), Cathy Lewis (Manager – Business and Governance), P Wainwright (Team Leader – Water Resources), A Skinner (Team Leader – Planning and MERI), C Dorr (Team Leader – Communications and Regional Engagement) and Emilee Vidau (Executive Officer).

#### In Gallery

N Bennet (Team Leader – Stewardship (Eastern Hills & Plains) and J Butler (Project Officer – Sustainable Agriculture)

**Apologies:** David Greenough, Jock Harvey and Andy Lowe

#### Meeting Items

##### Preliminary and Procedural Matters

##### 1.1 Welcome and apologies

The Chair acknowledged Country and welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

##### 1.2 Conflict of Interest Disclosure (arising from agenda items)

Nil conflicts of Interest disclosures arising from the agenda declared.

##### 1.3 Consent Schedule

*The board **approved** and **agreed** the items on the Consent Schedule be adopted.*

**Moved:** C West

**Seconded:** K Parkes

**Carried**

##### 1.4 Any Other Business (to be covered in item 4)

- Provisional dates for 2025 Board Meetings and Workshops.

##### 1.5 Minutes from the previous meeting

The board **confirmed** the minutes of meeting number 37, held on 30 October 2024 as a true and accurate record.

**Moved:** L Muffet

**Seconded:** K Parkes

**Carried**

## 1.6 Actions arising from previous meetings

The board **noted** the status of actions arising from the previous minutes.

**Moved:** C West

**Seconded:** L Muffet

**Carried**

## 1.7 Resolution Register

The board **noted** the Resolution Register.

**Carried**

## Items (for noting or decision)

### 2.1 General Manager's Report

- M Garrod provided a summary of the General Manager's Report, highlighting:
  - Additional information was received Friday, 6 December, that the funding from the Landscape Administration Fund for the dam compliance project was not approved by the Treasurer.
  - The General Manager noted the upcoming meeting with Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer within DEW and further confirmed he remained optimistic about receiving the funding.
  - Based on the in-principle approval for the funding from the Minister CEW, recruitment has commenced for the dam compliance project team.
  - The Joint workshop with Green Adelaide was insightful and helped clarify the priorities between the two boards. M Garrod was confident that we can create a collaborative partnership for investment in nature in the Mount Lofty Ranges.
- **Discussion followed:**
  - Board members reflected on the success of the joint workshop while also noting the differences in priorities between the two boards.

The board:

**2.1.1 noted** the General Manager's report.

**Moved:** L Muffet

**Seconded:** C West

**Carried**

### 2.2 Grassroots Grants – Budget for 2025-26

- C Dorr presented to the Board and noted the following:
  - The recommendations from last year's evaluation of the GRG program led to a successful grant round in the 2023/24 financial year.
  - Expectation Management with applicants through the guidelines helped attract a high calibre of applications And reduced negative feedback received compared to prior rounds. The reporting process was found to be overly onerous for applicants so has been improved to focus on a story about the outcomes of the project.
  - A similar program structure and process to last year is proposed for the 2025-26 GRG. Following discussions with last year's panel, an additional application question will be introduced to assess the maturity of projects and ensure a balance between funding new initiatives and established projects that are delivering high quality environmental outcomes.
- **Discussion followed:**
  - The board asked whether it would be beneficial to consider geographical spread of grants and targeting outcomes across the region. B Della Torre noted that the Stewardship Program is currently exploring a grants process that could support this approach.
  - M Garrod stated that it may be helpful for applicants to include information about the Green Safe grants in the GRG Guidelines.
  - C Dorr noted a grant recipient of \$30,000 was successful in receiving a grant for significantly more money from the Australian Government's Urban Rivers program, and therefore the recipient will be returning unspent grant monies to the board.
  - The board agreed that establishing a Community Engagement Committee to assist with the GRG assessment and providing advice on other key community engagement processes is a logical idea and worth exploring further.

