

Purpose of this discussion paper

The Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board has the task of developing a five-year plan to guide the management of our region's landscapes. We need your help to do it.

This document is intended to spark a conversation with the Hills and Fleurieu community and stakeholders - about what is important and how we work together for the long-term sustainability of the region.

The Hills and Fleurieu is a truly special part of the world; but its health and that of the community it holds is not secure. This year's fires, pandemic and trade disruptions are reminders of the growing complexity and scale of environmental and economic challenges we must navigate for our region to remain healthy, prosperous and beautiful.

We need your ideas and insights to create a plan that captures the community's values and provides a clear vision, targets and priorities for action.

This document is not a draft landscape plan

The ideas in this document have been built on a range of community surveys and planning priorities developed for the region by community organisations, councils and state agencies (see back page). They are a first step in the process of clarifying priorities for the next five years and a longer vision for the region. **We need your help to test these ideas and develop new partnerships for managing the region.** We will consult on a draft Plan in February 2021.



Who is the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board?

On 1 July 2020, the *Landscape South Australia Act* replaced the *Natural Resources Management (NRM) Act* and established 9 landscape boards to support local communities in the management of their region's landscapes. The new Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board looks after a region from Cape Jervis to Birdwood, Milang to McLaren Vale. The scale of this region will enable the board to focus on and respond to local issues. The landscape boards have many of the responsibilities of the previous NRM Boards but there are also key changes:

- Stronger partnerships with community groups, landholders and Aboriginal communities
- More emphasis on supporting landholders with sustainable management of land, water and pests
- Stronger focus on climate adaptation and biodiversity – to support the development of resilient landscapes and sustainable primary production.

Vision

The five-year plan will have a vision for the region. Based on early conversations and previous community input, the board believes such a vision could be:

Community-led stewardship of healthy, productive and resilient landscapes

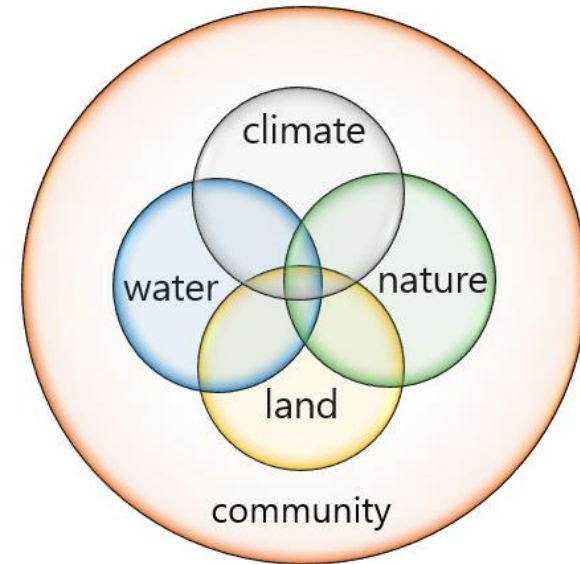
The Hills and Fleurieu region will be an international exemplar; known for its healthy, productive, resilient and beautiful landscapes, achieved through whole community action.

5 interconnected priorities

The board has drafted five priorities and possible focus areas for action within each of these. This document is structured by these priorities.

In putting together this draft, the board heard from Kurna, Ngarrindjeri and Peramangk who's Yarta / Ruwi (Country) the region crosses. We recognise we have much to learn from First Nations in their connection and cultural custodianship for Country and how they care for LAND, WATER and COMMUNITY. The suggested five priorities include these three elements. The importance of dealing with climate change and addressing biodiversity loss is reflected in the addition of NATURE and CLIMATE.

The five priorities are deeply interconnected and reflect our shared responsibility for the landscapes we live in and depend on. For example, to protect our water resources, our thinking and action need to reflect the interdependence of water systems on the other priority areas.



