

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape at sunset. The sky is filled with dramatic, golden light breaking through dark, heavy clouds. Below, a vast green field is dotted with numerous cylindrical hay bales. A single, large, gnarled tree stands prominently on the right side of the field. In the distance, a line of trees and rolling hills are visible under the twilight sky.

# Limestone Coast Regional Landscape Plan

2021-2026

## First Nations in the Landscape Plan

Lartara-Wirkeri Cultural Governance was developed with the South East Aboriginal Focus Group to create transparency, improve communication and foster ownership of First Nations project outcomes.

Lartara-Wirkeri Cultural Governance is a contemporary application of an historic First Nations governance process. It has three distinct steps that are uniquely individual but operate in a continual cycle of communication and improvement. The three steps are:



People come together out of respect to talk about whom, how and what. This is a time for acknowledging ancestors, recognising differences and developing agreed pathways that can be progressed.



People have agreed expectations and responsibilities from Ceremony and Talk. Everyone knows and undertakes what they have agreed on.



People can only achieve this stage once they have been successful with the first two stages. Song and Dance is about celebrating the success of working together as a community to achieve the desired and agreed upon outcome. It is a time for learning from successes and paying cultural/spiritual respect.

Through consultation the Limestone Coast Landscape Board has incorporated Lartara-Wirkeri Cultural Governance developed with the South East Aboriginal Focus Group in its regional landscape plan as a visual statement of its commitment to First Nations and how we will walk together to manage our landscapes. The LC Landscape Board seeks to have shared learning, shared outcomes, transparency and evaluation of the effectiveness of its First Nations inclusion across board work. The LC Landscape Board respects, honours and acknowledges the origins of Lartara-Wirkeri Cultural Governance and its importance to the South East Aboriginal Focus Group and First Nations People across Australia.



The Limestone Coast Landscape Board acknowledges Aboriginal people as the First People and Nations of the ancestral lands and waters of the Limestone Coast. We acknowledge the elders past, present and future and we respect the deep feelings of attachment and relationships of Aboriginal People to Country including the language groups: Meintangk, Potaruwutij, Bunganditj, Tatiara/Ngarkat, Tanganekald (Southern Clans) and Ngarrindjeri, and we commit to working together to look after our landscapes.



## Foreword

It's an exciting period of opportunity and change for the Limestone Coast. We are a region known for accessible water, natural beauty, green fields and an enviable lifestyle. We are home to natural wonders such as the Coorong and the Blue Lake. The Limestone Coast's agricultural sector contributes more than \$1.5 billion in output annually to the state's economy, coupled with a further \$439 million in output annually from the forestry sector, primary production is critical to the region's future. These key economic activities rely on our natural resources including land, soil and water.

With impacts of climate change already being felt by our people, our environment and our economy, it is inevitable we have challenges to face. Predictions for the Limestone Coast suggest maximum temperatures will rise by up to 3.2 degrees by the end of the century, along with a decrease in rainfall of up to 16%. This presents a risk to our region and its natural assets, and to the livelihood of our community. Where we have seen draining of our natural resources in the past, it is now time to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of our ecosystems to ensure the security of our landscape for the future.

This plan is underpinned by the work outlined in the Limestone Coast Landscape Board Business Plan 2021-22, providing a holistic view of the priorities of the board. Community, key partners and stakeholders, staff, and First Nations groups have contributed their ideas and feedback through a consultative process to create this community-centred plan.

We believe this plan is a plan for the future. It considers the needs of the community, First Nations, industry and the landscape. We will seek to maximise State and Federal Government support relating to climate change goals and initiatives, to build on current knowledge and expertise of staff, and make decisions and take action based on the best available science and evidence.



**Penny Schulz**

Presiding Member, Limestone Coast Landscape Board

## Our Board's Role

The Limestone Coast Landscape Board is rethinking how the region's natural resources could be managed. Every board member is deeply connected to the Limestone Community in which we all live and work. Our networks will equip us with the tools, partnerships and experience we need to build on the great work that is already being done, and support landholders, local government, community organisations and levy payers to generate outcomes that deliver on our priorities and our vision for the region.

In the next five years, changes must be made to strengthen this region in the face of climate instability, increased fire risk, rising costs and calls on our natural resources. This board is committed to listening to the interests and experiences of the people around us, to best represent and serve the diverse industries, landscapes, flora and fauna, and urban and rural populations of the Limestone Coast.