*The board:*

**2.2.1 noted** the program structure for the 2025-26 round of Grassroots Grants.

**Moved:** L Muffet      **Seconded:** C West      **Carried**

**2.2.2 approved** a budget of \$260,000 for the 2025-26 financial year.

**Moved:** L Muffet      **Seconded:** C West      **Carried**

**2.2.3 provided in principle support** for the creation of a new Community Engagement Committee of the board for further consideration at its February 2025 meeting.

**Moved:** K Parkes      **Seconded:** C West      **Carried**

**2.2.4 noted** that nomination of board and community members to be part of the Assessment Panel will be considered at its February 2025 meeting, as part of consideration of a new Community Engagement Committee.

**Moved:** K Parkes      **Seconded:** C West      **Carried**

## **2.3 Landscape plan evaluation and process for next Landscape Plan**

- A Skinner spoke to the paper and highlighted:
  - Evaluation and consultation of the current Landscape Plan with the board will take place at the March 2025 board workshop. Additional consultation with staff and key stakeholders will also be conducted.
  - Community forums to be held between July and September 2026 to engage community and stakeholders on a discussion paper about proposed changes to the plan.
  - A draft plan is expected to be completed by December 2025 for board endorsement for formal public consultation in early 2026.
- Discussion followed:
  - W Telfer noted the state election in March 2026 and that General Managers have sent a briefing to the Minister to check that this does not pose an impediment to consulting on new Landscape Plans in early 2026.
  - The board emphasised the importance of being activators of change and action. The board agreed that the plan needs to be clear on the priorities of LHF.
  - M Garrod and W Telfer confirmed the desire to sharpen the focus of the plan, drive significant impact within the community and showcase results.
  - L Muffet made note about the limited awareness of the board's work and its priorities within the broader community, and suggested consideration of pop-up listening posts and events to raise the board's profile, gather broader perspectives and increase engagement.

*The board:*

**2.3.1 noted and provided** feedback on the process for the Landscape Plan review and development of the new Landscape Plan 2026-31.

**Moved:** C West      **Seconded:** K Parkes      **Carried**

## **2.4 \*W Telfer left the meeting**

### **Levy income for 2025-26**

- A Skinner presented to the board noting the following key items:
  - If the board endorses the CPI increase, the total levy income for the regional landscape levy will be \$6,171,700 – with the indicative income from the water levy totalling \$2,641,100.
  - Data regarding capital value will be provided in January 2025 to determine Council shares.
- Discussion followed:
  - The board queried if clear and supportive information was provided to land manager. It was confirmed that councils have the option of including a brochure explaining the levy and how it is allocated by LHF.
  - C Lewis noted that data is captured on the number of enquiries received about the levy and any concerns regarding levy increases.

*The board:*

**2.4.1 approved** that the Business Plan 2025-26 specifies a total regional landscape levy income based on a CPI increase of 3.2% on that raised in 2024-25.

**2.4.2 approved** that the Business Plan 2025-26 specifies the water levy rates be based on a CPI increase of 3.2% on the levy rates raised in 2024-25

**2.4.3 noted** the proposed process for developing the 2025-26 Annual Business Plan

**Moved:** C West

**Seconded:** K Parkes

**Carried**

## 2.5 Indicative carry-over request to Department of Treasury and Finance

C Lewis spoke to the paper and highlighted the following points:

- The process to request carryover of expenditure authority to future financial years is to be submitted to Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) in early February 2025, prior to the next board meeting.
- Following careful assessment of projects, including some reprofiling, the preliminary indications are that there is approximately \$870,000 of funds available for redistribution during 2024-25 or to be carried over to future financial years via the February Department of Finance (DTF) process. Of this, \$138,000 relates to reprofiled externally funded projects. The board agreed that of the \$732,000 of levy funding available, no more than \$500,000 should be requested for carryover to the 2026-27 financial year, with the remaining reallocated to projects within the 2024-25 financial year.
- The board noted that there is a risk of carryover request being declined by DTF, although this risk low due to the forward strategic planning completed.