Planning framework



Land

Restored and highly productive landscapes

Landscape health underpins the success of our agriculture and industries. Our on-going prosperity will depend on us building on strengths in producing world-class food and fibre while also diversifying and innovating. We aim to support profitable long term industries and businesses while improving soil and water health and better integrating nature into productive landscapes. Threats posed by climate change only increase the importance of developing ways to manage our productive landscapes and regional economy in restorative ways.

Primary producers, 'lifestyle' property and urban landholders are all important managers of land. We need to continue to build our collective knowledge and capacity in how to manage local soil and pest issues and regenerate our productive landscapes.

Possible Focus Areas

- L1. Support landholders to identify and undertake targeted control of priority pest plants and animals.
- L2. Reduce total grazing pressure (deer, goats and kangaroos) in vulnerable ecological and agricultural systems.
- L3. Identify local soil health issues and support landholder capacity in maintaining soil health.
- L4. Support uptake of regenerative and integrated farming practices, including habitat regeneration, shelter belts and paddock tree replacement.
- L5. Ensure effective and coordinated management of priority declared roadside weeds.
- L6. Support diversification, value-adding and circular resource use in primary production linked regional economy.
- L7. Encourage all landholders to understand, value and nurture soil health and ecosystem services.
- L8. Monitor soil health and land capability.

Possible 5-year targets

(Conversation starters only)

- No new pest plants and animal species established.
- Eradication of outlying populations of feral goats and substantial reduction of primary populations.
- Reduce and stabilise deer and kangaroo grazing impacts on high value habitat to a sustainable level.
- All priority declared weed populations under active management.
- Landholders report consistent reduction in pest plants and animal distribution / density.
- Establish base-line soil and invertebrate (insect) condition maps across whole region.
- Involve XX% of primary producers in soil and habitat management programs.
- >XX% of primary producers report understanding the benefits of regenerative agriculture and how to apply its principles.
- Greater understanding of soil health metrics and trends.

Possible Long-term targets

- Soil health is maintained across productive landscapes.
- Native vegetation and habitats are integrated into and providing ecosystem services on productive properties.

Questions for you:

- *What's missing or needs changing in the Focus Areas?*
- *What projects and partnerships would be needed to achieve the Focus Areas?*
- *What kind of 5-year targets would you like to see?*

Water

Water resources are managed sustainably

The water resources and catchments of the Mount Lofty Ranges sustain our wellbeing, agriculture and other industries, and public water supply. They support aquatic habitat for native plants and animals, have significant Aboriginal cultural value, and contribute to the beauty of our landscapes.

It is critical that water quality and quantity is sufficient to meet our current and future needs, and the needs of the environment. This includes surface water being available for irrigation and aquatic ecosystems, avoiding increases in salinity of groundwater, and minimising nutrients and sediments in run-off that impact on the health of waterways, swamps and marine ecosystems.

With reduced rainfall reliability in future years, balancing our competing water needs will become even harder. We need to be world leaders in how we manage and provide water resources for all water users. We need be innovative in how we retain water in the landscape, use water more efficiently, and reuse our stormwater and wastewater from urban areas.

Possible Focus Areas

- W1. Improve understanding of regional water resources.
- W2. Incorporate economic, environmental, social and cultural interests into McLaren Vale, Eastern and Western Mount Lofty Water Allocation Plans.
- W3. Maximise efficient water and wastewater use and water sensitive urban design in urban areas.
- W4. Support industries with long-term climate ready Water Security Planning.
- W5. Ensure quality and supply for water dependent ecosystems.
- W6. Monitor water resources and water-dependent ecosystems.
- W7. Ensure water for First Nations' cultural wellbeing.

Possible 5-year targets

- Amended climate-ready water allocation plans.
- A water security plan developed for McLaren Vale.
- Return of environmental flows in high priority catchments.
- Water is used within sustainable limits in all catchments.
- Improved water quality in all priority catchments.
- Water allocation Plans set sustainable limits, determined on the basis of robust science.

Possible Longer-term targets?