## Minister's Endorsement

I, the Honourable David Speirs, Minister for Environment and Water, after taking into account and in accordance with the requirements of the Section 50 of the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* hereby approve the Landscape Plan for the Limestone Coast region for 2021-26.



**David Speirs MP**  
Minister for Environment and Water

28/07/2021.

# Working in our landscape

The new *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* ('the Act') introduces several changes to the management of South Australia's landscapes and the responsibilities of the Limestone Coast Landscape Board. The board, which has been appointed by the Minister for Environment and Water, will deliver on the requirements of the Act through this five-year Regional Landscape Plan and an annual Business Plan, underpinned by the State Landscape Strategy and supported by local and state policy.

The condition of the Limestone Coast's natural environment and how it is changing over time is tracked through the 'State of the Environment' 41 report cards, encompassing our key environmental assets, such as: water resources, native vegetation and soil. They also set out our environmental pressures, such as pest plant and animals, climate and air quality, and summarise the government's management responses, including marine and land protected areas and water management.

## Trend and Condition Reports



**Average annual rainfall could decline by 6.5 - 15.9%**

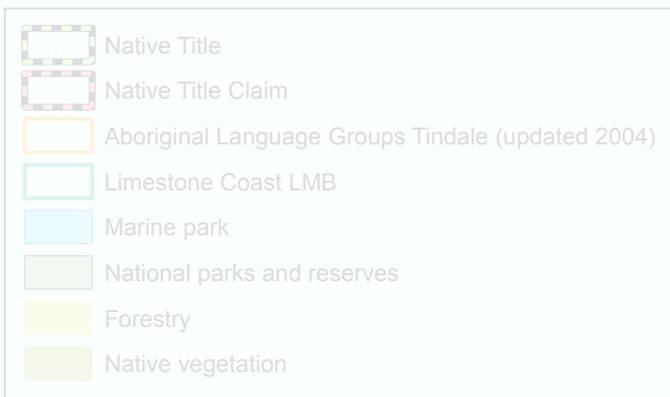


**Average annual maximum temperatures could increase by 1.6 - 3.2°C**



**Average annual minimum temperatures could increase by 1.4 - 2.7°C**

Source – SA Climate Ready Regional Summary – SE, Goyder Institute for Water Research/Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources



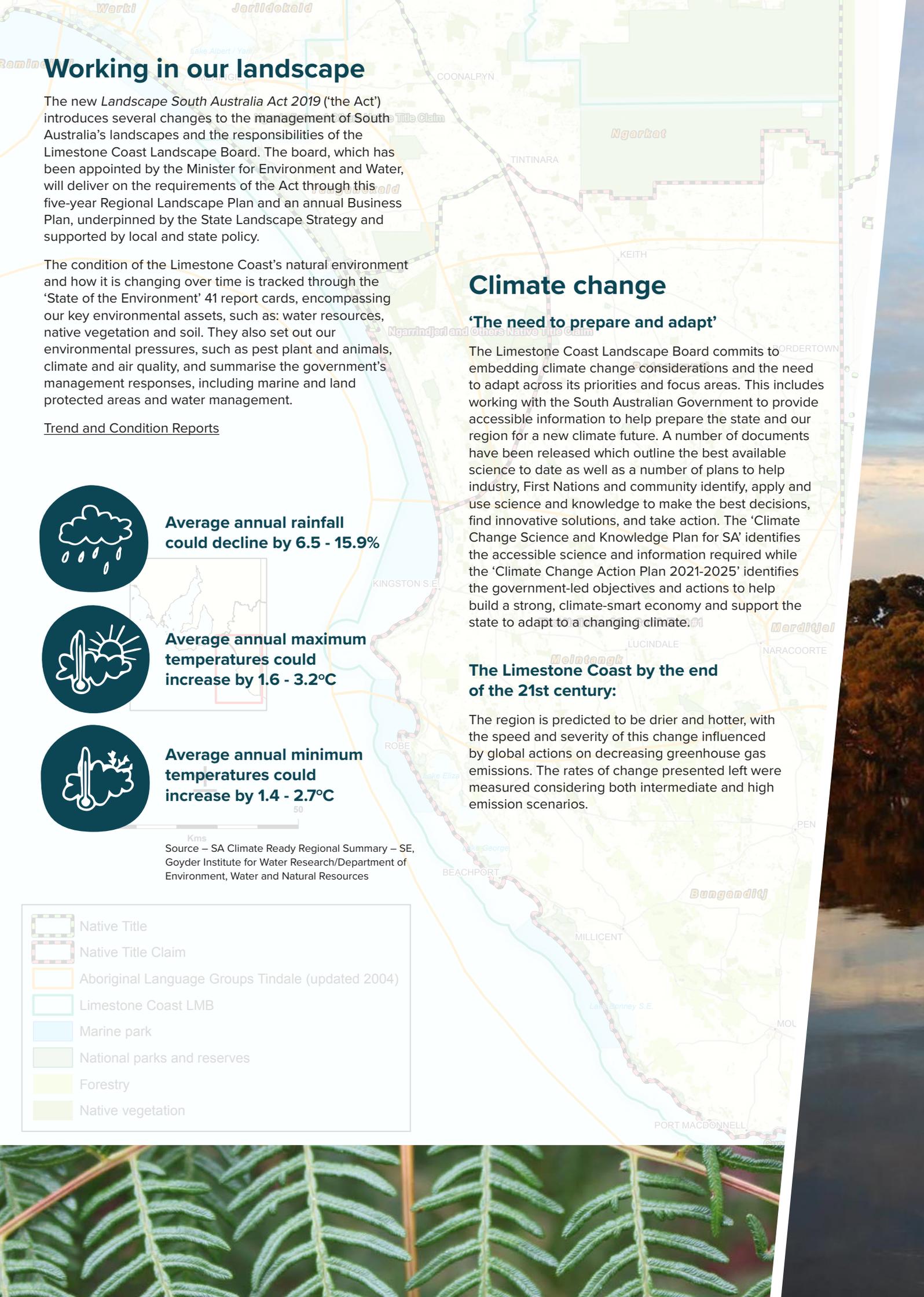
# Climate change

## 'The need to prepare and adapt'

The Limestone Coast Landscape Board commits to embedding climate change considerations and the need to adapt across its priorities and focus areas. This includes working with the South Australian Government to provide accessible information to help prepare the state and our region for a new climate future. A number of documents have been released which outline the best available science to date as well as a number of plans to help industry, First Nations and community identify, apply and use science and knowledge to make the best decisions, find innovative solutions, and take action. The 'Climate Change Science and Knowledge Plan for SA' identifies the accessible science and information required while the 'Climate Change Action Plan 2021-2025' identifies the government-led objectives and actions to help build a strong, climate-smart economy and support the state to adapt to a changing climate.

## The Limestone Coast by the end of the 21st century:

The region is predicted to be drier and hotter, with the speed and severity of this change influenced by global actions on decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. The rates of change presented left were measured considering both intermediate and high emission scenarios.

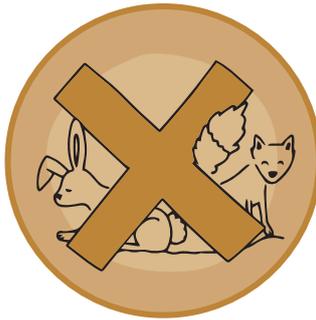


## Our Vision

To have a healthy, productive and biodiverse Limestone Coast landscape.

To be at the heart of the community, inclusive of First Nations and resilient to a changing climate.

## Our Priorities



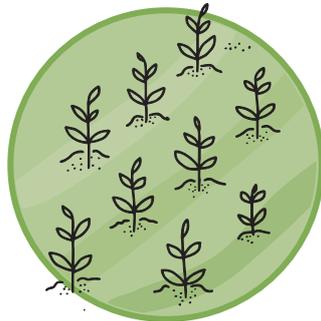
Working collaboratively to manage pest plants and animals



Protecting and balancing our region's water resources



Educating and partnering to sustainably manage our landscapes



Growing sustainable primary production



Conserving and enhancing our region's biodiversity

## Limestone Coast Snapshot



\$3.9 billion Gross Regional Product



28,000 km<sup>2</sup>



67,000 people



7,553 local businesses



32,301 jobs



\$3.5 billion in exports



\$1.8 billion in agriculture, forestry and fishing exports

## PRIORITY

### Working collaboratively to manage pest plants and animals

Pest plants and animals, including overabundant species, have a huge impact on agriculture, the environment and communities and result in a loss of productivity, biodiversity, social and cultural values. As a region deriving much of its economy from primary production, the Limestone Coast bears a significant part of the \$5 billion lost in agricultural productivity due to weeds and pest animals each year Australia-wide. Tackling the widespread and complex issue of pest plants and animals is a shared responsibility that requires a collaborative approach with everyone doing their part. Without the effective management of pest plants and animals, actions to support gains in biodiversity, sustainable primary production and cultural values will be undermined. Innovative, bold and science-based collective action is required.