*The board:*

**2.5.1 noted** the preliminary indicative information that will support the February 2025 request to DTF to carry over \$870,000 funds, and associated expenditure authority, to the 2026/27 financial year, from the 2024/25 financial year.

**2.5.2 agreed** that the request for carryover will not exceed \$500,000, with remaining available funds to be reallocated to projects within the 2024-25 financial year.

**Moved:** L Muffet

**Seconded:** C West

**Carried**

## 2.6 Carbon Planting – Proposed process for addressing policy issue

- P Wainwright spoke to the paper and highlighted the following:
  - Currently there is a limitation on carbon planting due to water resource management rules.
  - A minor amendment is proposed to serve as a short-term mechanism to enable carbon planting to occur but also has low risk of creating adverse impacts for water resources.
  - The Western MLR WAP currently has a precautionary principle that enables carbon plantings that are less than 250 trees/ha, but there is currently no equivalent exemption in the Eastern MLR WAP.
- Discussion followed:
  - The board discussed the balance that needs to be taken with the amendment to ensure another issue is not exacerbated to get ahead in carbon planting.
  - Ensuring language and projects support biodiversity requirements, such as looking to the long-term gain of the program rather the short-term credit return.
- L Nicholson spoke to the queries made by the board, highlighting:
  - Any policy change will need to be simple, non-ambitious nor rely on science that is not readily available to ensure it can be implemented in a timely manner.
  - As a key stakeholder in the project, DEW needs to be comfortable with any policy amendments.
  - Based on initial conversation with DEW, there is also discomfort in enabling dense non-native planning due to risk of water resourcing and lack of biodiversity benefits. A policy change would be leaning towards allowing the plantings of biodiverse, native species.

*The board:*

**2.6.1 noted** the policy issues relating to carbon planning in the Eastern and Western Mount Lofty Ranges Prescribed Water Resources Area.

**Moved:** K Parkes      **Seconded:** L Muffet      **Carried**

**2.6.2 noted** that a proposal to make minor amendments to the Eastern and Western Lofty Ranges Water Allocation Plans to clarify exemptions for carbon plantings will be brought to the board for its consideration.

**Moved:** C West      **Seconded:** K Parkes      **Carried**

## **2.7 Resilient Hills and Coasts – Climate Action Plan and Sector**

- M Garrod spoke to the paper as a stand in for W Telfer the paper was taken as read by the board. Discussion followed:
  - The board noted the plan did not have any actions; it was confirmed it is a foundational piece to guide the way forward.
  - M Garrod noted the previous agreement was based on input rather than output/ KPI targets. It was queried how the reporting structure would show the outcomes to ensure the investment of the board is beneficial.
  - K Parkes spoke to the trending concerns across all councils in relation to funding and sustainability, ensuring the outcomes are achieved is crucial to the agreement.

### **Action**

- 1) Request a more action-based agreement for review and consideration of the board.

*Responsible Officer:* W Telfer

*The board, in block:*

**2.7.1 noted** the Backcast Report and outcomes of the stakeholder engagement associated with the Resilient Hills and Coasts 'Regional Climate Action Plan'.

**2.7.2 endorsed** the Resilient Hills and Coasts *Regional Climate Action Plan 2025-2030* as one of the partner organisations of Resilient Hills and Coasts.

**2.7.3 authorised** the Chair to sign the revised Resilient Hills and Coasts Climate Change Sector Agreement pursuant to the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007* to formalise the board's recommitment to the partnership for the period 2025-2030.

**2.7.4 authorised** Resilient Hills and Coasts in collaboration with partners make any changes to the *Regional Climate Action Plan 2025-2030* or Climate Change Sector Agreement of a minor, technical or formatting nature.

**2.7.5 provided in principle approval** noting the rights to request additional information for a budget contribution to the Resilient Hills and Coasts partnership of \$11,000 per annum (indexed by CPI annually) from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2030.