- Improved water quality in all catchments.
- High quality water is available for the community, economic use and ecosystems.
- Environmental flows maintain ecosystem health.
- Freshwater outflows are not impacting marine ecosystem health.

Questions for you:

- *What's missing or needs changing in the Focus Areas?*
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Nature

Natural places, ecosystems and wildlife conserved and celebrated

We want the Mount Lofty Ranges be one of Australia's 15 biodiversity hot spots that has reversed its declining health. Our region has half of South Australia's native plant species and three quarters of its native bird species. However, a number of species and ecological communities are classified as nationally threatened and whole suites of species are in decline.

Loss of native vegetation, habitat modification, over-grazing, pest plants and animals, too much or too little fire, and marine pollution are key threats to biodiversity in the region. We need to restore vegetation extent and habitats to prevent further species loss.

We love and enjoy our beautiful beaches, and value the diversity of marine life and the commercial industries that depend upon it. Our watercourses provide a lifeblood through our landscapes. Our natural places hold significant cultural values for Kaurna, Peramangk and Ngarrindjeri people.

We need to support the resilience of our ecosystems so that our local plants and animals are maintained through the changing climate. People being connected to and looking after nature will play a critical role in this.

Possible Focus Areas

- N1. Support community, including First Nations, to protect natural habitat and biodiversity.
- N2. Implement recovery and monitoring of threatened species and ecological communities.
- N3. Support controlled burns, including for cultural reasons.
- N4. Support landowners to protect the health of their waterways.
- N5. Increase knowledge of and respect for the region's natural and cultural assets.
- N6. Increase community involvement in ecosystem monitoring.
- N7. Preserve the health of coastal, estuarine and marine ecosystems.

Possible 5-year targets

- A year on year increase in vegetation extent and condition to provide priority habitat on private and public land.
- More investment in management and restoration of ecosystems.
- More people connecting with and involved with restoring habitats and citizen science to understand ecosystem health.
- Recovery actions underway or completed for highest priority threatened species and ecological communities.

Possible Long-term targets

- Reverse declines in woodland birds and freshwater fish populations.
- Increase high-value habitat coverage by 37,000ha to support recovery of declining species.
- Stabilise the trajectories in populations of threatened species

Questions for you:

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Climate

A carbon neutral and climate resilient region

We are already feeling the effects of climate change. By 2050, our region will be dealing with higher temperatures, lower and less reliable rainfall, more extreme weather (drought, fire and floods), and rising sea levels. These conditions will increase agricultural and ecosystem needs for water and also increase the risk of catastrophic events. Significant effort is required to become climate ready and also to cut our emissions as quickly as possible.

We need to prepare for and manage our landscapes in ways that can withstand extreme weather events - finding ways of living and producing that simultaneously restore natural systems, mitigate emissions and build readiness to bushfire and drought. We also need action to conserve coastal vegetation to better protect our coastline, beaches and coastal towns from erosion and storm surge. While these are significant challenges, the process of mitigating and adapting to climate change will also present opportunities to improve our wellbeing, prosperity and regional resilience.

Possible Focus Areas

- C1. Champion uptake of land management practices consistent with climate change mitigation and adaptation (eg. soil and vegetation sequestration, agro-forestry and livestock management).
- C2. Address risks to high vulnerability ecosystems and industry (eg. viticulture, aquatic ecosystems).
- C3. Increase research on local climate impacts and adaptation pathways.
- C4. Showcase and support uptake of adaptation opportunities (eg. irrigation efficiency, adaptive water reuse, new and diversified primary production).
- C5. Ensure ecosystem and threatened species management programs factor in risk of catastrophic climate impacts.
- C6. Support resilience building for the primary production linked regional economy.

Possible 5-year targets

- Carbon neutral board operations.
- Climate adaptation and mitigation actions embedded into all Board priorities.
- Climate-ready water allocation planning.
- Regenerative land management practices
- Regional community is engaged in and understand the local risks and opportunities posed by climate change.