#### Statements of Success

*Pest plants and animals are being collectively managed by First Nations, primary producers, environmentalists, communities and governments.*

*Our working relationship with the Limestone Coast community has ensured successful collaboration to achieve jointly identified, positive and transformational outcomes.*



#### Delivered through projects like:

##### Priority Pest Plants and Animals:

delivering key activities that will meet our statutory responsibilities as well as swiftly addressing emerging threats and new incursions of priority pest species like African lovegrass.



##### Five Year Deer Action Plan:

increasing scale and intensity of deer control (aerial and ground shooting), deer farm compliance, supporting landholders to remove all feral deer, understanding feral deer population size and distribution, and assessing effectiveness of deer control tools (traps, aggregators, ground shooting, aerial shooting).



## PRIORITY

### Protecting and balancing our region's water resources

A long history of landscape-scale modification in the region, including extensive draining of the land, allowed the expansion of primary production which has long underpinned the region's economic prosperity. Concurrently, this modification has seen wetlands decline from covering 44% of the landscape prior to European occupation to just 2.5% left across the region today. This has resulted in a lowering of the groundwater table and loss of biodiversity and cultural values. As demand for water continues to increase and the climate dries, a new era of landscape-scale water management is required. Holding and retaining water in the landscape is now recognised by environmental groups, First Nations, primary production, other industries, and community as a shared responsibility and a necessity for our landscape.



#### Statements of Success

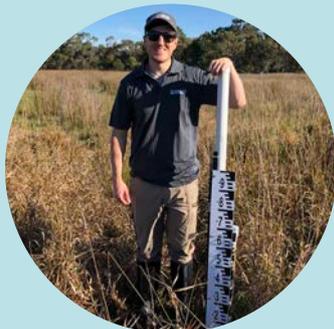
*Water resources are managed for all purposes.*

*First Nations, primary producers, environmentalists, communities and governments recognise and understand this balance.*



#### Delivered through projects like:

**Integrated Water Resource Management:** combining the board's statutory water policy responsibilities with a range of works around groundwater dependent ecosystems to provide an integrated approach.



**Eight Mile Creek Feasibility Study:** undertaking a detailed analysis of feasibility to retain water in the Eight Mile Creek Swamp while considering impacts on surrounding properties. Assessing the potential for restoration work to assist in stabilising groundwater levels and protecting key groundwater dependent ecosystems identified by the Lower Limestone Coast Water Allocation Plan.



## PRIORITY

### Educating and partnering to sustainably manage our landscape

The task to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of the Limestone Coast landscape is significant. Many years of land management action have had positive outcomes, but without continued collective effort from industry, First Nations and community progress will be slow. Education will strengthen the skill, knowledge and capacity of people to sustainably manage natural resources now and into the future. Connecting our youth to country creates a new generation of action. Coupled with enduring and effective partnerships, it builds large scale, long term change.



#### Statements of Success

*Awareness and uptake of sustainable land management practices has increased, and more people feel a sense of connectedness to the landscape.*

*We are innovative, supportive and provide inspiration to landowners, managers and community to contribute to positive biodiversity outcomes across all priorities.*



#### Delivered through projects like:

**Landscape Education:** reaching every primary school in the Limestone Coast, giving young people tools and knowledge to develop leadership skills and innovative environmental projects that align with all our priorities.



**Limestone Coast Adaptive Agriculture:** working with landholders and partner organisations to provide advice on industry adaptation to climate change, facilitate cross-sector collaboration on climate change and markets and build capacity of regional primary production industries to be climate change ready.



## PRIORITY

### Growing Sustainable Primary Production

Feeding a world population of 9.1 billion people in 2050 will require raising overall global food production by some 70 percent. This will be led by proficient and sustainable food producing nations such as Australia. The population expansion will also drive demand for timber as the need for housing and infrastructure increases. The scarcity of natural resources, exacerbated by climate change, will put pressure on the ability to increase production in both sectors. As primary production underpins the Limestone Coast's \$3.93 billion economy, the stability of the region's natural resources is critical for sustainable growth in primary production. Achieving this growth while simultaneously conserving and enhancing the environment, and honouring the connections and values First Nations have to country, is a challenge the region must embrace. A science-driven and common sense-based approach in creating practice change will be required for primary producers to be more profitable, efficient and in balance with cultural values and the environment. A thriving primary production sector will rely on a joint approach to protecting and improving soil health, managing water delivery and security, controlling pest plants and animals, and adapting to the impacts of climate change.