**Moved:** K Parkes      **Seconded:** C West      **Carried**

## **2.8 Risk and Performance Committee Membership**

- C Lewis provided an overview of the Risk and Performance Committee Update, noting the following key points:
  - The RPC recently reviewed the Legislative compliance register and were comfortable that there were no gaps.
  - An update will be provided at the committee's March meeting in relation to the board's reporting for the 2024-25 work plan.
- *Discussion Followed:*
  - J Klein queried if the board was aware of the media releases in relation to the concerns of the use of Paraquat. M Garrod noted that this does not have impact on HFLB operations, J Buter (in gallery) noted that it is a contact chemical and does not move through plants, so any risk to staff if we were to use it, would be very low.

*The board:*

**2.8.1 noted** the update from the Risk and Performance Committee (the committee) meeting held on 14 November 2024.

**Moved:** L Muffet

**Seconded:** C West

**Carried**

## Standing Items

### 3.1 Finance Overview

- C Lewis provided the Financial Overview for the year to date as of 31 October 2024, noting the following:
  - Potential carry over mentioned in the report has changed based on discussion earlier in the meeting.
  - The revised water levy is not due to be received until February 2025. DEW requested from DTF on behalf of all landscape boards to obtain 'working capital' to ensure there are no cashflow implications for the boards, and this has subsequently been approved.

*The board:*

**3.1.1 accepted** the financial reports and statistics for the period ending 31 October 2024.

**Moved:** C West

**Seconded:** K Parkes

**Carried**

### 3.2 Work Health and Safety Update

- C Lewis provided the Work Health and Safety Update noting:
  - Work Health Safety Committee are working through the procedures.
  - C Lewis and Human Resources, S Paull attended a Psychosocial Risk workshop. Noting resources are currently being created and hopefully deployed locally shortly.
  - An incident occurred last week and a report was subsequently filed and an investigation is to follow.

*The board:*

**3.2.1 noted** the Work Health and Safety update as at 30 November 2024.

**Moved:** C West

**Seconded:** K Parkes

**Carried**

### 3.3 Board Member Activity Register

- Brief discussion followed, highlighting the following:
  - L Muffet provided updates for the activity register on 10 December 2024 via email to E Vidau.
  - M Garrod advised the board that D Greenhough would be stepping out of the role as Chair of Chairs and position within NRM Regions Australia. Limestone Coast Landscape Board Chair, P Schulz, will be transitioning into both roles.

#### Action

- 2) Update the activity register with latest activity details for L Muffet for the February board paper.

*Responsible Officer:* E Vidau

*The board:*

**3.3.1 noted** the current register of meetings and events attended by the Chair and board members in their capacity as representatives.

**Moved:** L Muffet

**Seconded:** C West

**Carried**

### 3.4 Board Forward Agenda

- M Garrod spoke to the paper, noting the following:
  - March Board Workshop to be in relation to H&F Landscape Plan 2021-26 evaluation and MERI.
  - Coast and Marine planning workshop and Joint workshop with Northern and Yorke Landscape Board dates to be confirmed in due course.

*The board:*

**3.4.1 noted** the Forward Agenda.

**Moved:** L Muffet

**Seconded:** C West

**Carried**

### 3.6 Register of Interests

The board **noted** the Register of Interests.

**Carried**

### 3.7 Correspondence

The board **noted** the correspondence record provided.

**Carried**

## Other Business

- 4.1** • The board were informed provisional dates for the 2025 calendar year Board Meetings and workshops have been set.

#### Action

- 3) Provisional 2025 board meeting and workshop dates to be added to board members calendars by end of 2024.

*Responsible Officer:* E Vidau

## In Camera / Confidential Papers

*In accordance with the Landscape SA Act 2019, section 23 (5) the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board orders the public be excluded to receive, discuss or consider any prescribed information or matter in confidence*


**5.1 Nil**

## Meeting Closure

**6.1 Next meeting:** Wednesday – 26 February 2024

**Venue:** To be advised

**6.2 Meeting close – 11:50**

Endorsed 	David Greenhough <b>Presiding Member</b> <b>Hills Fleurieu Landscape Board</b>  26 February 2025
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