Possible Long-term targets

- Carbon neutral region.
- Climate ready region.
- Primary production and ecological systems are climate resilient.
- A region which is prepared for and navigates catastrophic events well.

Questions for you:

- *What's missing or needs changing in the Focus Areas?*
- *What projects and partnerships would be needed to achieve the Focus Areas?*
- *What kind of 5-year targets would you like to see?*

Community

Community-led stewardship

Our connection to place and nature is important to our health and wellbeing. Looking after our landscapes will benefit everyone.

We need First Nations communities to be an active part of managing our landscapes, providing opportunities for us to learn together and for cultural values to be respected.

We can only achieve our vision for landscapes by working together. We want to build better partnerships between community, industries, First Nations, non-government and government organisations that use everyone's strengths. We also need to be brave and have the challenging conversations about solving contentious issues in our region

We need deep community appreciation of our land, water and nature, and an understanding that community is part of the solution. We want community to be stewards of our landscapes – engaged and united in a vision for how we can manage and protect them.

Possible Focus Areas

- P1. Foster a culture that celebrates the importance of place and people's connection to nature.
- P2. Integrate First Nations' perspectives and participation into planning, education and delivery of landscape protection and maintenance.
- P3. Build landholder capacity to manage land, water and nature through community-of-practice (peer to peer) training.
- P4. Encourage community-led environmental stewardship, volunteering, and citizen science.
- P5. Ensure partnerships and cross-sector cooperation is central to addressing all regional priorities.
- P6. Seek shared understanding among stakeholder groups when tackling contentious landscape issues.
- P7. More community involvement in landscape sustainability decisions.

Possible 5-year action targets

- Community engaged in regional dialogues and strategies developed for management of complex issues.
- Involvement of First Nations practices in land management and community, including cultural burning.
- High levels of trust in Landscape Board decision-making and strategic priorities.
- First Nations have secure involvement in regional planning and land management.