#### Statements of Success

*The region's primary producers have integrated biodiversity and water sustainability practices, soil quality has improved and uptake of pest plant and animal management strategies has increased.*

*Our action and leadership is visible to the community and is in alignment with and supporting industry and First Nations' land management goals.*



#### Delivered through projects like:

**Carbon Roadmap:** investigating opportunities to sequester carbon in our favourable soils. Industry partnerships and smart collaboration will be crucial to attracting further investment to accelerate the adoption of carbon smart land management practices.



**Farming for the Future:** developing key modules of information tailored to allow land managers to quickly self-assess their current performance against best practice within sustainable primary industry systems, access educational materials and strategic educational activities.



## PRIORITY

### Conserving and enhancing our region's biodiversity

Landscape modification has caused a long history of biodiversity loss in this region. Without concerted action this loss will continue. In just 43 years from now, it is projected that existing paddock trees will be gone. Remnant native vegetation has declined to just 16%, in the 180+ years since European settlement. Industry, First Nations and community strongly value biodiversity from iconic paddock trees to globally significant wetlands to our dynamic coastline. These values also contribute to the region's clean and safe brand which secures global markets for our primary producers. Tourism, including nature-based experiences, is supported by the unique Limestone Coast landscape, and brings visitors and investment to the region. Actions to support sustainable primary production, water use and the management of pest plants and animals will have positive impacts for threatened species and ecological communities, as well as regional bio-diversity. Working with First Nations to actively protect their Ngatji (totems or special animals) alongside other specific action will benefit communities and habitats for substantial environmental gains.



#### Statements of Success

*Biodiversity has been maintained across the landscape and capacity increased for environmental stewardship through partnering with First Nations, primary production, other industries, and the community.*

*We have integrated best available local and cultural knowledge, science, and bench-marked practices to facilitate action that contributes to positive on ground outcomes.*



#### Delivered through projects like:

**Communities Helping Cockies:** working to restore the habitat of an iconic species and build relationships between schools, local government, landholders and the board. Australian Government funding and the expertise of partner organisations support our efforts and aligns with multiple priorities.



**Paddock Trees:** engaging and supporting landholders via education, technical support and financial assistance, to increase essential native habitat and biodiversity, improve 'on farm' biodiversity and build resilience on farming properties preparing for climate change. Achieved through the retention and protection of existing paddock trees, and establishing new paddock trees and native revegetation.



## Our Focus

Our focus areas for action across all priorities are:



### Pest management

Strategies and partnerships to mitigate the impacts of invasive species on the productivity, social fabric and biodiversity of the landscape, including compliance, technical advice and services

### Water planning

Water resource planning and management (including compliance) that addresses sustainable water use, while supporting environmental, industry, social and cultural water needs

### Improved biodiversity

Protection and restoration of native vegetation, soils, wetlands, watercourses, and coastal habitats

### Sustainable primary production

Supporting primary producers in responsible landscape management

### First Nations engagement

Walking together with First Nations people to manage our landscapes

### Communication, engagement and education

Accessible education and capacity building programs to increase knowledge of and involvement in landscape management. Fostering a sense of connectedness to the natural landscape

### Partnerships

Identifying and establishing partnerships to broaden the work and reach of the Board.

### Climate change

Regional and localised resilience to the impacts of a changing climate

## Measuring Our Success

This five year plan provides the 'why' and 'what' to help us achieve our priorities, with participation and collaboration with project partners from industry, First Nations groups, peak bodies, NGOs, community groups and volunteers.

We will collect data from our activities, monitor the condition of the landscape and set targets that reflect the five key priorities. We will analyse the effectiveness of our activities and whether our efforts have had the desired outcomes relevant to each priority and deliver value for investment. An example is a deer control activity resulting in the removal of deer from the landscape (activity). We will measure the impact of the removal (effectiveness) and determine if the activity has been sufficiently effective against our pest plant and animal control priority (outcomes).

How we will meet our commitments and deliver on our priorities is at the annual Business Plan level. The Business Plan will centre on projects determining the evaluative measures that align to their Statements of Success in this plan.

Further detail can be found in the Limestone Coast Landscape Board's Business Plan.



*The Limestone Coast Landscape Board will review this landscape plan during its lifetime and will invite you into the process so together we can evaluate our achievements and our behaviour against the Statements of Success.*

*We welcome your feedback.*



### Photo credits

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### How to get involved

*Community engagement | Working in partnership and collaboration | Community and stakeholder ideas*  
Contact us to find out more

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