Possible Long-term targets

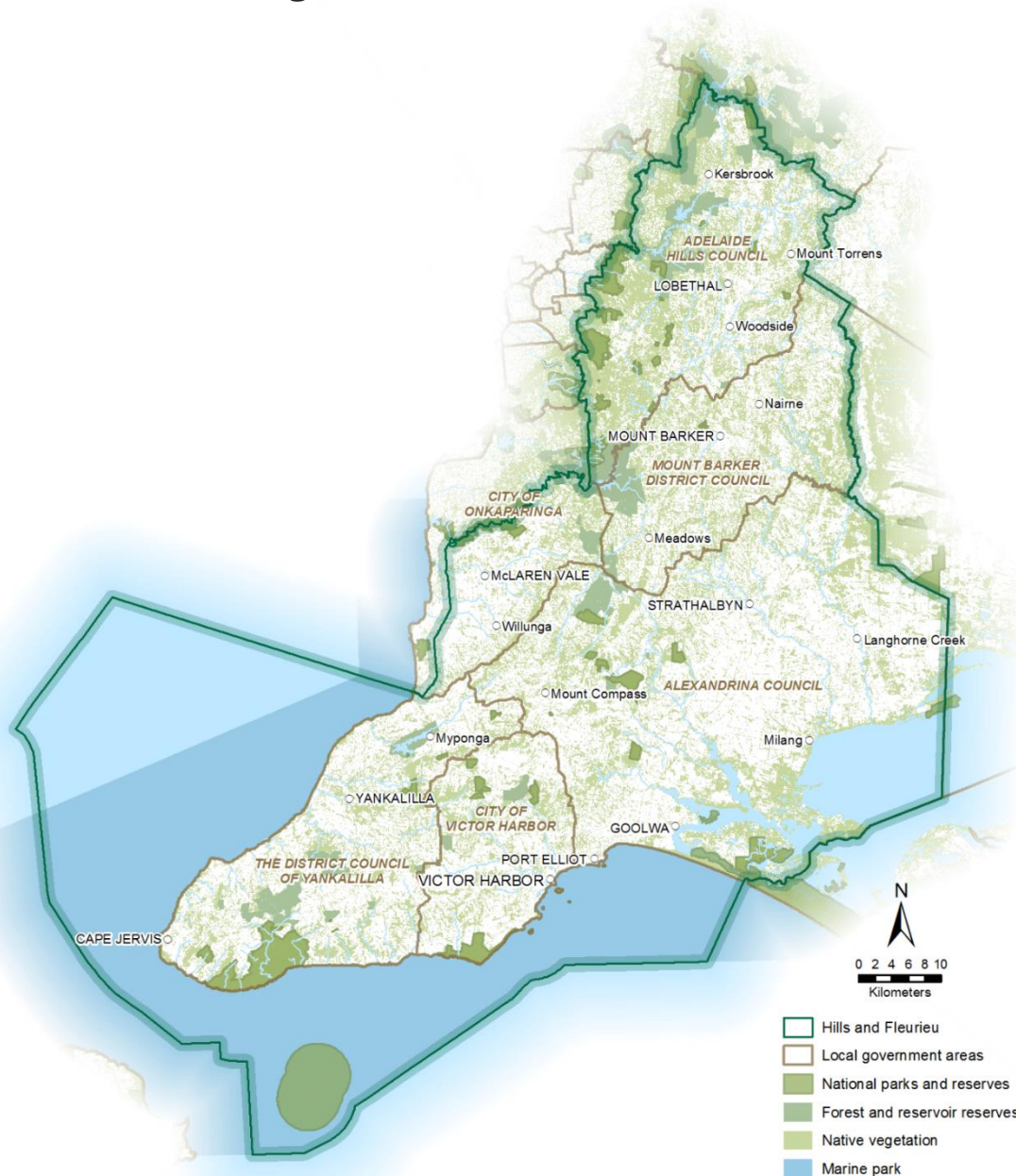
- A happy healthy community celebrating and enjoying hills and Fleurieu living and livelihoods.
- First Nations cultural knowledge is valued and incorporated into management of our landscapes.

Questions for you:

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- *What projects and partnerships would be needed to achieve the Focus Areas?*
- *What kind of 5-year targets would you like to see?*



Our region



Input to this discussion paper

Ideas, findings and recommendations from a range of documents were incorporated into this discussion paper. This list is a selection of those documents:

- *Adelaide Hills Council Strategic Plan 2020-2024:*
- *Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Plan 2013*
- *Adelaide Hills Council Plan 2017 Water management*
- *Alexandrina 2014-2023 Community Strategic Plan*
- *Four Nations Natural Resource Management Group 2007 Strategic Plan 2007 – 2010. AMLR NRM*
- *Mount Barker Community Plan 2020*
- *Onkaparinga Council Community Plan 2030*
- *Report from Fleurieu Farming Systems Workshop 1 IP Sept 2020*
- *Resilient Hills and Coasts Climate Change Adaptation Plan (2016).*
- *Review of Monitoring Programs for the Adelaide & Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Region. DEW 2020*
- *Rogers, D.J. and West, A. 2015, A framework for nature conservation under future climates, to inform climate adaptation planning in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges region, AMLRNRM Board*
- *SA MDB Natural Resources Management Plan 2015*
- *Thomas, et. al., (2016) A Comparative Climate Vulnerability Assessment for Key Agricultural Industries in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resource Management Region. AMLR NRM Board*
- *Victor Harbor Environmental Management Plan 2019*
- *Victor Harbor 2020 Agribusiness Survey Key Findings report*
- *Victor Harbor Council Community Plan 2030*
- *West, A. (2016) Climate Change and Biodiversity Landscape Scenario Assessment for the Resilient Hills and Coasts Region. Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges, DEWNR*
- *Yankalilla Strategic Plan 2014-2018*
- *Yankalilla What We Heard Community survey 2019-2020*